



# Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting

April 11, 2022

4.30 p.m.

Hybrid (Virtual Teams/In Person) Meeting

## Agenda

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### Call to Order

**1. Approval of Agenda**

**2. Comments from the Chair -**

- a. Brief discussion on meeting process/protocols

**3. Approval of Minutes**

- a. Committee Meeting, March 14, 2022

**4. Public Input / Question Period**

PLEASE NOTE:

- Public Participation is limited to 30 minutes
- Each Person is limited to 3 minutes and may return to speak once, for 1 minute, if time permits within the total 30-minute period
- Questions or comments are to be directed to the Chair
- Comments and questions that relate to personnel, current or potential litigation issues, or planning issues for which a public hearing has already occurred, but no decision has been made by Council, will not be answered.

**5. Staff Reports for Discussion**

- a. RFD 027-2022 Accessibility Plan 2022-20226



**6. Round Table Discussion – time permitting**

**7. Next Meeting: May 9, 2022**

**8. Adjournment**

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**ATTENDING**

- Chair, Councillor Jennifer Ingham
- Vice Chair, Dwayne MacLeod
- Mayor Wendy Donovan
- Emily Duffett
- Birgit Ellsner

**ALSO ATTENDING:**

- Meghan Swanburg, Acadia University
- Director of Finance, Mike MacLean
- Director of Parks and Recreation, Kelton Thomason
- Coordinator of Special Projects & Communication, Barb Shaw
- Recorder, Laura Morrison

**REGRETS:**

- Rebecca Smith
- Pamela Capern

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair, Councillor Ingham, called the meeting to order at 4:32 pm.

- 1. Approval of Agenda**      **MOTION: IT WAS REGULARLY MOVED AND SECONDED THAT THE AGENDA BE APPROVED AS CIRCULATED.**

**CARRIED**

- 2. Approval of the Minutes**      **MOTION: IT WAS REGULARLY MOVED AND SECONDED THAT THE MINUTES FOR THE FEBRUARY 14, 2022, ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE BE APPROVED.**

**CARRIED**

- 3. a) Acadia University Update**      • Meghan Swanburg advised the Learning Commons Centre at Acadia is AAC certified.

- b) Education Programs**
- Vice Chair Dwayne MacLeod advised no current full courses available at NSCC on Accessibility Related Training.
  - Conversation has started internally at NSCC to look at offering.
  - Education Standard Development Committee's draft recommendation for an accessibility standard in education to be offered to general community.

**c) Readability of Wolfville Blooms**

- Birgit Ellsner updated the committee on her friend's review of the Wolfville Blooms platform. Her friend uses a screen reader. She advised the hot links or URL web addresses were hard to read, but on the whole enjoyed the content.
- Communications Specialist Barb Shaw advised those addresses are a form of computer code and not intended for anyone to read, however there may be option to clean them up.

**4. Staff Reports for Discussion:**

a. Review of 1<sup>st</sup> Draft Accessibility Plan 2022-2025

- Director MacLean presented on the draft Accessibility Plan and asked for feedback.
- Actionable goals of plan tie into Town's long-term plans.
- Joint welcome message to be developed from Chair & Mayor.
- Universal Design – want to go beyond Equality vs Equity, include a paragraph to show universal design does exist and we have progressed. The chain-link fence graphic could be included as it evolves towards barrier free, but for now it's ok as is.
- Apple tree picture may be a better version that speaks to that – bring back options for Committee to review.
- Cost to engage plain language editor to review.
- Instead of a list in front of each section, consider a one-page Gallery of Achievements which would highlight various pictures of projects completed/improvements carried out. A caption under each picture to be included where possible. Before and after pictures if available.
- Achievements – shorter bullet points not as much info required.
- Rick Hansen certified but strive to get gold standard where budget allows. Standards are being increased for gold designation.
- Within coming months will commence Parks Masterplan which will require input from this committee.
- Upgrade to Quiet Park.
- Community Partnerships – would like to look at practicalities and come back to committee.
- Accessibility factors considered in Crosswalk Design/redevelopment.
- Continuous progress as opposed to completed ones to show difference.
- Report cards are inserted as appendix.
- Public engagement – not there yet.
- Could Planning Dept review what could be prioritize/fast tracked? Concern of ripple effect, what other projects doing that could affect.

