



Cape Breton Regional Municipality

Accessibility Advisory Committee Agenda

Wednesday, March 11, 2026

1:00 p.m.

Council Chambers
Second Floor, City Hall
320 Esplanade, Sydney, Nova Scotia

Accessibility Advisory Committee Members:

Councillor Steve Gillespie

Councillor Steven MacNeil

Mairibeth Reilly, Citizen Appointee

Denise McSpadden, Citizen Appointee

Kyron Coombes, Citizen Appointee

Kim Bates, Citizen Appointee

Kathy MacIntyre, Citizen Appointee

Sharon Costey, Citizen Appointee

Louise Gillis, Citizen Appointee

Adam Brown, Citizen Appointee

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Call to Order

Land Acknowledgment

Roll Call

1. **Approval of Agenda:** (Motion required)
2. **Orientation:** Christa Dicks, Municipal Clerk / Director of Corporate Information Services (See page 4)
3. **Terms of Reference:** Christa Dicks, Municipal Clerk / Director of Corporate Information Services (See page 31)
4. **Background Information:** Christa Dicks, Municipal Clerk / Director of Corporate Information Services (See page 34)
5. **Election of Chair:** Christa Dicks, Municipal Clerk / Director of Corporate Information Services
6. **Election of Vice-Chair:** Christa Dicks, Municipal Clerk / Director of Corporate Information Services

Adjournment

**Verbal Orientation with the CBRM Municipal Clerk,
Christa Dicks.**

This agenda item is reserved as a placeholder to note that a verbal orientation will be provided by the Municipal Clerk followed by the Rules of Order, agenda request form, and approved minutes.

Cape Breton Regional Municipality

Recorded Resolution RC1

RULES OF ORDER

1 Order

- (1) The Mayor or other presiding officer shall preserve order and decorum at all Council meetings and shall decide all questions of order, subject to appeal to the Council.
- (2) When the Mayor or presiding officer is called upon to decide a point of order or practice, the point shall be stated without unnecessary comment, and the Mayor shall briefly cite the rule or authority applicable to the case.
- (3) The Mayor may, before ruling on a point of order, consult the solicitor of the Regional Municipality as to the applicable law.
- (4) It is the right of a member to call another member to order.
- (5) Where a member calls another member to order, the member must state the point of order clearly and succinctly and it will be for the presiding officer to decide whether the point is well taken.
- (6) An appeal may be taken from the decision of the presiding officer by any member of the Council.
- (7) When an appeal is taken from the decision of the presiding officer, the presiding officer shall first state the decision and ad, "The question is: Shall the decision of the Chair stand?"
- (8) When any question of order or practice is raised, it must be decided before further proceeding with the question in discussion.
- (9) When any matter of privilege arises, it must be considered immediately.
- (10) If the Mayor desires to leave the chair for the purpose of taking part in the debate or otherwise, the Deputy Mayor or another member of the Council shall fill the Mayor's place until the Mayor resumes the Chair.

Recorded Resolution RC1
Rules of Order

- (11) If any member of the Council or any other person in attendance at a meeting of the Council persists in disturbing the conduct of the meeting, the Mayor or other presiding officer may (subject to an appeal to the Council) require that person to leave the meeting and may direct a police officer of the Regional Municipality to carry out the order.
- (12) If the Mayor or other presiding officer determines that it is not possible to maintain order at any meeting of the Council, the Mayor or other presiding officer shall adjourn the meeting.

2 Rules of Conduct and Debate

- (1) Every member shall, in speaking to any question or motion, address the Chair.
- (2) When two or more members evidence an intention to speak, the presiding officer shall call upon the member who first showed such an intention, subject to a motion to hear another member.
- (3) No member shall use offensive words in or against the Council or any member thereof, nor shall the member speak beside the question in debate.
- (4) No member shall infringe the rules of the Council or disobey the decision of the presiding officer or of the Council on any question of order or practice, or upon the interpretation of the rules of the Council.
- (5) Where a member infringes the rules of the Council or disobeys the decision of the presiding officer or of the Council, the member may be ordered by the presiding officer or by resolution of the Council to leave that meeting, but if the Council accepts an apology by the offender, the member may be permitted to remain.
- (6) A member called to order by the presiding officer shall immediately cease speaking, except to explain, and the Council if appealed to shall decide the matter without debate.
- (7) No member shall pass between any member who is speaking and the presiding officer, nor shall a member interrupt any member who is speaking except to raise a point of order.

Recorded Resolution RC1
Rules of Order

- (8) Any member may require the question or motion in discussion to be read at any time during the debate, but not so as to interrupt a member while speaking.
- (9) (a) Council members are permitted to speak up to two times to the same question without leave of the Council; the first time for a maximum of five (5) minutes and the second time for two (2) minutes, except for significant issues at special meetings during which Council members will be permitted to speak up to fifteen (15) minutes. Staff responses to questions by Councillors shall be counted in the speaking time.
- (b) A reply is allowed to a member who has made a substantive motion to the Council, but not to any member who has moved an amendment.
- (c) If a Council member exceeds the speaking time, any Council member can call a point of order and the Mayor will uphold the ruling that the speaking times be adhered to.
- (10) Every question shall be decided by a vote of yeas and nays and the presiding officer shall state whether the motion has been carried or defeated.
- (11) Every public vote on a motion is a recorded vote and is to be released as part of the televised and/or web-streamed broadcast. A paper copy of the results of a recorded vote is to be made available upon request. The staff will make such requests for paper copies available in as reasonably and timely manner as possible and a copy of the recorded vote will be available upon request.
- The above process does not apply to the limited type of motions made in closed or in camera sessions duly called under provisions noted in Section 22 of the *Municipal Government Act*.
- (12) When the question in consideration contains distinct propositions, upon request of any member, a vote upon each proposition shall be taken separately.
- (13) Every member of the Council present when a question is put shall vote unless:
- (a) the member has declared a conflict of interest in the subject of the question pursuant to the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*, or
- (b) the Council has excused the member from voting.

Recorded Resolution RC1
Rules of Order

- (c) Refusal to vote shall be recorded as voting in the negative, as per the *Municipal Government Act*.
 - (d) Council will not excuse members from voting unless in Conflict of Interest situations.
- (14) Subject to the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*, the Mayor shall vote on all questions before Council.
- (15) After the question is put, no member shall speak to the question, nor shall any other motion be made until after the result of the vote has been declared; the decision of the presiding officer as to whether the question has been put is conclusive.
- (16) Whenever the presiding officer is of the opinion that a motion is contrary to the rules and privileges of the Council the presiding officer shall apprise the members immediately without putting the question and shall cite the rule or authority applicable to the case without argument or comment.
- (17) The Mayor or presiding officer may, at the beginning of any meeting or at any time except when a question is actually under debate, bring any matters as the Mayor or presiding officer may have in charge or may consider desirable before the Council.

3 **Motions**

- (1) Any member of Council may require that a motion be in writing except a motion to adjourn, to lay on the table, to postpone to a certain time, to refer or to move the previous question.
- (2) A motion shall be seconded before being debated or put to the questions.
- (3) A motion may be withdrawn by the mover with the consent of the seconder at any time before decision or amendment.
- (4) When a question is under consideration, no motion shall be received except:
 - 1. To adjourn.
 - 2. To lay on the table.
 - 3. To postpone to a certain time.
 - 4. To refer.

Recorded Resolution RC1
Rules of Order

5. To amend.
6. To move the previous question.

These several motions shall have precedence in the order in which they are named.

- (5) A motion to adjourn shall always be in order, except:
 1. When a member is in possession of the floor.
 2. When the ayes and nays are being called.
 3. While the members are voting.
 4. When “to adjourn” was the last preceding motion.
- (6) No expression of opinion or qualification shall be made with a motion to adjourn the Council or the debate.
- (7) The following questions shall be decided without debate or amendment:
 1. A motion to reconsider.
 2. All motions as to priority of business or as to the suspension of the general order of the day.
 3. An application to speak more than the prescribed number of times.
 4. A motion to allow any person other than a member of the Council to address the Council.
 5. The previous question.
 6. A motion to adjourn.
 7. A motion to postpone to a certain day.
 8. A motion to lay on the table.
- (8) An amendment may only be amended once.
- (9) Amendments shall be put in the reverse order to that in which they are moved.

Recorded Resolution RC1
Rules of Order

4 **Minutes**

- (1) The Clerk shall keep Minutes of the procedures of every meeting of the Council in a properly indexed Minute Book and/or digital record system.
- (2) The Minutes shall:
 - (a) contain all resolutions and motions passed, with the names of the movers and seconders, and
 - (b) mention reports, petitions and other papers submitted to the Council by their respective titles only, or by a brief description of their purport.
- (3) The Minutes shall not include any lengthy report of any debate in the Council, but a summary of the main points raised for and against the question may be included at the discretion of the Clerk.
- (4) The first order of business at any regular meeting of Council shall be the passing of the Minutes of the preceding regular meeting and any special meetings held since the last regular meeting of the Council.
- (5) The Minutes as approved or as corrected and approved shall be signed by the Mayor and the Clerk.

5 **Resolutions Involving Extraordinary Expenditures**

All resolutions involving and expenditure not definitely arranged for in the estimates shall be laid on the table as a Notice of Motion to be discussed at a subsequent meeting. No such resolution shall be voted upon at the same meeting at which it is introduced unless the Chief Administrative Officer recommends in favour of the expenditure and the Council by a two-thirds vote of the members then present approved the expenditure.

6 **Reconsideration**

- (1) After any question has been decided either in the affirmative or negative, any member may, at the same meeting, or at the first meeting thereafter, move for a reconsideration thereof. No discussion of the main question shall be allowed unless the motion to reconsider has passed.
- (2) No question shall be reconsidered more than once, nor shall a vote to reconsider be reconsidered.

Recorded Resolution RC1
Rules of Order

7 Rescind; Amend Something Previously Adopted

- (1) The Council can change an action previously taken or ordered by:
 - (a) Motion to rescind can be used to strike out an entire main motion that has been adopted at some previous time; or
 - (b) Motion to amend something previously adopted can be used if it is desired to change only a part of the text, or to substitute a different version.
- (2) Two-thirds majority vote is required on a motion to rescind or motion to amend something previously adopted. However, a simple majority vote is only required if notice of intent to make the motion, stating the complete substance of the proposed change, has been given at a previous meeting.
- (3) Motions to rescind or amend something previously adopted are not in order under the following circumstances:
 - (a) When it has been previously moved to reconsider the vote on the main motion, and the question can be reached by calling up the motion to *Reconsider*;
 - (b) When something has been done, as a result of the vote on the main motion, that is impossible to undo. The unexecuted part of the motion, however, can be rescinded or amended.

8 Adjournments

The Council shall always adjourn at the hour of 10:00 p.m. if in session at that hour unless otherwise determined by vote of two-thirds of the members present.

9 **Agenda**

- (1) The Clerk, in consultation with the agenda review working group, shall prepare an agenda for all matters that are to come before any meeting of Council in the sequence in which they should arise in accordance with the Council Agenda Policy.
- (2) The agenda shall be distributed before each meeting of the Council.
- (3) No matter not on the agenda may be considered at a meeting except as notice for the next succeeding meeting of the Council.

10 **Persons Not Members of Council**

- (1) The Clerk, the Solicitor, or other officer of the Regional Municipality may address the Council on the request of the Mayor or other presiding officer or of any member of the Council.
- (2) No other person who is not a member of the Council shall be heard without the permission of the Council.
- (3) The permission of the Council may be extended by the Mayor or other presiding officer subject to the objection by a majority of the members of the Council present.
- (4) Any matter brought to the Council by petition or public representation shall be considered by the agenda review working group.
- (5) No one may bring any sign, poster, placard, banner or other like device into the Council Chamber without the prior permission of the Mayor or other presiding officer, subject to objection by a majority of the members of Council present.

Recorded Resolution RC1
Rules of Order

11 Suspension of Rules

The rules and procedures of the Council may be suspended by two-thirds majority vote of the members present.

12 General

In all cases not provided for, the proceedings of the Council shall be governed by Roberts' Rules of Order.

Approved by Council: August 1, 1995

Amended by Council:

August 15, 2000
November 28, 2000
February 19, 2002
March 14, 2005
July 14, 2020



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clerksoffice@cbrm.ns.ca
902-563-5010

Agenda Request Form	
<input type="checkbox"/> Recommendation / Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion/Report <input type="checkbox"/> Information Only	
Date of Committee Meeting: Subject:	
Topic Description: Reason: Outcome Sought or Motion: (Outcome Sought = what do you want to happen from your request e.g. recommendation to Council, information from staff, etc.) <i>(if making a motion: when drafting the motion, please ensure that it reflects everything that is being requested to be included in the request or recommendation.) – Please ensure this text is deleted in the final version of this form.</i>	
Committee Member Name:	Signature:
Date:	Received by Clerk's Department (date):
<i>Please note: The Clerk's Office must receive your item and any relevant documents 7 days in advance of the meeting to be considered for the agenda. Late submissions will be deferred for consideration at future meetings.</i>	

Cape Breton Regional Municipality

**Accessibility Advisory Committee
Meeting**

**Tuesday,
October 19, 2021
4:32 p.m.
Via Videoconference**

The Municipal Clerk called the meeting to order.

Present: Councillor Cyril MacDonald, Chair
Councillor Steve Gillespie
Citizen Louise Gillis
Citizen Douglas Foster, Vice-Chair
Citizen Sarah MacPherson
Citizen Veronica Merryfield
Citizen Linda Murray
Citizen Elaine Swartz

Staff: Kirk Durning, CBRM Accessibility Coordinator and
Manager of Recreation
Deborah Campbell Ryan, Municipal Clerk
Paul Burt, Manager of Building, Planning and Licensing
Laws
Sharon MacSween, Recording Secretary

Absent: Citizen Jenny-Rachel Lind
Citizen Marcie Shwery-Stanley (Regrets)

Summary of Decisions

1. Call to Order:

The Municipal Clerk called the meeting to order.

2. Election/Selection of Chair:

Councillor Cyril MacDonald was acclaimed Chair of the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

3. Roll Call

4. Election/Selection of Vice Chair

Citizen Douglas Foster was acclaimed Vice-Chair of the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

5. Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve the October 19, 2021 Accessibility Advisory Committee agenda as circulated. **Carried.**

6. Citizen Vacancy – Jenny-Rachel Lind:

The Clerk advised that Jenny-Rachel Lind has moved to Newfoundland for employment purposes and therefore is no longer eligible to serve on a CBRM Committee. The Nominating Committee will be advised of this vacancy.

For information only.

Summary of Decisions (Cont'd)

7. **Request for Proposals (RFP) – CBRM Accessibility Plan:**

The Accessibility Coordinator advised that the RFP has been completed and will be submitted to the Purchasing Department for advertising before the end of October.

For information only.

1. Call to Order:

Deborah Campbell Ryan, Municipal Clerk, called the inaugural meeting of the Accessibility Advisory Committee to order.

2. Election/Selection of Chair:

The Municipal Clerk advised that before calling for nominations for the position of Chair, the Committee Terms of Reference state that the term of the Chair will be for two years. Further as recommended during Committee Orientation, that the Chairperson position be filled by a Council Member for staff liaison and continuity purposes. Once the Chair is selected, the Chair will preside over the meeting and then call for Nominations for Vice-Chair. The Vice-Chair position is for a term of one year.

The Clerk then called for nominations for Chair of the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Councillor Steve Gillespie nominated Councillor Cyril MacDonald for Chair of the Accessibility Advisory Committee. Councillor Cyril MacDonald accepted the nomination.

The Clerk asked if there were any further nominations for Chair. Hearing none, Councillor Cyril MacDonald was acclaimed as Chair of the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Councillor Cyril MacDonald then assumed the Chair.

Councillor Cyril MacDonald expressed thanks and appreciation to Committee Members with entrusting him in the role as Chair of the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

3. Roll Call

4. Election/Selection of Vice Chair

Councillor Cyril MacDonald called for Nominations for Vice-Chair of the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Councillor Steve Gillespie nominated Citizen Elaine Swartz for Vice-Chair of the Committee. Citizen Swartz declined the nomination.

Citizen Louise Gillis nominated Citizen Douglas Foster for Vice-Chair of the Committee. Citizen Foster accepted nomination for Vice-Chair.

A third and final call for Nominations for Vice-Chair of the Committee was made. Hearing none, Citizen Douglas Foster was acclaimed as Vice-Chair of the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

5. Approval of Agenda

Motion:

Moved by Citizen Gillis, seconded by Citizen Swartz, approval of the October 19, 2021 Accessibility Advisory Committee agenda as circulated.

Motion Carried.

6. Citizen Vacancy – Jenny-Rachel Lind:

Deborah Campbell Ryan, Municipal Clerk, reviewed her Memo included in the agenda package, and advised that Citizen Jenny-Rachel Lind recently moved to Newfoundland for employment purposes. As a per Council policy, citizen appointees on CBRM Committees must be residents of the Municipality and therefore Ms. Lind is no longer eligible to serve on the Accessibility Advisory Committee. It was also noted that the Nominating Committee will address the vacant seat.

Continued...

Citizen Vacancy – Jenny-Rachel Lind (Cont'd):

At this point in the meeting, the Chair reminded the Committee of the Terms of Reference and Rules of Order, noting that all Committee Members will have an opportunity to speak for 5 minutes on each issue, with a second opportunity for 2 minutes. The Chair asked that Committee Members either raise their hand or use the chat feature to request to speak, and that the Chair will respond to the speaking requests in the order that they are received.

Following the staff report, discussion took place regarding:

- Current committee representation and composition in accordance with legislation
- Committee Members' discretion to disclose personal information i.e. disability
- Nomination and appointment process for citizens to CBRM Committees and Boards
- "First voice" knowledge, specific to disabilities including disabilities that are not visible, i.e. hearing, vision, etc.

For information only.

7. Request for Proposals (RFP) – CBRM Accessibility Plan:

Kirk Durning, CBRM Accessibility Coordinator, reviewed his Memo included in the agenda package. He advised the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the CBRM Accessibility Plan was complete and the document was prepared using a similar format as other municipalities in the province and current best practice for meeting accessibility plan requirements under the *Nova Scotia Accessibility Act*.

Mr. Durning advised that the RFP will be submitted to the Purchasing Department for advertisement before the end of October. With the timeline, it is anticipated that a consultant will be selected for the project in December 2021.

Continued...

Request for Proposals – CBRM Accessibility Plan (Cont'd):

Following the staff report, discussion took place regarding:

- Accessibility is a relatively new consulting field
- Individuals with “first voice” should provide opinion in concert with a consultant on any assessments.
- Hiring a consultant to facilitate development of the Plan is a best practice across the province.
- The consultant will be working with the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) and the supplemental staff committee, as well as citizens in CBRM.
- Staffing, municipality size and comparisons to Halifax Regional Municipality, Wolfville and Kentville
- The Rick Hansen Standards are a “gold standard”, however it was pointed out that the Rick Hansen Standards lack consideration of individuals living with sight challenges, as well as mobility, chronic pain, respiratory, and mental health disabilities.

Amended:
January
20, 2022

In response to questions, the Accessibility Coordinator advised that he will share the RFP document with the Committee once it is publicly available. There is a budget of \$50,000 for the RFP award for the Accessibility Plan and this was based on other RFP awards and the size of the Municipality was considered.

Inquiries were made regarding Committee Member involvement in the evaluation and awarding of the RFP. The Accessibility Coordinator advised that he will check with Finance regarding the process.

At this point in the meeting, the Committee **agreed** to allow Citizen Foster an additional 2 minutes to speak on the issue.

Citizen Foster advised that speaking time limits are too restrictive. He further suggested that a “first voice” individual participate in the scoring and awarding of the RFP.

Continued...

Request for Proposals – CBRM Accessibility Plan (Cont'd):

The Chair noted that the speaking times in the Rules of Order are important for the Committee to stay on task, however if the Committee decision is to relax the rules, it can be done but noted the importance to give all Members an opportunity to speak.

Councillor Gillespie noted that in the selection of a consulting firm from the RPF process, CBRM as a municipality must follow a rigid process, and although understanding the selection and whether individuals have certain criteria and training, clarifications on those items can be obtained. The RPF evaluation process may not be something that the Committee will be permitted to be involved in under the purchasing and tending policy.

For information only.

The Chair thanked the Committee and staff for their involvement and great discussion during the meeting.

Adjournment at 5:14 p.m.

Councillor Cyril MacDonald
Chair
/slm

Deborah Campbell Ryan
Municipal Clerk

Cape Breton Regional Municipality

**Accessibility Advisory Committee
Meeting**

**Thursday,
January 20, 2022
4:30 p.m.
Via Videoconference**

The Chair, Councillor Cyril MacDonald called the meeting to order.

Present: Councillor Cyril MacDonald, Chair
Councillor Steve Gillespie
Citizen Louise Gillis
Citizen Sarah MacPherson
Citizen Linda Murray

Staff: Kirk Durning, CBRM Accessibility Coordinator and
Manager of Recreation
Deborah Campbell Ryan, Municipal Clerk
Sharon MacSween, Recording Secretary

Absent: Citizen Marcie Shwery-Stanley (Regrets)
Citizen Elaine Swartz (Regrets)
Citizen Veronica Merryfield

Summary of Decisions

Roll Call

1. Approval of Minutes:

Motion to approve of the Accessibility Advisory Committee Minutes as amended for:

- October 19th, 2021

Carried.

3. Business Arising: October 19, 2021:

3.1 Update on RFP/Awarding of Contract - CBRM Accessibility Plan:

Four (4) RFP response submissions were received for the Accessibility Plan and the RFP was awarded to the reachAbility Association.

For information only.

2. Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve the January 20, 2022 Accessibility Advisory Committee agenda as circulated. **Carried.**

4. CBRM – reachAbility Municipal Accessibility Plan

A presentation was provided by reachAbility Association as an introduction to the process for the CBRM Accessibility Plan “Moving Accessibility Forward”.

Summary of Decisions (Cont'd)

5. Roundtable

A roundtable discussion took place following the presentation by reachAbility.

For information only.

6. Citizen Vacancies – Update:

It was **agreed** by Committee consensus to defer the decision of filling the vacancy of the 9th Committee Member until a later time.

It was **agreed** to defer nominations for a Vice Chair until a future meeting.

Adjournment

Roll Call

1. Approval of Minutes:

Suggested amendments to the October 19, 2021 draft Minutes were discussed.

Motion:

Moved by Councillor Gillespie, seconded by Citizen Louise Gillis, approval of the Accessibility Advisory Committee Minutes as amended:

➤ October 19th, 2021

Motion Carried.

3. Business Arising: October 19, 2021:

3.1 Update on RFP/Awarding of Contract - CBRM Accessibility Plan:

Kirk Durning, CBRM Accessibility Coordinator, advised that four (4) submissions were received in response to the RFP for the Accessibility Plan. He advised that the submissions were reviewed and scored by the Committee Chair, Councillor Cyril MacDonald, Paul Burt and himself. It was anticipated that the Vice Chair was to participate in the process, however he was unable to do so. Through the scoring process, it was unanimously decided to award the RFP to the reachAbility Association.

For information only.

2. Approval of Agenda

Motion:

Moved by Citizen Linda Murray, seconded by Councillor Gillespie, approval of the January 20, 2022 Accessibility Advisory Committee agenda as circulated.

Motion Carried.

4. CBRM – reachAbility Municipal Accessibility Plan:

Jessica Ward, Project & Program Manager and Primary CBRM contact, provided background information on reachAbility Association as an introduction to the process for the CBRM Accessibility Plan “Moving Accessibility Forward”. Highlights included:

- Past Projects
- Project Team: Jessica Ward and Krista O’Connor
- Our Lens:
 - provincial and federal legislation, Rick Hansen Accessibility standards, and Universal Design to evaluate:
 - accessibility
 - inclusion; and
 - inform on recommendations
- Standards and Benchmarks:
 - Goods and Services
 - Built Environment
 - Awareness
 - Information and Communication
 - Transportation
 - Employment
 - Education
- Cape Breton Regional Municipal Moving Accessibility Forward
- Environment Scans:
 - Capital Assets / Buildings
 - Parks, Playgrounds and Trails
 - Sidewalks, Public Spaces, Libraries, etc.

Continued...

CBRM – reachAbility Municipal Accessibility Plan (Cont'd):

- Engagement Strategy
 - Community Consultation
 - Surveying
 - Mapping
- The Plan including timeline
- Information for consideration when developing CBRM Statement of Commitment – Town of Kentville and Lunenburg County examples were provided and reviewed:
 - ensuring equal access and participation for all people, regardless of their abilities
 - treating all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence
 - meeting the needs of people who face accessibility barriers
 - identifying, removing, and preventing these barriers by meeting the requirements of Nova Scotia's *Accessibility Act*
- Definitions:
 - Inclusion
 - Accessibility
 - Barrier-Free

5. Roundtable

Following the presentation, the Chair opened the floor for discussion.

It was **agreed** to relax the speaking time rules of order to allow discussion in 2-minute intervals without restrictions.

The following was then discussed:

- Looking beyond physical barriers
- Identifying barriers and key issues that interfere with daily routines
- Colours and transitions, inside or outside buildings including textile considerations for those with sight loss
- ASL (American Sign Language) interpreter

Continued...

Roundtable (Cont'd):

- Short term changes
- Equal access for all
- Physical and cognitive disability considerations (i.e. ADHD, Alzheimer's)
- Benchmarks and opportunities will guide the Plan (which should be a living document)
- Service animals (including birds, gold fish)
- Health care issues
- Priorities
- The Plan is for CBRM-owned buildings and spaces (including trails and parks) and not for those privately or Provincially/Federally owned
- Affordability and availability of services for users (i.e. buses)

Ms. Ward advised that reachAbility will be in CBRM between February 22 to 25th to visit as many places as possible, including downtowns and rural areas. They will also be contacting stakeholder groups with expertise, as well as individuals in the community. Meetings in the community will be set up during these dates and will follow COVID-19 rules.

Chair, Councillor Cyril MacDonald, thanked Ms. Ward for the presentation and information and the discussion with the Committee.

6. Citizen Vacancies – Update:

Deborah Campbell Ryan, Municipal Clerk, reviewed her Memo included in the agenda regarding the two Citizen vacancies. She advised that the Council passed a motion to not fill the vacancy created when Jenny-Rachel Lind moved to Newfoundland, and to leave the Committee composition at 9 members. She also advised that Douglas Foster recently resigned from the Accessibility Advisory Committee and his resignation was brought to the Nominating Committee at their January 17, 2022 meeting with a recommendation to not fill the vacancy and that the composition of the committee be eight (8) members. At that meeting, the

Continued...

Citizen Vacancies – Update (Cont’d):

Nominating Committee, passed a motion to ask the Accessibility Advisory Committee for their input on whether the second vacancy should be filled. It was pointed out that Mr. Foster was the Vice-Chair of the Committee and that position is now vacant.

Discussion took place which included requirements under the *Act*, quorum, representation, and the Vice-Chair position, and process to fill a vacancy.

It was **agreed** by Committee consensus to defer the decision of filling the vacancy (re: the 9th Committee Member) until a later time.

It was **agreed** to defer nominations for a Vice Chair until a future meeting.

Adjournment at 6:26 p.m.

Councillor Cyril MacDonald
Chair

/slm

Deborah Campbell Ryan
Municipal Clerk

Cape Breton Regional Municipality Accessibility Advisory Committee

Terms of Reference

1.0 Purpose

The Cape Breton Regional Municipality (CBRM) Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) provides advice on identifying, preventing, and eliminating barriers to people with disabilities in programs, services, initiatives, facilities and policies for the purpose of improving the municipality's livability, inclusiveness and accessibility for individuals with disabilities. The Committee plays a pivotal role in helping CBRM meet its obligations under Nova Scotia's Accessibility Act.

2.0 Definitions

- 2.1 **“Act”** refers to the Nova Scotia Accessibility Act – Bill No. 59.
- 2.2 **“Barrier”** is any physical, technological, attitudinal, policy or practice that limits a person's participation within society
- 2.3 **“Committee”** means the Accessibility Advisory Committee for Cape Breton Regional Municipality.
- 2.4 **“Council”** means the elected governing body of the municipality.
- 2.5 **“Disability”** means any physical, mental, intellectual, learning or sensory impairment, including an episodic disability that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders an individual's full and effective participation in society.

3.0 Scope

- 3.1 The Terms of Reference are applicable to all members appointed to the Cape Breton Regional Municipality Accessibility Advisory Committee.
- 3.2 The work of the Committee will be in accordance of Bill No. 59 – Accessibility Act and Access by Design 2030 – Achieving an Accessible Nova Scotia document.

4.0 Membership and Terms of Appointment

- 4.1 The Accessibility Advisory Committee shall have up to ten (10) voting members who serve without pay.

- 4.2 In accordance with the Act, half of the Committee members must be persons with disabilities or represent organizations that represent persons with disabilities.
- 4.3 The composition of the Committee must include a minimum of two (2) members of Council.
- 4.4 Application of community member representation will be invited by public advertisement and appointed by Council.
- 4.5 The positions of Chair and Vice-Chair will be appointed by the Committee. The Chair will be a two (2) year term and Vice-Chair will be a one (1) year term.
- 4.6 The members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee shall be appointed for a term of two (2) years. Any member of the Committee is eligible for reappointment following the two-year term.
- 4.7 Any member of the Committee who is absent from three (3) consecutive meetings without being authorized by resolution of the Committee will forfeit their position on the AAC.

5.0 Responsibilities

The Accessibility Advisory Committee shall:

- 5.1 Advise on the preparation, implementation, and effectiveness of the Cape Breton Regional Municipality Accessibility Plan. In accordance with the Accessibility Act, the plan must include:
 - 5.1.1 a report on measures the public sector body has taken and intends to take to identify, remove, and prevent barriers.
 - 5.1.2 information on procedures the public sector body has in place to assess the following for their impact on accessibility for people with disabilities: any proposed policies, programs, practices, and services any proposed enactments or by-laws.
 - 5.1.3 any other prescribed information.
- 5.2 Review and update its accessibility plan at least every three years, in accordance with the act.

- 5.3 CBRM will designate staff identified by department directors to form a supplemental staff committee for accessibility. The Accessibility Advisory Committee will consult with this supplemental staff committee for guidance on municipal policies, procedures and organizational work concerning accessibility.
- 5.4 Identify and advise on the accessibility of existing and proposed services and facilities.
- 5.5 Advise and make recommendations about strategies designed to achieve the objectives of the organization's accessibility plan.
- 5.6 Receive and review information from staff and senior leadership, and make recommendations, as requested.
- 5.7 Assist in monitoring compliance with federal and provincial government directives and regulations.
- 5.8 The Committee may establish working groups to explore specific issues related to the accessibility plan and/or other responsibilities. A working group may include members who are not Advisory Committee members; however, the chair of a working group must be a member of the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

6.0 Meetings and Procedures

- 6.1 The Committee shall meet a minimum of six (6) times per year, or as determined by the Chair to fulfill the duties and responsibilities outlined.
- 6.2 Subject to section 22 of the Municipal Government Act, meetings of the Committee are open to the public and will be advertised accordingly.
- 6.3 Quorum is met by the attendance of a majority of the Committee's members.

7.0 Review

- 7.1 The Terms of Reference will be reviewed every three years in conjunction with the Municipal Accessibility Plan review.



The Accessibility Planning Toolkit for Municipalities

Nova Scotia Accessibility Directorate

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This toolkit is available at <https://novascotia.ca/accessibility/>

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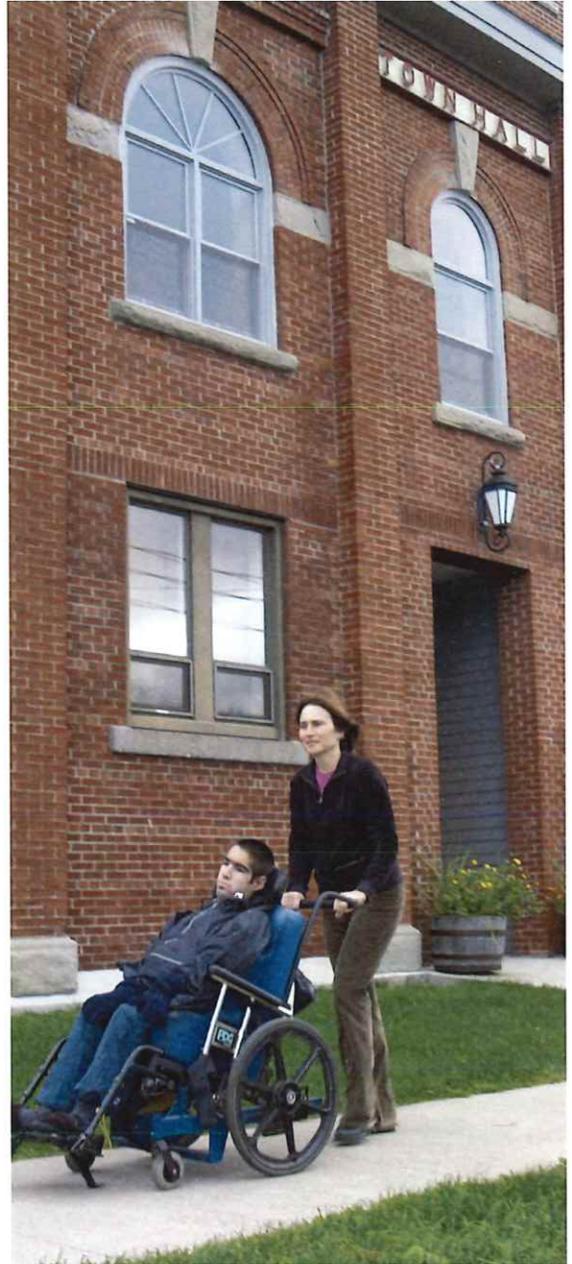
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► Welcome

Nova Scotia is on a journey to become an accessible province by 2030. This includes working with our municipal counterparts, and others, to remove the barriers to inclusion that people with disabilities continue to face every day.

Our collective efforts will help ensure all Nova Scotians can participate fully in society.

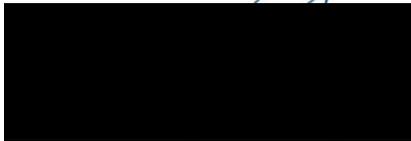
In September 2018, the province released the Government of Nova Scotia Accessibility Plan. This plan outlines specific actions for achieving an inclusive, responsive, and accessible workplace for Nova Scotia public servants, and ensuring our services are accessible to all.

This toolkit was developed in partnership with Nova Scotia municipalities. It offers a recommended approach to forming an Accessibility Advisory Committee and developing an accessibility plan. I encourage you to use this resource as you involve community members in the development of a plan for your municipality or village.

I commend the many municipalities and villages across the province that have already undertaken efforts to improve accessibility. We need to build on this work and continue to drive the changes needed to create a more equitable and inclusive province. These changes will have significant economic and social impacts on people with disabilities, their families, and the province.

By working together, we are solidifying our shared commitment to accessibility and helping to build a welcoming province that includes everyone.

Sincerely,



Mark Furey
Minister of Justice

► An overview of accessibility

Disability in Nova Scotia

According to Statistics Canada, 30 per cent of Nova Scotians aged 15 years and older identify as having at least one disability. That is nearly 230,000 Nova Scotians. This is the largest percentage of any Canadian province. Nova Scotia also has among the highest percentage of adults older than 65—currently 20 per cent, or 1 in 5. This percentage will increase to about 25 per cent of the population, or 1 in 4, by 2030. Because older adults are more likely to have disabilities than younger people, the number of Nova Scotians with disabilities will rise as our population ages. (Learn more at novascotia.ca/accessibility/stats-on-disability-in-Nova-Scotia.pdf.)



30% of Nova Scotians 15 years and older have at least one disability

— The Canadian average is 22.3%.



This represents 229,430 people in Nova Scotia as of 2017.

(Source: *Canadian Survey on Disability 2017*, Statistics Canada)

Nova Scotia's Accessibility Act

In 2017, Nova Scotia became the third province in Canada to pass accessibility legislation, committing to a more equitable and accessible province. The Accessibility Act recognizes accessibility as a human right, and sets a goal to make Nova Scotia an accessible province by 2030. The goal of the act is to prevent and remove barriers that restrict people with disabilities from fully participating in society. It enables the government to develop standards for accessibility, and outlines responsibilities for some public sector bodies, including municipalities. You can read the full text of the act at nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/legc/statutes/accessibility.pdf.

