

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN 2025 - 2028

TOWN OF WOLFVILLE

A welcome from Mayor Jodi MacKay

It is with great pride that I introduce our third Accessibility Plan, continuing to identify the steps towards the creation of a more inclusive, welcoming, and accessible community for everyone. We are committed to ensuring that all individuals, regardless of ability, can fully participate in the life of our town.

This plan is the result of thoughtful collaboration with residents, community organizations, and accessibility experts, and reflects our dedication to addressing the needs of people with all abilities. It focuses on a thoughtful, continued approach to improving infrastructure, services, and opportunities, ensuring that everyone can live, work, and thrive in an environment that is free from barriers.

Our goal is not only to meet the legal standards of accessibility but to go above and beyond, creating a Town where all individuals feel respected, valued, and empowered. We are excited to work alongside you to implement this plan and continue making our Town a place where everyone belongs.

Thank you to the committee for their support and commitment to a more inclusive future.

Sincerely,
Jodi MacKay

Opening

In Wolfville, we are committed to ensuring that all people can take part in community life and in society, whatever their abilities. We are committed to helping all people maintain their dignity and independence.

At the Town of Wolfville we want to provide equitable access, which means treating all persons fairly, based on their needs and abilities. This is different than equal access, which means treating everybody the same way, whatever abilities or needs they have.

We are committed to meeting the needs of people who face barriers to accessibility. We do this by identifying, removing and preventing these barriers and by meeting the requirements of Nova Scotia's Accessibility Act.

This three-year plan and the identified projects in our areas of focus are based on community consultation, on-going community feedback, and input from Wolfville's Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Built Environment

The Town of Wolfville owns, leases or operates many structures that help the Town run. These structures include streets, sidewalks, parking areas, parks, buildings and other structures.

Existing barriers

- Some sidewalks and walkways are uneven.
- Some public parks and open spaces are not fully accessible.
- Some public washrooms are not fully accessible.
- Cars and pedestrian traffic compete for street priority.
- Sidewalk snow clearing does not always leave enough room for those who use wheeled mobility devices like walkers or strollers.

Within the built environment, the Town of Wolfville commits to the following priority projects:

Sidewalk condition index tool

Our roadways are assessed for condition so repairs and replacement can be budgeted and scheduled but sidewalks are not assessed and managed in the same way. Many of our sidewalks are also built with asphalt that can shift and lift in our changing climate, creating barriers to mobility.

A sidewalk condition index tool will assess conditions and help us create a plan for on-going repair, and replacement.

Public Washroom assessment

In the Town of Wolfville, not all our public washrooms meet accessibility standards. An accessibility specialist has been hired to assess the barriers that exist and create a plan, with costs, to help the Town improve accessibility in public washrooms.

Reservoir Park washroom/change station

Reservoir Park is a well-used Park that attracts people of all ages and abilities. A design has been completed for an accessible washroom and change station. The design will be finalized and a structure put in place by the end of 2026.

This structure will also include awnings to provide shade for Park users.

We will continue to work on the following priority projects

- Work with the business community to keep furniture, sandwich boards and planters away from the path of travel on sidewalks and at curb cuts so that people can move freely.
- Install an automatic door opener at the Recreation Centre.

Areas of progress

- Our new active transportation network is being constructed with rolling and strolling in mind.
- Our new Visitor Information Centre at Willow Park is constructed to the latest accessibility standards, including two accessible public washrooms.
- The Town has committed to using concrete for sidewalk construction, rather than asphalt.

Information and Communications

The Town communicates with residents and visitors in many ways including:

- Meetings of Town Council and advisory committees.
- Email, website, social media, notices, ads in newspapers, posters and information campaigns.
- Through Town staff.

Existing barriers

- Persons who are Deaf, deafened or hard of hearing can not easily take part in public meetings.
- Even with plain language, it can be hard to understand municipal process and practice.
- Signage in the Town is not always accessible.

Within information and communication, the Town commits to work on these priority projects:

Wayfinding project

The Town uses many different types of signs to communicate location, direction, safety information and regulations to residents and visitors. This is called “wayfinding.” All these signs have been given an accessibility review. Over the next three years, new signs will be created and installed throughout the Town.

American Sign Language at community events

As much as possible, American Sign Language will be offered at community events. American Sign Language can also be offered at Council meetings, when requested in advance.

The Town will continue to work on

- Using plain language and inclusive communications.
- Providing the same information in different formats.
- Using image descriptions in social media posts.
- Using braille on business cards.
- Meetings broadcast through YouTube LIVE will include captions.

Employment

We will continue to remove barriers to employment for people of all ages and abilities who want to work with the Town of Wolfville. Our workforce will, over time, reflect the diversity of the people of Wolfville.

Existing barriers

- Most of our Town worksites are not barrier free.
- Job postings may not be accessible to all persons.
- The Town does not employ a human resources specialist.
- Town Hall does not have an accessible washroom.

