

INFORMATION REPORT

Title: IR 009-2025 Accessibility Report Card
Date: 2025-04-01
Prepared by: Barb Shaw, Manager of Communications & Strategic Initiatives
Contributors:



SUMMARY

Accessibility Report Card

Each year the Accessibility Coordinator is required to report to Council on progress and barriers in relation to the Town's Accessibility Plan.

As we retired the 2022 – 2025 Accessibility Plan and rolled-out our new plan that charts our course towards 2028, we have made good progress on our stated goals, and in some cases, we have taken on additional initiatives based on the culture change that is happening within the Town.

While our automatic door opener at the Recreation Centre is still not functioning, it is resourced and should be operational within the year. This provided good learning for all of us as we figured out the technical systems that were creating barriers for the operation of this important tool. The commitment of all departments to remove this barrier was evident.

In the report card, Council will note a small number of highlighted items that have not been started. This is due to a decision by the Accessibility Advisory Committee or other considerations, which are noted.

In addition to what was laid out in our 2022 – 2025 Accessibility Plan, we have started a review of our public washrooms, asking a consultant to help us plan to make them all barrier free in the years ahead. Staff have also undertaken a significant accessibility review of wayfinding and countless hours have been spent identifying and working to reduce barriers as we build out our active transportation network.

While there will always be more work needed to identify, remove and prevent barriers within the built environment, communications, employment, transportation, goods and services within the Town, but we are seeing real progress as we strive to nurture a more inclusive community.

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1) CAO COMMENTS

This report is provided for your information.

2) REFERENCES AND ATTACHMENTS

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3) DISCUSSION

Staff is happy to answer any questions that Council may have at this time.

4) FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable.

5) REFERENCES TO COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN AND TOWN REPORTS

The accessibility report card is an annual requirement of our Accessibility Plan.

6) COMMUNICATION REQUIREMENTS

With delivery of this report to Council, the communication requirements have been fulfilled.

7) FUTURE COUNCIL INVOLVEMENT

Council is a valued partner in the on-going process of identifying, removing and preventing barriers.



Accessibility Report Card

April 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025

Action item	Page	Progress	Additional Details
Add sidewalk curb cuts at all intersections where sidewalks exist.		On-going	These are being added as construction happens through the Town. Tactile markers are also being added as streets are repaired and constructed.
Ensure all pedestrian buttons or light controls at intersections and pedestrian-controlled crosswalks are located on a flat area		On-going	This was noted in the Town Crosswalk Policy (20/21) and will be actioned as repairs and new construction happens.
Place street furniture, sandwich boards, planters away from path of travel and curb cuts.		On-going	<p>To share information about the Town’s regulations in the Land Use Bylaw for signage, Staff distributed brochures to businesses during Spring 2022.</p> <p>Regulations for portable/sandwich signs help to remove obstacles and hazards from sidewalks, roadways and public spaces. These regulations are one way we can strive to make Wolfville a barrier-free place and help the Town advance its Accessibility Plan.</p> <p>The brochures included images demonstrating correct and incorrect sign placement examples, regulations for signs and information on Wolfville’s Accessibility Plan.</p>
Widen doorways and install power door buttons at Municipal Buildings and Public Washrooms.		On-going	An automatic door opener installed at the Recreation Centre is not yet functioning.

			<p>Re-build of the Visitor Information Centre has provided increased accessibility for the public.</p> <p>A public washroom accessibility audit has now been completed.</p>
Auditory, visual and tactile markers at busy intersections where people cross streets.		On-going	Tactile markers are being installed as work is being done on our streets. In some locations, hand-held orange safety flags are also provided for use by pedestrians.
Ensure service desks are at an accessible height		Where possible	This has been completed at Town Hall and the Visitor Information Centre.
Promote Province's small business grants to WBDC		On-going	Information is being shared with the WBDC and they update their membership.
Train relevant staff in plain language and inclusive communication		On-going	<p>A plain language approach has been encouraged across all departments.</p> <p>Staff continue to work with partners in the community to share this skill.</p>
Develop and implement a public awareness program focused on identifying barriers and how to create an accessible community		Not started	The Committee did not wish to pursue this. Instead, Access awareness events focused on this theme as did engagement for the 2025 – 2028 Accessibility Plan.
Provide ASL and/or Communications Access Realtime Translation services at Town-hosted and public meetings on request.		As needed	A list of ASL providers is now available for staff to use if a request is made for this specialized service.
Work with Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities to advocate for accessibility to be included in public notice requirements of the Municipal Government Act.		Completed	Council representatives have completed this task.
Meeting agenda released with enough lead time to book communications accommodations.		On-going	Staff are working to meet this commitment.
Ensure public have enough notice to give feedback and participate in discussion before Council makes a decision.		On-going	Staff work to ensure background agendas are published one week before Committee of the Whole and this is two weeks before Council makes a decision. This provides three weeks for public comment

			<p>through any communication channel.</p> <p>Town staff also continue to add large projects to Wolfville Blooms where members of the public can also provide input on a regular basis.</p>
Update employee training manual with an equity, diversity, and inclusion lens.		Not completed	The Town is now exploring the idea of a shared-service model for human resources. This may help complete this work.
Survey Town staff to get a baseline on ages/abilities of workforce.		Not started	This has been discussed but there are concerns with privacy as well as a lack of understanding relating to how this would be measured.
Produce annual diversity reports including trends and analysis about workforce with varying abilities.		Not-started	This is not being completed internally nor externally.
Share accessibility training opportunities		On-going	The accessibility coordinator is welcoming Town staff and community partners to participate in training as it becomes available.
Investigate strategies to reach a wider, more diverse audience with job postings		On-going	An approach has been tried that delivered success reaching diverse communities for committee appointments. The Town is now trying this for job postings as well.
Asking a designated staff person to help individuals who might need assistance in their jobs		Informally on-going	As a small staff team, we manage limitations in capacity with a collaborative approach.
Ensure enjoyment of all parks and open spaces – all ages and abilities		On-going	This is being addressed through our Parks Planning Process.
Create an accessible playground in Willow Park		On-going	This is being addressed through our Parks Planning Process. To date, accessible features have been added like a swing, picnic benches, curb cuts and a walkway to the splash pad. The re-build of the Visitor Information Centre also allows for more accessible features.
Train staff responsible for delivering accessible services		On-going	
Provide ASL interpreters for recreational and library programs		On-going	This is happening for more Town programs but not for Library programs.

Ensure all bus stops designed to meet or exceed CSA B651-18 Accessible Design		On-going	
Ensure training is available for operators of public transit		Out of scope	
Braille business cards		On-going	Multiple business cards now have braille added as an accessibility feature.
Work with Library to increase accessibility of collections		On-going	With changes to flooring in the library, the stacks were rearranged to provide greater accessibility. The digital collection also provides increased access to the collection.