In the Accessibility Act:

- ▶ A **disability** is defined as “a physical, mental, intellectual, learning or sensory impairment, including an episodic disability that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders an individual’s full and effective participation in society.”
- ▶ A **barrier** is defined as “anything that hinders or challenges the full and effective participation in society of persons with disabilities, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy, or a practice.”

The government’s strategy for achieving an accessible province by 2030 is described in **Access by Design 2030**, available at novascotia.ca/accessibility/access-by-design/. This strategy outlines how the government will work with municipalities and other partners and stakeholders to implement the Accessibility Act and improve accessibility for all Nova Scotians.



Note: In June 2019, the Government of Canada adopted the Accessible Canada Act, which will apply to organizations that fall under federal jurisdiction. This includes the federally regulated private sector, such as organizations in the transportation sectors, broadcasting and telecommunications services, and the banking and financial sectors. Learn more at www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/accessible-people-disabilities.html.

Provincial accessibility standards

Provincial standards will be developed for the following areas outlined in Nova Scotia’s Accessibility Act:

- ▶ **Goods and Services** – ensuring that people with disabilities have equitable access to goods and services
- ▶ **Information and Communication** – ensuring all people can receive, understand, and share the information they need
- ▶ **Transportation** – making it easier for everyone to get where they need to go
- ▶ **Employment** – making workplaces accessible, and supporting people with disabilities in finding meaningful employment
- ▶ **Built Environment** – making public buildings, streets, sidewalks, and shared spaces accessible to all
- ▶ **Education** – making the education system accessible to all students, from early childhood to post-secondary

As described in *Access by Design 2030*, a plan is in place to develop and implement these standards over several years. Municipalities and other affected sectors will be consulted before each standard is enacted. These standards will first apply to the Government of Nova Scotia, then to municipalities and other prescribed public sector bodies, and later to other organizations. The standards for the Built Environment and for Education are currently under development. Other standards will be implemented in subsequent years, in an order to be determined.

For an overview of the implementation plan, refer to *Access by Design 2030*, page 19, available at novascotia.ca/accessibility/access-by-design/access-by-design-2030.pdf.

Goods & Services

Education



Information & Communication



Built Environment



Employment



Transportation

Key requirements for your municipality

Under the Accessibility Act, municipalities, universities, and other organizations—including villages, regional libraries, and government agencies—may be prescribed as public sector bodies. (Prescribed means identified in the Accessibility Act General Regulations.) Once prescribed, these organizations—including municipalities and villages—must do the following:

- ▶ Establish an Accessibility Advisory Committee.
- ▶ Develop an accessibility plan within one year.

The act states that accessibility plans must be updated every three years. As accessibility standards are implemented, those standards should be integrated into your plan.



Success Story

The Lunenburg/Queens Recreation Co-ordinators/Directors Association, the Yarmouth Shelburne Municipal Recreation Association, and the Department of Communities, Culture & Heritage have joined together to produce audits and reports that will be used to remove barriers to recreation facilities. This partnership also produced a comprehensive Recreation Accessibility Guidelines Resource that can be accessed at southshoreconnect.ca/project/guidelines-for-accessible-recreation-report-and-lclc-audit.

Share your insights

Thank you to the organizations that contributed success stories for this toolkit.

What policies and actions are helping to make your municipality more accessible? Email your insights, and photos if you have them, to accessibility@novascotia.ca.



Establish your Accessibility Advisory Committee

The role of the Accessibility Advisory Committee is to advise the municipal council on identifying, preventing, and eliminating accessibility barriers to municipal programs, services, and infrastructure. The mandate of the committee is up to each municipality to determine, but the committee should play a key role in developing your accessibility plan and helping your municipality become an accessible community. Appendix A offers sample terms of reference for the committee.

Questions to consider

These are some factors to consider before forming your committee and appointing an Accessibility Coordinator (a staff person to support the work of the committee).

Will you develop your own committee or a joint committee in partnership with other municipalities or prescribed public sector bodies?

While all prescribed municipalities and villages are required to establish an Accessibility Advisory Committee, you may choose to form a joint committee with other municipalities or prescribed public sector bodies (such as a regional library) that have common interests. In that case, each member must be approved separately by each municipality or public sector body represented on the committee.

Who should be represented on the committee?

Under the Accessibility Act, *at least half* of the committee members must have a disability or represent an organization that represents people with disabilities.

Committee members may be staff, members of council, community members, partners, or others.

Don't assume that you know who does or does not have a disability.

Remember that advisory committee members will be your on-the-ground experts on accessibility.

How many members will the committee have?

The act does not state a minimum or maximum number of committee members, but the Accessibility Directorate recommends that your committee include people with a variety of disabilities and expertise to bring diverse perspectives to your planning.

How will you recruit committee members?

Communicate with your various stakeholder groups about opportunities to participate on the Accessibility Advisory Committee, and the impact the work will have on advancing accessibility within the municipality.

Consider advertising in alternative formats (such as large print) to accommodate diverse candidates.

Consider accepting applications in diverse formats to accommodate diverse candidates.

Appendix B shows a sample Call for Applicants.

Appendix C shows a sample member application form.

TIP: 211 Nova Scotia is a free, confidential information and referral service that can connect you to local community groups, nonprofits, and government departments across Nova Scotia. Dial 2-1-1 or visit ns.211.ca for help finding organizations that might recommend community members to serve on your Accessibility Advisory Committee. At the website, click on the “Disability Support and Services” icon and enter your location.

What resources will you need to establish the Accessibility Advisory Committee, to engage stakeholders, and to develop the accessibility plan? And what funding sources are available?

Appendix D lists some funding opportunities. It includes programs that are specifically aimed at municipalities, as well as programs aimed at helping businesses, community organizations, and individuals to improve accessibility.

Appoint an Accessibility Coordinator (recommended)

While not required under the act, the Accessibility Directorate recommends that you appoint a staff member to support the work of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, including the development and implementation of the plan. Since accessibility impacts all aspects of municipal government, ideally the Accessibility Coordinator would work in a central department, such as the office of the Chief Administrative Officer. If you opt for a joint committee, each municipality could appoint a separate coordinator, or the municipalities that are working together may choose to appoint a single coordinator who works across municipalities. The choice is yours.



Success Story

The Town of Truro, the Municipality of the County of Cumberland, and the Town of Pictou are collaborating with the Department of Communities, Culture & Heritage and Sport Nova Scotia to develop policies that support a comprehensive approach to inclusive recreation and sport.

Here are some responsibilities that could be assigned to the Accessibility Coordinator:

- ▶ Working with the Accessibility Advisory Committee, lead the development of an accessibility plan.
- ▶ When new policies and programs are introduced, work with the committee to identify accessibility needs, and provide advice on removing barriers.
- ▶ Monitor progress in implementing the accessibility plan, and ensure the plan's priorities and actions are reflected in the municipality's budget cycle and other planning documents.
- ▶ Receive and respond to stakeholder concerns, complaints, and suggestions about the plan.

Launch the committee

★ *Required steps are marked with a star.*

- ★ Recruit committee members. For municipalities, this includes issuing a public call. Refer to the "Questions to consider" on page 6 for tips and pointers to sample tools.
- ★ Approve committee members through municipal council.
- ★ Confirm a Chair and Vice Chair for the committee.
- Provide an orientation to the committee on the Accessibility Act, the municipality's obligations under the act, and the committee's mandate.
- Agree on a Statement of Commitment. The Statement of Commitment outlines your municipality's commitment to improving accessibility. It summarizes the accessibility message the municipality wishes to convey to the public.

You may want to consider the following when developing your Statement of Commitment:

- ▶ ensuring equal access and participation for all people, regardless of their abilities
- ▶ treating all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence
- ▶ meeting the needs of people who face accessibility barriers
- ▶ identifying, removing, and preventing these barriers by meeting the requirements of Nova Scotia's Accessibility Act

► Learn together

Ongoing learning and collaboration are vital qualities in an accessible municipality. It is important to provide learning opportunities for staff, your Accessibility Advisory Committee, and senior leadership, on accessibility as a human right, barriers to accessibility, and your municipality's obligations under the Accessibility Act. You may also choose to provide education on an area of accessibility that is of particular interest or high need for your municipality.

How you approach ongoing learning will depend on local needs. Everything offered in this section on learning together is a recommendation, not a requirement under the act.

Some suggestions include:

- ▶ guest speakers
- ▶ experiential learning
- ▶ the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification (RHFAC) assessor training program
- ▶ online learning

Guest speakers

At least half the members of your Accessibility Advisory Committee will be either people with disabilities or represent organizations representing people with disabilities. Consider inviting committee members or other stakeholders who have a disability to present to the committee on the barriers they face accessing programs or services from your municipality. This will ensure that the voices of people with disabilities are at the table, providing a perspective from lived experience.

In addition, you may consider inviting guest speakers from local organizations that provide services to people with disabilities.

TIP: Dial 2-1-1 or visit ns.211.ca for help finding organizations that might provide a guest speaker.



Success Story

The Town of Kentville has developed a "Recreation for All" policy and a plan for inclusive recreation. The plan provides a lens for decisions about program implementation and infrastructure investment.

Experiential learning

Consider giving decision makers a direct experience of barriers in the community. For example, a Walk and Roll About, using a wheelchair or walker, can give participants a better sense of the physical barriers in public spaces, such as:

- ▶ doorways that are too narrow
- ▶ a dangerous curb cut
- ▶ no curb cut next to an accessible parking spot
- ▶ a ramp that is too steep
- ▶ a ramp leading to a swing-out door with no platform at the top
- ▶ gravel or an unstable surface area
- ▶ a bathroom stall not designed to an accessible standard

Appendix G offers a sample waiver for participants in a Walk and Roll About.

Important note: There are conflicting opinions about the impact of disability simulations. Some advocates argue strongly against them, noting that an intense experience can reinforce negative stereotypes about people with disabilities. Others argue strongly in favour of simulations and point to positive outcomes. Your Accessibility Advisory Committee can help to weigh the pros and cons of different simulation approaches. If you choose to offer experiential learning, the Accessibility Directorate recommends that you ensure the activity is thoughtfully planned and facilitated. Be sure to ask a disabled person (or people) in your community to identify barriers and then focus the simulation exercise around those issues.

TIP. Dial 2-1-1 or visit ns.211.ca for help finding organizations in your region that might lend wheelchairs or walkers.



Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification (RHFAC) assessor training

The RHFAC program is a LEED-style (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) rating system that trains individuals on how to help owners, tenants, and municipalities measure the accessibility of their buildings and sites. The foundation also promotes universal design principles to improve accessibility, and encourages developers, owners, and others to adopt them. (www.rickhansen.com/become-accessible/rating-certification)

An RHFAC audit will identify assets that provide meaningful access, and those that require more work. According to the Rick Hansen Foundation, meaningful access refers to:

- ▶ the ability to independently and safely access the built environment based on planned inclusion
- ▶ the level of access for the facility as a whole

Your municipality may want an RHFAC professional to audit some of your assets to the RHFAC standard—for example, buildings that are heavily used by the public. Other assets might be audited to The Interim Accessibility Guidelines for Indoor and Outdoor Spaces (Appendix F), which are less detailed.

The RHFAC assessor training program trains assessors to evaluate the accessibility of a building or site. The Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) offers the assessor training program, with support from the Government of Nova through the Business ACCESS-Ability grant program (cch.novascotia.ca/business-access-ability-grant-program). Enrolling at least one staff person in the RHFAC assessor training program will help your municipality to audit the built environment.

For more information about the program, contact the NSCC School of Access at RHFAC@nsc.ca or 902-491-3557.

Online learning

There are many online resources—including webinars, courses, online tools, and more—that staff and committee members can use. For example, Working With Abilities is a free online course offered by the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission. This course gives practical information and advice to help employers in accommodating people with disabilities, and in building inclusion and respect in all workplaces in Nova Scotia. Visit humanrights.novascotia.ca/education-training/working-abilities.

For more suggestions about online learning, contact the Accessibility Directorate at 902-424-8280 or accessibility@novascotia.ca.

► Develop your municipal accessibility plan

Scope it out

In accordance with the act, your municipality must develop an accessibility plan, in consultation with people with disabilities and organizations representing people with disabilities. The plan must be updated every three years.

Your accessibility plan must be publicly available online. If you are asked to provide the plan in an accessible format (such as large print or braille), you must do so at no charge within a reasonable period of time.

★ *Required steps are marked with a star.*

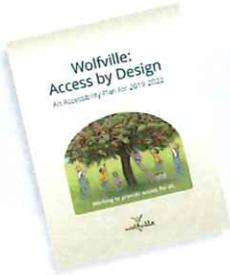
Your plan must include the following:

- ★ achievements to date in identifying, removing, and preventing barriers in policies, programs, practices, and services
- ★ how you will identify, remove, and prevent barriers in policies, programs, practices, and services
- ★ processes in place to assess the effect of your policies, programs, practices, and services on accessibility

Consider all areas of accessibility when developing your accessibility plan, such as:

- **Awareness** – promoting awareness throughout your municipality about the importance of accessibility
- **Goods and Services** – ensuring that people with disabilities have equitable access to the goods and services provided by your municipality
- **Information and Communication** – ensuring all people can receive, understand, and share the information provided by your municipality
- **Transportation** – making it easier for everyone in your municipality to get where they need to go
- **Employment** – making your municipality an accessible workplace, and supporting people with disabilities in finding and maintaining meaningful employment
- **Built Environment** – making buildings, streets, sidewalks, and shared spaces accessible to all

Also consider including an Implementation section, outlining who has responsibility for the plan (council, staff, and the Accessibility Advisory Committee); a timeline for implementation; how the plan will be monitored and evaluated; and a mechanism to respond to questions and complaints.



The Town of Wolfville piloted Nova Scotia's first municipal accessibility plan, beginning in April 2018. Check it out at www.wolfville.ca/accessibility-advisory-committee.html, under Reference.

Figure 1 shows a sample outline (page 14). This is adapted from the structure that the Town of Wolfville used for its accessibility plan. For each area of focus (e.g., Built Environment, Employment, etc.), consider:

- ▶ What is the vision or **commitment**?
- ▶ What is the **starting point**—the current situation?
- ▶ What **policies** are already in place or under development? These are the rules that outline how your municipality interacts with employees and stakeholders. An example of a policy could be that all employees have access to assistive devices so they can succeed at their job.
- ▶ What **actions** will your municipality take to remove accessibility barriers? An example of an action could be to establish a centralized accommodation fund to pay for assistive devices.



Success Story

The Town of Pictou and the Nova Scotia Community College are working together to enhance accessibility at the community pool. Initiatives include the installation of an accessible change room, upgrades to current change room facilities, policy development, and aquatic staff training.

Figure 1. Sample outline for an accessibility plan

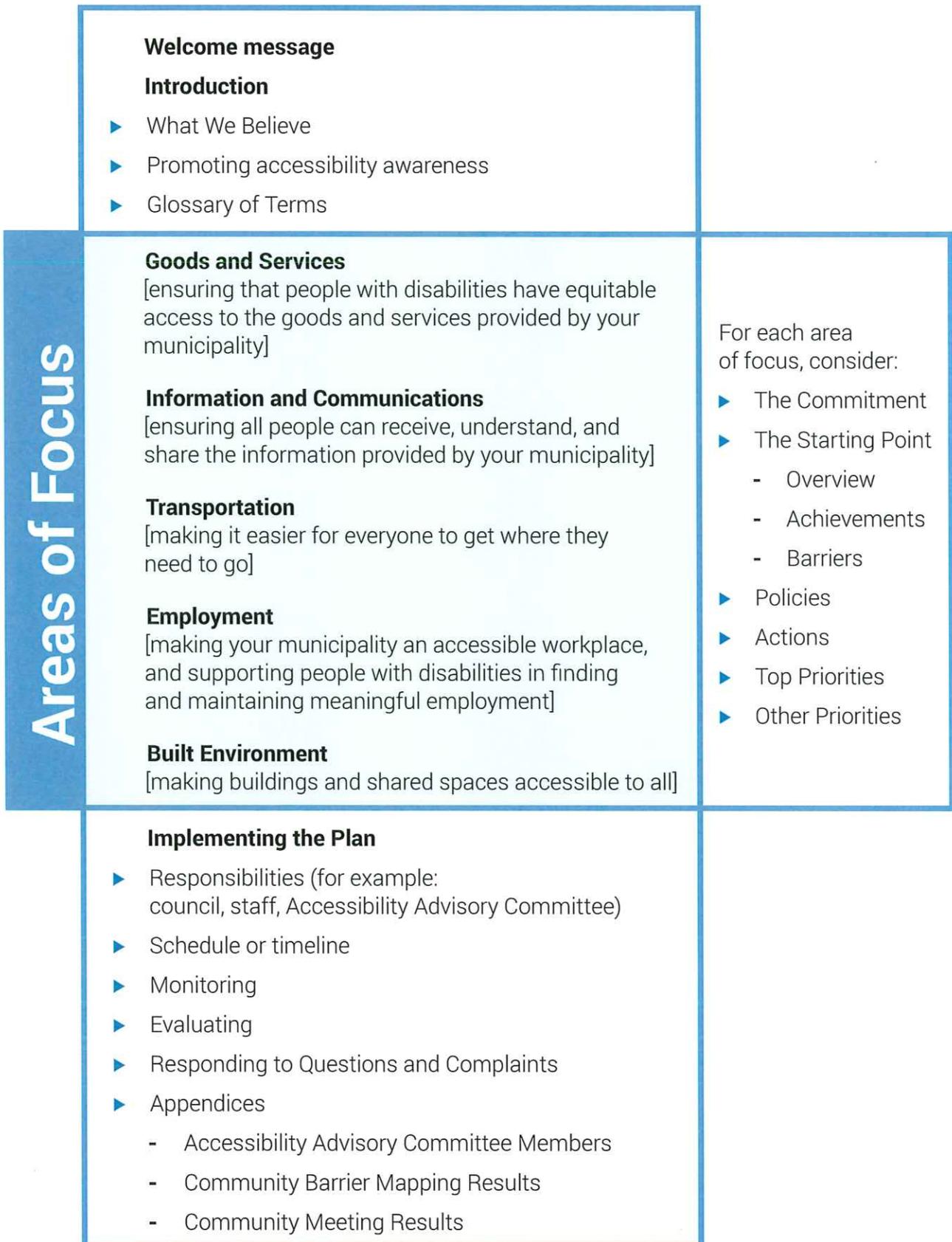


Figure 2 provides an overview of the planning process. ☆ All of the steps in Figure 2 are required. Each step is described in more detail on the following pages. As long as you comply with the required steps, you are free to adapt the details and sample tools to suit local needs.

Figure 2. Highlights of the planning process

Gather information:

- ☆ Consult with people with disabilities—for example by hosting an in-person consultation or conducting a survey.
- ☆ Review your municipality's accessibility achievements, barriers, and opportunities, to help identify priorities for your plan.

Draft and approve the plan:

- ☆ Develop the draft plan and seek feedback from the community, especially those with disabilities.
- ☆ Approve the plan within one year of being prescribed as a public sector body.

Implement and maintain the plan:

- ☆ Make the plan publicly available online. If requested, also provide the plan in an accessible format.
- ☆ Implement the plan. This includes complying with provincial accessibility standards when they apply to public sector bodies. (Refer to Figure 1 for implementation timelines.)
- ☆ Monitor and evaluate progress on the plan.
- ☆ Review and update the plan every three years. **Note:** In addition, the Accessibility Directorate recommends that you update your plan as new provincial accessibility standards are implemented (refer to Figure 1).

Gather information

★ Required steps are marked with a star.

★ Consult with the disability community.

This is required under the act and it is essential groundwork for a successful accessibility plan.

Including the community early on will allow you to collect important information from people who are directly affected by accessibility barriers in your municipality—including information about specific areas of concern and priorities for action. It will be important to provide meeting participants with information on why the municipality is doing this work, and what its responsibilities are under the act.

Consider what questions you are seeking input on. For example:

- ▶ What are the barriers to accessibility in your municipality? (Remember to ask about all areas of accessibility—not just buildings or public spaces.)
- ▶ What are the top priorities for improving accessibility in your municipality?
- ▶ What is already working well to make your municipality accessible?
- ▶ Who is doing accessibility work in your municipality? What can your municipality learn from them? Who can your municipality partner with on the work?

Appendix E suggests some consultation activities, including a brainstorming exercise to capture accessibility barriers, and a sample map exercise to identify barriers within the built environment.

For tips on hosting a welcoming meeting for people of all abilities, refer to the *Guide to Planning Accessible Meetings and Events* (novascotia.ca/accessibility/Accessible_Events_Guide.pdf), prepared by the Nova Scotia Accessibility Directorate. This resource is described briefly in Appendix F.

★ Review all areas of accessibility in your municipality to identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities.

For example, consider how your municipality communicates with the public, delivers services, and hires employees. Involve people with disabilities in this work.

Identify strengths and achievements

Chances are, your municipality has already taken steps to remove barriers for people with disabilities. Here are some questions to help highlight accessibility achievements:

- ▶ What experience does your municipality have in reaching out to and including persons with disabilities?
- ▶ What policies, if any, promote accessibility in your municipality by the public and by staff affected by accessibility barriers?

- ▶ What partnerships have been formed with people with disabilities or organizations representing people with disabilities?

Identify weaknesses and barriers

Here are some questions to consider when identifying barriers within your municipality:

- ▶ List barriers people with disabilities have identified in accessing your programs, facilities, and services. Highlight the ones that are most significant or urgent to the public.
- ▶ What municipal policies may create barriers for people with disabilities? Consider policies affecting council, staff, advisory committee members, and people in the community.
- ▶ What temporary barriers have been created by renovations, computer software upgrades, pathways that are blocked, or chemicals used that might affect people with sensitivities?

Consider an accessibility audit of the built environment

One part of your review should be an accessibility audit of the built environment, including buildings and public spaces. For help in planning a preliminary accessibility audit of the built environment, you can refer to Appendix H, Interim Accessibility Guidelines for Indoor and Outdoor Spaces. These guidelines are “interim”. They will be replaced by a standard for the built environment, once the standard has been adopted.



Success Story

Halifax Regional Council approved a motion declaring the Cogswell District Redevelopment Project—one of the largest building projects in the history of Halifax—to be designated a Rick Hansen Foundation Gold Zone, meaning that all public and private lands within the Cogswell District would have to achieve the RHFAC Gold Standard.

Draft and approve the plan

★ *Required steps are marked with a star.*

- ★ Draft the accessibility plan, using information collected from the Accessibility Advisory Committee, consultations, and the accessibility review, along with an understanding of your municipality's budget. Develop policies and actions to support outcomes identified by the community.
Remember: The plan should be accessible, too. Use plain language and clear design (Figure 3).
- Invite community feedback on the draft plan—for example, by posting it online or by holding an in-person meeting.
- Revise the plan based on consultation feedback. Prioritize the actions and identify any gaps in the plan.
- Ensure that the Accessibility Advisory Committee approves the revised plan before it is presented to council for a vote.
- ★ Approve the plan.

Figure 3. Use plain language

An important step in reviewing the municipal accessibility plan is to ensure that the information is as accessible as possible for everyone. A best practice is to have a professional plain language editor review your plan. The goal of plain language is to communicate so clearly that the intended audience can easily find what they need, understand what they find, and use the information (plainlanguagenetwork.org/).

Following is an example of text before it was reviewed by a plain language editor, and after:

Before

Partial funding for retrofitting of residential properties is available to qualified residents, with priority given to improving entrance and egress, bathroom accessibility, and mobility in the kitchen/food preparation area for older adults. Applications may be submitted in writing to this office.

After

If you are 70 years or older, you can apply for a grant to help pay for home improvements that make these areas of your home safer and more accessible:

- ▶ the entrance
- ▶ the bathroom
- ▶ the space where you prepare food

Application forms are available online or at our office. If you need help to complete the form, please call. We're here to help.

Implement and maintain the plan

Involve the community

Once council adopts the plan, it is important to communicate it through a variety of channels, both to celebrate the plan and to raise awareness about accessibility and your committed actions. Some examples include:

- ▶ Hosting a town hall meeting
- ▶ Setting up a booth at a community event (ensure the event is held in an accessible location)
- ▶ Posting the plan on your municipality's official social media accounts
- ▶ Emailing information about the plan to residents and stakeholders
- ▶ Issuing a media release

Remember, according to the Accessibility Act, the plan must be posted online, and be provided in an accessible format, upon request.

The plan must also be updated every three years, so it's important that the community continue to be given opportunities to provide input. Consider working with the Accessibility Advisory Committee to develop a process for responding to questions, suggestions, or complaints related to the plan.

Involve staff and council

Staff will recommend to council specific budget requirements to implement the plan, and will ensure priority action items are reflected in the municipal budget. Staff may wish to present budget proposals to the Accessibility Advisory Committee, along with other documents that could affect the implementation of the plan, such as transportation and planning strategies.

Your accessibility plan should be considered a living document. It's important for staff to work closely with the Accessibility Advisory Committee as the plan is implemented and evolves. As well, to keep the public engaged, the committee may consider preparing an annual report card to measure performance in implementing the plan.



Success Story

Several municipalities, including the Municipality of the County of Antigonish and the Municipality of the County of Inverness, have partnered to create accessible beaches in their communities. Accessible features include special mats that lead to the water's edge, beach-friendly wheelchairs and walkers with oversized tires for travelling on sand, and floating chairs that allow visitors to go into the water.

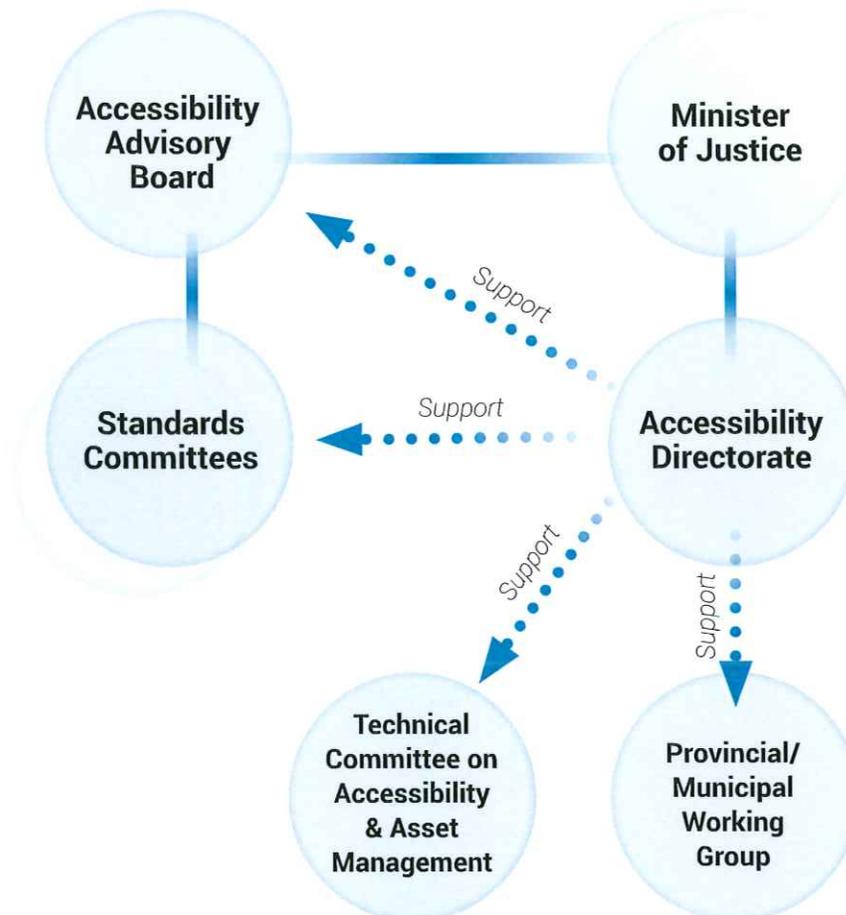
► Your provincial partners

The province's Accessibility Directorate has responsibility for administering the Accessibility Act and advancing disability issues within the government. An Accessibility Advisory Board advises the Government of Nova Scotia on accessibility. The majority of members are people with disabilities.

This municipal toolkit was developed by the Accessibility Directorate and overseen by the Provincial/Municipal Accessibility Working Group, which is made up of municipal staff and elected officials from across Nova Scotia, and representatives from the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities, Association of Municipal Administrators Nova Scotia, the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and the Accessibility Directorate.

The Interim Accessibility Guidelines for Indoor and Outdoor Spaces (Appendix H) were developed under the guidance of a technical working group of municipal representatives, and finalized by a researcher at Dalhousie University.

Who is working on municipal accessibility issues?



▶ Appendices / planning tools

- A. Sample terms of reference for an Accessibility Advisory Committee
- B. Sample call for applicants for an Accessibility Advisory Committee
- C. Sample application for Accessibility Advisory Committee members
- D. Funding opportunities
- E. Suggested consultation activities
- F. *Guide to Planning Accessible Meetings and Events* (available online)
- G. Sample waiver for participants in a Walk and Roll About
- H. *The Interim Accessibility Guidelines for Indoor and Outdoor Spaces* (available online)

Appendix A.

Sample terms of reference for an Accessibility Advisory Committee

Purpose

The Accessibility Advisory Committee provides advice to council on identifying, preventing, and eliminating barriers to people with disabilities in municipal programs, services, initiatives, and facilities. The committee plays a pivotal role in helping the Municipality of _____ become an accessible community and meet its obligations under Nova Scotia's Accessibility Act.

Role

The Accessibility Advisory Committee shall:

- 1) Advise council on the preparation, implementation, and effectiveness of its accessibility plan. In accordance with the Accessibility Act, the plan must include
 - a) a report on measures the municipality has taken and intends to take to identify, remove, and prevent barriers
 - b) information on procedures the municipality has in place to assess the following for their impact on accessibility for people with disabilities:
 - ▶ any proposed policies, programs, practices, and services
 - ▶ any proposed enactments or by-laws
 - (c) any other prescribed information
- 2) Review and update its accessibility plan at least every three years, in accordance with the act.
- 3) Consult with the community on accessibility in the municipality.
- 4) Advise council on the impact of municipal policies, programs, and services on people with disabilities.
- 5) Review and monitor existing and proposed municipal bylaws to promote full participation of people with disabilities, in accordance with the act.
- 6) Identify and advise on the accessibility of existing and proposed municipal services and facilities.
- 7) Advise and make recommendations about strategies designed to achieve the objectives of the municipality's accessibility plan.

- 8) Receive and review information from council and its committees, and make recommendations, as requested.
- 9) Assist in monitoring compliance with federal and provincial government directives and regulations.

Composition and Terms of Appointment

The Accessibility Advisory Committee shall have _x_ members. At least half of the members must be people with disabilities or represent organizations that represent people with disabilities, in accordance with the act.

The members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee shall be appointed by Council for a term of _x_ years, and in accordance with the _____ Policy.

The Committee shall elect a Chair and Vice-Chair every year.

Meetings

The committee shall meet at least _____ times per year, or as needed to fulfill its duties. Meetings of the Accessibility Advisory Committee shall be open to the public. Quorum shall be determined by the _____ Policy.

The committee may establish working groups to explore specific issues related to the accessibility plan and/or to other responsibilities. A working group may include additional members from the community who are not Advisory Committee members. The chair of a working group must be a member of the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Appendix B.

Sample call for applicants for an Accessibility Advisory Committee

Volunteer Opportunity: Accessibility Advisory Committee

Name of municipality/municipalities

Are you looking to make a difference in your community? Why not consider serving as a volunteer member of the newly formed Accessibility Advisory Committee?

The Accessibility Advisory Committee provides advice to the municipal council on identifying, preventing and eliminating barriers to people with disabilities in municipal programs, services, initiatives and facilities. The committee plays a pivotal role in helping [name the municipality] to become an accessible community that complies with Nova Scotia's Accessibility Act (2017).

At least one half of the members of the advisory committee must have a disability or represent an organization that represents people with disabilities.

Disability includes a physical, mental, intellectual, learning, or sensory impairment—including an episodic disability—that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders an individual's full and effective participation in society.

Applications are available online or can be picked up at Town Hall. The deadline for applications is [date]. Your completed application may be submitted by mail, in person, or by email to:

Address: _____

E-mail: _____

Subject line: Accessibility Advisory Committee Volunteer

For more information about the Accessibility Advisory Committee, refer to the terms of reference at [link]. Or contact [name] at [phone number] or [e-mail].

Appendix C.

Sample application for Accessibility Advisory Committee members

Committee Application Form

Applicant Name

Street Address

Postal Code

Home Telephone

Work/Cell Telephone

E-mail Address

Occupation

Application for appointment to (Committee Name)

Describe how your lived experience, community involvement, education, or work might be helpful to this committee.

Why are you interested in serving on this committee?

What contribution do you believe you can make to this committee?

What past contributions have you made on a similar committee or organization?

What experience do you have in exchanging your views with others and in appreciating and respecting the skills, abilities and knowledge of others?

Are you a person with a disability, or do you represent an organization representing people with disabilities?

Yes No

Note: At least one half of the members of the advisory committee must have a disability or represent an organization that represents people with disabilities.

Organization/sector you are representing (if applicable): If you are a person with a disability or represent an organization representing people with disabilities, what disability/disabilities do you or your organization represent?

Note: Members with a variety of disabilities will bring diverse perspectives to this committee. We will strive to accommodate all members to ensure they are able to fully participate.

Are you interested in an interview?

Yes No

The final approval of appointments is given by the council. If you would like more information about the approval process, or if you have questions about any of the bodies to which appointments are to be made, please contact the municipal Clerk's Office at [insert phone number]. The personal information on this form will be used to assist the council in selecting appointees for various committees. Questions about this collection may be referred to the municipal Clerk, [insert address].

[insert a consent to collect and disclose personal information, if required]

Applicant Signature

Date

Appendix D.

Funding opportunities

The following are some provincial and federal funding programs that directly or indirectly support accessibility for people with disabilities. The information was current as of September 2019.

Federal funding for municipalities, businesses, and community groups

Capital projects*

***Note:** Capital projects could relate to the Built Environment; Transportation; Employment; or Information and Communication.

The Enabling Accessibility Fund (EAF) provides funding for eligible capital projects that increase accessibility for people with disabilities in Canadian communities and workplaces, creating more opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in community activities, programs and services, or access employment opportunities. Eligible recipients can apply for funding through periodic funding processes. Learn more at www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/enabling-accessibility-fund.html

Provincial funding for municipalities, businesses, and community groups

M means this funding is for municipalities

Accessibility planning

M The **Community Works Program** helps municipalities to pay summer students and others to work on community projects, including active community involvement in accessibility planning (i.e., audits of municipal infrastructure such as buildings, sidewalks, trails, and signal lights). The program will consider up to 50% to a maximum of \$25,000 of eligible costs for each employment project, with the balance coming from the applicant or other potential sources. Learn more from the NS Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing at CommunityWorks@novascotia.ca

Transportation

M The **Accessible Transportation Assistance Program** (ATAP) helps community-based organizations* and municipal accessible transit organizations to buy accessible vehicles or modify existing vehicles. The program will provide up to 75% of the total capital cost to a maximum of \$75,000.