- In response to a question, Director MacLean confirmed the accessible playground at Willow Park is already in the draft plan – age friendly park – preferred title.
- Biography section still being considered.
- Add Committee’s picture of Tour of Parks.
- Dig out picture where we received an award.
- Implementing the plan schedule - initially it was March 2022 - limit the top priorities and support an achievable plan rather than aspirational one.
- Printed versions will be made available at a cost and with the same type of paper as last one.

#### 5. Round Table

- No dedicated Accessible Coordinator at this stage.
- First plan was a 3-year plan, a 4 year plan would fit in with the Province’s target date of 2030, as well as our Operational plan which is every four years.
- Will ensure it’s within guidelines to do that.
- If members want to come back with more feedback or questions send an email to Directors MacLean & Thomason.

#### 6. Next Meeting

April 11, 2022

#### 7. Adjournment

Members called an adjournment at 5:37 pm.

**Approved at the April 11, 2022 Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting.  
As recorded by Laura Morrison, Executive Assistant & Town Clerk, Office of the CAO.**

## REQUEST FOR DECISION 027-2022

Title: Accessibility Plan 2022-2026  
Date: 2022-04-11 Accessibility Advisory Committee  
Department: Finance

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## SUMMARY

### Accessibility Plan 2022-2026

In early 2019, Council adopted the Town's first ever Accessibility Plan, Wolfville: Access by Design 2019-2022. As part of a pilot project supported by the province, Wolfville was the first Town in Nova Scotia to adopt such a plan as it works to meet provincial legislation mandating all NS municipalities become accessible under the legislation by the year 2030.

That first version of what is now a living document, looked to have Council adopt a second version by the end March 31, 2022. Over the last three years many things have occurred, not the least of which has been the COVID pandemic. This pandemic impacted the timing of the Accessibility Plan update, with the Accessibility Committee looking to recommend a Plan to Council by May 2022. The draft plan attached to this Request for Decision (RFD), pending any changes by the Accessibility Advisory Committee, will form the 2022-2026 Plan for the Town.

The Accessibility Advisory Committee has spent the last year reviewing each of the five areas of focus of the 2019-2022 Plan, with an eye to updating the information and setting the goals for the next four years. This work has included numerous meetings as well as a field trip to three selected parks in Town to help inform how parks/open spaces might be improved. The culmination of the Committees work is now represented by the proposed 2022-2026 Plan attached to this RFD.

### **DRAFT MOTION for Committee:**

That the attached draft Accessibility Plan 2022-2026 be forwarded to Council for approval and adoption by the Town.

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### 1) CAO COMMENTS

Typically added once a report goes forward to Council.

### 2) LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

- Bill No. 59 - NS Accessibility Act (2017)

### 3) STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff's recommendation will be added once the report is forwarded to Council. This is similar to the process followed in 2018/19 when the first plan was ultimately adopted by Council. Generally speaking, staff support the draft 2022-2026 Accessibility Plan attached to this RFD as it goes before the Accessibility Committee on April 11<sup>th</sup>.

### 4) REFERENCES AND ATTACHMENTS

- Wolfville Access by Design – An Accessibility Plan for 2019-2022
- DRAFT Wolfville Access by Design – An Accessibility Plan for 2022-2026

### 5) DISCUSSION

As noted in the summary on page one of this report, the Accessibility Advisory Committee has spent the last year reviewing each of the five areas of focus of the 2019-2022 Plan, with an eye to updating the information and setting the goals for the next four years. This work has included numerous meetings as well as a field trip to three selected parks in Town to help inform how parks/open spaces might be improved. The culmination of the Committees work is now represented by the proposed 2022-2026 Plan attached to this RFD.

As the Accessibility Advisory Committee review the draft Plan attached to this report, staff would highlight the following:

- The Plan is still in draft form as such may still require further editing.
- The draft Plan covers the next four years, versus the three year period covered by the first plan adopted by the Town. This will allow time to achieve the goals as outlined, and allows the Town to have 2 four year plans moving forward, i.e. 2022-2026 and 2026-2030 which easily ties into the provincial deadline to achieve all goals by 2030. The use of annual report cards will still ensure the Town is making progress.

