

THE STARTING POINT

# For most organizations, accessibility lives *here*.

Initiative #7 on a list of eight. Owned by one person — or no one's primary job. Easy to defer when priorities stack up and budgets tighten.

If it can be removed without restructuring the plan — **it will be.**

**1 in 4**

US adults lives with  
a disability

CDC

**1.3B**

people globally —  
growing as populations age

WHO

**2–3×**

travelers per accessible  
booking

UNWTO

STRATEGIC PLAN 2025–2030

1. Marketing & Brand Awareness
2. Visitor Experience
3. Workforce Development
4. Infrastructure & Capacity
5. Sustainability & Stewardship
6. Technology & Innovation

**7. Accessibility Program ←**

↑ *afterthought*

THE STRUCTURAL PROBLEM

# When accessibility is a *program*, it's a target.

Nesting it inside a single pillar creates a single point of failure.



## Siloed = Vulnerable

- Easy to cut when budgets tighten
- One coordinator = one point of failure
- Invisible to board & funders across departments
- No cross-team accountability or ownership
- Can be extracted without restructuring the plan

When did accessibility last appear in a budget conversation **outside** the accessibility team?

# Accessibility as a **horizontal priority**

Not nested inside one pillar — running across all of them.  
*runs through every pillar — can't be cut*



## Embedded = Sustainable

- Survives budget cycles and leadership transitions
- Every team has a role and accountability
- Board sees interconnection, not a single program
- Can't be cut without restructuring the whole plan

*"When it runs through everything, it can't be extracted from anything."*

# Oregon Coast Visitors Association

What the horizontal model looks like embedded across a destination strategic plan.

<b>Marketing</b>	Accessible itinerary content as standard output; inclusive imagery guidelines; WCAG 2.1 AA compliance across all digital channels
<b>Operations</b>	Accessibility training built into staff onboarding; accessible booking workflows; sensory guides at key coastal access points
<b>Visitor Exp.</b>	Beach wheelchair lending program mapped in visitor guide; audio-described trail signage; mobile accessibility map by site
<b>Workforce</b>	Disability awareness as standard new-hire training; people with lived experience recruited into guest-facing roles

*\* Illustrative application of the horizontal priority framework*

# The horizontal model changes what you report to boards & funders.

## ✗ Siloed Reporting

### Board Agenda

Item 5.3 — Accessibility Program Update. One slide. One coordinator. One initiative.

### Funder Language

"We have an accessibility program that serves visitors with disabilities."

### Risk Profile

If that coordinator leaves, the board has no visibility into what survives.

### Budget Ask

"We need \$40K for the accessibility program."



## ✓ Horizontal Reporting

### Board Agenda

Accessibility outcomes appear under Marketing, Operations, Workforce, and Sustainability — every pillar lead reports.

### Funder Language

"Accessibility is embedded across every department. Here's what that looks like by pillar."

### Risk Profile

Five teams share accountability. No single departure creates a blind spot. Board sees the full picture.

### Budget Ask

"Accessibility is distributed across our operational budgets. Here's the combined investment and return."

# Audit where you stand *today.*

Before you can embed accessibility structurally, you need an honest read of where it lives right now. Most organizations are surprised by the answer.

## Open your plan right now.

Before you leave this conference, ask these five questions. Share your answers with your team this week. The audit takes 20 minutes. The insight lasts a planning cycle.

If the answer to question 5 is **"yes"** — that is this week's most important problem to solve.

## The 5-Question Audit

- 1 Where does 'accessibility' appear in your current plan?
- 2 In how many of your strategic pillars is it mentioned?
- 3 Is there a dedicated budget line, or absorbed into another?
- 4 Who is accountable — one person, or multiple teams?
- 5 Can it be removed without restructuring the plan?

# Change the language. Change the architecture.

Rewrite initiatives to embed accessibility as a standard — not a task to be completed.

Pillar	✗ Isolated Initiative	✓ Embedded Initiative
<b>Marketing</b>	<i>"Develop an accessibility guide for visitors."</i>	All marketing content — digital, print, and social — reflects and serves the full spectrum of our visitor community.
<b>Workforce</b>	<i>"Provide accessibility training to front-line staff."</i>	Every team member, at every level, is trained and accountable for delivering an inclusive visitor experience.
<b>Sustainability</b>	<i>"Support ADA compliance in capital projects."</i>	Universal design is embedded in all infrastructure planning from the outset — compliance is the floor, not the ceiling.
<b>Operations</b>	<i>"Ensure accessible meeting rooms are available."</i>	Accessible pathways, facilities, and service standards are the operational default — for every visitor, every time.

*In the right column, there is no single owner. There is a standard every team is held to.*

# Build accountability that *outlasts* any one person.

## 01

### Distribute ownership

Every strategic pillar has an accessibility lead — not one coordinator for the whole org. Distributed ownership means no single departure kills the program.

## 02

### Embed metrics in every pillar's KPIs

Accessibility outcomes appear in Marketing dashboards, Operations reviews, and Workforce reports — not only in an annual accessibility update.

## 03

### Report horizontally to stakeholders

Show boards and funders accessibility progress across all pillars — not a single program line that disappears quietly mid-year.

## Monday morning — three actions:

### Audit

Open your plan. Count where 'accessibility' appears and in how many pillars.

### Embed

Rewrite one objective per pillar to include an accessibility standard — not a task.

### Report

At your next board meeting, present accessibility across pillars — not as a single agenda item.

# Accessibility isn't an initiative.

## *It's the architecture.*

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Get **clear** on where it lives today.

Get **focused** on embedding it structurally.

Get **moving** on accountability that lasts.



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