(*To be eligible, the community-based organizations must also be receiving funding from the Community Transportation Assistance Program (CTAP), described below.) Learn more from the Department of Communities Culture and Heritage at beta.novascotia.ca/apply-funding-buy-or-modify-accessible-vehicles-accessible-transportation-assistance-program

The **Community Transportation Assistance Program (CTAP)** covers a portion of the operating costs of a community-based inclusive transportation service for disabled, elderly, and low-income people in rural Nova Scotia who need transportation to and from medical appointments, education, and recreation opportunities. Services are developed and provided by non-profit organizations through partnerships with public, private, non-profit, and volunteer resources and services. Learn more from the Department of Communities Culture and Heritage at beta.novascotia.ca/apply-funding-operating-costs-community-based-transportation-service-community-transportation-assistance-program

M The **Nova Scotia Transit Research Incentive Program (NS-TRIP)** provides funding for projects that generate new and improved public transit services in rural areas and underserved urban areas of the province. Projects must enhance the service capacity of new or existing public transit organizations. The program provides cost sharing at various funding levels, depending on the scope of the project. Funding is available for one project per year per organization. The program includes but is not limited to projects that focus on accessibility. Learn more from the Department of Communities Culture and Heritage at beta.novascotia.ca/apply-funding-help-assess-need-and-develop-transit-service-rural-or-underserved-urban-area-nova-scotia-transit-research-incentive-program

Built Environment

M The **Community ACCESS-Ability Program** offers cost-shared grants to non-profit organizations, Nova Scotian Mi'kmaw Band Councils, and municipalities, for accessibility-related capital improvements to community facilities. Learn more from the NS Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage at cch.novascotia.ca/investing-our-future/community-funding-and-awards/community-access-ability-program

The **Business ACCESS-Ability Grant Program** is a cost-shared grant for businesses to make accessibility-related improvements. Improvements can be for clients and customers, for employees, or both. Learn more from the NS Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage at cch.novascotia.ca/business-access-ability-grant-program

Disabled Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program for Landlords provides financial assistance for landlords to modify homes to be more accessible for residents with disabilities. Learn more from the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing at housing.novascotia.ca/programs/housing-programs-persons-disabilities/disabled-residential-rehabilitation-assistance#landlords

Provincial funding for individuals

Transportation

Individuals can apply for a rebate on the sales tax they paid when buying a vehicle for use by or to transport someone who has lost the complete use of their legs (referred to on the applications as a physiologically challenged person). There are two application forms available from Service Nova Scotia:

- ▶ For a rebate of the Nova Scotia Sales Tax (NSST), go to beta.novascotia.ca/apply-nova-scotia-sales-tax-nsst-rebate-vehicle-person-without-complete-use-their-legs
- ▶ For a rebate of the Harmonized Sales Tax (HST), go to beta.novascotia.ca/apply-hst-rebate-vehicle-person-without-complete-use-their-legs

Communication

Individuals can apply for a rebate on the HST they paid to modify a computer for use by a person with physical, vision, or hearing impairments, or mental challenges. Learn more from Service Nova Scotia at beta.novascotia.ca/apply-hst-rebate-computer-person-disabilities

Built Environment (Housing)

Access-A-Home Program offers funding to help people adapt their homes to become wheelchair accessible. The amount of the grant depends on income. The maximum amount is \$7,000. Learn more from the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing at housing.novascotia.ca/programs/housing-programs-persons-disabilities/access-home-program

Disabled Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program

for Homeowners offers funding to help homeowners make their homes more accessible for people with disabilities.

The amount of the grant depends on the value of the home and the total household income. The maximum amount is \$16,000.

Learn more from the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing at housing.novascotia.ca/programs/housing-programs-persons-disabilities/disabled-residential-rehabilitation-assistance#homeowners

Appendix E.

Suggested consultation activities

The Accessibility Act states that public sector bodies, when they are preparing their accessibility plans, must seek input from people with disabilities and representatives of organizations representing people with disabilities.

Remember to design all consultation activities to be accessible. For example, ensure that people with a variety of disabilities are able to access the information and are able to give their input. Refer to Appendix F for a *Guide to Planning Accessible Meetings and Events*.

Here are some ways to kick-start your consultation:

- ▶ Create an Accessibility Advisory Committee working group focused on consultation.
- ▶ Gather information from stakeholders, either in person (for example, at pop-up events) or online.
- ▶ Ask for suggestions to improve the accessibility of your municipality.
- ▶ Ask for help in identifying accessibility priorities and possible examples, such as a hiring practice or a registration process.

Following are some sample exercises.

Brainstorming and ideation

Here are some questions that could spark discussion at a stakeholder meeting:

- ▶ What's your current experience of accessibility in [name of municipality]? (what's working; what's not)
- ▶ How can [name of municipality] contribute to an accessible Nova Scotia by 2030?
- ▶ What does an accessible [name of municipality] mean to you?
- ▶ What are some ways to remove accessibility barriers in [name of municipality] that could be done right away and that wouldn't cost a lot?
- ▶ What accessibility improvements would you make to [name of municipality] in the long term that would have the biggest impact?
- ▶ What local partnerships can you identify that could help implement some of your proposed improvements? Please be as specific as possible.

Ask participants to identify accessibility priorities—such as employment, information and communication, and delivery of goods and services—and invite them to write their ideas under each category. *Wolfville: Access By Design* contains policies and actions in several categories that could be a useful starting point for a brainstorming session.

Mapping

One way to identify priorities in the built environment is to provide maps of key corridors in the community, or floor plans of buildings, and ask participants to mark the following hotspots, using coloured pencils or markers:

- ▶ **Red:** circle any accessibility barriers that represent a public safety hazard for people with disabilities within the municipal public domain (in public spaces for which the municipality has some responsibility or authority)
- ▶ **Orange:** circle any accessibility barriers that represent an access/equity issue for people with disabilities within the municipal public domain.
- ▶ **Green:** circle any areas in which the municipality has excelled at removing accessibility barriers.

For the first planning cycle, you may consider focusing on the streets and public spaces that have the most pedestrian traffic—for example, the commercial district and adjacent streets.

This exercise should be modified for participants with visual impairments—for example, by inviting oral feedback.

Here is a sample map from a community meeting in Wolfville.



Appendix F.

Guide to Planning Accessible Meetings and Events

(available online)

Ensuring that all Nova Scotians are able to participate in meetings and events is one important aspect of accessibility. All resources and events you plan for stakeholder consultations and for your Accessibility Advisory Committee **must** be accessible.

The *Guide to Planning Accessible Meetings and Events* offers tips and checklists on these topics:

- ▶ Scheduling
- ▶ Selecting a venue
- ▶ Promotions and registration
- ▶ Communications and accommodations
- ▶ Room set up
- ▶ Chairing or moderating events
- ▶ Effective, respectful communication

The guide encourages organizers to be flexible, creative, and open to alternative arrangements.

Download the printable pdf at
novascotia.ca/accessibility/Accessible_Events_Guide.pdf

Appendix G.

Sample waiver for participants in a Walk and Roll About

WAIVER AND RELEASE OF LIABILITY FOR [EVENT AND DATE]

I _____ want to participate in the Municipality of [_____] Accessibility Walk and Roll-About event. In order to participate in the event, I am signing this Waiver and Release of Liability. I understand this document creates a contract between me and the Event Organizers. The Event Organizers including The Province of Nova Scotia, the Municipality of [_____] , sponsors, promoters, [_____] , and any of their directors, officers, employees, volunteers, representatives, or agents.

By signing this Waiver and Release of Liability, I confirm all of the following:

- ▶ I am at least 19 years old.
- ▶ I have no health-related reasons or problems that prevent me from participating in this event.
- ▶ I assume all risks that may arise from participating in the event. I understand it is impossible to list or anticipate all the risks, but some include, for example: risks arising from my own negligence or carelessness; risks as a result of the terrain; equipment breakdown or misuse; weather; traffic; the actions or carelessness of others (for example, other participants, volunteers, monitors, and Event Organizers); and so on.
- ▶ I understand that by participating in this event I may suffer physical injury, property damage, or loss.
- ▶ I accept the consequences of any physical injury, property damage, or loss that I may suffer by participating.
- ▶ I agree that if I do suffer any physical injury, property damage, or loss I will not sue any Event Organizer.
- ▶ I agree to receive any medical treatment that may be considered advisable if I am injured or become ill during the event.
- ▶ I agree to allow others to photograph and record me (for example, on video or film). I also agree the Event Organizers may use the photos or recordings for purposes related to the event and future similar events.
- ▶ I agree that this Waiver and Release will apply to my next of kin and anyone representing them, as well as to my executor or administrator, and that no one will be able to sue any Event Organizer on my behalf.
- ▶ I understand the Event Organizers will rely on my Waiver and Release of Liability and that the terms of the Waiver and Release of Liability will be interpreted broadly.

Participant's Signature _____ Date _____

Participant's Name _____

Appendix H.

The Interim Accessibility Guidelines for Indoor and Outdoor Spaces (available online)

The Interim Accessibility Guidelines for Indoor and Outdoor Spaces offer a way to begin identifying barriers to accessibility in the built environment. They are “interim” because they will be replaced by a provincial accessibility standard for the built environment, which was under development when this toolkit was prepared.

The guidelines are rooted in three core principles: a whole journey approach; universal design; and seasonal maintenance.

The guidelines focus on four common elements in indoor and outdoor spaces: signage and wayfinding; ramps; stairs; and handrails.

Aspects of **indoor public spaces** that are addressed include

- ▶ building entrances and approaches
- ▶ doors and doorways
- ▶ circulation
- ▶ public washrooms
- ▶ interior and exterior emergency services

Aspects of **outdoor public spaces** that are addressed include

- ▶ streets
- ▶ transit stops
- ▶ parking
- ▶ recreation and leisure, such as parks, playgrounds, and trails
- ▶ outdoor fixtures, such as waste receptacles, picnic tables, and seating

The interim guidelines reflect the highest standard set by either the Nova Scotia Building Code Regulations or the most recent Canadian Standards Association’s Accessible Design for the Built Environment standard (B651-18). They also include recommendations from nationally recognized accessibility guides, such as the Rick Hansen Foundation’s RHFAC Ratings Professional Handbook and the Ottawa Accessibility Design Standards.

Your municipality may want to audit some of its assets to the RHFAC standard—for example, buildings that are heavily used by the public. Other assets might be audited to the Interim Accessibility Guidelines for Indoor and Outdoor Spaces, which are less detailed.

You can download the Interim Accessibility Guidelines for Indoor and Outdoor Spaces at novascotia.ca/accessibility.

► Glossary of terms

Access by Design 2030 (2018)

The provincial strategy for implementing the Accessibility Act. Access by Design 2030 provides a roadmap for government, businesses, and communities to work together to eliminate barriers to accessibility and make Nova Scotia accessible by 2030. (novascotia.ca/accessibility/access-by-design/)

Also see the Government of Nova Scotia Accessibility Plan (2018-2021).

Accessibility Act (2017)

The provincial law enacted to achieve accessibility by preventing and removing barriers for people with disabilities. The law defines the role and responsibilities of the Accessibility Directorate and the Accessibility Advisory Board, and addresses standards, compliance, and enforcement. (nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/legc/statutes/accessibility.pdf)

Accessibility Advisory Committee

A volunteer committee established by a municipality to advise municipal council about identifying, preventing, and eliminating barriers to people with disabilities in municipal programs, services, initiatives, and facilities. The committee plays a pivotal role in helping the municipality become a barrier-free community that complies with Nova Scotia's Accessibility Act (2017). At least one half of the members of the advisory committee must have a disability or represent an organization that represents people with disabilities.

Accessibility Advisory Board

A 12-member provincial board appointed by the provincial government to advise the Minister of Justice on accessibility and make recommendations on accessibility standards. The majority of board members are people with disabilities. (novascotia.ca/accessibility/advisory-board/)

Accessibility Coordinator

A person appointed by municipal staff to support the work of the Accessibility Advisory Committee in developing and implementing the municipal accessibility plan. The Accessibility Coordinator also liaises with the municipality's senior management and provides consultation services to staff, from frontline workers to website developers.

Accessibility Directorate

The provincial body that is responsible for implementing and administering the Accessibility Act, supporting accessibility initiatives and advancing broader disability-related issues. (novascotia.ca/accessibility/)

Barrier

Something that makes it harder for some people to participate. Nova Scotia's Accessibility Act defines a barrier as "anything that hinders or challenges the full and effective participation in society of persons with disabilities, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy, or a practice."

Disability

As defined in Nova Scotia's Accessibility Act: "a physical, mental, intellectual, learning or sensory impairment, including an episodic disability that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders an individual's full and effective participation in society."

Equitable/equity

A commitment to fairness. Equitable access is different from equal access. Equality means everybody is treated the same; equity means everybody is treated fairly, based on their needs and abilities.

Government of Nova Scotia Accessibility Plan

A multi-year plan setting specific priorities and commitments for achieving accessibility within the Government of Nova Scotia. The first plan was published in 2018 and covers the years 2018-2021. (novascotia.ca/accessibility/plan)

Plain language

Clear, conversational communication that makes sense to the intended audience. The goal of plain language is to communicate so clearly that the intended audience can easily find what they need, understand what they find, and use the information (plainlanguagenetwork.org/).

Prescribed

Means "prescribed in the Accessibility Act General Regulations." The Accessibility Act enables the government to use the regulations to identify which organizations must comply with certain requirements. These requirements include forming an Accessibility Advisory Committee and developing an accessibility plan within one year. The use of the word "prescribed" in legislation is intended to give wide authority for regulations to be made that set down a specific rule or direction.

RHF / RHFAC

Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification. (www.rickhansen.com/become-accessible/rating-certification)

CBRM

Cape Breton Regional Municipality

A Community of Communities



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

CBRM_P17-2021

MUNICIPAL ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

Closing: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2021 at 3:00 PM local time

~~Cape Breton Regional Municipality~~

~~Procurement Section~~

~~Suite 102, 1st Floor~~

~~320 Esplanade~~

~~Sydney, NS B1P 7B9~~



Cape Breton Regional Municipality

PROCUREMENT SECTION, FINANCIAL SERVICES

320 ESPLANADE, SUITE 102

SYDNEY, NS B1P 7B9

PHONE: 902-563-5015 EMAIL: purchase@cbm.ns.ca

MANDATORY REQUIREMENT CHECK LIST

PRIOR TO SUBMISSION PLEASE CHECK THAT YOU HAVE SUBMITTED A COPY OF THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS

- SCHEDULE "A" – MUNICIPAL BY-LAW COMPLIANCE CERTIFICATE
- SCHEDULE "B" – TRADE AGREEMENTS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
- DUE TO COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS, SUBMISSIONS FOR THIS TENDER WILL ONLY BE ACCEPTED BY EMAIL TO PURCHASE@CBRM.NS.CA & MUST INCLUDE ALL ITEMS LISTED UNDER THIS CHECK LIST
- RECEIVED ADDENDA NO. _____ TO NO. _____ INCLUSIVE WERE CAREFULLY EXAMINED

DATED THIS _____ DAY OF _____, 2021.

COMPANY NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY/ PROVINCE: _____ POSTAL CODE: _____

PHONE NO.: _____ FAX NO.: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

WEBSITE: _____

CONTACT NAME(please print): _____

TITLE (please print): _____ PHONE NO.: _____

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION MUST BE COMPLETED TO ENSURE ACCEPTANCE. FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH ABOVE WILL RESULT IN DISQUALIFICATION OF YOUR BID.



Cape Breton Regional Municipality

PROCUREMENT SECTION, FINANCIAL SERVICES

320 ESPLANADE, SUITE 102

SYDNEY, NS B1P 7B9

PHONE: 902-563-5015 EMAIL: purchase@cbrm.ns.ca

INSTRUCTIONS TO BIDDERS

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

MUNICIPAL ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

Closing: Submit to the undersigned up to **3:00 P.M., THURSDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2021**, the bid must be returned in a sealed envelope in **DUPLICATE(2) COPIES** and must clearly designate **CBRM_P17-2021** to the Procurement Section, Financial Services Suite 102, 320 Esplanade, Sydney, N. S. B1P 7B9.

NOTE: FAXED / ELECTRONIC submissions are NOT acceptable and will not be considered

Questions & Clarifications: Any clarification required by a proponent must be requested in writing to the responsible Buyer indicated in the Solicitation. Such requests must be provided in due time before the closing date in order to allow proper consideration and a reply. The response to a request for clarifications submitted by any Proponent will be posted on the Nova Scotia Government Website as an Addendum.

Withdrawal or Modification of Bid: Proponents may withdraw, replace or modify their bid up until the specified closing time, provided that this is done in writing. Any modification or replacement of a bid must be done in the same format as defined in the Solicitation. **NOTE: FAXED / ELECTRONIC modifications are acceptable**

Addenda: All addenda must be acknowledged in bid submission; proponents must monitor the Nova Scotia Government Tenders Website for any addenda that may be issued. CBRM staff no longer maintains plan takers lists, and no longer have knowledge of who has downloaded opportunities.

<http://www.novascotia.ca/tenders/tenders/ns-tenders.aspx>

Rectification Period: Procurement opens and reviews the Bids to determine if all mandatory submission requirements have been met in accordance with the Solicitation Document.

If the bid fails to meet the mandatory submission requirements, Procurement will notify the Bidders that there is a second opportunity to meet the mandatory submission requirements within the rectification period of two business days. Once the rectification period deadline passes, Bids still failing to meet the mandatory submission requirements are disqualified and will not be evaluated further. All bids satisfying the mandatory submission requirements are then passed along to the evaluation team for further evaluation. Exceptions to this are technical addenda, if a technical addendum is not acknowledged, the Bidder will be disqualified and there is no rectification allowance for incorrect submittal of a two envelope submission (two PDFs due to Covid-19).

Tenders requiring bid deposit: If a tender requires a non-refundable bid deposit only those companies who have complied with this request will be considered for acceptance.

TENDER CONTENTS:

(Section Applies to: Construction Contracts, Services & Sale of Municipal Property ONLY!)

Bid Security: Each tender must be accompanied by a certified cheque payable to the Cape Breton Regional Municipality or a Bid Bond on CCDC Form 220 for ten (10) percent of the tendered sum. *Any withdrawal of the successful tender shall constitute forfeiture of the bid deposit.*

Performance Security: A Performance Bond in the amount of fifty (50) percent contract price and Labour and Material Payment Bond in the amount of fifty (50) percent of the contract price will be required upon notification of award and before the signing date of the contract or issue of the Purchase Order.

Alternate Securities Acceptable: As an alternate to the Security Deposit and the Consent of Surety requirements stated herein, Contractors may submit a ten (10) percent bid security certified cheque, and



Cape Breton Regional Municipality

PROCUREMENT SECTION, FINANCIAL SERVICES

320 ESPLANADE, SUITE 102

SYDNEY, NS B1P 7B9

PHONE: 902-563-5015 EMAIL: purchase@cbrm.ns.ca

subsequently upon notification of award, an additional ten (10) percent contract security certified cheque, in lieu of contract stated bonding.

Accompanying Documents: *(Please note that only what is listed on the Mandatory Check List is required for this particular solicitation)*

All bids must include the following documents:

- **"Check List"** Completed in full /Signed /Dated(Including acknowledgement of addenda)
- The signed **Schedule "A"** Municipal By-Law Compliance form attached to the tender documents.
- The signed **Schedule "B"** Trade Agreement Acknowledgement form attached to the tender documents.
- A letter of Good Standing/Clearance from the Workers' Compensation Board of Nova Scotia
- Proof of current and valid Workplace Safety Certificate of Recognition (COR) from an authorized institution (East Coast Mobile Medical, HSE Integrated Limited, Nova Scotia Construction Safety Association (NSCSA), Nova Scotia Trucking Safety Association, Occupational Health and Educational; Services 2002 Inc, Safety Services Nova Scotia or equivalent)
- Completed/signed **Appendix "A"** Consultant, Contractor, Supplier Health & Safety Questionnaire.
- General liability insurance.

Prior to Contract Award – In accordance with section nine (9) of the CBRM Procurement Policy, the successful tenderer may be required to provide an approved Commercial Property Zoning Confirmation, issued by CBRM's Development Officer, prior to award of contract.

Following completion of the tendered work, letters of clearance from both organizations, dated no earlier than the final day worked on the project, must be submitted with the final invoice for the project. This will form a condition of the tender in addition to any other conditions within the contract documents and specifications.

POLICY:

- Canadian Free Trade Agreement (CFTA) and The Cape Breton Regional Municipality Procurement Policy are the governing documents used for all tenders. Copies of these documents are available from the Financial Services Department, Procurement Section, Suite 102, 320 Esplanade Sydney, N.S. or by phoning (902) 563-5015.
- Successful bidder will be required to follow CBRM protocol as designated by Purchasing Department for delivery and invoicing.
- Payment: Any supplier having an account due to the Cape Breton Regional Municipality, which is in arrears, will have such arrears deducted from payments being made to the supplier.

The Cape Breton Regional Municipality reserves the right to reject any or all tenders or to accept any tender or part thereof considered to be in its best interest.

Emily Neville

Emily Neville, Procurement Officer - Financial Services

(P) 902-563-5015 (E-Mail) purchase@cbrm.ns.ca



Cape Breton Regional Municipality

PROCUREMENT SECTION, FINANCIAL SERVICES
320 ESPLANADE, SUITE 102
SYDNEY, NS B1P 7B9
PHONE: 902-563-5015 EMAIL: purchase@cbrm.ns.ca

SCHEDULE "A"

MUNICIPAL BY-LAW COMPLIANCE CERTIFICATE

This document forms part of and is incorporated into the Tender. Bidders convicted of violations of any Cape Breton Regional Municipal By-Laws or found in contravention of the Dangerous and Unsightly Provision of the *Municipal Government Act*, S.N.S. 1998, c. 18 shall be precluded from bidding on the tender. Successful bidders who subsequently are found guilty of violation of any Cape Breton Regional Municipal By-Laws or are found to have contravened the Dangerous and Unsightly Provision of the *Municipal Government Act* S.N.S. 1998, c. 18 shall have the tenders revoked and shall be precluded from bidding on subsequent tenders for a period of thirty-six months.

_____ (hereinafter referred to as "The Bidder") does hereby certify that the Bidder has not been found guilty of violation of any Cape Breton Regional Municipal By-Laws and has not been found to have contravened the Dangerous and Unsightly Provision of the *Municipal Government Act* S.N.S. 1998, c. 18 and furthermore hereby agrees to comply with all Cape Breton Regional Municipal By-Laws and the Dangerous and Unsightly provision of the *Municipal Government Act*, S.N.S. 1998, c. 18. The Bidder understands and agrees that any finding of guilt or contravention of any Cape Breton Regional Municipal By-Laws and provisions will result in the Tender being revoked and the Bidder being precluded from bidding on any subsequent Tender for a period of thirty-six months.

Witness

Bidder

CBRM INTERNAL USE ONLY

Approved by: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____



Cape Breton Regional Municipality

PROCUREMENT SECTION, FINANCIAL SERVICES
320 ESPLANADE, SUITE 102
SYDNEY, NS B1P 7B9

PHONE: 902-563-5015 EMAIL: purchase@cbrm.ns.ca

SCHEDULE "B"

TRADE AGREEMENTS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All Public Sector Entities in Nova Scotia have trade agreement obligations under the Public Procurement Act. Trade agreements play a vital role in our economy. They create market access for our goods and services by reducing barriers to, among other things, labour mobility, investments, energy, agriculture, and government procurement. Agreements can be comprehensive, covering a number of different issues, or more concentrated, covering individual issues. Each agreement has unique language, exemptions, rules, and requirements.

Municipalities, Academic Institutions, School Boards, Health Authorities (MASH) and Crown Corporations that have their own procurement groups and policies must ensure they are consistent with the principles of the Province of Nova Scotia Procurement Policy, and the obligations of the Public Procurement Act.

Trade Agreements that impact government procurement in Nova Scotia include the Canadian Free Trade Agreement (CFTA) and the Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement with the European Union (CETA). The CFTA and CETA includes all provinces, Northwest Territories, Yukon, and the Federal Government as well as their respective MASH sectors and Crown Corporations.

The key to being compliant with multiple trade agreements is to ensure you are meeting the obligations of the one with the lowest thresholds, which in this case is the CFTA. Table A outlines the thresholds for these two agreements.

TABLE A – Domestic Agreement

Agreement	Coverage	MASH
Canadian Free Trade Agreement	Equal access to Canadian suppliers. Includes all CDN Provinces, NWT, YUK, their respective MASH and Crowns, and the Federal Government	Goods: \$105,700+ Services: \$105,700+ Construction: 264,200+
Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement with the European Union	Equal access to EU suppliers – includes: Federal Government, Provinces, Territories, MASH, Provincial/Federal Crowns & Public Utilities (many exceptions)	Goods: \$365,700+ Services: \$365,700+ Construction: \$9.1M+

_____ (hereinafter referred to as "The Bidder") does hereby acknowledges the understanding that this tender falls under the Domestic Trade Agreements. As part of these agreements and under the Nova Scotia Public Procurement Act, CBRM is included as part of the MASH Sector. This document forms part of and is incorporated into the Tender.

Witness

Bidder



Cape Breton Regional Municipality

COVID-19 Protocol for Contractors and Suppliers

Date: April 20, 2020

Any contractor or supplier hired by Cape Breton Regional Municipality (CBRM) must adhere to the following protocols while working within and CBRM owned facility, or any CBRM owned property:

- Contractors and Suppliers must have their own COVID-19 Pandemic Plans prior to starting any work for CBRM. It must be available upon request.
- Contractors or suppliers must seek approval prior to visiting and CBRM owned facility or property. Approval will be granted by the Manager/Director responsible for the specific site.
- Contractors and suppliers shall only carry out work in approved areas during approved times. Any changes to work scope, schedule or location of work must be pre-approved by CBRM.
- Anyone who has travelled outside of Canada or Atlantic Canada cannot carry out work at a CBRM facility or property until they have completed 14 days of self-isolation, measured from the date of their return to the Province. Any exemptions will have to be granted by Public Health.
- When carrying out work within a CBRM facility, the Supplier or Contractor may only utilize up to 5 individuals to carry out the work. Outdoor construction sites are exempt from this requirement.
- Supplier and Contractors **must** practice physical distancing of 2 meters(6 feet).
- Number of in person meetings should be limited. If required, they should be 5 people or fewer, while maintaining physical distancing protocol. Use of teleconference and videoconference for meetings is encouraged.
- The Supplier or Contractor must supply all employees with necessary materials to carry out regular disinfections of tools, equipment, and work areas. Where work is being carried out in a facility or area or worksite that does not have a washroom, the contractor or Supplier must provide the necessary equipment to allow for regular handwashing.
- Suppliers and Contractors shall follow all guidance/requirements as issued by the Nova Scotia Medical Officer of Health and Public Health.
- All Contractors and Suppliers must, to the best of their ability, closely self-monitor their health, and if their status changes then they must follow Public Health protocols. (e.g. contact 811)

- Should any contractor or supplier exhibit any symptoms of COVID-19 during the period they are providing services to CBRM, or within the 2 weeks following, they must advise CBRM immediately.



Company Name:

Date:

Work Location:

Name(s) of Employee(s):

2020 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) self-assessment

1. Are feeling unwell with any of the following symptoms:

- Fever, new cough or difficulty breathing (or a combination of these symptoms)?
- Muscle aches, fatigue, headache, sore throat, runny nose or diarrhea?

2. And have experienced any of the following:

- Have you travelled outside of Canada or Nova Scotia in the last 14 days?
- Have you been in close contact (within 2 meters) with someone with a confirmed case of COVID-19?
- Have you been in close contact (within 2 metres) with someone who has returned from another country in the past 14 days and who has a fever higher than 38°C, a new cough or a cough that's getting worse?

If you answered Yes to any of the following, contact 811. CBRM will have to restrict you from entering our buildings to provide service at this time.

If you answered no to all questions above, CBRM requests you to practice the following on our sites:

- Wash your hand with soap and water or hand sanitizer upon entry to our facilities
- Practice social distancing (2m or 6 feet)
- Practice good hygiene practices (coughing into sleeves, etc)

Cape Breton Regional Municipality

Request for Proposals

Municipal Accessibility Plan

Issued: November 9, 2021

Cape Breton Regional Municipality
Suite 200 - 320 Esplanade
Sydney, Nova Scotia
B1P 7B9

Closing: December 2nd, 2021

Information to Proponents

Scope of Proposals

The Cape Breton Regional Municipality (CBRM) is requesting proposals from experienced proponents to complete a Municipal Accessibility Plan that will guide CBRM in meeting the requirements set out in the *Nova Scotia Accessibility Act*.

Municipal Contact Person(s)

Questions with respect to this Request for Proposal should be directed to:

- Kirk Durning, by phone at 902-563-5513 or via email to kadurning@cbrm.ns.ca.
- Cyril MacDonald, by phone at 902-736-2102 or via email to camacdonald@cbrm.ns.ca

Evaluation Criteria

Each Proposal will be evaluated by the Municipality to determine the degree to which it responds to the requirements as set out in this RFP document.

Proposal Evaluation Criteria	
Criteria	Maximum Percentage
Completeness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adherence to the submission requirements provided in Terms of Reference • Completeness and thoroughness of proposal submitted 	10%
Qualifications, References, & Prior Work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team qualifications & composition • Relevant experience • Proven knowledge and understanding of the <i>Nova Scotia Accessibility Act</i> • References 	40%
Methodology & Approach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notable methodologies, tools, & techniques • Innovative solutions • Suitability to project 	30%
Timeframes & Schedule <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project timeline with proposed approach • Demonstrates ability to meet schedule requirements of project and milestones 	10%
Cost	10%
TOTAL	100%

Following the evaluation and development of a short list, Proponent interviews may be requested which will be considered in addition to previous scoring.

Pricing

The pricing of the work shall reflect the appropriate magnitude for such a project and shall include the HST.

The proposal must include a breakdown of the costs to include the work identified herein, including all material costs, labour costs (hours to be worked per individual hourly rates), expenses/disbursements, applicable taxes, and any other costs so as to be the final cost to the CBRM for the proposed project.

The budget amount for this study including all expenses is \$50,000.00 inclusive of applicable taxes.

All prices must be in Canadian funds.

Terms of Reference

Project Background

The Cape Breton Regional Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee is comprised of ten (10) voting members inclusive of two (2) elected officials and eight (8) community members who either live with disabilities, or who work/volunteer with organizations that work with people living with disabilities. The committee is supported by a Supplemental Staff Committee with representatives from each municipal department.

The role of the Accessibility Advisory Committee is to advise the Municipal council on identifying, preventing, and eliminating accessibility barriers to municipal programs, services, and infrastructure.

The Committee will play a pivotal role in helping the Municipality to become accessible and comply with the Nova Scotia's *Accessibility Act*, S.N.S., 2017, c. 2 ("Act"). The Act defines disability as a physical, mental, intellectual, learning, or sensory impairment, including an episodic disability that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders and individual's full and effective participation in society.

The Municipality recognizes accessibility as a human right, and like other Nova Scotia Municipalities have been mandated to prepare and make publicly available, and Accessibility Plan.

CBRM seeks proposals from qualified consultants to complete an Accessibility Plan that identifies opportunities for improving accessibility in the areas of awareness, goods and services, information and communication, transportation, employment and built environment, and assists the municipality in meeting our obligations the provincial Accessibility Act.

The plan must include a guide for implementation including Municipal staff, and Council responsibility, timeline, monitoring and evaluation, and a mechanism to respond to questions and complaints.

The successful proponent will be required to work with the CBRM Accessibility Advisory Committee and staff committee throughout the plan development process. The proposal must include a detailed description of how the Consultant proposes to produce a 10–15-year Accessibility Plan which address the mandatory requirements and accessibility standards from the Province.

Focus Areas to be Included

The Province of Nova Scotia has created “The Accessibility Planning Toolkit for Municipalities” (December 2019) which includes a sample outline for this Plan. The following areas must be considered during the development of the Plan:

- **Awareness:** promoting awareness throughout the Municipality about the importance of accessibility.
- **Goods and Services:** ensuring that people with a disability have equitable access to the goods and services provided by the Municipality.
- **Information and Communication:** ensuring all people can receive, understand, and share the information provided by the Municipality.
- **Transportation:** making it easier for all people throughout the Municipality to get where they need to go.
- **Employment:** making the Municipality a more accessible workplace and supporting people with disabilities in finding and maintaining meaningful employment.
- **Built Environment:** making buildings, streets, sidewalks, and shared spaces accessible to all.

The Consultant will be responsible for reviewing the relevant municipal plans and strategies, leading engagement with the Accessibility Advisory Committee, staff committee, Council, the public, and drafting the Municipal Accessibility Plan. The CBRM is also engaged in a comprehensive review of its Municipal Planning Strategy and Active Transportation Plan. The successful proponent will be expected to coordinate, as necessary, with the teams engaged in this work.

Work related to this RFP is to begin immediately following the award of contract with a kick-off meeting to be scheduled as soon as possible. The Consultants adherence to the following intended project timeline is required (any proposed deviation is to be noted in Proposal document):

Accessibility Plan – Intended Project Timeline

The project is expected to start December 2021 and conclude with final report by April 2022. Proposals must detail how the project can be completed within this timeframe.

Scope of Work

The successful Consultant shall be responsible for all areas of the development of the Municipal Accessibility Plan. The services to be provided are summarized in the following subsections.

Kickoff Meeting

The selected Consultant shall attend a project kick-off meeting with the Municipality within 15 business days of the contract being awarded to confirm: Scope of Work, Project Schedule and Milestones, Project Team, and other existing information.

Background Information

After the project kick-off meeting, the selected Consultant shall review the identified information, resources, and related documents. Additionally, the Consultant will determine if other documentation should be considered.

Meetings with Accessibility Advisory Committee & Staff

The successful firm will be expected to consult with the following during plan development:

- The Accessibility Advisory Committee at its regular meetings to provide updates on progress towards completing the work plan, any issues encountered and suggestions for moving forward. A schedule that details the process to achieve the deliverables and follows the RFP timeline as indicated is to be provided to the Committee at the same time as the presentation of the work plan to the Committee; and
- Municipal Staff Committee and/or others identified who have responsibility for the built environment, open spaces, delivery of goods and services, transportation, information and communications, and employee accommodation to assist the consultant with obtaining relevant background information.

Community Engagement

The selected Consultant shall provide the following services:

- Conduct public consultation within identified communities of the municipality that are inclusive and accommodating for all.
- Direct stakeholder engagement with, but not limited to surrounding First Nation communities, community groups and organizations that provide the first voice perspective or lived experience within CBRM, relevant provincial government departments, Cape Breton Regional Library, and others determined by the municipality and the Accessibility Advisory Committee.
- Following completion of the draft Accessibility Plan, conduct public consultation sessions to obtain feedback on the plan. Findings are to be incorporated into the final report.

Deliverables

The primary deliverables for the Accessibility Plan will include:

- Facilitate and assist the Committee with developing a Statement of Commitment as defined in the “The Accessibility Planning Toolkit for Municipalities” (December 2019).
- A list of achievements to date that the CBRM has had in identifying, removing, and preventing barriers in by-laws, policies, programs, practices, and services.
- Review and recommend new, or changes to, by-laws, policies, programs, practices, and services, and provide a detailed process on how the municipality will identify, remove, and prevent barriers in these areas moving forward.
- A prioritized list of capital projects outlining the required modifications to ensure accessibility standards are met in the built environment that is owned or operated by the municipality. This includes a prioritized timeline for projects based on the degree of impact. Timeline is to be broken into 5-to-10-year markers. (Costing of capital projects is not required.)
- A report to be provided on the community consultations held as part of the compilation of the draft report.
- Recommend an evaluation and process guideline for reviewing the plan every three years, as identified in “The Accessibility Planning Toolkit for Municipalities.”

Proposal Submission Requirements

The proponent(s) proposal submission must include the following information:

- Corporate name and company profile;
- A description of the methodology to be followed by the consultant(s) to meet the study’s objectives;
- A statement of the consultant(s) understanding of the scope of the project;
- A description of the experience and expertise of the consultant(s) and team;
- A schedule of fees and expenses setting out rates of remuneration for consultant(s) team members and an estimate of time each member will devote to the project;
- A project timeline and reporting schedule;
- A statement as to whether other consultants/professionals will be used
- A maximum price for the study including all expenses and HST; and,
- References for the past three projects that your organization has been lead.
- Proof of WCB (or demonstrate this is not required) and insurance

Proposal must demonstrate:

1. **Evidence of Understanding** - Please outline your understanding of what is to be accomplished, including the desired outcome of this contract and in general, the entire project and how it will assist CBRM in meeting its obligations under the Nova Scotia Accessibility Act.
2. **Experience** – Provide up to three examples of similar community planning projects which have been successfully completed, including an overview of scope, process, work, and final product for each example. Outline the experience and qualifications of the firm and/or personnel who will be directly involved with the project.
3. **Methodology & Budget** - Tell us how you plan to go about leading the plan development process, and how you plan to communicate with municipal staff and the Accessibility Advisory Committee. Provide a description of, and rationale for your proposed plan development process including an outline and strategy for communicating and engaging with Municipality staff. Include a comprehensive itemized budget for services that includes the full scope of work.

Acceptable Work-Plan

Proponents shall provide a work plan which clearly outlines milestones and timelines to demonstrate how the work will progress to the desired completion date. Proponents must present a realistic timeline of the proposed project schedule. The schedule shall reflect the tasks in the work plan and will be updated on a monthly basis to reflect project progress with updates submitted to the Municipality.