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- The Report Card for the year ended March 31, 2022 has not yet been reviewed or approved by the Committee.
  - Staff suggest the March 2022 Report Card be reviewed as part of process finalizing the 2022-2026 Accessibility Plan.
  - Staff suggest that at this point in time, the forward looking draft Accessibility Plan is more important than the Report Card which is looking back in time. Basically, it is more critical to adopt a Plan to help guide next steps, than to spend too much time evaluating the past.
- The 2022-2026 Plan does not reference specific years of completion for Top priorities as did the last Plan. Some top priorities may take all four years of the period of time covered by this Plan, while some “other” priorities may be able to be completed in the short term. Ultimately all action items need to be addressed in the next four years, or reevaluated on the next four years as changes to consider for the 2026-2030 version of the plan.
- Wording has been added to specifically reference the aspirational goal of Universal Design, which will help set the bar higher than an equity-based goal which can be achieved by accommodation. Universal Design will help move the Town towards barrier free community.
- After discussion with our Communications staff, Barb Shaw, the final layout of the Plan adopted should be informed by reference to a graphics design consultant. Effectively this will not change the content of the draft before the Committee, but may change the layout in areas such as the proposed Gallery of Achievement. This is not dissimilar to the approach taken with the 2019-2022 Plan. Final content was recommended by the Committee to Council, with a draft layout and images. The final product was modified slightly to produce the actual document made available to the public. This largely involved specific visuals used and they were displayed throughout the document.
- Both the Accessibility Committee and staff are committed to the 2022-2026 Accessibility Plan being vetted by a Plain Language editor. Same process as followed three years ago.

For the Committee, the April 11<sup>th</sup> meeting should provide a chance to review the content, goals and action items, that the Committee looks to the Town to achieve over the next four years. Staff believe the attached is close to or complete in its inclusion of the Committee’s goals as discussed over the last year.

## 6) FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Many of the action items have been included in the 2022/23 multi year Operations Plan and Budget. The specific financial implications will continue to evolve over time as the Town attempts to implement the goals. Areas such as replacing existing buildings with new facilities come with a significant financial commitment. The proposed new Town Hall and Library currently show in the long term capital plan at a



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combined cost of some \$5.6 million dollars. Such investments will help achieve not only accessibility goals, but also environmental goals, improved public services, and much needed practical space for existing staff.

### 7) REFERENCES TO COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN AND TOWN REPORTS

The Accessibility Plan, like many plans adopted by the town have linkages to more than one aspect of the Council's overall Strategic Plan. Achieving a barrier free community can enhance economic development, become a pillar of social equity, and improve opportunity for community wellness.

### 8) COMMUNICATION REQUIREMENTS

A specific communications plan will be developed once Council approves the 2022-2026 Accessibility Plan.

### 9) ALTERNATIVES

The AAC could request staff to bring back further revisions to the draft plan before approving a motion to forward to Council. It is important for the committee to balance the time required for further revisions with the goal to operationalize the plan

# Wolfville: Access by Design

An Accessibility Plan for 2022-2026



  
wolfville

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For important terms, check out “**What the Words Mean (Glossary of Terms)**” on page 6.

## Welcome Message: current Chair and Mayor

Note Barb will be working with the mayor and Jen to develop this welcome message.