Within employment, the Town commits to the following:

Accessibility Foundations Training for all staff

The Nova Scotia Accessibility Directorate has created a comprehensive training program that shares important information about accessibility. A Town employee is a certified trainer and over the next three years, Town staff will be offered this training opportunity.

Work from home/Accommodations policy

Not all Town offices and work sites are accessible. Many have barriers like stairs or lack accessible washrooms. As part of a human resources policy review, a “work from home policy” will be developed to ensure barriers in the workplace do not become barriers to employment.

Staff will also work on policy and training to better understand how to proactively offer accommodation.

Goods and Services

The Town of Wolfville delivers many programs and services to the public. Some of these include:

- Public meetings.
- Streets and sidewalk maintenance.
- A Visitor Information Centre.
- Water and sewer services.
- Emergency services.
- Recreational programs.
- Special events.

We commit to ensuring people of all ages and abilities have equitable access to the goods and services offered by the Town of Wolfville. Our policies, procedures and tools will help us do this.

Existing barriers

- Not all our Town facilities are barrier free.
- Not all our recreation programs are accessible for all ages and abilities.

The Town of Wolfville will deliver all goods and services without bias. No person shall be denied a service because of a disability. Within goods and services, the Town commits to the following priority items:

Barrier free program space

The Town of Wolfville rents different spaces around the community to offer recreational programs. The Town is committed to renting spaces that are accessible for recreational programming.

Recreation Centre automatic door opener

An automatic door opener has been installed at the Recreation Centre, but it is not yet operational. The barrier is a network upgrade that will connect the automatic door to the Town's security system. There is a commitment to remove this barrier before March 31, 2026.

Program descriptions

The Town lists events on its website to communicate with the community. By adding program descriptions, potential participants can decide if the event or activity would meet their needs. Program descriptions explain the physical environment where the program or activity takes place. Program descriptions can also explain what the event will look and sound like.

Electric scooter regulatory framework

A private business has launched an electric scooter rental program in Wolfville but there are no clear rules or guidelines for how the electric scooters should be operated or stored. As a result, there have been numerous concerns raised when scooters are left on streets, lawns or in parks, waiting to be collected by the business operator. By developing a regulatory framework, the Town will have an opportunity to address these concerns with the business operator.

Memory Café

The Town of Wolfville helps to coordinate our local, award winning, Memory Café. Memory Café is a program that improves social and emotional well-being for older adults with memory challenges and their care partners and families. At a Memory Café, people come together to relax, chat, enjoy activities or some music while enjoying a hot drink and snacks from the local host café. In Wolfville, we use Chats Café for this program.

Transportation

People who live in Wolfville can use Kings Transit Authority and ride their buses from Weymouth to Grand Pré. Kings Point-to-Point Transit offers accessible public transportation. In Wolfville, residents and visitors can also use our active transportation network.

Barriers

- There are no accessible taxis in Wolfville.
- People who use Kings Point-to-Point Transit must book their rides at least 24 hours in advance.

Within transportation, the Town of Wolfville commits to helping all people move around the community.

Micro-transit pilot project

Micro-transit is a public transportation option that provides on-demand and/or scheduled transportation service in a specific area. Like buses, micro-transit may follow a scheduled route, or uses a flexible schedule to allow for detours to specific pick-up and drop-off locations. We hired consultants and they completed a study that helps explain how this could work in our community. In the next three years, we will work towards funding and launching a pilot project to test how this works for our Town.

Active Transportation

Active transportation is any kind of travel that uses your own energy to get from one place to another. This includes walking, wheeling, cycling, skateboarding, scootering, rollerblading, jogging, running, skiing, e-scootering and e-bicycling. Active transportation can help improve your health, reduce traffic, and lower pollution.

The Town of Wolfville is building 10 kilometres of protected bike lanes, and multi-use pathways that will form an active transportation network.

Bringing the plan to life – next steps

Responsibilities

- Town Council is responsible for adopting and overseeing the Accessibility Plan.
- The Chief Administrative Officer is responsible for acting on the plan and naming the Accessibility Coordinator.
- The Accessibility Coordinator is responsible for hearing and answering public concerns, complaints and questions.

- The Accessibility Advisory Committee is responsible for giving feedback and recommendations to help guide the Town Council's decision making.

Timeline

The Town will work to complete all the commitments in the Plan by March 31, 2028. Priorities that are not completed will be considered for the next plan.

Monitoring

The Committee will report on progress, through the Accessibility Coordinator, to the Town Council, each year by April 30. This is one month after the end of the fiscal year.

The Accessibility Plan will be a public document, posted on www.wolfville.ca.

Questions and Concerns

Anyone can ask about accessibility or share a concern. This can be done through the Accessibility Coordinator. The Accessibility Coordinator will follow up with staff and report back to the person who shared the concern or asked the question.

If the Accessibility Coordinator's response is not satisfactory, Council may ask the Accessibility Advisory Committee to review the situation and provide a recommendation.

Questions, concerns and other communications that relate to accessibility will be considered when developing the next accessibility plan.