M·E·M·O

320 Esplanade Sydney, Nova Scotia, B1P 7B9 902-563-5010

To: Kirk Durning, Director of Parks, Recreation, Buildings & Facilities
From: Christa Dicks, Municipal Clerk
Date: October 27, 2023
Subject: CBRM Accessibility Plan

At the Council meeting on October 24, 2023, the following motion was passed:

Motion:
Moved by Councillor Paruch, seconded by Councillor Eldon MacDonald, to accept the report provided by reachAbility regarding the CBRM Accessibility Plan.
Motion Carried.

I would ask that you please take the action noted in the above motion.



Christa Dicks
Municipal Clerk
/km



Cape Breton Regional Municipality + You. Moving Accessibility Forward.

Final Accessibility Action Plan for the Cape Breton Regional Municipality (CBRM)

Submitted by: reachAbility Association



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1.1 INTRODUCTION

1.2 SUMMARY OVERVIEW

Accessibility is a human right. The equal rights of a person are denied by making access difficult. As identified by Access by Design 2030, the first step towards achieving accessibility goals is through awareness and capacity building for the rights of persons with disabilities and/or people facing barriers to full participation. It is easy to get stuck in the old ways of doing things, which are rooted in ableist mindsets and structures. However, change is happening, and we believe the Cape Breton Regional Municipality (CBRM) will help set the bar for other Municipal regions across the province.

Nova Scotia has the highest rate in Canada of people identifying as a person with a disability with nearly one in three people who live with a disability, the most common of which are invisible, cognitive disabilities. There are many types of disabilities which include: physical, mental, intellectual, learning and sensory impairment, including episodic disability, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders an individual's full and effective participation. The research and recommendations to follow address universal accessibility improvements for the Cape Breton Regional Municipality and attempt to include the spectrum and experiences of all disabilities. For the purpose of this report, when referring to the Cape Breton Regional Municipality it may be referred to as the CBRM.

The research and community engagement strategy for this report took place during the Covid-19 Global Pandemic, which further heightened access and equity issues for everyone. From the individuals and stakeholder groups we were able to connect with, we heard that accessibility issues were exacerbated due to increased poverty, social isolation, and lack of transportation, all of which further affected mental and physical health. The results of our community engagement are included throughout this report.

We would like to commend the Cape Breton Regional Municipality on its work as a region to address accessibility and inclusion for its community as the Province of Nova Scotia begins its work towards the 2030 Access by Design: Achieving an Accessible Nova Scotia goal. Throughout this report, we refer to Bill 59, also known as the Nova Scotia Accessibility Legislation, including the recommendations put forth by the working groups for the Built Environment and Education Standards, and the Nova Scotia Post-Secondary Accessibility Framework created by the Council of Nova Scotia University Presidents and the Nova Scotia Community College. We also include and/or reference the Government of Canada's Accessible Canada Act, and the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification built environment standards.

In order to involve as much of the Cape Breton Regional Municipality as possible we reached out to stakeholder groups and community members in all twelve districts to identify possible solutions to the future of access and inclusion. The responses were honest and rooted in frustration but optimistic.

We recognize that the Cape Breton Regional Municipality has a number of plans and goals in place. The purpose of this report is to provide recommendations based on first-voice, community feedback, and legislation while acknowledging the work that has

already been done. The solutions to achieving accessibility and inclusion will require resources, human and capital, but they have the capacity to be transformative for the Cape Breton Regional Municipality. We hope that this report provides starting points to achieving goals, and delineating the steps in between to help you get there. It has been our pleasure to assist you with this work.

Accessibility Advisory Committee's (AAC) Goals:

- Create a mechanism for continued learning and capacity building.
- To ensure equitable access for all.
- Create a culture of acceptance and awareness.
- Collaborate with other regions and advisory committees to share best practices.

The AAC is committed to accessibility, equity and inclusion of all people regardless of ability, race, culture, gender, sexual identity and/or expression, family status, religion or age. To support this commitment reachAbility has been engaged as experts with first voice, lived experience and a robust knowledge of accessibility issues, best practices, legislative requirements, social equity and planning processes to ensure that a comprehensive framework will guide the development of accessibility initiatives and establish priorities across the Cape Breton Regional Municipality.

1.3 TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Ancestral or Traditional Territory refers to the land occupied by First Nations people and their ancestors. reachAbility Association resides within K'jipuktuk, and the Cape Breton Regional Municipality resides within Unama'kik, the ancestral territory of the Mi'kmaq people. This territory is protected by the Treaties of Peace and Friendship, signed in 1752 between the Mi'kmaq, Maliseet, Passamaquoddy and the British Crown. This territory is known as Mi'kma'ki and was divided traditionally into seven districts: Kespukwitk, Sipekni'katik, Eskikewa'kik, Unama'kik, Epekwitk aq Piktuk, Siknikt, and Kespek.

We acknowledge that our work and organizations are located within unceded and unsurrendered Mi'kmaq Territory that we all have a responsibility and accountability to uphold in the process of Truth and Reconciliation. We are all treaty people. There is much to do in terms of reconciliation and building meaningful dialogue, partnerships and opportunities to mend historical injustices and present day inequalities. We aim, through our work and our lives, to continue to better educate ourselves on what this means, and how we must use the many opportunities and privileges we are afforded to address the importance of place, equity, sustainability, peace and understanding. We celebrate diversity and believe that understanding the intersectionalities that occur within the Cape Breton Regional Municipality is key to a truly inclusive culture.

2.1 OVERVIEW

2.2 METHODOLOGY

A. Inclusion In Action Lens

As an accessibility support organization, reachAbility Association helps guide businesses, organizations and public sector bodies through the process of creating an accessibility action plan compliant with government legislation, and in building leadership in accessibility, diversity and inclusion. The process of *Inclusion In Action* addresses accessibility through an inclusion and diversity lens driven by first-person voice and ensures alignment with the Province of Nova Scotia's "Accessibility Planning Toolkit for Municipalities". With extensive public consultation this creates an accessibility action plan to align with both Access by Design 2030 and the Nova Scotia Accessibility Legislation (Bill 59).

Consultation with client organization and identified groups

- Worked strategically through various meetings with the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) to review the plan and methodology for the project; and discuss critical goals.
- Reviewed strategic documents from the CBRM's ie. policies, programs, services, practices and any additional documentation to assist in our understanding of the CBRM's efforts within accessibility, and through a data analysis we identified achievements, barriers and opportunities for improved accessibility and inclusion.

First-Person Voice

- Surveyed the community both online and in person to gain the perspective of lived experience.
- Engaged the public through twelve online sessions in addition to stakeholder group meetings and individual conversations with community members by phone, zoom and in person.
- Opportunities were provided, online and/or in person, for community participation in providing feedback on the built environment in the five areas within the CBRM. This was done through our online #CBRMaccess photovoice campaign and in-person mapping activities where barriers, successes and opportunities were identified throughout the CBRM.

Strategic Review

- Reviewed feedback from engagement sessions.
- Revisited critical goals and compared them to the identified issues highlighted from engagement.
- Reviewed the built infrastructure/environment of the organization's assets.
- Based on the strategic review, created a draft Accessibility Action Plan to present to the AAC and to the community through public engagement sessions, both online and in person, according to NS Health Guidelines.

Action Plan Delivery

- We will gather and review stakeholder/public feedback from the draft accessibility action plan and determine, based on legislative requirements and the Municipality's goals, what to include in the final accessibility action plan.

- We will deliver the CBRM Accessibility Action Plan with deliverables including: prioritized timelines; capital asset lists with priorities, phasing and resources.

Additional Recommendations & Resources

- We will identify topics for continued learning for all organizational levels.
- We will identify areas of opportunity for improved accessibility and inclusion through stakeholder partnership
- We will identify funding and grant opportunities to: offset Cape Breton Regional Municipality costs with action plan implementation, and provide resources for businesses, organizations and individuals within the municipality to work towards a sustainable accessibility within the community.

B. Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification (RHFAC) Lens

(RHFAC) is a lens through which to assess accessibility. <https://www.rickhansen.com> RHFAC ensures people with disabilities have direct input into the vision and details of how to create truly inclusive places. RHFAC has a rating and certification process designed by people with disabilities to allow for transparency, accountability and measurable data. RHFAC and Universal Design are interdependent. Universal Design is the design of public buildings, products and environments to make them accessible to all people regardless of age, disability or other factors. This ensures that human rights, compassion, democracy, and access are all at the forefront in the public realm. In order to create a sustainable, fully participatory community, Universal Design must be met to ensure access and inclusion.

Our team conducted an environment scan of the Cape Breton Regional Municipality using the RHFAC lens. We did not conduct a National Building Code (NBC) review. It is important to note that RHFAC often has standards that are different from the NBC. While all aspects of a renovation or new build must meet the NBC, meeting RHFAC standards would be ideal. We used some of the major principles of RHFAC as a guide to highlight where the needs for improvements are, as well as identify efforts and successes as per the scope of this Accessibility Action Plan.

3.1 STANDARDS & BENCHMARKS

In order to give feedback and assist in creating an accessibility action plan for the region we reviewed the programs, policies, services and built environments of the Region and addressed the following six standards of accessibility. As identified in the Access By Design 2030 framework, it is imperative to also address **Awareness and Capacity Building** to move forward and truly be inclusive, for this purpose we have included Awareness and Capacity Building along with the other legislative standards. These standards are based on the, currently in development, Nova Scotia Accessibility Act (Bill 59), and the Accessible Canada Act, as listed below:

3.2 Goods and Services

- Bill 59: standards for delivering and receiving goods and services may address how service providers interact with and are trained to serve persons with disabilities, including the use of assistive devices.
- Accessible Canada Act: Service Design & Delivery: receive services that are accessible to all.

3.3 Built Environment

- Bill 59: standards in this area will address how to make buildings, streets, sidewalks, and shared spaces accessible to all. These standards may address gaps in current regulations.
- Accessible Canada Act: move freely around buildings and public spaces.

3.4 Information and Communications

- Bill 59: Requires institutions to ensure all Nova Scotians can receive and share the same information. Consider accessible formats (for example, braille, American Sign Language, or large print), accessible websites and technologies, and standards for communicating with persons with disabilities.
- Accessible Canada Act: Requires accessible digital content and technologies, barrier free spaces and services for people with communication disabilities.

3.5 Awareness and Capacity Building:

- Access By Design 2030: building capacity in accessibility and increasing awareness about the rights of persons with disabilities and barriers to participation.

3.6 Transportation

- Bill 59: public transportation and transportation infrastructure: standards in this area will help make it easier for everyone to travel throughout rural and urban Nova Scotia.
- Accessible Canada Act: barrier-free federal transportation network.

3.7 Employment

- Bill 59: standards in this area will support persons with disabilities in finding meaningful employment. The goal is to ensure equal access to employment for persons with disabilities.
- Accessible Canada Act: access to employment opportunities and accessible workplaces.

4.1 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In 2010, Canada ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) committing to rid the country of barriers that prevent people with disabilities from fully enjoying their human rights. “Nothing Without Us” , the Accessible Canada Act, carries this commitment through legislation and ensures first-voice contributions. First-person knowledge is key to understanding the causes of inaccessibility and has guided our process in identifying barriers within the Cape Breton Regional Municipality and offering recommendations to ensure equity, diversity and inclusion is achieved for all.

4.2 SUMMARY

The Cape Breton Regional Municipality is a very diverse community with a challenging geographic layout that combines the urban centre of Sydney with widespread rural areas, national historic sites and many industrial growth possibilities. Despite this diversity in landscape and community, there are many shared needs and concerns. However, even with these similar shared interests, there is a physical disconnect due to the lack of connectivity between neighbourhoods, communities and towns. In reviewing this report, it will become clear that the community at large feels the need for pedestrian pathways, active transportation, and public transportation. We believe that through the implementation of the Cape Breton Regional Municipality’s Accessibility Action Plan, the upcoming CBRM Active Transportation Plan and the many strategic growth plans that are in the works, progress can and will be made. For the purpose of providing feedback/findings for each accessibility standard, we have used the first-voice experiences collected through the **Moving Accessibility Forward** project. These first-voice experiences have also guided the recommendations offered throughout.

4.3 CAMPAIGN

In an effort to engage the communities of the Cape Breton Regional Municipality, reachAbility created a social media campaign titled ***Cape Breton Regional Municipality + You. Moving Accessibility Forward***. Additionally, a landing page was created for the overall project, and individual pages for each respective areas’ campaign were made accessible both on their own or through the project landing page - which can be viewed by visiting www.reachability.org/cbrmandyou

The targeted social media campaign was used to promote the project through Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. The campaign reached over 14,000 individuals (saw the awareness campaign on their social media platforms); 76 shares (people shared the content on their social media platforms), and 551 people visited the project landing page.

Due to COVID-19 public gathering restrictions, extended online, phone, as well as small gathering or individual engagement sessions were offered in addition to in-person public engagement options. The project’s engagement process offered three methods for community members to get involved.

A) TAKE THE SURVEY

An online survey was created based on the accessibility standards and how they pertain to the region's programs, services, built environment and communication. The survey was circulated online through the social media campaign, posted on the landing page and available physically at our in-person engagements throughout the Cape Breton Regional Municipality.

The public survey has been open since February 7th, 2022 and will continue through to April 4th, 2022. Throughout this report we have provided summarized information based on the surveys received thus far. Of the survey results we received, 15% of the respondents did not identify which District they reside in.

- 15% were from Districts 4 & 7
- 19% were from District 5
- 8 % were from Districts 6, 10 & 11
- 12% were from District 8

No surveys were received from those who identified as residing in, or being connected to, Districts 1, 2, 3, 9 or 12. We continue to try to engage these areas through further promotional activities within the region.

B) JOIN THE DISCUSSION

Throughout February, 3 in-person and 12 virtual engagement sessions were hosted inviting community members to *join the discussion* and have their voice heard to help inspire change in the Cape Breton Regional Municipality as they work toward their inclusion and accessibility goals. Additionally, individual zoom meetings and/or phone calls have been, and continue to be, booked with stakeholder groups and anyone who could not attend the various virtual meetings. These sessions are moderated by Jessica Ward and Krista O'Connor of the reachAbility team and supported by ASL (American Sign Language) interpreters when requested.

The conversations throughout these sessions highlighted the gaps in accessibility and inclusion with the Cape Breton Regional Municipality and identified the many strategies that have been or are currently being applied to remove barriers. We spoke with many disability and marginalized community support groups, individual citizens, youth with disabilities and their parents and community advocates.

C) SHOW US HOW

Community members were invited to *help us inspire change* by participating in an in-person mapping exercise and sharing, through photovoice, their perspective on barriers, opportunities and successes in the CBRM built environment through the #CBRMaccess campaign.

During our three in-person engagement sessions participants were provided with pink, blue and yellow sticky notes and were asked to tell us:

- what is working (success)
- what's not working (barrier)
- to share with us how they could envision things working better (opportunities), and

- when doing so, to consider how they travel to, from, and throughout the CBRM

By posting photos and comments on social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter with the hashtag #CBRMaccess, participants were able to share areas within their communities that required highlighting for one of the aforementioned reasons. Participants in this piece of feedback are also entered into a draw for a \$200 gift card from a local CBRM business for sharing their valuable first-voice experience on the built environment and how it plays a part in the way they live, work, play or go to school, in the Region.

5.1 STANDARDS OF ACCESSIBILITY - ENGAGEMENT ANALYSIS

PREFACE

“Under the Accessibility Act, municipalities, universities, and other organizations—including villages, regional libraries, and government agencies—may be prescribed as public sector bodies. (Prescribed means identified in the Accessibility Act General Regulations.) Once prescribed, these organizations—including municipalities and villages—must establish an Accessibility Advisory Committee and develop an Accessibility Action Plan.” (2019, Province of Nova Scotia)¹ As per the recommended format offered by the Province of Nova Scotia in the Accessibility Plan Toolkit for Prescribed Public Sector Bodies, the feedback from our engagement efforts has been summarized into seven components for each of the seven standards. Below we have provided a brief explanation/purpose of each component as identified in the aforementioned document.

Commitment: In this component, we will suggest a vision statement that aligns with the direction set out by the public sector body when it comes to inclusion, diversity, and equity.

Current Services Offered: The purpose of identifying the services currently offered by the prescribed public sector body is to provide the reader with a starting point. As a 3rd party organization, we do not know every aspect of the public sector bodies’ services, programs etc. We create a list based on information we are provided at the time of information gathering and/or what information is publicly available.

Overview: The overview component is meant to provide a summary of the feedback received, highlight specific points that were brought up through engagement and/or provide honourable mentions of key points.

Successes (What We Heard): An important part of the accessibility action planning process is to highlight the many successes or achievements that have been made to-date in identifying, preventing and removing barriers by/within the prescribed public sector body. This section provides a summary of what we heard from stakeholders throughout the project. This component does not include a comprehensive list of successes or achievements made by the organization.

Barriers (What We Heard): As above, this component will include a summary of what we heard from stakeholders and does not include a comprehensive list of barriers faced in every aspect of the organization. This component will focus on a compilation of the identified barriers that pertain to each of the seven standards as listed in Section 3 of this document.

Benchmarks: For the purpose of this report we have used the benchmarks component to offer suggestions for policy changes and/or adaptations based on the feedback received through our engagement process as well as the information provided by the Province of Nova Scotia about the Accessibility Act, its standards that are in

¹ reference for direct quote <https://novascotia.ca/accessibility/public-sector-bodies-toolkit.asp>

development, and the framework for implementation set out through the Access By Design 2030 Plan.

Opportunities/Recommendations: Prescribed Public Sector Bodies are obligated to ensure first voice and lived experience is considered throughout the implementation of the accessibility action plan. This component provides recommendations on how to take actionable steps toward achieving the benchmarks and the organizational commitments for each standard. This is done by engaging people with disabilities, diverse communities as well as other resources available in the community through organizations that work with and support members of equity seeking groups.

5.2 GOODS AND SERVICES

Commitment:

The Cape Breton Regional Municipality aims to ensure all residents and visitors have equitable access to goods and services provided by the Municipality.

Current Services Offered:

The Cape Breton Regional Municipality currently offers these goods and services:

- Maintaining most parks, trails and playgrounds and responsible for the installation, maintenance and snow removal services of most roads and sidewalks within Municipal limits.
- Maintains the CBRM Water Utility.
- Receives payments for property taxes and utilities.
- Hosts Municipal Council meetings.
- Emergency services through the Cape Breton Regional Fire & Emergency Services (Police and Fire).
- Recreational programming.
- Manages and operates Transit Cape Breton.

Survey Overview:

Of the services identified as most frequently accessed, businesses and services such as restaurants or bars and barber shops/hair salons stood out as the most frequented privately owned services (average 71% across all responses). These services were also identified as the least accessible privately owned services. Of the municipal owned/operated services identified as frequently accessed, recreation (pools, sports centres, playgrounds, trails etc.) and educational services (libraries and schools) were most common (average 69% across all responses). However, when asked to identify what the least accessible services were, public transportation and recreation were highlighted. Respondents stated they found it difficult to choose which service was least accessible as there were aspects of each service that made them inaccessible. Many comments mentioned the lack of accessibility at public parks and that the lack of safe sidewalks makes getting to any of the services difficult for most.

Successes (What We Heard):

- There have been some accessibility considerations made in the various libraries and there is a provincial plan coming to ensure that all libraries improve their accessibility
- CBRM is supporting a community group in the development of the Municipality owned Hawks Field as a fully accessible baseball field, walking track, bocce court, splash pad and canteen amenities.
- CBRM is currently partnered with the Health Authority on an accessible Bike Loan program.
- Delivering the Adapt Program that provides recreation and physical activities for all ages and abilities.
- The Recreation Department offers a variety of free and paid programs and services, including accessible activities like sledge hockey and an accessible sailing regatta. CBRM has provided support for capital upgrades and for events that celebrate accessibility. Additionally, they offer funding and in-kind programs for hundreds of individuals and community organizations.

- Most communities have at least one playground offering activities for free play
- The CBRM provides both Transit Cape Breton and
- Handi-Trans as options for transportation throughout many areas of the CBRM.
- There is more access to some services for people with disabilities and/or limited transportation since the onset of the COVID pandemic due to the expansion of some delivery service areas.

Barriers (What We Heard):

- The parks, playgrounds and outdoor spaces don't provide options for all ages ie. senior friendly exercise equipment, adult sized accessible swings, family engaging activities for year round use.
- There is not enough inclusive programming, events and services offered by CBRM Recreation. Gaps in services adaptive equipment available through loan programs; guided programs using the trails and parks.
- There aren't many community building activities to bring community groups and individuals together that don't involve going for a walk. Physically demanding activities cause barriers.
- Access to all essential items are not available in all areas which weighs heavily on those who are low-income and/or on fixed incomes without transportation.
- The operating hours of many necessary services like libraries (internet access) and recycling and solid waste facilities makes it difficult for many to access them.
- Accessible transit is not consistently available during the hours that are needed to access services, they are only available during their set schedule which makes accessing many services impossible for people with disabilities.

Benchmarks:

- **Ensure services required by residents and visitors are accessible to them.** This includes being physically accessible at publicly accessed spaces like parks, playgrounds and trails.
- **Ensure equal opportunity for play for everyone.** Consider offering "Play Boxes" at various park locations that provide free, adaptive play items to promote unstructured recreation activity. Ensure there are options for organized sport and recreational activities for all socio-economic groups.
- **Promote acceptance by implementing an accessibility policy for all new business/builds or renovations.** Shopping and retail establishments were identified as the most accessed and the least accessible spaces which highlights the need for an accessibility policy for businesses. Create a culture of acceptance by providing incentives for those businesses and service providers who abide by the policy instead of fining for non-compliance. Support businesses in the area in sourcing funding support to assist with the required accessibility updates/changes.
- **Ensure equitable access to all public services, in all regions.** Extend the hours for public services like libraries (providing internet access), solid waste, recycling, bill payments etc. by extending into evenings/mornings or weekends. For the Balefill Facility, an after hours drop off spot would be sufficient.

Opportunities/Recommendations:

- Work with disability support agencies within the Cape Breton Regional Municipality to begin to build capacity and awareness around inclusion and

accessibility for all. This should include implementing inclusive programming with partners' support and guidance.

- Create a standard for accessible service delivery that holds accountable all providers who work within the Cape Breton Regional Municipality until the Province develops a government-wide accessible customer service policy as identified in Nova Scotia's Accessibility Plan (2018-2021).
- Partner with Nova Scotia Works offices in the region to gather funding resources, support and training information to provide to employers in the region who want to improve their inclusive hiring practices.
- Become a wealth of knowledge for your communities by seeking out resources available through support organizations in the region.
- Partner with organizations within the community to bring mobile services to communities with limited resources and access.

5.3 BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The following section refers to feedback received from the community focused on Built Environment.

Commitment:

The Cape Breton Regional Municipality aims to exceed minimum accessibility standards when, and if possible, by making all buildings, streets, sidewalks, and shared spaces accessible to all.

Current Offerings: CBRM maintains most of the roadways within the former municipal units. There are highways, bridges, and provincially owned roads that are currently maintained by Provincial Department of Public Works that are found outside of the former municipal units, but within the former County of Cape Breton.

CBRM has a snow removal strategy that is equitable to all users – snow clearing operations are both consistent & reliable as resources, timing of event & conditions allow. We have GPS mapping of our sidewalk network that shows the areas of coverage, and as well the areas that receive full winter maintenance.

CBRM is responsible for the ownership and operation of approximately 200 Buildings, many of which provide public access.

Survey Overview:

When addressing general built environments and spaces, the majority identified public grounds/roads and open spaces (89%), parks and trails (63%) and crosswalks and parking/parking lots (55%) as the most frequented built spaces. Unsurprisingly, crosswalks and sidewalks (63%) and public grounds (61%) were identified as the least accessible with 84.5% of those surveyed saying they do not believe that “infrastructures (foot paths, public spaces, roads, sidewalks, crosswalks, street furniture, garbage bins, post boxes, bicycles) are accessible to all”. We surveyed the community by the districts they live in as well, and most often the identified area within the community that was voted least accessible was a park, trail or community centre, with the exception of Sydney with the least accessible built environment being Centre 200.

Successes (What We Heard):

- There are a number of community parks and playgrounds that have undergone significant accessibility upgrades with the partnership of the CBRM and community group fundraising. For example the Cantley Village Community Playground.
- The Sydney Fire Station is a brand new, well equipped and fully accessible location.
- The libraries in the Cape Breton Regional Municipality have plans to be renovated to include aspects of accessibility and inclusivity. There are considerations being made to replace the main CBRM Regional Library in Sydney.
- There are a number of trails and walking pathways that are assets to the community and well groomed during the warmer months.

- The Glace Bay Miners Forum has had a major renovation to include accessibility aspects.
- The Gary McDonald Recreation Complex in New Waterford includes an accessible walking trail within a brand new recreation complex with activities for everyone (not fully accessible).

Barriers (What We Heard):

- Most restaurants don't have accessible entryways and/or washroom facilities.
- Parks and playgrounds aren't accessible for everyone or provide opportunities for all age groups to participate in play.
- Most of the recreation facilities need accessibility upgrading for washrooms, ramps, doors.
- Most of the trails and parks do not have designated parking lots even though community members need to drive to access them as they can't connect to them via sidewalks or transit.
- Most of the region's trails don't have any accessible access.
- Most stairways do not have the yellow edge indicator on steps to show where the edges are - challenging for the visually impaired.
- Access within the built environments tends to only encompass physical access in the space and not sensory considerations like: vision/ lighting and colours used on signage, etc.
- Amenities like post office boxes, resting areas, ATMs, and garbage receptacles are not logically placed, easily accessible and/or not prevalent enough throughout the community. Many of these amenities have been removed to minimize the spread of COVID which creates more inequity and accessibility barriers.
- Well maintained, public, accessible washrooms are not adequately available throughout at regional parks, trails, playgrounds and heavily travelled areas. Covid and the opiate crisis in the area have exacerbated this issue in the region with public washrooms usually locked.
- Pedestrians can't make informed decisions on how to get where they need to go. Sidewalks do not provide connectivity between town amenities, schools, parks etc and there is no consistency in installation, maintenance and snow removal among sidewalks, crosswalks, streets or pathways in any area. Not enough lighting for pedestrian pathways (sidewalks, crosswalks, trails).
- There are a number of priority #3 roads (residential streets and municipal walkways) in the region which are last on the list for snow removal and during winters like 2022, often don't get cleared before the next storm. Lack of all season roads causes issues for accessing employment, essential services and social interaction.
- Municipal roads are in disrepair, road markings are non-existent in most spots including crosswalks and intersections.
- There is insufficient accessible, affordable housing. Where there are housing developments, they are built far from the downtown core and essential services like hospitals and grocery stores. Furthermore, there are very few accessible, adaptable or visitable dwellings in CBRM. Barrier free design is a direction for future building policy.
- Wayfinding is insufficient and inconsistent.

Benchmarks:

- **Increase wayfinding and use adequate signage to locate essential amenities and identify accessibility within the built space.** Wayfinding and adequate signage enable the users to make informed decisions (ie. This trail is fully accessible; this park is accessible physically with support and does not have sensory specific equipment; only the bathroom at X point is fully accessible) ensuring accessibility features are found and dignity is maintained by everyone.
- **Consider accessibility and adhere to the Built Environment standards.** All municipal buildings need to not only have physically accessible entrances, but accessibility needs to be met throughout the entire built environment, including furniture, and fixtures. This needs to be a priority when the Cape Breton Regional Municipality renovates, acquires or builds any of its facilities. Model this standard level of accessibility and provide incentives to privately owned businesses/service providers who strive to meet the same standard.
- **Create an Accessible Signage Standard.** (see Information and Communication)

Opportunities/Recommendations:

- Engage disability focused organizations and/or community members with disabilities in the planning and design of new built environments or renovations to existing structures and ensure Universal Design is considered when doing so.
- Promote an event whereby elected officials and/or administrative staff tour the community with people with disabilities using various mobility devices; blindfolded with assisted guides, and/or wearing noise cancelling headphones to try and gain new perspectives and raise awareness.
- Consider sensory barriers in public spaces and at public events. Low sensory times are helpful and increase welcoming and acceptance; sensory rooms are important in recreation centres and other large community spaces, but they aren't enough. Consider pieces of parade routes where the parades will be silent; encourage lower lighting, and reduce the need to wait in crowded lobby areas when possible.
- **Create a minimum standard, or update an existing standard for playgrounds.** Playgrounds offer free opportunities for physical activity and need to be inclusive and engaging of all age levels. The standard should include: cork surface below all play structures, accessible swings (including ones for adults), adaptive equipment, ground-level access, accessible parking (or at a minimum safe streetside parking with an accessible access point to the play area), accessible seating and accessible washrooms.

5.4 INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

Commitment:

The Cape Breton Regional Municipality aims to provide all communication in accessible formats ensuring that everyone can receive, understand and share the information provided by the Municipality. This may include but is not limited to communications policies, procedures and practices in order to facilitate accessibility and adapting an institutional standard.

Current Offerings:

The municipality currently sends important information in printed form to those who receive bills through the mail; invites citizens to view/watch their municipal council meetings livestreaming online, and posts announcements and event information on their websites and social media platforms, ads in the paper, on the radio and in the recreation guide.

Overview:

According to survey results, 97% of respondents have daily access to the internet whether at home, work, school or at their local library. 73% of respondents access information from the CBRM and their individual communities through social media platforms, other frequently used forms of information communication were the CBRM website and local radio. Many participants provided further information about where they source their information, stating that the newspaper, community newsletters and websites of various organizations (Go Cape Breton), their local councillors, CBU's newsletters and bulletin boards and the social media pages of community organizations like the Downtown Development group and the Chamber of Commerce were all relevant sources.

A list of Municipal programs, committees and publications were compiled and respondents were asked to select all they are aware of. The results are as follows. On average, the awareness of:

- Council Video Stream - 69%
- Official Citizen Handbook of the CBRM - 58%
- CBRM ConnectArts - 42%
- 311 - 35%
- Cape Breton Welcome Network - 31%
- CBRM Forward Project - 31%
- CBRM Accessibility Advisory Committee - 27%
- CBRM Diversity Committee - 15%

A few key points to mention - the two committees that should have community member representation and work on plans and commitments that directly relate to the community are the items the community is **least** aware of. Raising the awareness of these initiatives could help increase the feeling of inclusion and representation within the community, as when asked about whether or not they feel included and represented within CBRM, 69% of respondents said "no". Furthermore, 85% of respondents indicated they do not feel there is enough representation of people with disabilities within CBRM's local news and media. Information provided for the promotion of programs, services, events and initiatives is easily found, according to 62% of

respondents and 73% of those surveyed said the information is accessible to them, however, only 23 % stated that the information about the accessibility of events and programs was sufficient. Additionally, it is important to note here that only 1 survey respondent identified as being blind or visually impaired and 1 respondent identified as being deaf and/or hearing impaired. When thinking of communication methods, we need to ensure that everyone can understand and share the information, not only 73%.

Successes (What We Heard):

- CBRM Twitter is effective when it comes to disruptive timely information regarding bus/transit routes.
- CBRM social media platforms are usually kept up to date and provide ample information on events and news.

Barriers (What We Heard):

- The Transit website is very confusing - there needs to be an app.
- There needs to be a map that highlights accessible spaces in each region, or adequate signage with accessibility features and/or limitations at entrances of built spaces.
- ASL is not provided at public events or in council meetings.
- Inconsistent signage and wayfinding everywhere.
- All correspondence (posters etc) need to be made available in plain text, or with descriptions for all images/non-text elements.
- Advertising of important events is not being found in a timely manner, most find it once the event has passed. Furthermore the accessibility of each event needs to be clearly communicated on all public notices, posters, promotional materials etc. This should include all accessibility features and should emphasize where and how to access accessible parking.
- The CBRM website is hard to navigate. You have to know what you are looking for in order to find it aside from recent news headlines.

Benchmarks:

- **Ensure all communication is delivered in accessible formats and can support the use of assistive technology.** This includes the Municipality's website and social media communications including image descriptions and captioned video content, and physical/written text as means of communication should include plain language options and the availability of audio transcriptions. **The CBRM should and can aim to exceed the WCAG 2.1 standards.**
- **Create communications policies that protect and work for all stakeholders.** Software used for program and service delivery needs to be accessible to the end-user. Listen to employees and community members and make changes to policies to allow for **ease of accommodations**. For example Zoom vs Microsoft Teams, Youtube vs Zoom for Council meetings, etc.
- **Re-evaluate the various systems and platforms being used for reservations, bookings, bill payments etc.** Ensure all platforms and systems can be easily used from mobile devices and tablets, and when possible, have them reviewed by people with differing abilities to ensure they work with assistive technology. For example the "Booking" platform for the recreation department is very inaccessible.
- **Create a standard for accessible communication.** Ensuring nothing is

emailed, mailed, posted or otherwise if it does not meet certain standards for accessibility and need.

- **Ensure that providers can confirm their product/service meets a minimum of WCAG 2.0 standards when procuring IT/Software.**
- **Create an Accessible Signage Standard.** Be sure to identify font style, size, contrast, logo placement, and the use of universally recognized icons for accessibility features.
- **Ensure clear, easy to read, eye-level floor plans/maps/wayfinding signage is available for all built space.** Providing wayfinding for both indoor and outdoor built environments supports informed decision making. These can also be made available online if and where applicable.

Opportunities/Recommendations:

- Involve the Cape Breton Regional Municipality Accessibility Advisory Committee in guiding these policies. The committee consists of staff as well as knowledgeable community members who have the capacity to lead these conversations.
- Available technology exists for interactive, accessible digital boards where information can be shared, wayfinding is made accessible, events, business hours, and contact information can be readily available. Consider a digital interface where information can be provided and updated in real-time. It could become an asset to everyone, especially visitors.
- Offer staff training to learn how to create accessible documents. Everyone who is responsible for creating documents and/or any form of communication can be equipped with the knowledge and capabilities to create them in all formats.
- Provide information about provincial and federal resources for financial support for assistive technology so the community can have improved access to communication.

5.5 AWARENESS AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Commitment:

The Cape Breton Regional Municipality aims to foster a culture of accessibility and inclusion by facilitating the prevention and removal of barriers to participation for everyone. The Cape Breton Regional Municipality will do so by promoting awareness and acceptance throughout the Municipality.

Current Offerings: In the winter of 2021, the Municipality began forming their Accessibility Advisory Committee of community members, council and staff to address the prevention and elimination of barriers for all members of the community and to work on creating this Accessibility Action Plan. The community of CBRM has a number of community and staff advocates and experts who provide leadership and advocacy throughout the region, many of whom are on the Advisory Committee which is really positive to see. Additionally, the CBRM has a Diversity Committee and the Welcome Network in the community to help with the sense of belonging, welcome and inclusion.

Survey Overview: When asked if they would share their experiences and opinions about how to increase the accessibility of their area, if able to, 96% of respondents said they would, with 46% of respondents also stating that although they don't currently attend council meetings, they would like to. These numbers speak loudly to the fact that citizens have valuable input to shape the community and support in moving accessibility forward. 97% of respondents were residents of the CBRM. Additionally over 60% of all of the surveys were completed by individuals who self-identify belonging to at least one equity seeking group and also as being caregivers to a dependent (child, senior/parent, and/or dependent with a disability). Of those identified, citizens identified as belonging to one or more of these groups: people with disabilities (48%), women (57%), and LGBTQ2SIA (18%).

65% of those surveyed said they "disagree" or "strongly disagree" when asked if the CBRM is a community that makes all residents and guests feel welcome, including people with disabilities. This is a strong message, as the majority of respondents identify as being white, cis gendered, upper middle class, married members of the community. Although, as mentioned above, there is a diverse group of citizens in the Cape Breton Regional Municipality, this group of respondents would be considered to have a lot of social privilege and most would not typically be excluded from full participation in society. For these respondents to identify that they do not feel a sense of welcome from the CBRM we can infer two things: CBRM needs to do better, and that the community is very aware of inequity.

One respondent provided us with these closing remarks: "Accessibility is about wanting to include others in all of the activities of life. It isn't just about ramps or physical barriers. It is also about making sure that folks have a quiet space to go to during a noisy event, or that materials provided in meetings are digitally accessible so that they can be used with digital technology. Think about the barriers that people may face and then imagine it is your partner, child or parent."

Successes (What We Heard):

- The community is beginning to see that accessibility is a priority based on the

- physical adaptations and considerations in new builds that are happening.
- The community is noticing that accessibility awareness is being included in some public events and recreational activities.
- There has been a lot of good press on the CBC radio show, Ready and Able, that Cape Bretoners report hearing and recognizing the advocates and leaders from their community.
- Council meetings are available online and/or through cable tv which increases the accessibility of these meetings for some, and also makes them more available to the public.