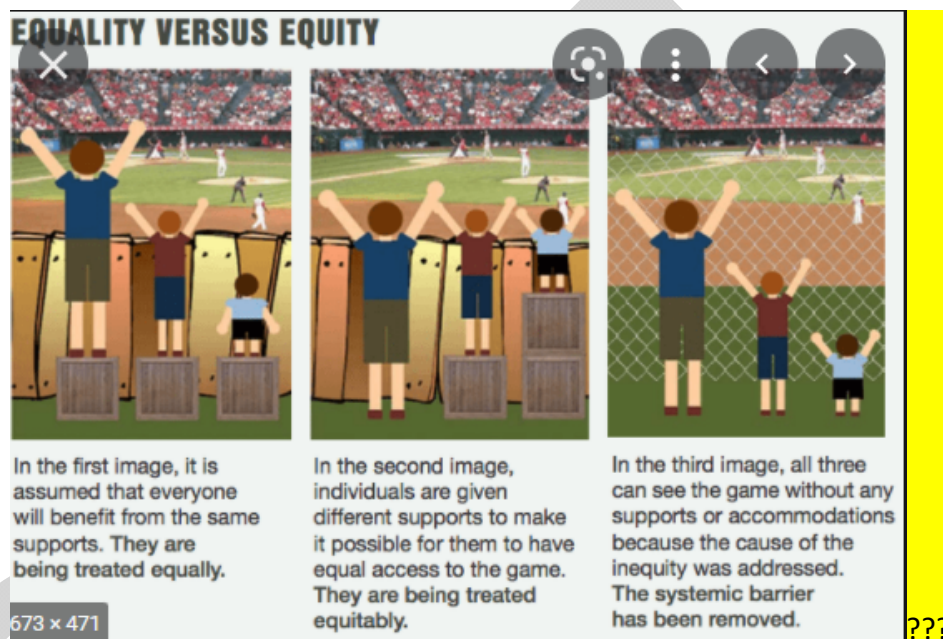
DRAFT

## What We Believe

The Town of Wolfville is committed to ensuring equitable access to community life and participation in society for all people, regardless of their abilities. We are committed to helping all people maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in inclusion.

*Equitable access* is different from *equal access*. *Equality* means everybody gets the same thing; *equity* means everybody is treated fairly, based on their needs and abilities (Figure 1).

Figure 1.



We are committed to meeting the needs of people who face barriers to accessibility. We will do this by identifying, removing, and preventing these barriers and by meeting the requirements of Nova Scotia's Accessibility Act. The Town will strive to incorporate Universal Design concepts wherever possible within the financial constraints inherent in municipal entities.

## Areas of Focus

Our plan includes five areas of focus (Figure 2).



Figure 2.

## What the Words Mean (Glossary of Terms)

**AAC:** Accessibility Advisory Committee. (Where possible, avoid using acronyms and initials for short forms. Use words instead. For example, when it is clear which committee you mean, use “the committee” rather than the AAC.)

**Appeal:** Make a formal request to clarify or change a decision.

**ASL:** American Sign Language.

**Auditory:** Related to hearing or sensing sound.

**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.”

**Braille:** A reading and writing system for people who are visually impaired.

**CART:** Communication Access Realtime Translation.

**CSA:** Canadian Standards Association.

**Density bonusing:** (Also called “incentive zoning” or “bonus zoning”) A way for developers and municipalities to negotiate changes to zoning rules. For example, the municipality might allow the developer to include less parking in exchange for benefits to the public, such as public art, parks, or accessibility improvements.

**Disability:** A condition that makes it harder for a person to participate. The condition may always interfere, or only sometimes. Nova Scotia’s Accessibility Act defines *disability* 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.”

**EMO:** Emergency Management Office.

**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.

**Infrastructure:** The “underlying structure” that makes a place liveable and keeps its systems working (e.g., roads, sewers, clean water, electricity, and more).

**NSFM:** Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities.

**Pedestrian:** A person walking outside or using an assistive device outside to travel at a walking speed.

**Plain language:** Language a reader or listener can understand easily and completely.

**Retrofit:** To add features that were not included in the original design.

**RHF:** Rick Hansen Foundation.

**RHFAC:** Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification. (Learn more at [www.rickhansen.com/become-accessible/rating-certification](http://www.rickhansen.com/become-accessible/rating-certification).)

**Tactile:** Related to the sense of touch.

**WCAG:** Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. (Learn more at [www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/wcag](http://www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/wcag).)

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### Gallery of Achievements

Staff are proposing that we create a page or two of visual pictures of selected achievements over the last few years. For example the Splashpad and amenities at Willow Park, new ramp at Town Hall, concrete pathway to Cenotaph located in front of post office, pathway to Mona Parsons Project, and new accessible parking at Town Hall and also on Main Street.

Barb is collecting relevant visual images. Thought is to engage a graphic designer to help with layout of entire document, including how to incorporate images of achievement. Could be a one or two page gallery, could be an appendix, or could be distributed throughout the document.

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## Built Environment

### Our Commitment

Our public buildings and public spaces will become more accessible to people of all ages and abilities, whether we own, lease, or operate the space. We will also encourage citizens, the business community, and Acadia University to make other public and private spaces accessible.

### Our Starting Point

#### *Overview*

The Town of Wolfville owns, leases, and operates public facilities such as Town Hall, Rotary Park, streets and sidewalks, parking areas, and a wide variety of other buildings, parks, and infrastructure (basic structures and systems that help the Town run smoothly).