Barriers (What We Heard):

- The community doesn't see enough representation in the region's public facing services. Additionally, there is a strong group of people committed to equity in the Region but those voices aren't necessarily represented in Council or Administration.
- Awareness has felt limited to physical accessibility only.
- Knowledge of accessibility and access related concerns vary throughout the community so there is no consistency in messaging, and limited opportunities for people with disabilities to know what to expect when accessing services.
- The social determinants of health are not met by, or accessible within, the CBRM (economic stability, neighbourhood or physical environment, education, food, community and social context, and health care system) and the impact of this on mental health and addictions is not being considered.
- Not everyone is aware that council meetings are able to be watched, or rewatched, despite their availability online and on tv. If they were more aware, they would feel more informed and engaged in community matters. Furthermore, ASL interpretation and closed captioning have to be included for all council meetings.
- There doesn't seem to be consistency in the accessibility regulations between most educational institutions and private career colleges.

Benchmarks:

- **Create a plan for learning for all levels of staff at the Cape Breton Regional Municipality** that includes anti-oppression training, emotional intelligence and/or unconscious bias, terminology, legislation, the ease of accommodation, accessible language, etc.
- **Make accessibility a financial priority.** Add it to the budget and plan how it will be addressed. Accessibility is doable but it takes planning, time and cooperation.
- **Create opportunities for all people with disabilities.** Create equity hires or committee positions to ensure inclusion of not only people with disabilities but members of all equity seeking groups.
- **Appoint a Director of Compliance or designated role to focus on accessibility compliance.** The Province of Nova Scotia will be creating compliance measures for the accessibility legislation, but, this framework has not yet been developed. In the meantime, create a designated role to review and reassess progress to date.
- **All staff to be trained in diversity and inclusion so everyone is ready, willing and able to provide inclusive services.** Some employee groups will require more in-depth training depending on the services they provide: inclusive

customer service for retailers; disability awareness for recreational staff; accessible communication for communications staff; unconscious bias for senior leaders. Training should be compulsory for all groups.

- **Ensure adequate staffing for roles that provide support.** People with disabilities and/or those who experience barriers to full participation cannot go without because service providers do not have the capacity or are not provided what they need to adapt ie. adequate staffing for day camp and recreation programs in order to accommodate children with disabilities.

Opportunities/Recommendations:

- Partner with agencies that support people with disabilities on a regular basis for events, programs, and learning opportunities and do so in the public's eye. Promote the partnerships and encourage the Cape Breton Regional Municipality community to join in.
- Encourage more employees and the AAC to get involved in the various working groups within the Province of Nova Scotia to help build the standards that will guide all goods and services within Cape Breton Regional Municipality.
- Consult with agencies and organizations supporting people with disabilities and/or people from marginalized communities when making decisions and/or creating policies to ensure they are being done without bias, and with full consideration and engagement of these communities.
- Increase awareness about mental health and intersectional barriers like food and financial insecurity, affordable housing, and support for single parents by partnering with service agencies and promoting messages and events of awareness.

5.6 TRANSPORTATION

Commitment:

The Cape Breton Regional Municipality aims to make it easier for everyone to get where they need to go throughout the Municipality and will continue to discuss options for increased accessibility and the removal of transportation barriers for residents and visitors.

Current Offerings:

The CBRM operates and maintains both Transit Cape Breton and Handi-Trans - an accessible door to door service for people requiring accessible transportation.

Overview:

The three main responses when asked about how community members travel in the Cape Breton Regional Municipality were: by car (88%), walking (81%) and cycling (19%). None of the respondents identified public transportation as their main source of transportation. They did however state that their barriers when it comes to using public transportation are routing (many areas of CBRM do not have Transit services), scheduling and availability - which seems to be a barrier for all modes of public transit - taxi, Handi-trans and Transit Cape Breton. When addressing physical barriers in relation to walking, cycling and travelling by wheelchair or electric scooter the most prominent issues are weather, routing and physical barriers. Most explained further in the comments that the physical barriers pertain to roads, sidewalks, bicycle trails and lack thereof. One respondent shared "As an international student who mostly relies on public transportation, my commute has not been the most efficient. It has been most disrupted during wintertime. I often feel like my voice is not heard by the CBRM. I have been tweeting my complaints to CBRM to no response."

Successes (What We Heard):

- Handi-Trans exists and is able to provide much needed services to those who access it.
- There are various taxi services throughout the region.
- The taxi by-laws are now being updated to make them more accessible. This would increase the number of accessible taxis in the area, alleviate the resource strain on Handi-Trans and provide more public transportation for community members.
- Transit Cape Breton is a public transit system that operates throughout many, but not all, of the Districts in the CBRM.
- There have been some sidewalk and crosswalk improvements in specific areas. For example, George Street in Sydney.

Barriers (What We Heard):

- Handi-Trans needs to expand their services, currently they do not provide services for people with cognitive disabilities due to limited resources. Taking a packed bus for folks with autism is overwhelming. "I had a student missing time regularly because they could get on a crowded bus due to their autism which affected them in not dealing well with crowds". There needs to be more accessible door to door transit, and the services need to be extended to outlying areas, this would also improve housing issues.

- We no longer use the word handicapped, and shortening the word transit to trans is not acceptable language for an accessible transportation service - the "Handi-Trans" name needs to change.
- Taxis don't travel to all areas and very few are wheelchair accessible.
- Calming measures, lower speed limits, and the removal of some street side parking is needed on traffic heavy streets as it is unsafe to get to and from parked vehicles; for travelling vehicles to see pedestrians trying to cross, for cyclists, and for those using powered chairs/scooters who have to drive on the road as the sidewalks are not passable.
- There is no consistency of sidewalk placement in the downtown areas, residential areas, or connecting downtown areas to outlying communities and vice versa. Inadequate access or availability of multi-use trails which would provide improved connectivity for adjoining communities into the core of Sydney, improve active transportation and quality of life for many who need access to safe walkways and bike passageways in order to exercise daily.
- There are not enough designated accessible parking spots, and those that are available do not have accessibility features: spaces are not clearly marked, are not large enough to accommodate vehicles with lifts and ramps, do not have cut-outs in curbs when roadside and do not provide safe passage to amenities.
- Unable to bike on most roadways, especially King's Road. Cyclists and motorists cannot share the road using the 1 metre rule, and there are no safe places to lock and store a bicycle in public places.
- Little enforcement done to ensure that accessible parking is only used by permitted vehicles on CBRM property.
- Inconsistent and unreliable snow removal on roads, sidewalks and crosswalks. Sidewalk curb cuts need to be properly cleared for someone using a mobility device to be able to get off of the sidewalk and cross the street.

Benchmarks:

- **Ensure access to accessible, affordable public transportation.** The Cape Breton Regional Municipality needs to provide improved access to public transportation for the entire municipality both through Transit Cape Breton and Handi-Trans.
- **Ensure that any new development includes designated accessible parking spaces.** (see appendix for parking examples)
- **Ensure that safe travel is made a priority for the Cape Breton Regional Municipality.** Connect the main amenities of stores, recreational facilities and outdoor spaces with well lit and clearly marked pathways to encourage the use of the spaces and promote active transportation, aligning with the Active Transportation Plan.

Opportunities/Recommendations:

- **Create a campaign to increase awareness and acceptance about Accessible Parking.** Using social media to reach (and continuously) educate the public to be kind and respect accessible parking, explaining that these spaces are for people with all forms of disabilities and that there is a high percentage of our population who require them, and very limited spaces available in general.
- **Communicate clearly and openly about snow removal.** Inform the community of snow removal plans before storms hit, remind them of how to 'track the plow' if

this service is available in your area, provide minimal timelines to ease expectations and be open and honest about resources. For example, "We're expecting 15 cm of snow Thursday, it is our goal to have the areas of A,B,C cleared by 8am, D,E,F cleared by Thursday evening and G&H at the latest on Friday afternoon. Please prepare accordingly for the upcoming snow. If you need assistance please contact 311 for support and resources in your area. Remember you can visit [x link](#) to view the plow tracker in your area."

5.7 EMPLOYMENT

Commitment:

The Cape Breton Regional Municipality aims to lead as accessible and equitable employers, by making the Municipality an accessible workplace and supporting people with disabilities in finding and maintaining meaningful employment.

Current Offerings:

The Cape Breton Regional Municipality has a dedicated team of full-time, part-time, and seasonal employees as well as elected officials. There are many divisions and departments and many staff who are unionized and many who are not.

Overview:

Just under half of the survey respondents feel that there is available employment for them in the CBRM, and it is notable to mention that just under half of the respondents identify as a person with a disability. We have no way of knowing if these individuals are those who feel there is available employment for them in the CBRM but the possibility is encouraging. When asked about their knowledge around the employment supports that are available for them in the area, 97% of respondents said they are aware that these services exist.

Successes (What We Heard):

- The Municipality has a Diversity Committee which can address inequities in the workplace.
- 30% of survey respondents said they are aware of inclusive and accessible workplaces in the area. We've heard about individuals from Crossroads work seasonally at the Port of Sydney.
- There are a number of employment support organizations in the area for example: Nova Scotia Works, Breton Abilities, Crossroads, etc.

Barriers (What We Heard):

- Lack of transportation limits ability to find, and maintain employment.
- The built environments of the municipality owned and privately owned buildings are not accessible to everyone. This inaccessibility creates barriers to employment for many. This is especially true for many areas within the City Hall Building and the various locations of the CBRM Regional Libraries.
- Employers do not understand what it means to be accessible or to provide accommodations so most feel screened-out if they disclose they require an accommodation.

Benchmarks:

- **Train all current employees, provide onboarding materials around inclusion and accessibility for all new employees, and put policies in place to process issues and concerns should they arise.** Equity, Diversity and Inclusion training is not only an asset for organizational structures like the Cape Breton Regional Municipality, it is required and should be included alongside other necessary operational costs. There will be an initial expense but future costs can be reduced by finding a method that works like online training modules.
- **Ensure recruitment, hiring, and career development processes are**

accessible to all marginalized groups. Revisit and revise hiring policies, job descriptions, and inclusion and diversity policies within Cape Breton Regional Municipality.

- **Update policies for managers to include the duty to provide reasonable accommodations.** Explore what accommodations would look like, and promote your policy throughout. There are likely employees who are not aware they could ask. Consider including provisions for working from home to allow for increased accommodations for staff.
- **Improve access to all built environments** to ensure employees are able to access washrooms, workspaces, common rooms etc.

Opportunities/Recommendations:

- Partner with organizations like reachAbility to create online or in-person modules for continued learning around Equity, Diversity & Inclusion for Cape Breton Regional Municipality employees.
- Partner with agencies that represent people with disabilities and marginalized communities when hiring and commit to equity hires.
- There are financial supports through various levels of grant funding streams that provide financial support for infrastructure, training and wage subsidies for the Municipality and for business. **See appendix for Funding Resources.**
- Provide resources to employers/businesses in the area on how to be inclusive. Host and promote free training sessions (online or in person) and/or promote other organizations free training resources to increase awareness of accessibility and inclusion and show that the Municipality sees EDI as a priority.

6.1 BUILT ENVIRONMENT ACCESSIBILITY SCAN

Overview

When considering the accessibility of the built environment it is important to consider Universal Design - *“Universal Design is the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability. An environment (or any building, product, or service in that environment) should be designed to meet the needs of all people who wish to use it.”*² In order for a space to achieve universal design it needs to have:

- Equitable Use: useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.
- Flexibility in Use: accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.
- Simple and Intuitive Use: easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level.
- Perceptible Information: communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.
- Tolerance for Error: minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.
- Low Physical Effort: can be used efficiently and comfortably and with a minimum of fatigue.
- Size and Space for Approach and Use: appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of user's body size, posture, or mobility.

Most simply put, universal design ensures that anyone and everyone can use a space in a dignified manner. It is through this lens, with the guidance of the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification, that we have reviewed the built environment of the CBRM.

Our Built Environment Scans took place between February 22nd and 25th, 2022. We have listed all of the built spaces we visited. We were able to experience most locations fully, however some buildings were closed at the time of our arrival and/or unavailable to arrange an internal tour. We have included a categorized list of the spaces we visited and for each category we have provided a thorough scan of this space. Specific references and images are provided for each of the spaces, when necessary, in Section 7.0.

When scanning built environments, whether indoor, outdoor or a combination of built and natural space as observed in parks, there are a number of key aspects that we consider:

² National Disability Authority, 2020. <https://universaldesign.ie/What-is-Universal-Design/>

Buildings & Indoor Built Space

- Entrances/Exits, Passageways and Rooms: consider transitions, doors, wayfinding, welcome & inclusivity, location, safety, lighting, noise, logic, fixtures, flooring.
- Furniture & Layout: consider height, depth, leg clearance, arm height, floor design, obstacles, ability, inclusivity, noise, logic, fixtures.
- Stairs/Ramps: consider height, depth, transitions & colours, railing height, diameter, shape, locations and availability, wayfinding, landings, overhang, obstacles.
- Elevators: consider dimensions, door width, mirrors, wayfinding and signage, sounds, buttons, button height, braille, location, availability, flooring.
- Washrooms: consider availability & location, signage, wayfinding & identifying labels, stall width and turn radius, toilet (width/back), height of fixtures, sink (height/insulated pipes/clearance), amenities within reach, doors, buttons, handles and locks, coat hooks, changing tables.
- Parking: consider availability & location, signage, wayfinding & identifying markings (sign on pole/painted space), curb cuts, space width and length, vicinity to other spaces.
- Other considerations: additional amenities not typical of all spaces, added accessibility features like publicly accessible mobility devices (chairs, walkers, scooters), general concerns.

Parks & Playgrounds

- Entrance/Exit: consider transitions, gates, wayfinding and signage, welcome & inclusivity, location, safety.
- Passage Ways: consider pathways, transitions, wayfinding, inclusivity, location, safety, material.
- Rest areas: consider structure, layout, frequency and location, transitions, wayfinding, welcome & inclusivity, safety, noise, furniture/fixtures, leg clearance, wheelchair accessibility.
- Equipment: consider material, durability, transitions and contrast, height, design, obstacles, ability, inclusivity, noise, logic, variety of activities.
- Stairs/ladders: consider height, depth, transition textures & contrast, railing height, railing diameter & shape, railing locations and availability, wayfinding, landings, overhang/toe kick, obstacles.
- Washrooms: consider availability & location, signage, wayfinding & identifying label, stall width and turn radius, toilet (width/back), height of fixtures, sink (height/insulated pipes/clearance), amenities within reach, doors, buttons, handles and locks, coat hooks, changing tables.
- Parking: consider availability & location, signage, wayfinding & identifying markings (sign on pole/painted space), space width and length, curb cuts, vicinity to other spaces.

Trails

- Entrance/Exit: consider transitions, gates, wayfinding, welcome & inclusivity, location, safety
- Passage Ways: consider pathway, transitions, wayfinding, welcome & inclusivity, location, safety, material.

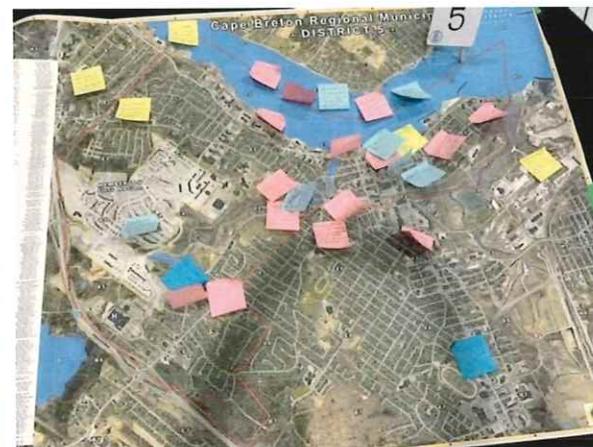
- Rest areas: consider structure, layout, frequency and location, transitions, wayfinding, welcome & inclusivity, safety, noise, furniture/fixtures, leg clearance, wheelchair accessibility.
- Amenities: consider water, bike support (air/repair), lighting, proximity to emergency help/telephone, durability, wayfinding, obstacles, ability, inclusivity.
- Washrooms: consider availability & location, signage, wayfinding & identifying label, stall width and turn radius, toilet (width/back), height of fixtures, sink (height/insulated pipes/clearance), amenities within reach, doors, buttons, handles and locks, coat hooks, changing tables .
- Parking: consider availability & location, signage, wayfinding & identifying markings (sign on pole/painted space), space width and length, curb cuts, vicinity to other spaces.

6.2 Mapping Engagement

Summary

During the engagement sessions conducted throughout the CBRM as well as the social media mapping engagement campaign, we gathered input from the citizens of the area on barriers, successes, and opportunities, in the 12 districts throughout CBRM. During our in-person engagement sessions, attendees were asked to write on sticky notes of differing colours indicating successes (blue), barriers (pink), and opportunities (yellow) and asked to place them on large printed out maps of the different districts within the CBRM. The responses were then collected, along with the submissions from the online #CBRMaccess social media mapping engagement campaign.

These are some photo examples of the in-person mapping project that took place. During each engagement, the district maps were placed throughout the room and attendees engaged in discussion while placing their comments on the maps:



District 1

Successes:

Monroe Park has a few pieces of accessible playground equipment like an accessible double swing.

Barriers:

The entrance to Emera Centre was noted in successes as it has good contrast, this will need to be redone in better weather conditions as it is starting to fade.

Opportunities:

Munroe Park could be greatly improved by updates to the boardwalk and increased path markings.

District 2

Successes:

There was mention of an upcoming Accessible National Sailing race hosted by the Northern Yacht Club, which was considered a success.

Barriers:

Most of the barriers focused on Emera Centre Northside which included: a lack of contrast on the steps, the height of the sinks and paper towel/soap dispensers in the bathroom, and the signage on the bathroom that could be improved. The majority of the barrier notes mentioned the key operated within the Emera Centre to reach the upstairs. This lift is only accessible by key and the key is not kept close by the elevator for ease of access.

Opportunities:

Munroe Park could benefit from better signage and wayfinding to increase accessibility.

District 3

No suggested areas of improvement for municipal properties.

District 4

Successes:

There were multiple parks and trails in this area that were mentioned as successes including: the well groomed #2 trail, the well used and accessible 18km recreation route in Coxheath/Sydney River/Howie Centre/Blackett's Lake, The Westmount Murphy Road side walking loop, and the Cantley Village Park.

Barriers:

Major barriers surrounded a lack of sidewalks and safe crossing in a lot of pedestrian and high traffic areas, for example The Westmount Road to Sydney Port area. This causes most areas to be inaccessible by foot. Another major barrier listed was the lack of public transportation and connectivity between communities, creating difficulty accessing important goods and services. There is a food desert in Edwardsville and Westmount that is heightened by lack of transportation or safe walking passageways to other communities.

Opportunities:

There were many opportunities within parks and recreational spaces noted: Cantley Village Park could benefit from more seating and their baseball field could use some minor updates for accessibility, the #2 trails could have some improved signage,

increased lighting on the Vince Muise Walking trail would improve visibility and extend hours of use, and the Sydney River Tennis courts could benefit from improved access via the parking lot. There were also a few opportunities listed for new pathways, sidewalks, and recreational spaces. These included: A multi-use trail by the old train tracks parallel to Kings Road, a pedestrian bridge that could connect communities at the bottom of the Waterview, sidewalks to increase safety in the Coxheath subdivisions, crosswalk lights at major crossings and in heaving pedestrian areas, and a trail connecting the community to the new NSCC campus would improve accessibility and active transportation.

District 5

Successes:

Schools in this area, specifically the Whitney Pier Memorial Jr High, have been doing a good job of making efforts toward accessibility. It was mentioned that the social media and newsprint in this area are excellent but that it doesn't reach everyone. A few areas were noted for their success in upgrading crosswalks (Geroge and Prince) and adding bike lanes and traffic control (Membertou). A few recreation areas were noted as well: The accessible players entrance at Centre 200, the boardwalk in Sydney, and the new changes to Wentworth Park.

Barriers:

Transportation was frequently mentioned in this area, including: The cycle route maps not being accessible through mapping apps, a significant lack of transit due to coverage and run times, and the lack of a pedestrian trail throughout. There were also a number of barriers mentioned in relation to sidewalks (missing or in poor condition), snow clearing, traffic control, safe crossings and crossing lights, as well as safe bike lanes throughout the entire area - even in "priority areas". Barriers within Centre 200 were also frequently noted including: The stairs from the street aren't painted with contrast, there are no signs to indicate the exits inside of the bathrooms by the main entrance, there are no rails on the stairs to the stadium seating, and the "main entrance" on both sides of the building are not accessible. There were also a few barriers mentioned within Wentworth park that include: Missing rails for stairs in the gazebo area, and no signage for wayfinding or stating what is available within the park.

Opportunities:

Opportunities for District 5 included: Ensuring more accessible and safe pedestrian access around roundabouts (will have to consult with the Province), increasing the Handi-Trans services to serve more citizens, and better communication from the community would help with a lot of issues. Some opportunities for recreation spaces included: having more wheelchair accessible washrooms available in public spaces and restaurants, and increasing the maintenance of the boardwalk to improve accessibility.

District 6

This area included barriers noted for most of the sidewalks in the district, as well as the lip from the curb to the road causing a barrier.

District 7

In this area, there is a lot of promotion for sledge hockey which is a major success. It was also noted that there is an accessible beach.

District 8

Barriers:

In this area there were a few barriers mentioned including schools and parks, it was noted that no schools or parks in the area were fully accessible and often required segregation from friends/classmates when being accessed by someone with a physical disability.

Opportunities:

An opportunity that was presented in this area was some improvement to the lighthouse trail to incorporate an accessible system like that at Peggy's Cove, Nova Scotia.

District 9

Successes:

A few successes mentioned funding, such as the Hub Club Accessibility Funding, and the Reserve Fire Hall Funding. The Miner's Museum and Village was notable, with the biggest success being the accessible fishing area in Glace Bay.

Barriers:

The biggest barriers in this area surrounded lack of sidewalks and crosswalks, accessible features to sidewalks, and accessible parking.

Opportunities:

The opportunities listed in this area all commented on accessible infrastructure and accessible entrances to goods and services. It was also noted that more crossing lights at crosswalks would go a long way in increasing accessibility and safety.

District 10

Successes:

Many recreational activities and spaces were mentioned, including: the accessible equipment at the Dominion playground, the walking basketball program, the sledge-hockey program, the updates to the Union Street Legion, the Glace Bay Minor Forum (including lighting, contrast on walls, bathrooms, entrance, and more), The Glace Bay Library, and the barrier free fishing platform. A few other accessible spaces were mentioned such as the Police Station, the Food Bank, and the community garden.

Barriers:

Many barriers mentioned in this area related to lack of sidewalks, physical inaccessibility of stores and other goods and services, inaccessibility and poor maintenance of walking trails and parks, and the road lines and safety. The lack of mental health and other health services was also mentioned as a major barrier.

Opportunities:

Many opportunities mentioned access to information and communication, including: Increasing the forms of communication to include print options allowing for more access, including a "read aloud" or "audio" button on websites for ease of access, and increasing partnerships and connections with community groups to better disseminate information. Many opportunities also listed small changes to physical built space that would increase accessibility like making gender neutral bathrooms, using more durable paint or markers for contrast, updates to frequently visited parts, and adding quiet spaces.

District 11*Barriers*

A few barriers in this area that were mentioned included a lack of accessible taxis, lack of accessibility to the accessible transit service, and inaccessible library and other public spaces.

Opportunities

The opportunities provided in this area focused on physical spaces, like sidewalk updates and doorway clearance, but also included more accessible information like font changing the access to information pages as well as captioning and ASL on public meetings.

District 12*Barriers:*

In this area, the Mall was identified as containing a lot of physical barriers within the indoor space and entrances. It was also noted that the maintenance of public parks and walkways was a barrier.

Opportunities:

It was noted that some changes to the boardwalk would be a great opportunity for an accessible trail.

6.3 Community Halls and Centres, and Recreation Centres

- Glace Bay Miners Forum
- Recreation Centre Indian Beach/Indian Beach Complex
- Northside Community Pool
- Coxheath Recreation Centre
- Emera Centre
- Centre 200

Featured Building: **Glace Bay Miners Forum**

Entrances/Exits: There are a number of entrances at the front of the building, and therefore the main entrance isn't easily identifiable. All entrances have adequate curb cut outs for easy access from the parking lot. Two of the entrances are ground level and do not require stairs or ramps. One of the entrances, which appears to be the players entrance, has three stairs with a gradually elevated walkway that leads from the sidewalk to the door. We believe the elevation of this is less than 12" (300 mm) and, if this is the case, a railing is not required but a defined edge for cane detection is recommended. The entryway has motion sensed automatic glass doors which have two panes of glass separated by the metal framing of the door, providing adequate contrast. We would suggest adding the "automatic doors" sticker to the top panels for visitors to be fully aware that the doors are automatic as well as to add additional contrasting. It's notable to mention that the optional/emergency exits that we found were all ground level push doors without door opener buttons, and these buttons wouldn't work in most emergencies. The doors were light enough to be pushed open with ease.

The name of the facility has changed since Google and GPS were updated so we had a bit of a challenge finding the space, even with the wayfinding signage throughout Glace Bay.

Passage Ways: The lobby area is open and bright with minimal clutter. Upon entering, you can proceed, left, where you are met with stairs and a ramp to access washrooms and the community room, or right, where you are also met with a ramp and a small set of stairs to enter into the lobby area and proceed to the rink and the Pit Shop (Glace Bay Miners merch store). The doors to the community room had long vertical automatic door opener buttons, which was great to see, however they didn't have much contrast from the wall colour so they weren't easily identifiable. Additionally, all of the stairs and ramps lacked contrast and tactile indication at the beginning and end, as well as on each step. In the lobby, we were greeted by a table of cheerful volunteers checking Covid vaccinations and their set up was not intrusive of the space. Other than this group of volunteers, it was not clear if there was a welcome desk area/box office space.

It is important to keep unnecessary items out of pathways so as to not impede the passageway for people who are blind, visually impaired, or who use a mobility device that may need a specific turn radius. The passageways have ample built space for the public to move in both directions. We encourage using caution when using rugging to create walkways as they can create tripping hazards for people who are blind or who are visually impaired if not properly placed.

The doors we saw all had handles and all opened the same way - they were pulled from the outside and pushed from the inside. Directional arrows for wayfinding are needed, and more of the well contrasted signs need to be everywhere. If you were a new visitor to the centre, there is little support in finding where you need to go.

Fire extinguishers weren't properly encased or partially recessed in the walls as they should. Visual and audible fire alarms were visible throughout the building. The AEDs were too high on the walls and should be lowered to no more than 1100mm in height for accessibility.

Rooms: The community space we visited was very accessible. The tables and chairs were all at reasonable heights for accessibility, we would suggest having some chairs that have arms on them for folks who require some more stability when using a chair. The lights were adjustable, which is very helpful for individuals with visual impairment, and the noise baffling throughout the space was great for any audience and especially for those with sensory needs.

The lounge area was open and barrier free, using the same types of seating as the community room, and features a large viewing area to overlook the hockey rink. The windows for viewing were at a great height, ensuring anyone could see from a seated or standing position. We were unable to visit the changing rooms or the pathway to them, but we would advise to ensure that this space allows for 1000mm of clear width for path of travel with room for a 1700mm turn radius. The Pit Shop is a bright, clean and uncluttered space, however the display table in the middle of the space makes the turn radius and passageway inconveniently narrow for anyone using a mobility device. We would also suggest using caution when placing clothing racks, balloons, etc outside of the space as it could get into the pathway of someone who can't see it, or impede on the turn radius and passageway of someone using a mobility device.

There was an event happening on the rink, so we were unable to enter. We did take a look around and noticed that although there is contrast on the stairs to the arena seating, there doesn't seem to be any tactile indication and there is only a railing on one side of the stairs. We didn't see any indication of accessible seating or where it could be found.

Furniture & Layout: We can't recall seeing any benches or rest areas throughout the lobby space or in the walkways. We would suggest that there be some seating for those who need to rest along the route, ensuring that it is at a reasonable height, available with and without arms for varied support. The seating area in the lounge has tables and chairs that are easily moveable and at accessible heights, however the bar height and seating of the TALO on Ice lounge space is too high. It is important to remember that tables/desks need to be a clearance height of 685mm minimum, with a height range of 730mm-860mm, and there should be a variety of chairs - some on wheels so they can be moved without assistance, and some that are fixed or without wheels if someone with a wheelchair wishes to transfer from their chair to use the table/desk. Moreover, access to electrical outlets is imperative nowadays for communication and/or accessibility needs. Ensure that there are always seating options within proximity of available outlets.

Stairs/Ramps: The stairs located at one of the entrances, believed to be the athlete entrance, have appropriate railings available - they are proper height and diameter. There is no contrast or tactile indication on the stairs, so this needs to be added. We heard that there is an elevator at this location, however we did not see or use it. There are railings on both sides of the ramps in the lobby which are appropriate size, height and shape for accessibility. All ramps should be checked to ensure the degree of elevation is no more than 5-6%, the acceptable standard. There needs to be appropriate contrast at the beginning and end of all ramps and stairs. The lack of railings on either side of the stairs to the arena seating will impede movement on the stairs for those with some mobility issues - like seniors or people with back injuries - two railings would be ideal.

Washrooms: The washrooms on the main level are well marked with gender and accessibility. The counters and sinks are at accessible heights, ensure all toilets have backs on them and that all of the amenities (soap, paper towel, etc) are accessible (maximum 1100 mm high). **See Appendix for washroom examples.**

Parking: There were at least four appropriately sized accessible parking spaces at the front of the building with clearly marked pathways to all entrances from the parking lot and curb cut out access. The parking spaces do not have adequate markings, they only have the ground markings, they require posted signs as well. **See Appendix for accessible parking examples.**

6.4 Municipal Buildings

- Cape Breton Regional Municipality City Hall
- Recreation Centre/Maintenance Building

Featured Building: Cape Breton Regional Municipality - City Hall

Entrance/Exit: In order to access the main entrance, visitors cross a large brick walkway that connects the City Hall with Esplanade and the side streets surrounding the building. This space has a number of access points, two of which are inaccessible staircases without contrast, tactile indicators or appropriate railings. Anyone with a mobility impairment can only access this area at ground level if they travel up the sidewalk to the ground level access point. The entrance leads immediately to other doors, and is not very welcoming. There is signage on the glass windows of the doors identifying the automatic door opener. We would suggest moving the door opener button as it is hidden and difficult to locate.

There is a rear entrance for staff only which requires a badge/key for entrance. This entrance is not accessible as it requires staff to use stairs from the rear parking lot. The flooring is laminate tile with a low tight carpet used to create a pathway between the two entrances creating a space to provide some anti-slip surface.

There are a number of other entrances/exits in the building. The emergency exit from Council Chambers is a spiral staircase that brings the user outside on the main level. There are two other entrances/exits in the basement that have strange layouts, one a ramp and stair combination (neither are built to standard) leading to a large lip when exiting the door, with no way for someone in a wheelchair to independently exit or enter. It is suspected this exit/entrance is meant for loading and unloading, however, the layout is inaccessible and somewhat dangerous. The other entrance/exit leads to the underground parking lot which has a step required to enter/exit. This underground parking space is not well organized and doesn't have clear passageways to get from your vehicle to the entrance.

Passageways: Hallways are an appropriate width, except in some office spaces like the planning office where there is too much clutter and cubicle placement making the passageway too narrow. Passageways need to allow for 1000mm of clear width for path of travel with room for a 1700mm turn radius.

Signage used to identify areas and office spaces have good contrast and are of a good sized font. There are a variety of signs/postings throughout City Hall, especially in the bathrooms, that place the CBRM logo behind the font, making them hard to read and reducing the accessibility of the sign. There are a number of mailboxes/file holders hanging in the hallways next to office doors which need to be removed as they reduce the space of the passageway and are dangerous obstacles for individuals who are visually impaired or blind.

Fire extinguishers were a bit too high. Visual fire alarms were visible throughout the building. Fixture height may be too high - all fixtures and amenities should be at an accessible standard height of 1100mm for all standard items such as fire extinguishers, light switches, paper towel, soap, etc, with fire alarms at 1200mm. Door knobs should

all be replaced with door handles and door swings should all go the same way - either all push, or all pull - from the outside.

Rooms: The Council Chambers room has a number of accessibility issues to address. It is inappropriate to prop a wheelchair user at the top of a very small ramp in order to watch the council meetings. Separating an individual from the rest of the audience is wrong, and perching them unsafely on a landing at the top of a ramp without a turn radius or any space to move around is dangerous. The chairs for the seated audience are all fixed to the floor and they should be able to be moved to accommodate further accessible floor level seating. The space allotted for councillors on the main level is too narrow, there is not ample passageway behind the seats for someone in a wheelchair or using a mobility device to pass behind those already seated. This could be alleviated by shortening the plexiglass dividers and eliminating how they overstretch into the passageway. The podium or counter space where a member of the public addresses council is too high and needs to be lowered to between 750-850 mm. There are steps to get up to where the staff and Mayor sit, these spaces should be accessible to everyone. The large CBRM logo in the middle of the Chamber's floor needs to have a smooth transition around its outer edge, adding a rubber nosing commonly used in flooring would rectify this. The control room for the council chambers has a step up to get inside. A ramp could be included in this small space after modifying the door to pull open instead of pushing inward and replacing the step with a ramp. It was nice to see the adjustable lighting.

The office spaces on level 1 were very cluttered, leaving little to no passageway or clearance. Other offices had lots of space to allow for appropriate turn radius and passageways. Some of the office space would benefit from furniture removal, as the extra seating spaces and pieces of furniture that are not essential to the functioning of the space reduce space for an adequate turn radius. The keypad for staff access needs to be lowered to be no more than 1100 mm high. Filing cabinets are too high, they should not be any higher than 1100 mm either. The boardrooms and community rooms had tables at accessible heights and chairs (with wheels) that could easily be removed to create more space. We would suggest adding a few chairs to each meeting space that do not have wheels for those with mobility issues who require a stable chair. Additionally these spaces had minimal other furniture or clutter which made them open and accessible.

Furniture & Layout: As mentioned, the tables and chairs in publicly used rooms (board and community rooms) meet accessibility needs but we would suggest adding a few sturdy chairs without wheels for safe transferring and/or someone who requires a sturdy chair to get in and out of. The chairs in the council chambers are all at a good height, are sturdy and have good leg clearance for mobility assistance. We recommend providing a variety of seating - some with and without arms - to accommodate varying needs. The seating arrangement for the media is not inclusive as the attached desktop is not friendly for people of all sizes and abilities.

Office furniture is reasonable. Desks are mainly L shaped and have good leg clearance. Office chairs are on wheels which is helpful with moving around the desk area. The counters in the tax and billing space on the main level are too high at 43", they need to

be lowered to between 750-850 mm. The counter for the commissionaires booth is also much too high. The chairs available in the visitor waiting area are adequate.

Stairs/Ramp: As mentioned there is ground level access to the main public entrance/exit along with two sets of stairs. The stairs are not accessible as there is a lip at the bottom, they do not have appropriate railings, and they do not have contrast or tactile indication on them. We would recommend that this whole area be entry level and the stairs be removed. This space already causes barriers for those with mobility issues as the brickwork is difficult to walk on. The stairs inside the building need better contrast and tactile indication. The emergency exit stairs from the Council Chambers would be nearly impossible to carry someone down with their spiral layout. The hand rails on all stairs need to have a definitive end where the railing turns down at the last step, indicating to the user, whether they can see or not, that the stairs have ended.

Elevators: There are standard size elevators that access all levels of the building. Button height is appropriate and accessible, the buttons are black with silver numbers, providing black and white contrast would be helpful, and the railings are adequate in the elevator. There are no mirrors on the back walls, they should be added for improved accessibility. The floors of the elevators were non-slip which was nice to see.

Washrooms: Bathrooms didn't have L shaped or vertical bars for transfer, only horizontal. Not all amenities (soap, paper towel etc) are at accessible heights. Every bathroom we entered had a different layout. The bathrooms can easily be made accessible by switching the location of the stall with the non-accessible stall OR making them single use bathrooms to allow for more space and turn radius. None of the bathrooms had door opener buttons or door stops. The doors were a reasonable weight. The sinks would be accessible if the front plate was removed (there is a piece of wood going across the front of all of the sinks that prevents accessible leg clearance) and the pipes were covered with insulating materials. In almost every bathroom entrance way there was a garbage disposal in the entry way limiting the width of the passageway. These all need to be removed.