#### *Achievements*

- Incremental improvements have occurred over the past few years to improve trail and pathway surfaces including concrete walkway to Town Cenotaph, pathway created to Mona Parsons statue, and improved attention to compacting existing crusher dust pathways.
- Sidewalk rebuilding is included in the 10-year capital investment plan, and sidewalk repairs now have more attention in the Operations Plan. Includes move towards Active Transportation, beyond just sidewalk.
- The Town bought additional equipment, and allocated additional human resources, to improve snow removal.
- Town Hall has new improved entrance ramp, accessible service counter, and general barrier free first floor.
- Additional accessible parking spaces have been added in the downtown core area including Town Hall parking lot and street parking. Street accessible parking now includes curb cuts and ramps at each location and improved signage.
- Added accessible parking included in Willow Park street reconfiguration
- Town's new Municipal Planning Strategy (2020) includes provisions addressing ability for people to age-in-place

#### *Barriers*

- Some sidewalks and walkways are uneven.
- Some entryways to public and private buildings are narrow.
- Some public open spaces—such as, Quiet Park and the Harvest Moon Trail (Rail Trail)—are not accessible to people with mobility challenges.
- Some public washrooms are not fully accessible to people of all ages and abilities.

- There are not enough signs for people with visual and hearing impairments.
- Cars and pedestrian traffic compete for street priority and snow clearance.
- Sidewalk snow clearing does not always meet accessibility requirements.
- It can be very expensive to update (retrofit) existing buildings to make them more accessible.
- Accessibility projects compete with other budget demands, including core services such as policing, fire, water and sewer services.

## Policies

### *For Public Spaces*

The Town of Wolfville will...

- Continue to, ensure that all or most municipal facilities meet the Accessibility requirements (Schedule “C”) in the latest version of the Nova Scotia Building Code Regulation. For facilities not yet achieving regulation, have a plan in place to complete the work by 2030. Currently the Town plans to upgrade key buildings by 2027.
- Ensure that all new municipal buildings (including major renovations) can be Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certified. (RHFAC). Where possible, achieve as many elements of gold certification within the Town’s financial capacity. Encourage Universal Design.
- Provide basic access for people of all ages and abilities at public parks with a natural slope of less than 5 percent (e.g., parts of Reservoir Park; Harvest Moon Trail; Quiet Park; parts of Willow Park, etc.).

### *For Community Partnerships*

The Town of Wolfville will...

- Regard Rick Hansen Accessibility Certification as a “public benefit” under the Density Bonus Program.
- Work with the Wolfville business community, including the Wolfville Business Development Corporation, to promote Wolfville as an accessible community.
- Encourage seniors to “age in place” through alternative housing options, such as “granny-flats”, co-housing, senior shared housing with students, etc.

## Actions

### *Top Priorities ()*

- Ensure Town Crosswalk Policy includes accessibility considerations into annual crosswalk improvement program. Refer to Town's Ten Year Capital Investment Plan.
- Have Town staff work with business community to place street furniture, sandwich boards and sidewalk planters away from the path of travel and set back from curb cuts and sidewalks so that people can move freely.
- Install automatic doors at Rec Centre located at Rotary Park..
- .
- Include Accessibility Committee as a source of input to the Town's development of a Parks Masterplan.
- Upgrades at Reservoir Park around beach area include accessible washroom/change room facilities and shade from sun.
- New Welcome Centre at Willow Park (formerly Visitor Information Centre) to be accessible including washrooms
- Convert a portion of pathways at Clock Park to concrete surface.

### *Other Priorities*

- Include Accessibility Advisory Committee as a source of input to the Town's design of new Library/Town Hall facility . .
- Ensure added accessible parking spaces included in new parking lot at East End Gateway (adjacent to Harvest Moon Trailhead)
- Include Accessibility Committee as a source of input in design of playground upgrades at Willow Park
- Include Accessibility Committee as a source of input in design considerations at Quiet Park
- Review with Planning Department staff whether the following can be implemented in a practical/impactful way.
  - For renovations to private buildings that aim to meet the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification, fast track the approval and waive the development fee.
  - For new developments that aim to achieve Rick Hansen Accessibility Certification, consider:
    - deducting the cost of certification from development fees, and
    - fast tracking these applications through the development approval process.

- Develop a directory of accessibility related grant programs available to the Town's business community. Promote and make the list available to the business community.
- Increase number of accessible parking spots at Farmers Market parking lot. Ensure spots meet accessible standards.

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## Information and Communications

### Our Commitment

Information and communications delivered by the Town of Wolfville will be clear and accessible for people of all ages and abilities.

We will take steps so people understand accessibility and barriers to participation, and will increase awareness about the accessibility rights of people of all ages and abilities.