Parking: There was one wheelchair parking spot available in front of the building. There is not enough space streetside for this to be a truly accessible parking space. We suggest creating an inlet in the sidewalk area to make a more accessible street side parking spot that is wider and longer for true accessibility. The parking spots need to be properly marked with visible ground painting, a posted sign as well as appropriate curb cut outs. We were informed of additional accessible parking spots in the rear and underground parking lots, however there is no accessible entrance to the building except through the front. There should be more than one accessible parking space within close proximity of the main entrance. There are no identifiable pedestrian walk-ways from the public parking spaces at the rear of the building to the entrances.

Other notes: Great artwork in parts of the building, if this was continued throughout it would add a very welcoming feel for all community members. We were happy to see maps and floor plans easily accessible in the lobby area. The AED was clearly labelled and at a reasonable height. There are lots of signs throughout the building however they are mostly taped to the walls and not consistently placed.

6.5 Libraries

- WW Lewis Memorial Library
- Glace Bay - Cape Breton Regional Library
- James McConnell Memorial Library
- New Waterford Library - Urban Centre

Featured Building: **New Waterford Library - Urban Centre**

Entrance/Exit: There are two entrances, one roadside which has zero accessibility and one on the back side of the building in the parking lot. The "main" entrance does not have door openers, and immediately upon entering you are met with a set of stairs. The stairs do not have adequate contrast or tactile indicators. The entrance leads you to an open space with the reception desk at your right and the entrance to the library area ahead of you. The reception desk was a nice low level workspace with many smiling librarians.

Passage Ways: There were a few directional arrows visible on the floor which support accessibility, especially in areas that are not wide enough for visitor traffic to move in both directions. The passageway through the library area was very cluttered and narrow with many obstacles. The only area without an obvious barrier for a passageway is the hallway leading to the back entrance/exit which holds the community computer access space. The library space was crowded with tall turnstyle book racks and shelving, as well as large 6 foot long planters that took up a third of the width of the library space. There was lots of artwork throughout the library, however the wayfinding was almost non-existent. The labels for the genres of books were so small they weren't recognizable.

Rooms: The library had two sets of steps throughout, bringing you to slightly different levels of books. Each set of steps had 2 steps. The flooring was a checkerboard tile which was very hard on the eyes. The lighting was typical and just right, not too fluorescent, but clear and helpful. There was ample wide open space in the computer access space which was nice to see.

Furniture & Layout: There were a variety of chairs - some with and without arms. Desks used for the computer space may be a bit too low and don't have adequate leg clearance due to their structure - they are an older style desk that has space for the tower of the computer to tuck in under the desk. The book shelves were about 5 feet high. Having the shelving go all the way to the floor is very helpful for those who use a cane to assist in navigating a space and the height of the shelves was helpful in making the books at an accessible height, although someone in a wheelchair or using a mobility device would not be able to use this library without a lot of support.

Stairs/Ramps: There were stairs (needing railings on both sides) at the front entrance of the building. The stairs inside the library space did not have railings, contrast or tactile indication. The ramp at the rear side of the building does have an accessible door opener. The user would have to go out this door and then open another entrance with a door opener. The process of exiting through this door has a number of flooring transitions and tripping hazards because of the various pieces of flooring. Special

attention should be taken when considering the base transition to ground, as a level difference greater than ½" (13mm) poses a barrier. Once out the door you come to a very weathered concrete sidewalk type ramp with very aged railings. These railings, although adequate height and diameter, would not be usable because of the rust and flaky paint that they are covered in.

Washrooms: There was one washroom, only accessed by key. Although it is a single-use, gender neutral washroom it has a stall which makes it inaccessible. The washroom could easily be made accessible if the stall walls were removed. The bathroom did not have L shaped bars to support transferring to and from the toilet. Without removing the stall this washroom will not have adequate turn radius to ensure accessibility. The sink is not accessible because of the full vanity cabinet below the sink. Removing this and ensuring the pipes are insulated could possibly make the sink accessible.

Parking: There was one marked accessible parking space streetside in front of the building which had the ground markings and the posted sign. Otherwise, the building has a shared parking lot alongside it that has ample public parking but nothing that is designated specifically for the library.

Other notes: Wayfinding and signage would be very helpful. The staff are very friendly and knowledgeable. There is a selection of artwork that covers the wall that spans the passageway to the accessible entrance/exit that is from a local artist. This is a great archive for the community but we would recommend that it not be the only artwork on this wall. It does not represent the entire community and depicts a lot of colonial historical content.

6.6 Parks & Playgrounds

- Miners Memorial Park
- Westmount Family Park
- Cantley Village Recreation Complex (Playground)
- Sydney Mines Field Complex
- Coxheath Veterans Memorial Playground
- Wentworth Park & Bandshell

Featured Park & Playground: **Sydney Mines Field Complex**

This location was not open and we were not able to access the interior of the main buildings. We were able to review building features such as stairs/ramps/etc, but no interior spaces.

Main Entrance/Exit: The canteen and stands at the main field were reviewed and a ramp was present with two landings and an open space at the upper area. Ramp width is sufficient but tight. In future renovations, careful consideration should be given to width and size of ramps and landings to allow for improved manoeuvrability. Special attention should be taken when considering the base transition to ground, as a level difference greater than ½" (13mm) poses a barrier. A visual marker such as a colour strip could be added to indicate the transition from inclined to level surface as an aid for users with visual impairments.

The main entrance to the park area was not clearly marked, which can cause confusion for visitors as there are multiple entrances. Signage visibility could be improved, the addition of interpretive signage describing the amenities available in the park and wayfinding would be an asset to this complex.

Side/Back Entrance/Exit: The out building (Ramblers Hall) or staff building was reviewed for this portion of the assessment. A small ramp was present to gain access to the standalone building attached to the parking lot. A cane detectable edge was present and being that the level difference was less than a 12" (300mm) no protective guard/rail was required.

Passage Ways: The width of the path present at the main field between stands and fence has freestanding garbage bins placed along the pathway creating pinch points. Consideration should be taken when placing obstacles in the path of travel, especially in high traffic areas.

The biggest improvement that could be undertaken at this complex is a master plan to connect parking lots to bleachers and secondary amenities to the parking areas such as the skate park and the Miners Memorial monument. At a minimum, having a dedicated path from a parking area to the bleachers with a level surface suitable for a person in a mobility device would be a welcome addition.

Rest areas: No designated rest areas were identified. Most seating was placed around baseball fields in the form of freestanding bleachers. No pathways were present from the parking area to the outer bleachers. At the centre of the complex was the Miners

Memorial monument. No seating was present in this area and the monument could only be accessed by steps. A concrete raised platform was present; however the intended use of this space was not clear. If users are intended to access this space, a ramp and some information signage should be considered. The addition of bench seating at intervals around the park would also benefit the use of any older individuals that may not use the equipment but may accompany someone to the playground.

Equipment: The general condition of the skate park equipment was in fair to good condition. The biggest concern is getting from the parking area to the equipment itself as there was no pathway to and from any amenity present.

Rooms: *Not applicable as no access was possible.*

Furniture & Layout: Moveable furniture is present on the upper level of the bleachers area. Currently this space is accessible via ramp by wheelchair users, however there is little space on the upper level for users to situate themselves outside of the path of traffic. Designating spaces on each side of the large upper level chairs as reserved for wheelchair users would give users a safe space out of the path of traffic without removing them from the social atmosphere. (See picture 450.)

Stairs/Ramps: *Not applicable as no access was possible. Exterior features noted above.*

Elevators: *Not applicable was not present.*

Washrooms: *Not applicable as no access was possible.*

Parking: No barrier free parking was identified either by painted symbols on the ground or vertical signage. Consideration should be given to adding at least two designated spaces close to the main baseball diamond. There appears to be individual parking areas for outer ball fields as well. The addition of a designated accessible space at each of these lots would also be worthwhile. As previously noted, clearly marked barrier free parking was not identified at either of the parking lot areas. Even if parking areas are not typically congested, the addition of designated accessible parking spaces makes the entire complex more inviting and inclusive.

6.7 Trails

- Coal Town Trail
- MaryAnn Corbett Trail

Featured Trail: **Coal Town Trail**

It is an exciting time for accessibility at The Coal Town Trail. A partnership was announced in January 2022 as part of an investment of \$30,000 provided through the Canada Community Revitalization Fund (CCRF) The fund is going to support improving social interaction, physical activity and most importantly access to services. The results are two rest areas with benches, waste receptacles and bike racks - improving overall access to services.

These amenities will support the goal of transitioning the route into a multiuse trail for walkers, cyclists, horseback riders, snowshoe users and more. Most beneficial is the fact that persons with disabilities will see improved accessibility thereby encouraging more residents and visitors to feel welcome upon arriving at the Trail.

Partnership has been key in the revitalization of the Coal Town Trail. This is a great example of bringing everyone together to make a difference in your community.

In fact a group of local volunteers from The Glace Bay Revitalization Group, Velo Cape Breton, Cape Breton Roadrunners, Marconi Trails Association and local community volunteers came together with the purpose of working with the three levels of government to assess the possibility, address the problems, tackle the challenges and do whatever is needed to see this project through to completion.

There is an old railway line (Devco) running through and connecting various parts of the community. The railway line is in very good condition but currently enjoyed mostly by ATV/dirt bikes as it is not suitable for many other users at this point. With some money, dedication and support, these partners are working alongside CBRM to convert it to an able pathway for various recreational and leisure activities (as mentioned above).

The benefits of having this type of infrastructure in the community is enormous and will bring benefits to almost all residents of this area of the CBRM. Safer, greener and more accessible is the goal of this commitment.

“Strong, vibrant communities Nova Scotia are a critical part of a robust and inclusive economic recovery. Investing in shared public spaces like the Coal Town Trail through Gardiner Mines, Dominion and Glace Bay helps revitalize local economies, boosts tourism, creates jobs, and gives residents a place to come together safely. ”

- The Honourable Ginette Petitpas Taylor, Minister of Official Languages and Minister responsible for ACOA

“From providing resources and support to those who need it most, preserving local history and culture, or being a safe place to gather, community organizations play a key role in strengthening our communities. For these organizations to continue their work, they need strong infrastructure. That's why I'm so proud to be part of a Government that

understands the importance of supporting infrastructure projects for grassroots, community organizations like the Coal Town Trail Society."
- Mike Kelloway, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard and Member of Parliament for Cape Breton – Canso

As a result of the ongoing work being done to the Trail at the time of this report we are delaying the assessment to allow for the present commitment to be completed but encourage a review on the following areas: Entrance/Exit, Passage Ways, Rest Areas, Amenities, Washrooms and Parking.

6.8 Fire Halls & Police Stations

- New Glace Bay Police Station
- Sydney Mines Fire Station
- Cape Breton Regional Police Service (North Division)
- Sydney Fire Hall
- North Sydney Volunteer Fire Department

Featured: North Sydney Volunteer Fire Department

Entrance/Exit: It was hard to identify the main entrance of the facility; signage could be added to identify public access points and which access points are for personnel only. The side/back entrance/exit was not accessible as it is on the second floor of the building.

Passageways: Transition between the garage and main building was crowded and as the garage is the only way to access the facility by wheelchair (as pointed out to us by staff), having a path of travel that is free of obstructions is vital. This being the only accessible entrance could create an unsafe situation where the path of travel of a vehicle could coincide with a person trying to access the barrier free entrance.

Rooms: Transitions between rooms were consistent with no/minimal level changes within the main space. A quiet room was available for firefighters to rest. The office area had ample room for manoeuvring and would be able to accommodate a person in a wheelchair at the dispatch desk. The assembly room was cluttered and had a number of obstructions laying about. Additional storage would be an asset to this area to ensure paths of travel are clear of obstructions for persons with visual impairment. The large room (meeting space) had a number of obstacles placed inside of it. This space should not be used for storage unless proper lockers/storage changes are built within.

Furniture & Layout: Storage lockers or other means of storage should be built and fixed to walls to keep storage and items out of pathways and ensure things are kept tidy. Office furniture in the dispatch area was at accessible heights, and did not cause a barrier for turn radius or passageway.

Stairs/Ramp: The stairs did not have contrast or tactile indicators. We did not gain access to the second floor.

Elevators: *Not applicable*

Washrooms: No barrier free bathroom was present at the facility, existing facilities lack sufficient space for a person needing mobility assistance. Shower facility did not have a low profile edge.

Parking: No parking spaces were identified as accessible parking. The path of travel from either parking lot is at inconsistent heights and does not have adequate signage explaining how to enter the building if you have mobility issues. Further to this, the only accessible entrance to this facility is through the garage door as noted above.

6.9 Sidewalks, Storefronts, Signs, Public Offices

- Sidewalks and crosswalks
- Storefronts
- Signage
- Greenspace and other public areas

Feature: Commercial Street, Glace Bay



The photos to the left and below are of a small public area across the street from the Glace Bay Library. The image to the left is of a storage container that is placed in between a small public parking lot and the sidewalk/crosswalk to get to the Library.

The photo below is of an accessible picnic table also located in the same public space with a string of clear patio style lights hanging across the image. We aren't sure who this space belongs to or what community initiative created the artwork but we were happy to see the space being embraced by and for the community.

We chose to feature this area as an example of how a space can, very inexpensively, be made inclusive, and accessible. The artwork here is community building, showcasing unity, acceptance and love for the entire community of Glace Bay.



The picnic table is close to the sidewalk making it more accessible to someone in a wheelchair and provides a rest area for folks who are out and about. It also offers a place to spend some time outside at no cost, enjoying a game with your friends with minimal supplies needed. We hope when the weather is better, this place will be brought back to life, the lights restrung and perhaps more spaces like this will be found throughout the region.

6.10 Tourist Attractions & High Traffic Areas

- Joan Harriss Cruise Pavilion, Civic Centre Storefronts and Boardwalk Kiosks

Featured Tourist Attraction: **Joan Harriss Cruise Pavilion, Sydney Port & Civic Centre StoreFront**

We visited this location during the winter when the majority of the amenities were closed. Below is a partial review discussing what we were able to access of the civic centre, the restaurant area, a retail space, and the outdoor market area - while closed.

Entrance/Exit: The main entrance of the building has a large easily identifiable entrance way with an awning that reads "Joan Harriss Cruise Pavilion ". There is a very long and strangely positioned crosswalk that directs pedestrians diagonally from the sidewalk beyond the parking lot to the main entrance. To enter, visitors can use a wide set of five stairs, or take the ramp that is available to the right of the stairs. There are door openers at this entrance, however they aren't easily detected so we would suggest moving them or making them more noticeable with contrast or signage. It is a smooth transition into the entrance area where you are greeted with another set of doors (with door openers). The flooring in this space is a clay colored, textured surface for slip resistance. The doors are standard width and not too heavy, with pull handles. Once past the second set of doors, visitors enter the Civic Centre Storefront, where the flooring is a vinyl plank style flooring.

The rear entrance is a ground level entrance with motion activated doors. There is a well marked walkway for pedestrian passage to this entrance from the rear of the building. There is no lip or transition to enter. There are two other entrances/exits, both of which have ramps that do not meet code and are clearly marked stating "this door is not wheelchair accessible" followed by "accessibility is available at main entrances". We recommend that these entrances be updated to meet code or be marked as not for public use. Both of these entrances/exits lead you directly into the Civic Centre Storefront area.

Passage Ways: The Civic Centre main floor is an open space with small retail shops along the back/water side of the building, including an information centre that resembles a small lighthouse, and washrooms. The second floor is a leased space which houses Flavour on the Water, a restaurant and bar. The open concept main level provides ample room to move around without any narrow passageways. There wasn't any clutter in the footpath that could be a barrier or hazard, there isn't a lot of helpful wayfinding either. Upstairs was a circular restaurant layout of standard height with bar height tables that circles the staircase and the lighthouse information centre from the first floor. The restaurant has a separate area that is accessed through a set of double doors, this looked like a closed area when we were there so we didn't get to view it. There are also gendered washroom facilities on this level. The passageway throughout the restaurant is wide enough to accommodate an accessible turn radius and ease of access.

Fire extinguishers were clearly marked, recessed and encased in the wall as they should be, fire alarms were visible throughout the building. Fixture height may be too high, maximum height for fixtures is 1100 mm and fire alarms are 1200mm. An AED

was located in the main entrance downstairs and properly labelled, signs were properly posted upstairs with instructions on where to find the closest AED.

Rooms: Other than the main Civic Centre, there are a number of small retail shops that were closed. They all have entrances into the main Civic Centre with garage doors and regular doors that open to the outside marketplace. The retail spaces are small and contain a lot of product, so it is unlikely they would provide enough clearance for someone in a wheelchair or someone using a mobility device to move freely within their space - but we can't say for certain. The information centre/lighthouse has a large opening that allows people to enter and sit and watch a video.

On both the upper and lower level there is a patio/walkway that encircles the end of the building. This walkway is ground level without any transitions and wide enough for clear passage. There are a few seating options and pillars for structural support, none of which cause barriers for passage, however, some contrast on the pillars could be helpful for visually impaired individuals. The walkway on the main level leads you to the platform retail vendor space with ground level access to the shops contained within the Civic Centre. On the water side of the platform were small multi-coloured huts containing more retail shops, with ramp access on both sides of them. Again, these shops are quite small so we would assume they would not provide an adequate turn radius and wide enough passageways but without access we can't confirm. This retail platform is wooden and could be difficult to maintain with varied weather conditions, adding slip resistant texturing to the platform would be recommended. The platform had uneven ground which could cause barriers and there was no defined edge. There is a small wooden ramp for shoppers to exit the platform on the far side, the railings are not to code but appropriate hand rails could be added without impeding in the passage width.

Furniture & Layout: The seating that is available throughout the Civic Centre is minimal from what we saw, however the venue was in its off season, so there may be more options during the busy season. There were a number of adirondack chairs available outside which are not easy for someone with a mobility issue to get out of without assistance, we would recommend a variety of seating. The tables and chairs in the restaurant were at accessible heights, there was bar height seating, but there was ample amount of standard height as well. The chairs and tables were easily moveable if needed. There is lots of bench seating in the information centre/lighthouse, some of which is moveable and would allow for someone in a wheelchair to enter and participate in the viewing.

Stairs/Ramps: The ramp at the main entrance had proper elevation and accessible railings (height diameter, etc), however, the railings were not continuous from the beginning of the ramp to the end so if someone were using the railing to guide them, they would walk directly into the wall. The railing must be continuous with a defined end that allows the user to know the ramp has ended. There also needs to be tactile indication and contrast at the beginning and the end of the ramp. The stairs at the main entrance are quite wide with railings on either side and there is a section that allows for someone to have access to railings on both sides. The railings are to code, but the stairs need to have contrast and tactile indication. As mentioned, the ramp around back where the retail space is requires accessible handrails, tactile indication and contrast.

The stairs inside have tactile indication built into the stairs, however, it is worn and needs to be updated with contrast and more durable tactile indication. The stairs may also be too wide and require a middle railing. Additionally, there is a small set of stairs and a ramp that lead to Pittman Hall, an event space we couldn't access. The stairs and ramp require adequate tactile indication and contrast on each level and at the beginning and the end of the ramp. **See appendix for accessible stairs.**

Elevators: The elevator was standard, accessible width with appropriate button height and contrast.

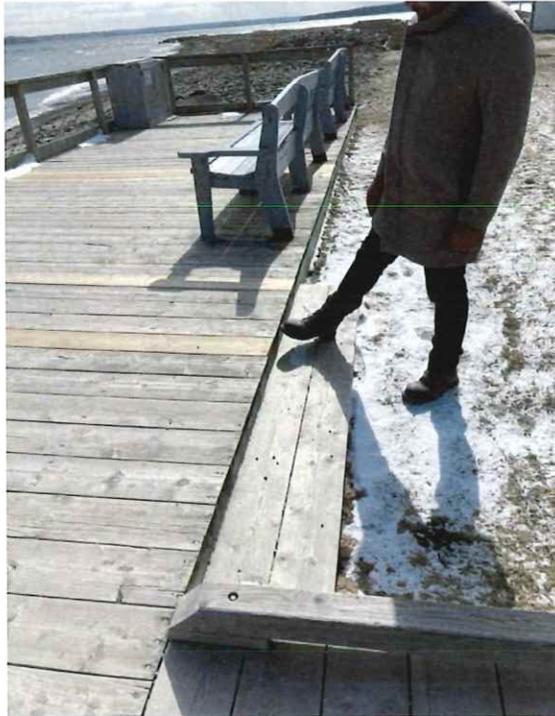
Washrooms: The main level washrooms are open access by design and do not require doors. The upstairs washrooms have doors, but no door openers and are appropriately weighted for accessibility. Both washrooms had accessible stalls. For the most part the stalls were accessible, and with the addition of an L shaped transfer bar, the stalls themselves would provide accessible access. There aren't tanks on the toilets, but there are toilet seat covers which, when open, provide back support for improved stability. The handles, coat hooks and locks on the doors are all at accessible heights and appropriate for equitable access. It is important to ensure that all amenities are at accessible heights (1100 mm maximum) and that there is knee clearance of at least 685 mm with a height range of 730mm-860mm.

Parking: The parking layout creates hazards as the pedestrian crossing intersects the driveway/roadway diagonally and there aren't any posted crosswalk or caution signs to alert cars to the pedestrian crossing. There are accessible parking spaces lining the front of the building with both painted and posted signage. These spaces are directly located next to the ramp access to the building and are ground level so they do not require curb cut outs.

Other notes: There is very little wayfinding at this location. Given that this is a multi-purpose location with a variety of destinations, wayfinding would be very beneficial to visitors for both the indoor and outdoor amenities. There are wheelchairs available for visitors to rent for the day to tour the local area. The wheelchairs are located below the stairs behind a railing which creates a perimeter around the base of the stairs so visitors do not injure themselves by walking into it.

7.0 Specific Built Environment Barriers

There are a number of accommodations and/or adaptations that can be made to the built environments throughout the Cape Breton Regional Municipality. We have provided some specific examples below:



Community Halls and Recreation Centres

Indian Beach Complex

There have been a number of accessibility considerations taken here. We want to emphasize the effort put into making this space accessible is admirable

- There are a number of small transitions that require accessible access or a cane detectable railing used.
- The pebble or gravel ground covering is inaccessible to anyone with mobility barriers.
- There are no contrasting, tactile indicators or railings on any of the stairs. These accessibility features are required no matter how small the staircase.



- The pebble or gravel ground is not a suitable ground covering around ramps as it moves when walked on, and leaves barriers and large transitions between levels as seen in the photo on the left.
- More wayfinding would be helpful, ensuring that signage has appropriate contrast.
- Some buildings have doors with door knobs, they should all be switched to have consistent door handles.
- There were no clearly marked bathrooms, however there were a number of buildings so there could have been one.
- The canteen counter is too high for equitable access.



Community Halls and Recreation Centres

Northside Community Pool

- No automatic door openers at entrance or bathrooms.
- No ramp or lift for pool entry.
- No variety of seating available in the lobby. Need some seats with arms on them to assist those with mobility impairments with stability and standing up.
- No wheelchair accessible changing room or washroom.



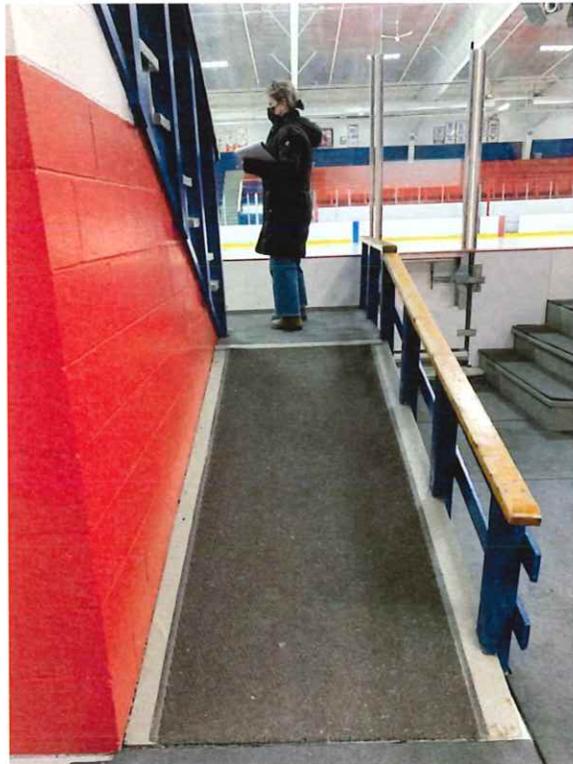
- Narrow doorways.
- Insufficient signage and wayfinding.
- A lot of clutter near the entryway.
- Heavy doors.
- Accessible viewing area for the pool, but narrow hallway with odd barriers in passageway caused by structure of wall/ductwork in order to get to the viewing area.
- Very little signage or wayfinding anywhere.



Community Halls and Recreation Centres

Coxheath Recreation Centre

- Bathroom stalls not accessible widths for accessibility and passageways do not provide enough turn radius or room for travel.
- Sinks are not accessible. Removing the trim around the front and sides of the vanity would provide appropriate knee clearance of 685 mm.
- Bathroom doorways are too heavy.



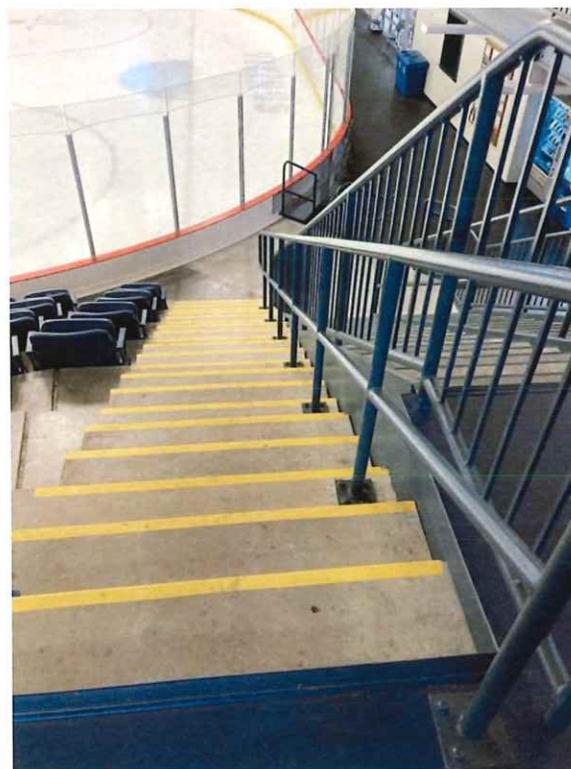
- Ramp provides access to rinkside accessible seating but ramp is not to code. The incline is above the 5-6% maximum and the railing is below the appropriate height, by almost half.
- Contrast is needed on the ramp and on all stairs.
- Changing rooms could be adapted to accommodate an accessible shower by moving the stall wall out another 8-9" which is possible to do in its current state.
- AED is too high. It is currently approximately 1700 mm high and the maximum height should be 1100-1200 mm
- The box office and canteen counters are too high.
- Stairs do not have adequate contrast, tactile indicators or railings.



Community Halls and Recreation Centres

Emera Centre

- The parking lot has designated parking spaces but do not have the required posted signage.
- Accessible lift available for visitor use. However the need to find the manager and request the key is quite inconvenient for the person needing to use it.
- Wayfinding signage has directional arrows worn off.
- Stairs to access the second level outside of the rink have railings on both sides but have insufficient contrast and tactile indication.
- Bathrooms need L shaped bars, adequate turn radius and transfer space, toilet seat covers or tanks on toilets, adequate knee clearance on sinks, amenities like soap, paper towel, etc. at accessible heights.

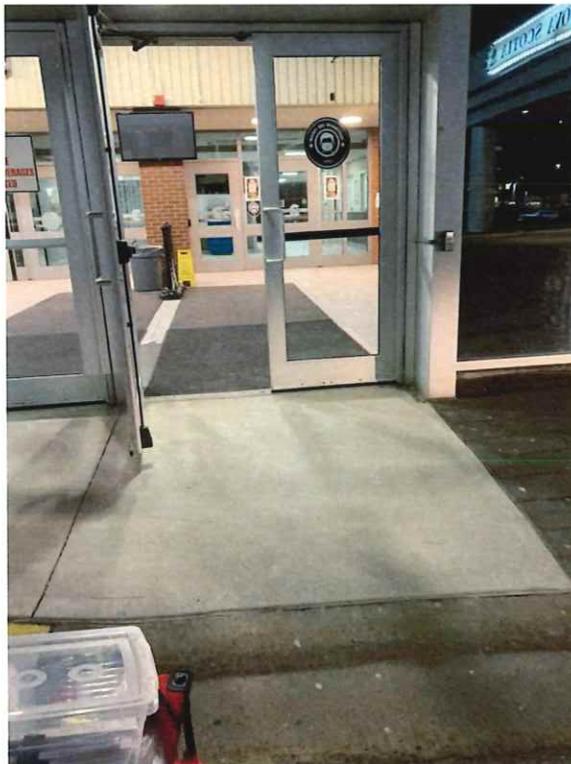


- Stairs to arena seating have adequate contrast on stairs but needs contrast at top and bottom as well. Additionally, tactile indicator strips should be replaced regularly and included at the top and bottom as well.
- The railing from the arena seating steps extends beyond the railing of the adjacent set of stairs leading to the upper level and causes a hazard for passersby, especially those with a visual impairment or blindness.
- Ramps and stairs on second level, outside of the arena space, do not have appropriate contrast or tactile indicators and the stairs don't have railings as required.



Community Halls and Recreation Centres
Centre 200

- Stairs in the arena do not all have railings equitable access.
- Stairs in the arena do not have tactile indicators.
- Accessible seating at the top of the lower bowl seating has an unsafe railing in front of it. It is less than 610 mm and the appropriate height is 920 mm.
- The box office and canteen counters are too high.
- There needs to be clear signage inside the main level bathrooms.
- Accessible bathroom stalls need toilet seats or tanks on the back for improved stability, L shaped transfer bars.



- There are no visible rinkside accessible seats.
- Rear entrance does not have door opener buttons.
- Entrance/Exit doors for the arena do not have door opener buttons.
- The main entrance has a slight incline in before the door open button and does not have enough space between the door and where the incline is for safe access.
- There is no safe passageway from the parking lot to the main entrance unless you travel from the Casino side of the building along the sidewalk, and this is a long way to walk with no rest areas.
- Wayfinding within the space could be improved.



Municipal Buildings

CBRM City Hall - Council Chambers

- Not enough space for accessible passage in the councillor seating area, plexiglass barriers impede movement.
- Councillor tables/desks barely provide enough knee clearance.
- Public seating area doesn't offer a variety of seating options.
- Podium for public speaking is too high.
- Media seating is inaccessible.

City Hall - Office Spaces

- Clutter and unused items through most of the office spaces creates inaccessible work spaces.
- Cubicles reduce flexibility in space and limit the opportunity to provide adequate turn radius.
- Narrow hallways and thoroughfare in shared office spaces, like the planning office.
- Essential items like sanitizer, soap dispensers, paper towels, sharps containers etc are mostly all at inaccessible heights.
- The Commissionaire's desk/counter is too high.
- Stairs lack contrast and adequate tactile indicators on each step and at top and bottom.
- Parking is inaccessible and unorganized.
- Muster point is inaccessible.



Libraries

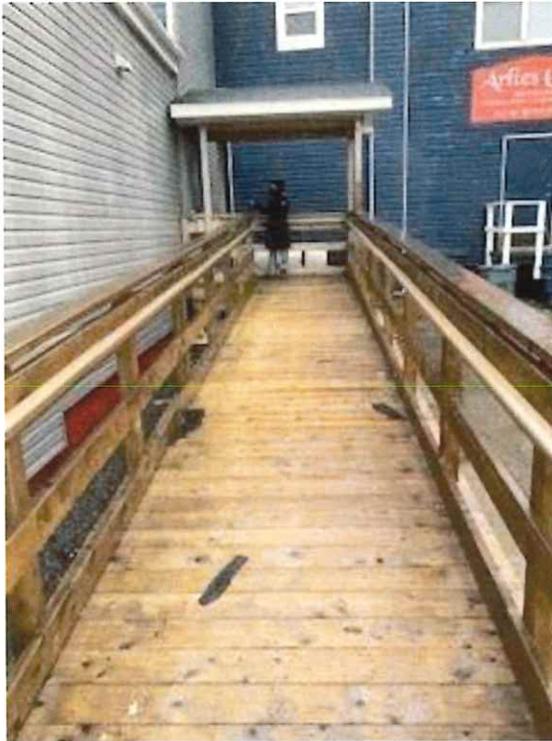
WW Lewis Memorial Library (Louisburg Library)

We were not able to enter this library as they were closed even though their posted hours said they were open. These notes are based on what we could see from outside the building.

- There is no designated parking at all for this location. There is also no sidewalk leading to this building, or on this road so users must park on the shoulder or in the driveway which would fit one car.
- There is very little signage identifying the building or the entrance.



- There is only one entrance/exit to this building.
- There is no accessible access for someone in a wheelchair or with moderate to severe mobility issues to be able to access this space.
- The stairs do not have appropriate railings, contrast on the stairs or tactile indicators.
- The yard has a few picnic tables and/or seating areas, however the "yard" is not overly accessible as it is very uneven ground.



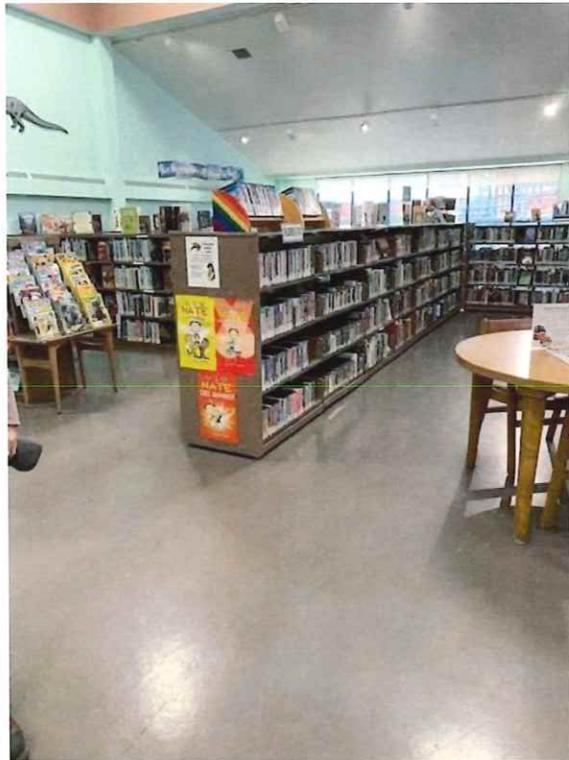
Libraries

Glace Bay - Cape Breton Regional Library

- The ramp providing accessible access to the library from the parking lot requires tactile indicators and contrast at the beginning and end of the incline. Also, due to the wooden material used for the ramp, it needs to have anti-slip material on the ramp to eliminate the risk of injury when using it when it is wet.
- There is no signage or wayfinding identifying this ramp as the accessible entrance to the library. The main entrance is on the other side of the building.
- There is no safe, identified passageway from this ramp to the parking lot/accessible parking spaces.



- The door opener button for the main entrance is not easily located and should have a sign indicating where it is.
- There is a chair in every aisle of books which causes a barrier and impedes the turn radius for someone in a wheelchair.
- Signage indicating the various genres on the shelves is not at accessible heights, nor of consistent size/font/contrast.
- Some of the bookshelves are too high.
- There were no designated accessible parking spaces visible within the parking lot to the rear of the library.
- There is another exit on one side of the building that has two stairs and a small ramp, neither of which have a railing or tactile indicators.



Libraries

James McConnell Memorial Library

- The ramp to the main entrance is too steep, the railings are not to code, and it needs a landing area for rest.
- The main library space is too cluttered to allow for accessible passageways.
- There were benches in each aisle of books causing a barrier for anyone using a mobility device or wheelchair when trying to access the books.
- Most of the bookcases were too high in the main library area and should model the same height as the bookcases in the children/youth section.
- The book sale area is too crowded for able bodied people to move around let alone someone in a wheelchair.