### Our Starting Point

#### *Overview*

The Town delivers information to the public in many ways, including:

- meetings of Town Council and Advisory Committees, which are open to the public
- email, the Town's website, Wolfville Blooms public engagement platform, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and other forms of social media
- kiosks (display structures) to promote events and special town meetings
- public awareness campaigns

#### *Achievements*

- Meetings are generally held at Town Hall, where the first floor is barrier free.
- When meetings are not held at Town Hall, a wheelchair-accessible space is booked, whenever possible.
- Agendas and minutes of all meetings are posted on the Town website.
- Town Council, and Committee of the Whole, meetings are now conducted in-person and virtually, referred to as hybrid meetings. People can attend at Town Hall or request a virtual link if they wish to address Council. People can listen to or watch Town Council meetings on the Internet via Facebook Live streaming. After the meeting, people can listen to or watch an archived copy on the Town's website. The Facebook Live stream includes ability to have closed captioning.
- The Emergency Management Office (EMO) Coordinator has worked with seniors and seniors' housing to develop a contact list for use in the event of an emergency.

#### *Barriers*

- Many people do not know that others face barriers to accessibility.
- There is currently no process for hearing-impaired individuals to easily participate in public meetings, including meetings of Town Council and Advisory Committees.

- Staff are generally not trained to promote inclusion in communications.
- “Plain language” is not consistently used in written material.
- The Municipal Government Act sets limitations for certain public notices—for example, advertisements must be published in newspapers, which may not be accessible to people with visual impairments.

## Policies

The Town of Wolfville will...

- On request, provide information in an accessible format, or with communication supports that consider a person’s specific needs. Build a campaign to promote this service to the public.
- Ensure the Town’s continued digital presence (e.g., website and social media) and Information Technology systems are designed for people of all ages and abilities.
- Strive to hold all in-person public meetings in barrier-free locations.
- Train front-line staff in better ways to communicate with people of all ages and abilities, and to provide information in an accessible format.
- Create and maintain a presence on the Towns public engagement site Wolfville Blooms, providing an ongoing forum for public outreach and feedback.

## Actions

### *Top Priorities ( )*

- Train staff in plain language and inclusive communications.
- Develop and implement a public awareness program (for Town staff and the public) to build awareness around barriers to accessibility and what an accessible community means.
- Provide modified editions of key municipal resources—in large print and/or in plain language—on request. Examples include recreation guides, emergency management information, and bylaw services.
- Ensure digital communications, including emergency alerts, are screen-readable. Encourage partner agencies to achieve the same standard of communication.

### *Other Priorities*

- Provide American Sign Language (ASL) and/or Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) services at Town Council and other Town-hosted public meetings, on request.
- Include braille on all employee business cards.

- .
- Issue meeting agendas with enough lead time to review and book communication accommodations, if needed.
- Ensure the public have enough notice to give feedback and participate in discussions before Town Council makes a decision.

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## Employment

### Our Commitment

We will remove barriers to employment for people of all ages and abilities who seek a career with the Town of Wolfville. Our workforce will, over time, reflect the Town's diverse population. We will make our employment practices and workplaces more accessible for new and existing employees of all ages and abilities.

### Our Starting Point

#### *Overview*

The Town employs 49 permanent employees. There are 7 elected representatives on Town Council, including the mayor. Elected representatives must be Canadian citizens, at least 18 years old, and live in the community. The Council may appoint other members of the public to serve on committees or task forces.

#### *Achievements*

- Members of Council receive Surface Pro devices for reading agendas and Town documents. This makes reading more accessible because users can zoom in on text and change the font size.
- Town Hall is barrier free on the first floor.
- The Council table is generally wheelchair accessible.
- The Public Works/Community Development building is wheelchair accessible on the first floor.
- Town maintains a financially sustainable level of reserve funds, ensuring ability to cover cost of a requested accommodation.

#### *Barriers*

- The second floor is not wheelchair accessible in Town-owned buildings. Bathroom facilities in Town buildings do not meet accessible standards.
- Staff, including senior management, are generally not trained to recognize barriers that may limit job opportunities for qualified individuals.
- Jobs are posted in traditional ways, including web pages, which may not be accessible to some individuals.
- Because the Town does not have a Human Resources Department, there are limited resources to help staff who have individual needs.
- Because buildings have limited accessible access, Town's capacity to accommodate within the current offices is minimized.

## Policies

The Town of Wolfville will...