- The counters at the library staff work space are too high for accessibility.
- There is no elevator providing accessible access to the lower level which serves as the headquarters for the Cape Breton Regional Libraries.
- The entrance/exit to the lower level is also not accessible.
- Fire extinguishers are not encased or recessed in the wall.
- The door opener buttons for the main entrance are almost hidden in their current location and should be more clearly labelled or moved.
- The stairs and ramps inside and outside need adequate contrast and tactile indicators at the top, bottom and on all stairs.



Parks & Playgrounds
Westmount Family Park

- No signage or wayfinding explaining where to park, whether vehicles are allowed past the gate or what to expect at the park.
- Contrast used for the entry sign is not accessible for those with visual impairment.
- There are no sidewalks, crosswalks or any directional signage leading you here.



- There is no designated parking or even signage referring to parking being allowed at this location.
- The entrance from the parking lot up onto the walking trail and the fields is not accessible. It's not stable ground and is quite inclined - this could possibly be paved or the incline levelled.
- Currently there are two fields, one could easily be converted to a soccer field with the baseball field being updated so that the diamond can be used. Otherwise, we would suggest completing the fence and creating an off leash dog park for the community.
- There needs to be rest areas along the trail/path no more than 30 metres apart with ample waste receptacles also available.



Parks & Playgrounds

Cantley Village Recreation Complex (Playground)

The results of this community playground project speaks loudly to what can be done when the community and the Municipality work together.

While there are commendable accessible and inclusive components in this playground there are also some things that can and should be improved.

- There is no designated parking at all, and minimal space streetside for someone using a mobility device to safely depart their vehicle.
- There isn't any accessible seating at this playground. The addition of a variety of rest areas, including accessible picnic tables would really improve the quality of time people spend here.
- The swing sets and former playground area that are still very useful are disconnected from the new accessible playground. There needs to be connectivity between these two areas so that no one is being excluded from playing together.
- There aren't any sidewalks or crosswalks leading to this playground for those who are travelling by foot, bicycle or wheelchair.
- There are no washrooms at this location let alone accessible bathrooms.





Parks & Playgrounds

Coxheath Veterans Memorial Playground

- Contrast on signage is insufficient for individuals with low vision/visual impairment.
- Garbage receptacles are too high.
- The terrain in this area is very uneven and unstable, making it difficult to walk on and/or travel across while using a wheelchair or mobility device.
- The bridge leading to an unknown area has a transition from the ground to the structure preventing barrier-free access.



- There are no accessible play options. Someone with a physical disability who requires the use of a mobility device and/or someone who is visually impaired or blind, would have no options for independent play here.
- The pebbles or gravel used as the ground for this playground causes barriers for anyone who is unstable on their feet.
- The wooden base that is used to contain the pebbles/gravel needs to have an opening on each side to allow barrier-free access for anyone who can not independently use steps to access this area.
- There is no accessible parking, sidewalks leading to this space, or washroom amenities.



Parks & Playgrounds
Wentworth Park and Bandshell

- There is very little wayfinding, signage or identifying markers. We didn't realize there was a second piece to the park on the other side of the road.
- The play area does not provide a lot of options for accessible play.
- The brick platform of the play area can cause hazards if not well maintained.
- None of the stairs have contrasting or tactile indicators and some have wear from the weather that is creating a hazard.



- The pathways need to have a cane detectable edge.
- There are stones and pathways near the bandshell that create an uneven pathway and create tripping hazards.
- The duck launching platforms do not have accessible access as they currently require someone to step over a barrier, this could be rectified with simple ramp structures so that everyone can participate.
- There is an electrical outlet in an area of green space, this would be a great place for a resting area so someone could charge their assistive technology and/or their electric scooter.



Trails
Coal Town Trail

- Presently under construction at various stages of completion.
- Working on unpaved walkways
- Work underway to provide ease of access from curbs and sidewalks



- At the entry point behind Town Hall walking along the trail, there was no signage for directions.
- No waste receptacles for garbage or washrooms that was noticed at the earlier portions of the trail connecting to the downtown corridor.
- Parking is available at various points along the trail.



Trails
MaryAnn Corbett Trail

- Well maintained and paved along the trail.
- Very accessible from the parking lot.
- Adequate signage providing directions and information on the trail and surrounding areas accessible via the trail.



- No washrooms or waste receptacles along the first point of entry into the trail (approx the first 1km of the trail).
- Very accessible via wheelchair, walker, or other assisted mobile devices and equipment.



Fire Halls & Police Stations
New Glace Bay Police Station

- No direct crosswalk access to the police station. There are curb cuts directly across from it, with no crosswalk. And a crosswalk up the road from it, with no signage identifying it. (It had apparently blown down in the weather.)
- There not much room to ensure you are out of the way when the door opens.
- The phone for emergency use outside of the station is a bit too high.



- There was no posted accessible parking sign to identify the parking space as being accessible if there was snow on the ground, or vehicles parked over the markings on the ground.
- The gender neutral accessible washroom was great to see, the only recommendations would be to have door opener buttons and to ensure that the pipes to the sink are properly insulated to prevent scalding.



Fire Halls & Police Stations
Cape Breton Regional Police Service
(North Division)

- Contrast needs to be added to all stairs to assist individuals with visual impairment.
- The side/back entrance was not accessible, only stairs were present.
- Barrier free parking was on the roadside creating an area of concern when transitioning from vehicle as traffic is present.



- The only room we could access was the lobby. The service window was at an appropriate height for a person using a mobility device. Plexiglass at reception makes hearing the reception officer difficult, even for persons without hearing loss. An intercom could be added that would allow the maintenance of the plexiglass shielding and mitigate communication barriers.
- The lobby had enough room to manoeuvre. A focus on a range of seating types would be a welcome addition to the space. For example, seats that provide adequate kick space to allow people to stand with ease.
- The ramp and stairs, as seen to the left, need contrast and tactile indicators.



Fire Halls & Police Stations

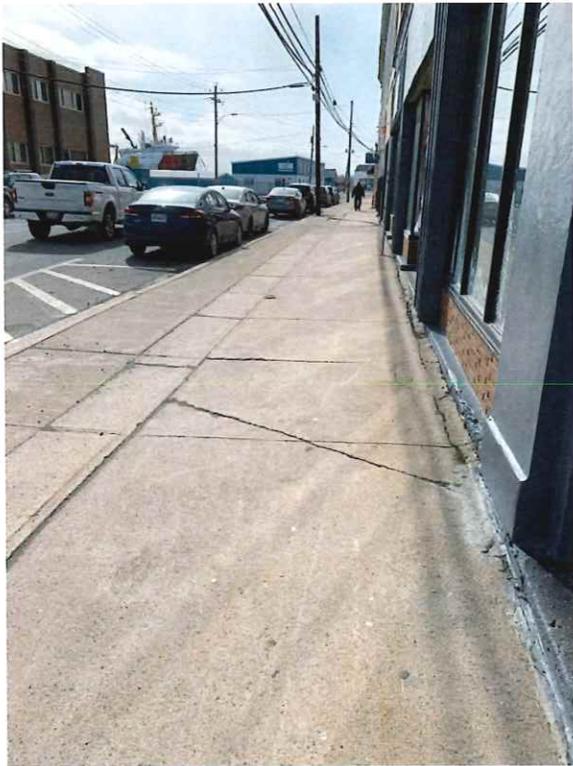
Sydney Fire Hall

The new Sydney Fire Hall is a beautifully thought out building providing full accessibility anywhere the public would travel. The overall space allows for accessible movement and turn radius, however there are some places, where the public would not typically access, that are not accessible to all.

- The stairs, as seen to the left, require better contrast, in bright colours, and new tactile indicator strips.
- The kitchen area, which we believe is strictly for those employed at the station, does not have accessible counter workspace and a lot of over the counter storage at inaccessible heights.
- The stairs need to have railings available on both sides of the stairs.



- The turn radius in the bathrooms is impeded by the moveable added storage cabinet that is located in most of the washrooms. We recommend removing this to improve upon the space provided.
- There is an elevator at this location, however they are unable to use it at this time due to some technical issues with the generator override system.
- There are no posted signs identifying the accessible parking spaces.



Sidewalks, Crosswalks, Storefronts, and Signs
 Glace Bay

There are more sidewalks available in Glace Bay than most of the regions we visited, however the safe connectivity needs work.

- Sidewalks do not all have curb cut-outs at crosswalk intersections or where there are accessible parking spaces.
- There are curb cut-outs where one sidewalk ends and another begins, without marked crosswalks (no painted markings, posted signs, auditory or visual signals)
- There is insufficient wayfinding signage throughout the region, and Glace Bay is no exception. More effort needs to be made to provide needed information for the public to know where and how to find the essential services and amenities they require.



Louisburg Map

Signage and wayfinding information needs to be accessible.

- Adequate contrast for all text and necessary information like directional markings, icons and legends.
- Font size should be a minimum of 16 pt for large print documents to be accessible to everyone.
- Ensure signage and wayfinding is clear and concise, making it easy to read.



Sidewalks, Storefronts, Signs, Public Offices

Crosswalk and Curb Cut in New Waterford

Crosswalks like these have been seen throughout the CBRM region where:

- The markings are wearing off the road.
- There are no posted signs.
- Curb cuts are either in the wrong spot or they are non-existent.
- No visual or auditory signals.
- There is no identified street side parking so cars are parked dangerously close to the crosswalk impeding on the visibility of someone walking across the crosswalk for oncoming traffic.

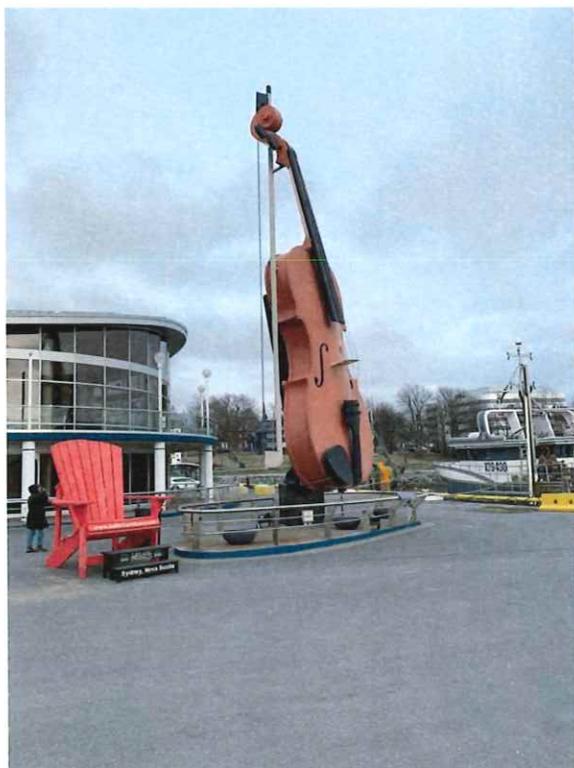


These signs were found in the Coxheath Recreation Centre, and very similar signs were found in the bathroom at the CBRM City Hall.

Inconsistent signage has been found throughout the region. In addition to consistent branding, having a standard for signs eliminates the opportunity for signs to get posted that are insufficient or inaccessible.

Overlaying text over an image makes the font difficult to read. As seen in the image to the right, the main message is lost because of the overlay. This sign could be made accessible by:

- Placing a smaller CBRM logo in one of the corners of the sign.
- Using black for all fonts, or atleast a more distinct shade of red, if red is necessary - this shade of red is somewhat faded.
- Ensuring all fonts are at least 16 pt.



Tourist Attractions & High Traffic Areas

The Big Fiddle

The Big Fiddle is well known as an iconic destination for Sydney visitors and a great photo opportunity.

- It is unclear due to lack of signage if this is a pedestrian only area or if vehicles have access to this space.
- The Big Chair next to The Big Fiddle is also a great photo opportunity, however inaccessible to anyone who requires mobility support.
- The railings around the base of The Big Fiddle are an accessible height and diameter and we were pleased to see the contrast around the base of The Big Fiddles platform.



- These accessible parking spaces are not clearly marked. The posted signs should be on posts and approximately 4 feet off the ground for optimal visibility. They also require painted markings on the ground to show their accessible designation.
- There isn't any safe passage from these parking spots to the wharf, the Joan Harriss Cruise Pavilion, The Big Fiddle or anywhere as someone parking here would have to walk through the line of traffic to get to the crosswalk or any of the aforementioned places.



Tourist Attractions & High Traffic Areas

Sydney & Louisbourg Railway Museum

We weren't able to gain access to view the museum itself but were able to take a look around at the outdoor sites.

- There are a lot of ramps providing access to the many trains and attractions at this historical site. As you can tell in the photos, the surfaces of these ramps and walkways become very slippery with varied weather, a texture surface for anti-slip should be applied.
- Some of the ramps are worn out from weather and need repair.
- Most of the trains/railcar exhibits couldn't be accessed by wheelchair, we hope there are some more tangible items in the museum that people can touch and experience.



- The cane detectable railing/ledge does not cover all of the ramps or walkways. This needs to be improved.
- Any areas that are more than 200 mm off of the ground should have a railing, not just the cane detectable railing.
- The signs and information panels provided at this location do not have appropriate contrast and can get quite worn over time. Proper maintenance of these pieces is needed to ensure equitable access to this historical tourist attraction.



Tourist Attractions & High Traffic Areas

Miners Museum and Miners Memorial Park

The park, in its current state, would not be passable for someone with a mobility disability. The ground is very unstable and uneven. Visitors enter through a rot iron archway passing over a gravel walkway into a grassy field type area. Visitors would benefit greatly from a wooden boardwalk being put here to allow for ease of access.

There are a number of large pieces of mining equipment throughout the area that are on exhibit with informative panels explaining their use in the mining industries. We would recommend the font be larger and with better contrast when, and if, they are ever replaced.



There were a number of access points to the Miners Museum building.

- The brick entryway to the ramp causes tripping hazards when not maintained.
- The ramp and staircase require railings on both sides of the ramp.
- The ramp and stairs both require contrast and tactile indicators, at the beginning and the end of the ramp and staircase, and on each stair.
- The entrance has door openers, but there are exhibits directly inside the entry way that impede the passageway and turn radius required in this space.

8.1 TIMELINE VS PRIORITY PHASING

Given that we know there are many different strategic plans guiding changes that are underway throughout the Cape Breton Regional Municipality we have opted to provide timelines for these recommendations rather than prioritizing them. As we have noted many times throughout this report, and as the community is fully aware - immediate action needs to be taken to alleviate the barriers created by much of the built environment at Cape Breton Regional Municipality. We have not addressed these overarching issues in our recommendations but identified how programs, services and physical space can be adapted to alleviate these barriers in the meantime. Below are reasonable recommendations within suggested time frames that we feel can significantly improve upon the accessibility of the environment of Cape Breton Regional Municipality while building a sense of trust and community. When addressing these recommendations keep in mind these five steps for implementation as identified in Access By Design 2030.

- 1) **Developing the Standards:** using recommended benchmarks, develop standards as to how implementation within the Cape Breton Regional Municipality structure will occur.
- 2) **Build Capacity and Awareness:** All Cape Breton Regional Municipality staff build capacity through training. Cape Breton Regional Municipality promotes inclusive priorities with an awareness campaign.
- 3) **Collaborate and Support:** in collaboration with marginalized groups and agencies, build relationships of mutual respect and support.
- 4) **Compliance and Enforcement:** based on the developed standards and using the recommended benchmarks, the Cape Breton Regional Municipality implements these standards and clearly identifies compliance and enforcement strategies.
- 5) **Monitor and Evaluate:** as with any growth and change it is essential to revisit, reassess and revise policy and implementation.

8.2 Immediate (within the next two years)

These recommendations are immediate as they include policy and attitudinal barriers, which require less structural change to the environment at Cape Breton Regional Municipality as well as Built Environment recommendations focused on making minor adjustments to current structures that will increase accessibility, all of which are eligible for provincial funding.

- Determine core Diversity, Equity and Inclusion competencies for each level of staff and create an implementation plan for training. Train current employees, and include this essential learning as part of your onboarding process for all new staff.
- Revisit and revise hiring and workplace accommodation policies and ensure they are inclusive.
<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/campaigns/hiring-per-sons-disabilities.html>
- Appoint a Director of Compliance or designate the role to an existing position (this could be a part of the Accessibility Coordinator and Committee role) to focus on accessibility compliance. Revisit by-laws and include the requirement for

- designated accessible parking spaces for all new developments.
- As the Taxi Authority in the region, update the by-laws to require a minimum percentage of fleet to be accessible vehicles in order to renew licences.
 - Review brand guidelines and update ensuring accessible font, font size, and contrast are included.
 - Create an Accessible Signage Standard.
 - Create an accessibility awareness campaign, and ensure that accessibility is seen as a priority.
 - Re-evaluate the various systems and platforms that are being used for services and communication and ensure they work efficiently with assistive technology.
 - Create an Accessible Communication Standard. Ensure all communication is delivered in accessible formats and can support the use of assistive technology.
 - Create a standard and implementation plan for crosswalks and sidewalk installation and maintenance ensuring accessible, safe, connectivity between amenities and areas of the community. The standard should define minimal requirements for varying levels of usage for example: downtown core, connective routes from downtown outward, and residential areas significantly outside of the downtown core.
 - Review hours for public service and consider extending where appropriate and possible.
 - Creating opportunities for community building that do not require physical activity. Use the communities ample access to parks and green space to host community events in place.
 - Create an Accessible Playground Standard, or update an existing standard for playgrounds that ensures all new playgrounds are built to accessibility standards and create a plan for updating or decommissioning existing playgrounds.
 - Create a plan to ensure all municipal buildings will adhere to the built environment standard before 2030 by prioritizing spaces according to impact.
 - Update by-laws to ensure all new builds (government and private) have to adhere to accessibility standards.
 - Adopt a recreation policy that commits to ensuring equitable access to recreational programs for everyone. For programs that aren't free, CBRM has a funding access program that allows those who cannot afford fees reduced or waived.
 - Adjust the height of everything that needs to be used regularly or in an emergency to an accessible height of 1100mm (ie fire extinguishers, paper towel, soap, etc)
 - Ensure there are visual and auditory fire alarms and that emergency plans with muster stations for people in wheelchairs are clearly visible and on each floor.

8.3 Short Term (within 2-6 years)

- Implement the plan for crosswalks and sidewalk installation and maintenance ensuring accessible, safe, connectivity between amenities and areas of the community.
- Ensure all communication is delivered according to the new accessible communication standard and can exceed the current WCAG standards.
- Ensure all regionally owned built environments have accessible wayfinding, signage, maps, floor plans etc. as outlined in the Accessible Signage Standard.

- Build, replace, update or decommission playgrounds according to the Accessible Playground Standard and implementation plan.
- Connect the main amenities of stores, recreational facilities and outdoor spaces with well lit and clearly marked pathways to encourage the use of the spaces and promote active transportation, aligning with the Active Transportation Plan.
- Start implementing the plan for the built environments in the region to adhere to the built environment standard.
- Promote acceptance by implementing an accessibility policy for all new business/builds or renovations. Provide incentives (tax cuts for certain time periods) for businesses who abide by the policy instead of fining for non-compliance.

8.4 Opportunity Based Recommendations

- Make available information listing non-profit agencies offering free or affordable assistive devices.
- Promote and support organizations within your community that support and represent all marginalized communities
- Partner with disability support organizations and leverage provincial and federal funding streams to ensure adequate staffing for roles that provide support ie. adequate staffing for day camp and recreation programs in order to accommodate children with disabilities.

GRATITUDE:

This report was made possible with much appreciation for commitment to change by CBRM Staff, Council, Regional Accessibility Committee and the community as a whole in the Cape Breton Regional Municipality, past and present.

We are very grateful for the time the Cape Breton Regional Municipality team has taken to accommodate us during the review as well as to the members of the community who engaged us in discussions regarding making their communities accessible and inclusive.

We have listed a number of resources in the appendices for you to refer to for quick reference. We would love to continue to work with the Cape Breton Regional Municipality to help you obtain the training needed to be leaders in next practice.

We wish you the very best with this process and look forward to watching you **move accessibility forward** with the Cape Breton Regional Municipality.

Sincerely,

Tova Sherman

On behalf of the entire reachAbility Association team

9.1 APPENDIX

9.2 GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Accessibility: The prevention and removal of barriers (physical, attitudinal, technological, or system) to allow equitable participation for persons with disabilities or others who experience barriers to accessibility.¹

Accessibility Act: The provincial legislation enacted in 2017 to prevent and remove barriers to accessibility for people with disabilities. It has a goal of an accessible Nova Scotia by 2030. The Act outlines some responsibilities for municipalities, universities, and other entities, including developing accessibility plans and establishing an accessibility committee. It allows the Government to develop and implement standards (regulations) in education, the built environment, the delivery and receipt of goods and services, transportation, information, communication, and employment.¹

Accessible Customer Service: Ensuring all persons have the same opportunity to seek, obtain, use or benefit from the service. Accessible services are easy for all people to use, interact with, and understand.¹

Accommodation: A means of preventing or removing barriers that impede a person from participating fully in a way that is responsive to their own unique circumstances. The principles of accommodation involve three factors: dignity, individualization and inclusion.³

Barrier: Anything that hinders or challenges the full and effective participation in society. Barriers can be physical, attitudinal, technological, or systemic (policy or practice). Accessibility barriers may be related to areas such as employment, education, the built environment, transportation, the delivery and receipt of goods and services, or information and communications.¹

Barrier-Free: A barrier-free environment is one which enables people with disabilities to move about safely and freely and use all facilities within the built environment, roads, parks, gardens and other places.

Communication Access Real-Time (CART): The professionally translated transcription of speech to text through a third party. It enables culturally Deaf, oral deaf, deafened and hard of hearing people to have visual access to the spoken word. CART services can be provided on-site or remotely.⁸

Deaf: A sociological term referring to those individuals who are medically deaf or hard of hearing who identify with and participate in the culture, society, and language of Deaf people, which is based on Sign language.³

Disability: A physical, mental, intellectual, learning or sensory impairment, including an episodic disability, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders an individual's full and

³ Ontario Human Rights Commission

<https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/guidelines-accessible-education/principles-accommodation#fn9>

effective participation in society.^{3,1}

Equity/Equitable: Equity is fair treatment of individuals, acknowledging and making provisions for their differences by ensuring that employment and educational processes are free from systemic barriers. Equity does not mean ignoring differences and treating everyone the same. Instead it means recognizing and valuing differences, removing systemic barriers and accommodating individual differences, as needed.⁴

First Voice: First voice perspectives generally refer to the knowledge generated by persons with disabilities and others who experience barriers to accessibility that emerges from lived experience, community connections, knowledge traditions, and scholarly activities that are typically undervalued and under-represented.¹

Inclusion: The process of improving the terms of participation in society, particularly for individuals or groups of individuals who are disadvantaged or under-represented, through enhancing opportunities, access to resources, voice and respect for rights. This creates a sense of belonging, promotes trust, fights exclusion and marginalization and offers the opportunity of upward mobility and results in increased social cohesion.⁵

Marginalized Populations: Groups and communities that experience discrimination and exclusion (social, political and economic) because of unequal power relationships across economic, political, social and cultural dimensions.¹¹

Meaningful Access: When referring to the built environment, meaningful access is the intent to meet the needs of all users of a site (a building or outdoor space) regardless of their ability. It means that not only individual features of a site, such as an entrance or washroom, must be accessible, but the entire experience throughout.¹

Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC): The Accessibility Advisory Committee was formed in 2021 by members of the community who identify as being people with disabilities and/or lived experience, members of CBRM staff and members of CBRM Council. The committee advises CBRM Council on the elimination of barriers faced by people with disabilities and acts as a liaison with external bodies on barriers to participation in public life and to the achievement of social, cultural and economic well-being of people with disabilities.

Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification (RHFAC): A national rating system that measures and certifies the level of meaningful access of buildings and sites. It measures the level of meaningful access beyond building code, and is based upon the holistic user experience of people with varying disabilities affecting their mobility, vision, and hearing.⁷

Universal Design: Universal Design is the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability.⁷

Universal Design for Learning (UDL): An educational approach to designing instructional goals, assessments, methods and materials, and policies that work for a diversity of learners - can be customized and adjusted for individual student needs.¹

References for Glossary

¹ Nova Scotia Post Secondary Framework

³ Nova Scotia Accessibility Act

⁵ Nova Scotia Community College Educational Equity Policy

⁶ Scorgie, K. & Forlin, C. (2019). Promoting Social Inclusion: Co-Creating Environments that Foster Equity and Belonging. P. 153.

⁷ Rick Hansen Foundation

⁸ Canadian Hearing Services

¹¹ National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health



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REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
AND YOU

**MOVING
ACCESSIBILITY
FORWARD**



REPORT DRAFT PRESENTATION

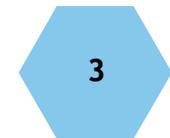
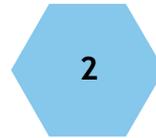
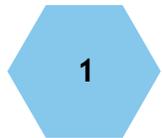


Social Media & Website

We reached over 14,000 individuals (saw the awareness campaign on their social media platforms); 76 shares (people shared the content on their social media platforms), and 551 people visited the project landing page.



Timeline



February

Surveying Started
In-Person and
Virtual
Engagements
Environment Scans

March

Stakeholder
Engagements
Building and
Submitting Draft

May/June

Draft Report
Presentation to RAC
Draft
Recommendation
Engagement

Engagement Feedback: What we heard

7 Standards:

- Built Environment
- Transportation
- Employment
- Information and Communication
- Awareness
- Goods and Services
- Education



Engagement Feedback: How we heard

- Survey
- Engagements: In-Person and Virtual
- Mapping: In-Person and #CBRMaccess



Engagement Feedback: What we heard

Successes



Goods and Services:

- Some libraries have had some features. There is a provincial plan coming!
- There are a variety of free and paid programs and services, including accessible activities like sledge hockey and an accessible sailing regatta. Some funding opportunities as well!
- Transit Cape Breton and Handi-Trans!

Engagement Feedback: What we heard Successes



Transportation:

- Handi-Trans and Transit Cape Breton!
- There are various taxi services throughout the region.
- There have been some sidewalk and crosswalk improvements in specific areas. For example, George Street and Charlotte Street in Sydney.



Engagement Feedback: What we heard

Successes



Built Environment:

- A number of community parks and playgrounds have undergone significant accessibility upgrades.
- New or renovated buildings such as the Sydney Fire Station and Glace Bay Miners Forum are well equipped and considered accessibility in design.



Engagement Feedback: What we heard Successes



Built Environment:

- There are a number of trails and walking pathways that are assets to the community and well groomed during the warmer months.
- CBRM Libraries are considering accessibility and inclusion upgrades.



Engagement Feedback: What we heard Successes



Information and Communication

- CBRM Twitter is effective when it comes to disruptive timely information regarding bus/transit routes.
- CBRM social media platforms are usually kept up to date and provide ample information on events and news.



Engagement Feedback: What we heard

Successes



Awareness and Capacity Building:

- The community is beginning to see that accessibility is a priority is noticing that accessibility awareness is being included in some public events.
- There has been a lot of good press!
- Council meetings are available online which increases the accessibility.



Engagement Feedback: What we heard Successes



Employment:

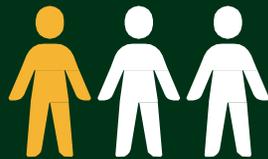
- The Municipality has a Diversity Committee which can address inequities in the workplace.
- Roughly 1 in 3 survey respondents said they are aware of inclusive and accessible workplaces in the area. We heard about individuals from Crossroads work seasonally at the Port of Sydney.

Engagement Feedback: What we heard Successes



Employment:

- There are a number of employment support organizations in the area for example: Nova Scotia Works, Breton Abilities, the YMCA, Crossroads, etc.



Engagement Analysis: Barriers

Goods and Services

- The parks, playgrounds and outdoor spaces don't provide options for all ages or for year-round use.
- Not enough inclusive programming, events and services offered by CBRM.
- Most community engagement activities involve going for a walk.



Engagement Analysis: Barriers

Goods and Services

- Access to all essential items are not available in all areas.
- Hours of services make it difficult for access.
- The attitudes received by people with disabilities in most retail and small business establishments is that of being an inconvenience.

Transportation:

- Handi-Trans: Services only really available for folks with physical accessibility needs, and not in some areas, “Handi-Trans” name needs to change.
- Calming measures, lower speed limits, and the removal of some street side parking is needed on traffic heavy streets as it is unsafe.



Engagement Analysis: Barriers

Transportation:

- There is no consistency of sidewalk placement in the downtown areas, residential areas, or connecting downtown areas to outlying communities and vice versa.
- There are not enough proper designated accessible parking spots.
- Inconsistent and unreliable snow removal on roads, sidewalks and crosswalks.



Built Environment:

- Accessible parking is limited and difficult to access overall.
- Most restaurants don't have accessible entryways and/or washroom facilities.
- Parks and playgrounds aren't accessible for everyone or provide opportunities for all age groups to participate in play.
- Most of the recreation facilities need accessibility upgrading for washrooms, ramps, doors.



Built Environment:

- Amenities like post office boxes, resting areas, ATMs, and garbage receptacles are not logically placed, easily accessible and/or not prevalent enough throughout the community.
- Well maintained, public, accessible washrooms are not adequately available throughout. They need to be at every park, trail, playground and heavily travelled areas. Covid and the opiate crisis in the area have exacerbated this issue in the region with public washrooms usually locked.



Built Environment:

- Most of the trails and parks do not have designated parking lots.
- Sidewalks do not provide connectivity between town amenities, schools, parks etc and a perception that there is no consistency in installation, maintenance and snow removal among sidewalks, crosswalks, streets or pathways in any area.
- There is insufficient accessible, affordable housing.
- Signage is insufficient and inconsistent.



Engagement Analysis: Barriers

Information and Communication

- The Transit website is very confusing.
- No mapping or information on accessible spaces in each region.
- ASL is not provided at public events or in council meetings.
- Inconsistent signage and wayfinding everywhere.
- Advertising of important events is not being found in a timely manner.
- The CBRM website is hard to navigate.

Engagement Analysis: Barriers

Awareness and Capacity Building

- The community doesn't see enough representation!
- Awareness has felt limited to physical accessibility only and knowledge of accessibility varies throughout the community.
- The social determinants of health are not met by, or accessible within, the CBRM.
- Not everyone is aware that council meetings are able to be watched, or rewatched, despite their availability online and on tv.

Engagement Analysis: Barriers



Employment

- Lack of transportation limits the ability to find and maintain employment.
- The built environments of the municipally owned, and privately owned buildings are not fully accessible. This inaccessibility creates barriers to employment for many. This is especially true for many areas within the City Hall Building and the various locations of the CBRM Libraries.

Engagement Analysis: Barriers



Employment

- Employers do not understand what it means to be accessible or to provide accommodations so most feel screened out if they disclose, they require an accommodation (this can be changed with opportunities to become more disability confident).

Engagement Analysis: What we heard

Opportunities

Goods and Services:

- Create a standard for accessible service delivery that holds accountable all providers who work within the Cape Breton Regional Municipality until the Province develops a government-wide accessible customer service policy as identified in Nova Scotia's Accessibility Plan (2018-2021).
- Become a wealth of knowledge for your communities by seeking out resources available through support organizations in the region.
- Partner with organizations within the community to bring mobile services to communities with limited resources and access.

Engagement Analysis: What we heard

Opportunities

Transportation:

- Create a campaign to increase awareness and acceptance about Accessible Parking.
- Communicate clearly and openly about snow removal.



Engagement Analysis: What we heard

Opportunities



Built Environment:

- Engage organizations and community members in the planning and design of new built environments or renovations.
- Promote an event whereby elected officials and/or administrative staff tour the community with people with disabilities to gain new perspectives and raise awareness.

Engagement Analysis: What we heard

Opportunities



Built Environment:

- Consider sensory barriers in public spaces and at public events. Low sensory times, rooms, silent parade portions, lower lighting etc.
- Inform citizens of new accessible spaces and improvements (i.e. work being done on trails)

Engagement Analysis:

Opportunities



Information and Communication:

- Involve the Cape Breton Regional Municipality Accessibility Advisory Committee in guiding these policies. The committee consists of staff as well as knowledgeable community members who have the capacity to lead these conversations.
- Offer staff training to learn how to create accessible documents.
- Provide information about provincial and federal resources for financial support for assistive technology so the community can have improved access to communication.

Engagement Analysis:

Opportunities



Awareness and Capacity:

- Partner with agencies that support people with disabilities and promote the partnerships!
- Encourage more employees and the AAC to get involved in the various working groups within the Province of Nova Scotia to help build the standards!
- Consult with agencies and organizations supporting people with disabilities.
- Increase awareness about mental health and intersectional barriers like food and financial insecurity, affordable housing, and support for single parents.

Engagement Analysis: What we heard

Opportunities



Employment:

- Partner with organizations to create online or in-person modules for continued learning around Equity, Diversity & Inclusion for Cape Breton Regional Municipality employees.
- Partner with agencies that represent people with disabilities and marginalized communities when hiring

Engagement Analysis: What we heard

Opportunities



Employment:

- Provide resources to employers/businesses in the area on how to be inclusive.
- Partner with agencies in activities other than hiring (show interest in diverse ways)

CBRM Buildings, Parks and Facilities

CBRM can easily and affordably make a difference in the municipally owned facilities that already offer some existing accessibility features.



Successes

Accessible playground equipment (Cantley Village Park)

Support for Accessible events (National Sailing hosted by Northern Yacht Club)

Accessible Parks & Trails (Coxheath/Sydney River/Howie Centre)



Successes

Street and sidewalk improvements on George and Charlotte Street in Sydney

Accessible activities (Glace Bay accessible fishing area)



Opportunities:

Communication between the regions about what you are doing well and how you did it is an easy way to start tackling some of these barriers. So many more!



Recommendations:

Overview – something to consider



- Every survey mentioned that sidewalks, crosswalks, and pedestrian pathways are the biggest barrier to accessibility. (Built Environment)
- The maintenance of parks and trails needs to be considered to improve accessibility. (Built Environment)
- Acceptance of disability communities is not seen as a priority.

Recommendations:

Considerations as you go



- 1) **Developing the Standards:** using recommended benchmarks, develop standards as to how implementation within the Cape Breton Regional Municipality structure will occur.
- 2) **Build Capacity and Awareness:** All Cape Breton Regional Municipality staff build capacity through training. Cape Breton Regional Municipality promotes inclusive priorities with an awareness campaign.
- 3) **Collaborate and Support:** in collaboration with marginalized groups and agencies, build relationships of mutual respect and support.
- 4) **Compliance and Enforcement:** based on the developed standards and using the recommended benchmarks, the Cape Breton Regional Municipality implements these standards and clearly identifies compliance and enforcement strategies.
- 5) **Monitor and Evaluate:** as with any growth and change it is essential to revisit, reassess and revise policy and implementation.

Recommendations:

Immediate – Period of next two years



- Determine core Diversity, Equity and Inclusion competencies for each level of staff and create an implementation plan for training. Train current employees and include this essential learning as part of your onboarding process for all new staff.
- Revisit and revise hiring and workplace accommodation policies and ensure they are inclusive.
- Consider appointing a Director of Compliance or designate the role to an existing position (this could be a part of the Accessibility Coordinator and Committee role) to focus on accessibility compliance.
- Revisit by-laws and include the requirement for designated accessible parking spaces for all new developments

Recommendations:

Immediate – Period of next two years



- As the Taxi Authority in the region, consider update the by-laws to require a minimum percentage of fleet to be accessible vehicles to renew licenses.
- Review brand guidelines and update ensuring accessible font, size of font, and contrast are included.
- Create an Accessible Signage Standard.
- Create an accessibility awareness campaign and ensure that accessibility is seen as a priority.
- Re-evaluate the various systems and platforms that are being used for services and communication and ensure they work efficiently with assistive technology

Recommendations:

Immediate – Period of next two years



- Create an Accessible Communication Standard. Ensure all communication is delivered in accessible formats and can support the use of assistive technology.
- Create a standard and implementation plan for crosswalks and sidewalk installation and maintenance ensuring accessible, safe, connectivity between amenities and areas of the community. The standard should define minimal requirements for varying levels of usage for example: downtown core, connective routes from downtown outward, and residential areas significantly outside of the downtown core.
- Review hours for public service sand consider extending where appropriate and possible.

Recommendations:

Immediate – Period of next two years



- Creating opportunities for community building that do not require physical activity. Use the community's ample access to parks and green space to host community events in place.
- Create an Accessible Playground Standard or update an existing standard for playgrounds that ensures all new playgrounds are built to accessibility standards and create a plan for updating or decommissioning existing playgrounds.
- Create a plan to ensure all municipal buildings will adhere to the built environment standard before 2030 by prioritizing spaces according to impact.
- Update by-laws to ensure all new builds (government and private) have to adhere to accessibility standards.