- Provide accommodation during recruitment, if needed.
- Offer accommodation to employees of all ages and abilities. This includes providing assistive devices so that employees can succeed at their jobs.
- Track the number of employees with disabilities, with the aim of reflecting the Town's diversity by 2030.
- Work with Town employees to build an understanding of the value of accessibility and inclusion.
- Continue to ensure adequate financial funds on hand to assist with any required accommodation.

## Actions

### *Top Priorities (2022-2025)*

- Update the employee training manual to include a section on respecting diversity. This will include training in working with people of all ages and abilities. All town employees will be required to take the Working with Abilities online training provided free by the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission ([workwithabilitiesns.ca](http://workwithabilitiesns.ca)).
- Start identifying staff positions that can remote work full time, increasing the Town's ability to accommodate staff facing barriers.

### *Other Priorities*

- Survey the municipal workforce to get baseline data on the ages and abilities of employees.
- Produce annual diversity reports, including trends and analysis about people with varying abilities.
- Share opportunities for accessibility training with residents and local businesses—online or in person with Town of Wolfville staff training.
- Investigate strategies to reach a wider and more diverse audience with job postings. Include statements in the job postings to ensure applicants are aware that accommodation can be provided.
- Assign a designated staff person to help individuals who may need assistance to succeed at their jobs.
- Ensure new buildings identified in Town's long term capital investment plan are constructed by 2030. Develop alternatives if new buildings are delayed.

## Goods and Services

### Our Commitment

We will ensure that people of all ages and abilities have equitable access to goods and services delivered by the Town of Wolfville. This includes ensuring that there are policies, procedures, and tools to promote the accessible delivery of goods and services.

### Our Starting Point

#### *Overview*

Following are some of the many services the Town of Wolfville delivers to the public:

- handling meetings of Town Council and Advisory Committees
- overseeing communication to the public (see Information and Communication section)
- providing Customer Service counters
- maintaining streets, including sidewalk snow removal (see Built Environment section)
- maintaining parks, trails, and open spaces, including playgrounds, and a Visitor Information Centre (see Built Environment section)
- maintaining water and sewer services
- providing emergency services, such as police and fire

#### *Achievements*

- The customer service counter in Town Hall is at a height that is wheelchair accessible.
- The Visitor Information Centre has no steps, and so it is partially wheelchair accessible.
- New ramp at Town Hall has reduced slope and added a mid-ramp rest area.
- Use of virtual meetings has expanded ability of members of community to attend or participate in Council meetings.
- Recreation program offerings have been expanded to provide a more diverse number of options for the community

#### *Barriers*

- Although the Visitor Information Centre is built at ground level, it is not fully accessible. For example, it does not have an automatic door opener and does not have an accessible washroom.
- Although the Recreation Centre at Rotary Park is built at ground level, it is not fully accessible. For example, there are no automatic door openers, some doors are too narrow, and the ramp to the program room is inappropriate.

- No staff members are trained in alternative communication methods, such as American Sign Language (ASL).
- No resources or funds are designated to offer alternative communications to people who need them (for example, a sign language interpreter).

## Policy

The Town of Wolfville will deliver all goods and services without bias. No resident shall be denied a service because of a disability.

## Actions

### *Top Priorities (2022-2025)*

- Ensure public parks can be enjoyed by people of all ages and abilities.
- Create an accessible playground at Willow Park. Ensure Parks Masterplan process includes accessibility considerations in other Parks.
- Provide an adapted listing of recreation programs and services for people of all ages and abilities and update it annually.
- Train the staff who are responsible for delivering accessible services to people with diverse abilities.
- Over the next four years, move towards required Hybrid meetings ensuring equitable access and participation in Town meetings.

### *Other Priorities*

- Create a directory, or link to a directory, of available ALS interpreters, CART Service Providers, and other resources the community can access.
- Provide sign language interpreters, on request, to enable people to participate in recreation and library programs.
- Provide accessible exercise equipment at municipal recreational facilities.
- Provide accessibility training to the Town's Building Inspector, through the RHFAC training offered by Nova Scotia Community College.

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## Transportation

### Our Commitment

We will ensure that people of all ages and abilities have equitable access to publicly funded transportation services. These currently include Kings Transit Authority, and Kings Point to Point Transportation.,.

### Our Starting Point

#### *Overview*

Kings Transit Authority operates 13 buses from Weymouth to Grand Pre with service extending to through Cornwallis Park, and Port Williams.

Kings Point-to-Point Transit (KPPT) provides a door-to-door accessible public transportation service for all residents of Central and Eastern Kings County. KPPT operates a fleet of 8 vehicles, including an 18-passenger minibus. All vehicles are accessible.

#### *Achievements*

All Kings Transit Authority buses are equipped with the following:

- Global Positioning System (GPS) and Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL), using DoubleMap. These features enable passengers to get up-to-the-minute estimates of bus arrival times, by phone or Internet.
- Automatic Voice Annunciation (AVA) Technology to announce the next stop for passengers with visual impairments
- low-floor kneeling capabilities and electric ramps
- priority seating

All of the Kings Point-to-Point vehicles are accessible.

#### *Barriers*

There are currently no accessible taxis operating in Wolfville.

Kings Point-to-Point Transit must be booked at least 24 hours in advance.

### Policies

The Town of Wolfville will...

- Ensure that no resident is denied transit service because of a disability.

- Ensure that no resident is charged an additional fee for transit or taxi service because of a disability.

## Actions

### *Top Priorities (2022-2025)*

- Work with Kings Transit to ensure all transit stops are designed to meet or exceed Canadian Standards Association (CSAA) Standard B651-12, Accessible Design for the Built Environment. This will be a multi year process.
- Town to assess main bus stop on Main Street in downtown core. Upgrade stop as required to meet CSAA Standard.

### *Other Priorities*

- Explore increasing subsidized transit fares and/or transit passes for people with disabilities and/or low income.
- Complete process of reviewing micro transit, including working with Kings Transit and Kings Point to Point to improve accessibility options.
- Encourage training is available for operators and drivers of public transportation.

## Implementing the Plan

### Responsibilities

- **Town Council** is responsible for adopting and overseeing *Wolfville: Access by Design*.
- The **Chief Administrative Officer** is responsible for implementing the plan and assigning an Accessibility Coordinator.
- The **Accessibility Coordinator** is responsible for receiving and responding to public concerns, complaints, and suggestions.
- The **Accessibility Advisory Committee** is responsible for giving feedback and recommendations to the Town Council.

### Schedule

All priorities in this plan will be implemented by March 31, 2026. If not complete, Committee will review for inclusion in the third version of the Plan covering 2026-2030.

### Monitoring

- The Wolfville Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) will prepare an Access by Design Report Card for council by April 30<sup>th</sup> of each year (one month after the end of the fiscal year). This report card will measure the performance of the policies and actions in this plan for the previous year. The committee may also make recommendations to improve the plan.
- The Access by Design Report Card will be a public document. It will be posted on the Town's website.

### Evaluating

The Town will lead a public review and evaluation of *Wolfville: Access by Design* before fiscal year 2026/27.

### Responding to Questions and Complaints

- Anyone can lodge a complaint, pose a question, or express a concern about accessibility in the Town of Wolfville. These should be directed to the Accessibility Coordinator via Town Hall or by emailing [accessibility@wolfville.ca](mailto:accessibility@wolfville.ca)

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- The Accessibility Coordinator will respond within a reasonable time. Before responding, the Coordinator will consult with the staff person responsible for the area of inquiry. The Coordinator's response will contain the reasons for the decision.
  - Anyone can appeal to Council if they are not satisfied with the response from the Accessibility Coordinator. Council may refer any appeal to the Accessibility Advisory Committee for additional review and recommendations before issuing a final response to the complainant.
  - The Accessibility Coordinator will keep a record of all complaints, questions, and concerns submitted to them, and will provide summary updates to the advisory committee on a regular basis. These updates will become part of the advisory committee's continual review of the Accessibility Plan, and may inform future changes.

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## Appendices

### Annual Report Cards – past three years

- Report Cards Year Ended March 31, 2020 (completed by committee)
- Year Ended March 31, 2021 (completed by committee)
- Year Ended March 31, 2022 (yet to be reviewed by committee)

### Committee – Field Trip to Review Selected Parks July 2021

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## Committee Tour of Selected Town Parks July 2021

The Accessibility Advisory Committee undertook a fieldtrip to Reservoir Park, Willow Park, and Waterfornt Park. Committee members were challenged to consider each park in reference to the 5 “s”. These were Site, Surface, Signage, Services, and Standards. The Town’s Director of Parks and Recreation, the Town’s only RHFAC trained staff, facilitated this process which provided not only feedback directly related the Parks visited, but indirectly towards keys to think about for all other Parks.

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