Recommendations:

Immediate – Period of next two years



- Consider adopting a recreation policy that commits to ensuring equitable access to recreational programs for everyone.
- Adjust the height of everything that needs to be used regularly or in an emergency to an accessible height of 1100mm (ie fire extinguishers, paper towel, soap, etc).
- Ensure there are visual and auditory fire alarms and that emergency plans with muster stations for people in wheelchairs are clearly visible and on each floor.

Recommendations:

Short Term – with 2-6 years



- Implement the plan for crosswalks and sidewalk installation and maintenance ensuring accessible, safe, connectivity between amenities and areas of the community.
- Ensure all communication is delivered according to the new accessible communication standard and can exceed the current WCAG standards.
- Ensure all regionally owned built environments have accessible wayfinding, signage, maps, floor plans etc. as outlined in the Accessible Signage Standard.

Recommendations:

Short Term – with 2-6 years



- Build, replace, update or decommission playgrounds according to the Accessible Playground Standard and implementation plan.
- Connect the main amenities of stores, recreational facilities and outdoor spaces with well lit and clearly marked pathways to encourage the use of the spaces and promote active transportation, aligning with the Active Transportation Plan.

Recommendations:

Short Term – with 2-6 years



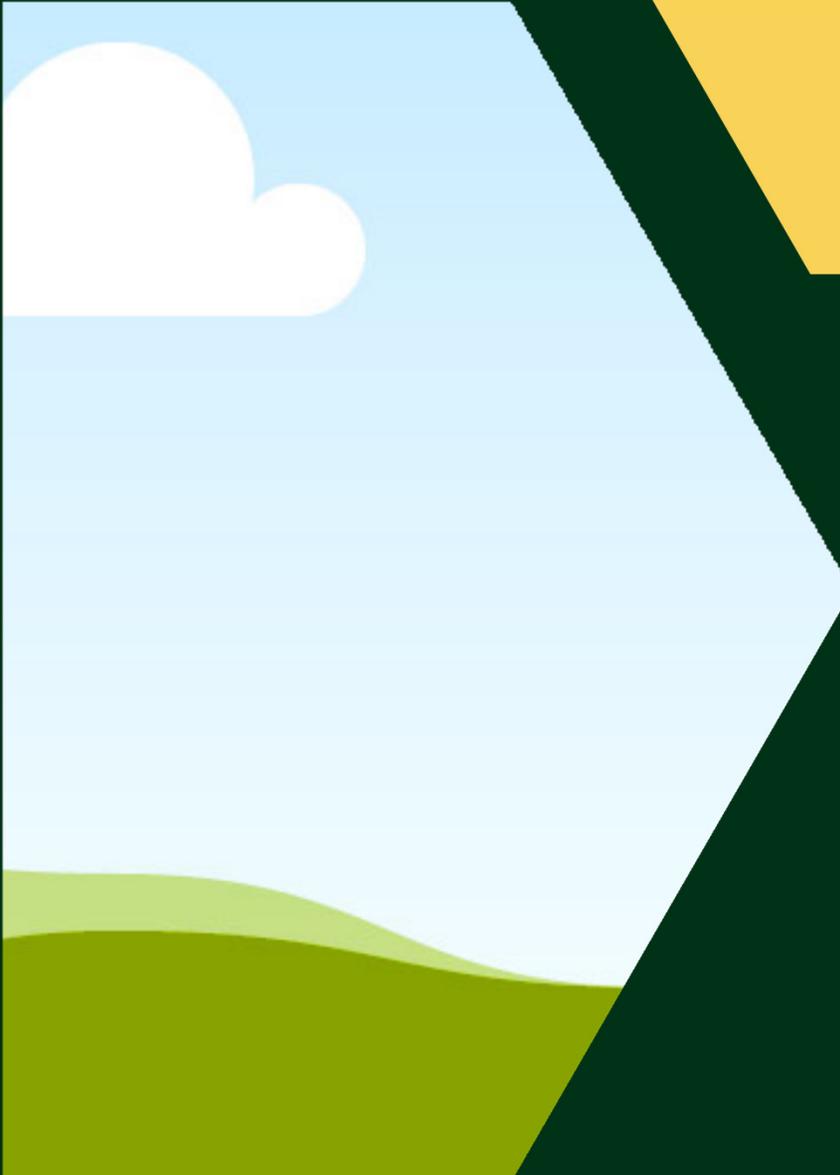
- Start implementing the plan for the built environments in the region to adhere to the built environment standard.
- Promote acceptance by implementing an accessibility policy for all new business/builds or renovations. Provide incentives (tax cuts for certain time periods) for businesses who abide by the policy instead of fining for non-compliance.

Recommendations:

Opportunity Based



- Make available information listing non-profit agencies offering free or affordable assistive devices.
- Promote and support organizations within your community that support and represent all marginalized communities
- Partner with disability support organizations and leverage provincial and federal funding streams to ensure adequate staffing for roles that provide support ie.adequate staffing for day camp and recreation programs in order to accommodate children with disabilities.



Next Steps for Cape Breton Regional Municipality:

Approve draft plan and begin implementation.

Consideration should be given to hiring an Accessibility Coordinator for the municipality.

Communication and Engagement needs to be a major focus for the future of the area.





Next Steps for Cape Breton Regional Municipality:

Accessibility "awareness" isn't active. Your community wants to see you prioritizing accessibility with your actions.

Plan to build a disability confident community through education and osmosis.





Thank you for your interest and attention.

Accessibility Act

CHAPTER 2 OF THE ACTS OF 2017



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CHAPTER 2 OF THE ACTS OF 2017

An Act Respecting Accessibility in Nova Scotia

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WHEREAS, under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Canada agrees to take appropriate measures to achieve accessibility and to develop and monitor minimum accessibility standards;

AND WHEREAS the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* grants equality rights to all persons without discrimination on the basis of a disability;

AND WHEREAS the *Human Rights Act* recognizes that the Government, public agencies and all persons have a responsibility to ensure equal opportunity for every individual to enjoy a full and productive life;

AND WHEREAS persons with disabilities disproportionately live in conditions of poverty;

AND WHEREAS there is diversity among persons with disabilities;

AND WHEREAS persons with disabilities continue to face attitudinal and environmental barriers that prevent them from achieving their full and equal participation in society;

AND WHEREAS persons with disabilities who are subject to multiple forms of discrimination face additional barriers;

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AND WHEREAS achieving accessibility will improve the independence and well-being of persons with disabilities;

AND WHEREAS the Government acknowledges it must take a leadership role in the process of achieving an accessible Nova Scotia:

Short title

1 This Act may be cited as the *Accessibility Act*. 2017, c. 2, s. 1.

Purpose of Act

2 The purpose of this Act is to

(a) achieve accessibility by preventing and removing barriers that disable people with respect to

- (i) the delivery and receipt of goods and services,
- (ii) information and communication,
- (iii) public transportation and transportation infrastructure,
- (iv) employment,
- (v) the built environment,
- (vi) education, and
- (vii) a prescribed activity or undertaking;

(b) provide for the involvement of persons with disabilities, the public sector and other stakeholders in the development of accessibility standards;

(c) facilitate the timely implementation of accessibility standards with a goal of achieving an accessible Nova Scotia by 2030;

(d) monitor, review and enforce compliance with accessibility standards; and

(e) establish an Accessibility Directorate that is responsible for supporting accessibility initiatives and advancing broader disability-related issues. 2017, c. 2, s. 2.

Interpretation

3 (1) In this Act,

(a) “accessibility plan” means a plan to address the identification, removal and prevention of barriers in the policies, programs, practices and services of a public sector body;

(b) “accessibility standard” means an accessibility standard established under this Act;

(c) “barrier” means anything that hinders or challenges the full and effective participation in society of persons with disabilities

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including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice;

(d) “Board” means the Accessibility Advisory Board established under this Act;

(e) “built environment” means the human-made space in which people live, work, learn and play and includes buildings, rights-of-way and outdoor spaces;

(f) “committee” means a committee established under this Act;

(g) “Court” means the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia;

(h) “Director” means the Director of Compliance and Enforcement appointed pursuant to Section 45;

(i) “disability” includes a physical, mental, intellectual, learning or sensory impairment, including an episodic disability, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders an individual’s full and effective participation in society;

(j) “Government” means Her Majesty in right of the Province;

(k) “inspector” means an inspector appointed under this Act;

(l) “Minister” means the Minister of Justice;

(m) “organization” includes the Government, a sole proprietorship, corporation, society, association, partnership and limited liability partnership, any association of individuals and any similar body;

(n) “order” means an order made under this Act;

(o) “prescribed” means prescribed by the regulations;

(p) “public sector body” means

(i) the Government,

(ii) a prescribed municipality,

(iii) a prescribed university, and

(iv) a prescribed organization.

(2) A document or information is publicly available if it is posted on a website or made available in a prescribed manner. 2017, c. 2, s. 3.

Act with stronger protection of rights prevails

4 (1) Nothing in this Act or the regulations diminishes the rights and protections offered to persons with disabilities under the *Human Rights Act*.

(2) Where a provision of this Act or the regulations conflicts with a provision of another enactment, the provision of this Act or the regulations prevails unless the other enactment provides a higher level of accessibility for persons with disabilities. 2017, c. 2, s. 4.

Act binds Crown

5 This Act binds Her Majesty in right of the Province. 2017, c. 2, s. 5.

Supervision of Act

6 The Minister is responsible for the general supervision and management of this Act and the regulations. 2017, c. 2, s. 6.

Mandate of Minister

7 (1) The mandate of the Minister is to achieve accessibility for persons disabled by barriers by

(a) raising awareness of how persons with disabilities are disabled by barriers;

(b) promoting and encouraging the prevention and removal of barriers;

(c) overseeing the development and implementation of accessibility standards necessary to attain the purpose of this Act;

(d) assisting in the integration of applicable accessibility standards into the activities of all persons in the Province; and

(e) ensuring persons in the Province are consulted in the development of accessibility standards and informed about their duties and responsibilities under the standards once created.

(2) Within one year of the coming into force of this Act the Minister shall adopt, and make publicly available, an implementation strategy setting out how the Minister plans to achieve the goal of an accessible Nova Scotia by 2030. 2017, c. 2, s. 7.

Annual report of Minister

8 (1) The Minister shall annually prepare a report of the actions the Minister has undertaken pursuant to Section 7 during the preceding fiscal year and make that report publicly available.

(2) The Minister shall table the report in the House of Assembly within 15 days after it is completed or, where the Assembly is not then sitting, file it with the Clerk of the Assembly. 2017, c. 2, s. 8.

Delegation by Minister

9 (1) The Minister may, in writing, delegate any power or duty conferred or imposed on the Minister under this Act to

- (a) an employee of the Government;
- (b) an employee of a municipality; or
- (c) another person,

who, in the Minister's opinion, has the requisite qualifications and experience.

(2) Where the Minister delegates a power or duty under subsection (1), the Minister may

(a) specify how the power or duty is to be exercised or performed and impose any requirement in relation to or restrictions on the exercise or performance of the power or duty that the Minister considers appropriate; and

(b) provide that the delegate be paid for, or reimbursed for the cost of, exercising or performing the delegated power or duty.

(3) Before making a delegation to a person under clause (1)(a) or (b), the Minister shall consult with and obtain the consent of the employer of the person.

(4) Before making a delegation to a person under clause (1)(c), the Minister shall obtain the consent of the person.

(5) The Minister may revoke a delegation made under subsection (1). 2017, c. 2, s. 9.

ACCESSIBILITY DIRECTORATE

Establishment of and role

10 (1) The Accessibility Directorate is hereby established.

(2) The role of the Accessibility Directorate is to

(a) support the implementation and administration of this Act and the regulations;

(b) address broader disability-related initiatives by acting as a central government mechanism to ensure that the concerns of persons with disabilities respecting policy, program development and delivery are advanced and considered by the Government. 2017, c. 2, s. 10.

Executive Director and staff

11 (1) The Minister shall appoint an Executive Director and the staff of the Accessibility Directorate.

(2) The Executive Director shall lead the Accessibility Directorate and liaise with the Board.

(3) The staff of the Accessibility Directorate shall be appointed pursuant to the *Civil Service Act*. 2017, c. 2, s. 11.

Duties

12 The Accessibility Directorate shall

(a) provide policy, programming, communication and administrative support on all aspects of this Act and the regulations;

(b) conduct research and develop and implement programs of public education and awareness on the purpose of this Act;

(c) examine and review measures, policies, practices and other requirements to improve opportunities for persons with disabilities; and

(d) identify and study issues of concern to persons with disabilities and recommend action where appropriate. 2017, c. 2, s. 12.

ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY BOARD

Board composition

13 (1) There shall be an Accessibility Advisory Board consisting of 12 members appointed by the Governor in Council on the recommendation of the Minister.

(2) In making recommendations to the Governor in Council for the purpose of subsection (1), the Minister shall take into consideration

(a) the skills and assets the Minister considers necessary to ensure an effective and optimally functioning Board; and

(b) representation by stakeholder groups that will be subject to the accessibility standards.

(3) The majority of the members of the Board must be persons with disabilities. 2017, c. 2, s. 13.

Term

14 (1) A person appointed to the Board holds office for a term of three years.

(2) No person may be appointed to the Board for more than two consecutive terms. 2017, c. 2, s. 14.

Chair and Vice-chair

15 (1) The Governor in Council, on the recommendation of the Minister, may designate members of the Board as the Chair and the Vice-chair of the Board.

(2) The Vice-chair shall act as Chair if the Chair is absent or unable to act or when authorized to act by the Chair. 2017, c. 2, s. 15.

Board meetings and reports

16 (1) The Board shall hold at least four regular meetings in each year and meet with the Minister at least once every 12 months.

(2) The Board shall prepare a summary report after each regular meeting and make the report publicly available.

(3) The Board shall annually prepare a report of its activities and operations during the preceding fiscal year, file it with the Minister and make the report publicly available. 2017, c. 2, s. 16.

Duties

17 The Board shall advise and make recommendations to the Minister about accessibility and, in particular, shall

(a) suggest measures, policies, practices and requirements that may be implemented by the Government to achieve accessibility;

(b) assess whether existing measures, policies, practices and requirements are consistent with the purpose of this Act;

(c) set priorities for the establishment and content of accessibility standards and the timelines for their implementation;

(d) set long-term accessibility objectives for furthering the purpose of this Act; and

(e) respond to requests for accessibility advice from the Minister. 2017, c. 2, s. 17.

Standard development committees

18 (1) The Board shall, with the approval of the Minister, establish standard development committees to assist the Board with making recommendations to the Minister on the content and implementation of accessibility standards.

(2) The Board shall prepare terms of reference for each standard development committee that include deadlines for each stage of the standard development process.

(3) The Board may, with the approval of the Minister, establish a subcommittee of technical experts and other individuals familiar with issues specific to the standard being developed. 2017, c. 2, s. 18.

Standard development committee composition

19 (1) A standard development committee established under Section 18 must have

(a) one half of its membership consist of persons with disabilities or representatives from organizations representing persons with disabilities;

(b) representatives of organizations and classes of organizations likely to be affected by the standard being developed; and

(c) representatives from departments of the Government that have responsibilities related to the standard being developed.

(2) A person does not need to be a member of the Board to be a member of a committee or subcommittee. 2017, c. 2, s. 19.

Remuneration and expenses

20 (1) The Board, committee and subcommittee members not employed in the public service of the Province shall be paid such remuneration as is determined by the Minister.

(2) The Board, committee and subcommittee members shall be reimbursed for their reasonable expenses incurred in the performance of their duties. 2017, c. 2, s. 20.

ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS

Considerations for a recommendation

21 When making a recommendation to the Minister on a proposed accessibility standard, the Board shall consider

(a) the accessibility objectives for the activity or undertaking, the class, the aspect of the built environment or the individuals or organizations to which the standard relates; and

(b) the measures, policies, practices and other requirements that the Board believes should be implemented, including

(i) how and by whom they should be implemented, and

(ii) the period for implementing them. 2017, c. 2, s. 21.

Considerations for recommending a time period

22 When recommending time periods for implementing an accessibility standard, the Board shall consider

(a) the nature of the barriers that the measures, policies, practices and other requirements are intended to identify, remove or prevent;

(b) any technical and economic considerations that may be associated with implementing the standard; and

(c) any other matter requested by the Minister. 2017, c. 2, s. 22.

Consultation

23 When preparing recommendations under Sections 21 and 22, the Board shall ensure that the following persons have been consulted:

- (a) persons with disabilities;
- (b) representatives from organizations representing persons with disabilities;
- (c) representatives of those engaged in the activity or undertaking, or the individuals or organizations, or representatives of the class that may be made subject to the proposed accessibility standard;
- (d) representatives of government entities that have responsibilities relating to the activity, undertaking or class that may be made subject to the proposed accessibility standard; and
- (e) other individuals or organizations that the Minister considers advisable. 2017, c. 2, s. 23.

Separate recommendations

24 The Board shall attempt to achieve a consensus among its members on its recommendations but one or more members may submit recommendations if a consensus is not achieved. 2017, c. 2, s. 24.

Form and availability of recommendations

25 (1) The recommendations must be submitted to the Minister in the form and within the period specified by the Minister.

(2) The Minister shall make the recommendations publicly available. 2017, c. 2, s. 25.

Proposed accessibility standard

26 Upon receipt of the recommendations, the Minister may prepare a proposed accessibility standard adopting the recommendations in whole, in part or with any modifications the Minister considers appropriate. 2017, c. 2, s. 26.

Contents of accessibility standard

27 An accessibility standard may

- (a) specify the individuals or organizations that are subject to the standard;
- (b) set out measures, policies, practices and other requirements for
 - (i) identifying and removing barriers, and
 - (ii) preventing barriers from being established; and

(c) require the individuals or organizations that are subject to the standard to implement those measures, policies, practices and other requirements within the period specified in the standard. 2017, c. 2, s. 27.

Application may be general or specific

28 An accessibility standard may be general or specific in its application and may be limited as to time and place. 2017, c. 2, s. 28.

Application to individuals or organizations

29 Accessibility standards may apply to individuals or organizations that

- (a) employ others;
- (b) offer accommodation;
- (c) own, operate, maintain or control an aspect of the built environment other than a private residence with three or fewer dwelling units;
- (d) provide goods, services or information to the public; or
- (e) engage in a prescribed activity or undertaking or meet other prescribed requirements. 2017, c. 2, s. 29.

Classes of persons, activities or aspects of built environment

30 An accessibility standard may apply to different classes of individuals or organizations or aspects of the built environment and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, may apply to classes with respect to any attribute, quality or characteristic, or any combination of those things, including

- (a) the number of persons employed by an individual or organization or its annual revenue;
- (b) the type of activity or undertaking in which an individual or organization is engaged or the sector of the economy of which an individual or organization is a part; or
- (c) a particular characteristic of an aspect of the built environment, such as the type of infrastructure or the size of a building, a structure or premises, that is owned, operated, maintained or controlled by an individual or organization. 2017, c. 2, s. 30.

May define a class

31 An accessibility standard may define a class to include or exclude an individual or organization, or an aspect of the built environment, having the same or different attributes, qualities or characteristics. 2017, c. 2, s. 31.

More than one accessibility standard may apply

32 An individual or organization may be subject to more than one accessibility standard. 2017, c. 2, s. 32.

Must be publicly available

33 The Minister shall make a proposed accessibility standard publicly available. 2017, c. 2, s. 33.

Comments re proposed accessibility standard

34 Within 60 days after a proposed accessibility standard is made publicly available, or within any other longer period specified by the Minister, an individual or organization may submit comments about the proposed standard to the Minister. 2017, c. 2, s. 34.

Recommendation to Governor in Council

35 After consulting with the Board with respect to any comments and, if the Minister considers it appropriate, revising the proposed accessibility standard, the Minister shall recommend the standard to the Governor in Council for approval as a regulation. 2017, c. 2, s. 35.

Records

36 An individual or organization that is subject to an accessibility standard shall

- (a) prepare and keep records in accordance with the regulations;
- and
- (b) make the records available for inspection and examination under this Act and the regulations. 2017, c. 2, s. 36.

Compliance period

37 An individual or organization that is subject to an accessibility standard shall comply with it within the period specified in the standard. 2017, c. 2, s. 37.

Incentive-based measures

38 Where the Minister believes it is in the public interest to do so, the Minister may recommend that the Governor in Council prescribe incentive-based measures to encourage and assist an individual or organization, or a class of individuals or organizations, to meet or exceed an accessibility standard. 2017, c. 2, s. 38.

Accessibility plans

39 (1) Every public sector body shall prepare and make publicly available an accessibility plan within one year of the coming into force of this Act.

(2) A municipality, university or organization shall prepare and make publicly available an accessibility plan within one year of being prescribed as a public sector body. 2017, c. 2, s. 39.

Accessibility plan must include

40 An accessibility plan must include

- (a) a report on measures the public sector body has taken and intends to take to identify, remove and prevent barriers;
- (b) information on procedures the public sector body has in place to assess the following for their effect on accessibility for persons with disabilities:
 - (i) any of its proposed policies, programs, practices and services, and
 - (ii) any proposed enactments or by-laws it will be administering; and
- (c) any other prescribed information. 2017, c. 2, s. 40.

Input for accessibility plan

41 A public sector body shall seek input from persons with disabilities and representatives of organizations representing persons with disabilities when preparing an accessibility plan. 2017, c. 2, s. 41.

Updated and publicly available

42 A public sector body shall update its accessibility plan every three years and make it publicly available. 2017, c. 2, s. 42.

Joint accessibility plan

43 Two or more public sector bodies may agree to have a joint accessibility plan. 2017, c. 2, s. 43.

Accessibility advisory committee

44 (1) Every public sector body shall establish an accessibility advisory committee or continue any such committee that was established before the coming into force of this Act.

(2) At least one half of the members of an accessibility advisory committee must be persons with disabilities or representatives from organizations representing persons with disabilities. 2017, c. 2, s. 44.

COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT**Director of Compliance and Enforcement**

45 (1) The Minister shall appoint a Director of Compliance and Enforcement.

- (2)** The Director shall
 - (a) carry out the powers and duties assigned to the Director under this Act;
 - (b) advise the Minister with respect to compliance and enforcement matters; and

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(c) perform such duties as are assigned by the Minister.

(3) The Director may delegate the exercise of any of the Director's duties, powers or functions, other than the power to review an order or decision. 2017, c. 2, s. 45.

Inspectors and other persons to assist

46 (1) Inspectors and other persons required to administer compliance with and enforcement of this Act and the regulations shall be appointed by the Minister in accordance with the *Civil Service Act*.

(2) Notwithstanding subsection (1), the Minister may engage, upon such terms and conditions as the Minister considers necessary, the services of such persons as the Minister requires for administering compliance with and enforcement of this Act and the regulations. 2017, c. 2, s. 46.

Identification card

47 (1) An inspector carrying out an inspection under this Act shall produce, on request, an identification card provided by the Minister for that purpose.

(2) A copy of an identification card purporting to be signed by the Minister is proof in any court of law that an individual is an inspector. 2017, c. 2, s. 47.

Inspections

48 (1) An inspector may carry out an inspection in response to a complaint or in relation to an activity as directed by the Director.

(2) An inspector may carry out any inspection, examination or test reasonably required to

(a) determine compliance with this Act and the regulations;

(b) verify the accuracy or completeness of a record or of other information required to be prepared under this Act and the regulations; or

(c) perform any other duty or function that the inspector considers necessary or advisable in the administration or enforcement of this Act and the regulations.

(3) When carrying out an inspection under this Section, an inspector may

(a) require the production of any document or record for inspection and copying; and

(b) inspect the physical premises and equipment. 2017, c. 2, s. 48.

Public Inquiries Act

49 An inspector has all the powers, privileges and immunities of a commissioner appointed under the *Public Inquiries Act*, with the exception of the powers of contempt, arrest and imprisonment. 2017, c. 2, s. 49.

Powers of inspector

50 (1) Subject to subsection (2), an inspector may, at any reasonable time, enter

(a) any land or any building, structure, premises or place that is subject to this Act or the regulations; or

(b) any other premises or place where the inspector has reasonable grounds to believe that records or things relevant to the administration or enforcement of this Act or the regulations are kept,

for the purpose of administering and enforcing this Act or the regulations.

(2) An inspector may not enter a private dwelling place or any part of a place that is designed to be used and is being used as a permanent or temporary private dwelling place except

(a) with the consent of the occupant of the place; or

(b) under an order granted under Section 51. 2017, c. 2, s. 50.

Court order

51 (1) Where a justice is satisfied on evidence under oath by an inspector that

(a) there are reasonable grounds to believe that it is appropriate for the administration of this Act for the inspector to do anything set out in Section 48; and

(b) the inspector may not be able to carry out duties under this Act effectively without an order under this Section because

(i) no person is present to grant access to premises that are locked or otherwise inaccessible,

(ii) a person has denied the inspector access to premises or there are reasonable grounds for believing that a person may deny the inspector access to premises,

(iii) a person has prevented the inspector from doing one or more things set out in Section 48 or denied the inspector access to something, as a result of which the inspector is unable to do one or more things set out in Section 48,

(iv) there are reasonable grounds to believe that a person may prevent an inspector from doing one or more things set out in Section 48, or may deny the inspector access

to something as a result of which the inspector may be unable to do one or more things set out in Section 48,

(v) it is unpractical, because of the remoteness of the premises to be inspected or because of any other reason, for the inspector to obtain an order under this Section without delay if access is denied, or

(vi) there are reasonable grounds to believe that an attempt by the inspector to do anything set out in Section 48 without the order might defeat the purpose of that Section or cause an adverse effect,

the justice may issue an order authorizing the inspector to do anything set out in Section 48 that is specified in the order for the period set out in the order.

(2) The period referred to in subsection (1) may not extend beyond 30 days after the date on which the order is made, but the order may be renewed for any reason set out in subsection (1) for one or more periods, each of which may not be more than 30 days.

(3) An application for an extension under subsection (2) may be made before or after the expiry of the period.

(4) An order under this Section may be issued or renewed on application without notice. 2017, c. 2, s. 51.

Order or finding of inspector

52 (1) An inspector who finds that this Act or the regulations are being or have been contravened may issue an order, in the form prescribed, requiring the individual or organization responsible for the contravention to remedy it.

(2) Where an inspector carries out an inspection and finds that this Act or the regulations are not being or have not been contravened the inspector shall document the finding and any relevant information leading to the finding. 2017, c. 2, s. 52.

Director may review decision of inspector

53 The Director may, on the Director's own motion, review any decision of an inspector that does not result in the issuance of an order and may confirm the inspector's decision or direct the inspector to issue an order under subsection 52(1). 2017, c. 2, s. 53.

Review of inspector's order

54 (1) An individual or organization named in an order made under subsection 52(1) may request the Director to review the order.

(2) A request must be made in writing and must include the individual's or organization's name and address, the reasons for requesting the review

and any additional information that the individual or organization wants to be considered by the Director.

(3) The Director is not required to hold a hearing when a request for review is made.

(4) A request for review operates as a stay of the inspector's order pending the outcome of the review by the Director.

(5) The Director may confirm, revoke or vary the order.

(6) The Director shall, within 60 days of the request for review being made, provide the individual or organization who requested the review with

(a) a copy of the Director's decision, with written reasons; and

(b) notification of the right to appeal the decision to the Court under Section 60.

(7) Where a request for review of an inspector's order is not received by the Director within 30 days after the order is served, the inspector's order is final. 2017, c. 2, s. 54.

Administrative penalty

55 (1) Subject to Section 56, where the Director is of the opinion that an individual or organization has failed to comply with an inspector's order within the period specified in the order, the Director may issue a written notice requiring the individual or organization to pay an administrative penalty in the amount prescribed.

(2) Notice of an administrative penalty may only be issued after the period for appealing an order has expired or, where an appeal has been filed, after a decision has been made on the appeal.

(3) The notice of administrative penalty must be served on the individual or organization required to pay the penalty. 2017, c. 2, s. 55.

Limitation period

56 No penalty may be issued by the Director more than three years after the act or omission that renders the individual or organization liable to a penalty first came to the knowledge of the Director. 2017, c. 2, s. 56.

Certificate filed with Court

57 (1) The Director may file a certificate with the Court signed by the Director and setting out

(a) the amount of the administrative penalty issued; and

(b) the individual or organization against whom the penalty is issued.

(2) A certificate filed under this Section has the same force and effect as if it were a judgment obtained in the Court for the recovery of a debt in the amount set out in the certificate and may be enforced in the same manner as a judgment of the Court. 2017, c. 2, s. 57.

Effect of payment of administrative penalty

58 An individual or organization who pays an administrative penalty for an incident of non-compliance may not be charged with an offence with respect to that non-compliance unless the non-compliance continues after the penalty is paid. 2017, c. 2, s. 58.

Use of administrative penalty fees

59 Administrative penalties paid under this Act must be used for the purpose of accessibility initiatives, including public education and awareness. 2017, c. 2, s. 59.

Appeal

60 (1) Any individual or organization who is directly affected by a decision of the Director made under

- (a) Section 54 with respect to an order; or
- (b) Section 55 with respect to an administrative penalty,

may appeal the decision by filing a notice of appeal with the Court and serving a copy on the Director and any other person who the Court orders to be served.

(2) An appeal may be made on the following grounds:

- (a) in the case of a decision under Section 54, that the finding of a contravention of this Act or the regulations was incorrect; or
- (b) in the case of an administrative penalty, that
 - (i) the amount of the penalty was not determined in accordance with the regulations, or
 - (ii) the amount of the penalty is not justified in the public interest.

(3) An appeal may not be commenced more than 30 days after the individual or organization receives a decision of the Director. 2017, c. 2, s. 60.

Duties of Director on appeal

61 On receipt of the notice of appeal under subsection 60(1), the Director shall file with the Court true copies of

- (a) all documents and materials that were before the Director when the Director made the decision;
- (b) the Director's decision; and
- (c) the Director's written reasons for the decision. 2017, c. 2, s. 61.

Powers of court

62 (1) On hearing an appeal under Section 60, the Court may confirm, vary or dismiss the decision or refer the matter back to the Director.

(2) The Court may make any order as to costs on an appeal that the Court considers appropriate. 2017, c. 2, s. 62.

Appeal operates as stay

63 The commencement of an appeal under Section 60 operates as a stay of the decision pending the outcome of the appeal. 2017, c. 2, s. 63.

Director's report

64 (1) The Director shall maintain a database of all complaints of non-compliance, inspector visits, orders issued, Director reviews, notices of administrative penalties and appeals and shall provide the Minister with a summary report annually or at any more frequent interval as requested by the Minister.

(2) The Minister shall share the report prepared pursuant to subsection (1) with the Accessibility Directorate and the Accessibility Advisory Board.

(3) The Minister may issue public reports disclosing details of orders and decisions made and administrative penalties issued under this Act which may include personal information as defined in the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. 2017, c. 2, s. 64.

Documents to be provided in accessible format

65 The following documents must be provided in an accessible format and at no charge to a person within a reasonable period after the person requests it from the Minister or a public sector body:

- (a) in the case of the Minister,
 - (i) the recommendations of the Board,
 - (ii) a proposed accessibility standard,
 - (iii) a review conducted under Section 66,
 - (iv) any educational and awareness tools made publicly available,
 - (v) a summary report prepared by the Board,
 - (vi) an accessibility plan; and

- (b) in the case of a public sector body, its accessibility plan. 2017, c. 2, s. 65.

Review of Act and accessibility standards

66 (1) Within four years after the coming into force of this Act, and at least every five years thereafter, the Governor in Council shall appoint a person to undertake a comprehensive review of the effectiveness of the Act and the accessibility standards and report on the person's findings to the Minister.

(2) The person undertaking the review under this Section shall consult with

- (a) persons with disabilities;
- (b) representatives from organizations representing persons with disabilities; and
- (c) representatives from organizations affected by the implementation of the accessibility standards.

(3) Within 30 days of receiving the report, the Minister shall

- (a) make the report publicly available; and
- (b) table the report in the House of Assembly if the Assembly is then sitting or, where the Assembly is not then sitting, file it with the Clerk of the Assembly. 2017, c. 2, s. 66.

No action lies

67 No action lies against the Minister, the Accessibility Directorate, the Board, the Director, an inspector or any other person acting under the authority of this Act for anything done, or omitted to be done, in good faith, in the exercise or intended exercise of a power or duty under this Act or the regulations. 2017, c. 2, s. 67.

Offence and penalty

68 An individual or organization who

- (a) repeatedly fails to
 - (i) prepare and keep records in accordance with the regulations,
 - (ii) make the records available for inspection and examination, or
 - (iii) comply with an accessibility standard as required under Section 37;
- (b) knowingly makes a false or misleading statement to the Minister or an inspector acting under the authority of this Act;
- (c) knowingly makes a false or misleading statement in a record or report given or required under this Act;

(d) hinders, obstructs or interferes with, or attempts to hinder, obstruct or interfere with, the Minister or an inspector acting under the authority of this Act; or

(e) continues to fail to comply with an inspector's order after having been issued an administrative penalty, regardless of whether the penalty is paid,

is guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine of not more than \$250,000. 2017, c. 2, s. 68.

Offence by employee

69 In a prosecution of an offence under this Act, it is sufficient proof of the offence to establish that it was committed by an employee or agent of the accused whether or not the employee or agent is identified or has been prosecuted for the offence, unless the accused establishes that the offence was committed without the knowledge or consent of the accused. 2017, c. 2, s. 69.

Liability of directors, officers and agents

70 Where an organization commits an offence, a director, officer or agent of the organization who authorized, permitted or acquiesced in the offence is also guilty of the offence and liable on summary conviction to the penalty set out in Section 68, whether or not the organization has been prosecuted or convicted. 2017, c. 2, s. 70.

Regulations

- 71** (1) The Governor in Council may make regulations
- (a) prescribing municipalities, universities and organizations as public sector bodies;
 - (b) prescribing the manner in which a document must be made publicly available;
 - (c) prescribing an activity, undertaking or other requirements for the purpose of clause 29(e);
 - (d) establishing accessibility standards;
 - (e) exempting an individual or organization or a class of individuals or organizations, or an aspect of the built environment, from the application of any provision of this Act or the regulations and prescribing terms and conditions for the exemption;
 - (f) respecting record-keeping and reporting requirements for individuals and organizations that are subject to an accessibility standard;
 - (g) respecting incentive-based measures to encourage and assist an individual or organization, or a class of individuals or organizations, to meet or exceed an accessibility standard;

(h) respecting accessibility plans, including the content, timing and preparation of such plans;

(i) respecting the offices, positions, territorial jurisdiction and duties of inspectors generally or specifically;

(j) establishing rules governing the qualifications, office, position, duties, conduct and discipline of inspectors;

(k) respecting the form of the order an inspector may make, including the content of the order and the method of its service;

(l) prescribing the form an inspector must use when making an order under Section 52;

(m) prescribing the form an inspector must use to document a finding that the Act or the regulations has not been contravened;

(n) for the purpose of Section 55, respecting administrative penalties for contraventions of this Act, including regulations

(i) prescribing the form and content of the notice of administrative penalty,

(ii) respecting the determination of amounts of administrative penalties, which may vary according to the nature or frequency of the contravention and whether it is an individual or organization in non-compliance, and

(iii) respecting any other matter necessary for the administration of the system of administrative penalties provided for under this Act;

(o) respecting the specific use to be made of any funds collected through the imposition of administrative penalties;

(p) respecting the manner in which any order, notice or other document under this Act may be served, given or provided to any individual or organization;

(q) defining any word or expression used but not defined in this Act;

(r) respecting any matter or thing the Governor in Council considers necessary or advisable to effectively carry out the intent and purpose of this Act.

(2) The exercise by the Governor in Council of the authority contained in subsection (1) is a regulation within the meaning of the *Regulations Act*, 2017, c. 2, s. 71.

Disabled Persons' Commission Act repealed

72 Chapter 130 of the Acts of 1989, the *Disabled Persons' Commission Act*, is repealed. 2017, c. 2, s. 72.

Effective date

73 This Act comes into force on such day as the Governor in Council orders and declares by proclamation. 2017, c. 2, s. 73.

Proclaimed - September 15, 2017
In force - September 18, 2017

SEPTEMBER 18, 2017

