



# Town of Lockeport

## Accessibility Action Plan



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# INTRODUCTION

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## What We Believe

The Province of Nova Scotia, through the Department of Justice, recognizes accessibility as a human right. The Municipality of the District of Shelburne, the Town of Shelburne, and the Town of Lockeport are committed to fostering a culture of accessibility and inclusion throughout Eastern Shelburne County. We recognize accessibility as a human right and are committed to promoting accessibility awareness and ensuring equitable opportunity to participate in community life is supported for all members of the community, regardless of their abilities. We will achieve this by identifying, removing, and preventing barriers to accessibility within our communities and by satisfying the requirements of the Nova Scotia *Accessibility Act*. These barriers may be attitudinal, systemic, physical, or within the design of information communication, and technology systems.

This plan communicates the commitment of the three municipal units to ensuring inclusive access and participation within municipally owned and operated facilities, services, and programs; specifically, as they relate to the areas of awareness, goods and services, information and communication, transportation, employment, and the built environment.

## Promoting Accessibility Awareness

We recognize the value in making meaningful changes in our communities to work toward achieving the provincial goal of an accessible Nova Scotia by 2030. Bringing together diverse perspectives and experiences to achieve this goal will not only help to improve the quality of life for the 30% of Nova Scotians with a disability, but it will also create the opportunity to increase accessibility awareness and promote the rights of persons with disabilities and draw attention to the benefits of an inclusive and accessible society for all.

## How to Read this Plan

The Accessibility Plan is broken down into this Introduction, six (6) chapters covering the areas of focus, and three (3) appendices. Chapters outlining each of the six (6) areas of focus are broken down under identical headings which provide the information outlined in this section. Lastly, the appendices provide additional material to help provide a more complete understanding of the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee structure, the community engagement process, and individual Action Plans for each municipal unit.

## Eastern Shelburne County Accessibility Plan

**Our Commitment:** The Towns/Municipality's commitment to accessibility in the areas of focus.

**Policies:** Recommended principles that the Towns/Municipality use as a basis for making decisions.

## Individual Action Plans

**Overview:** An overview of the current situation in the Towns/Municipality.

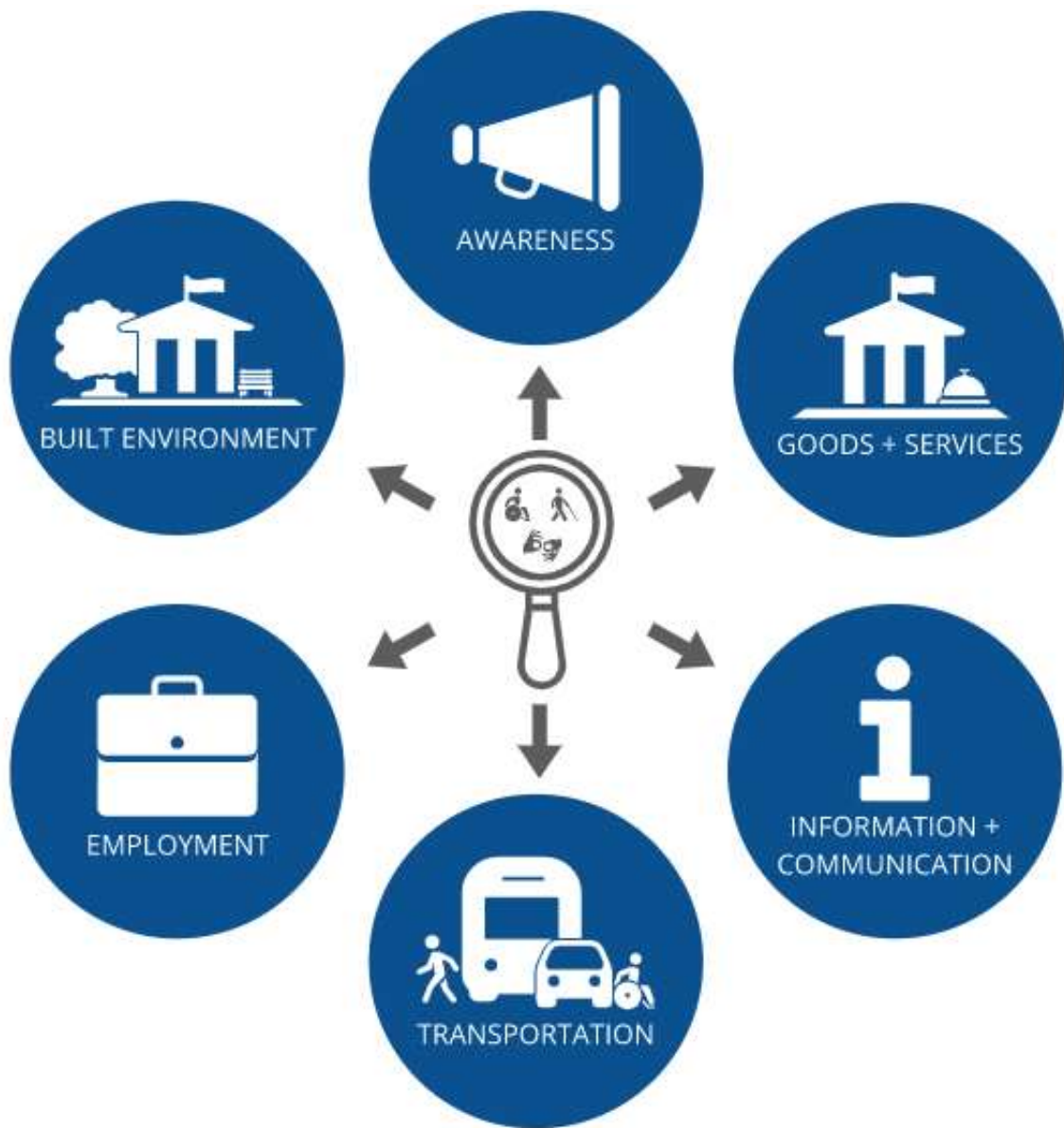
**Achievements:** The Towns/Municipality's achievements to date in identifying, removing, and preventing barriers in policies, programs, practices, and services.

**Barriers:** Barriers in the Towns/Municipality that hinder or challenge the full and effective participation in society of persons with disabilities.

**Actions:** Recommended actions the Towns/Municipality take to improve accessibility.

# AREAS OF FOCUS

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# Glossary of Terms

**Access:** A place that is easily reached, an environment that is easily navigated, or a program or service that can easily be obtained.

**Accessibility Act (2017):** The law enacted by the Province of Nova Scotia to achieve accessibility by preventing barriers to accessibility, developing and implementing provincial accessibility standards, and defining the role of an accessibility directorate in supporting and advancing accessibility initiatives and broader disability-related issues.

(<https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/legc/statutes/accessibility.pdf>)

**Accessibility Lens:** A tool for assessing programs and services to ensure that persons with disabilities have equal access to and equitable inclusion in programs and services.

**Accommodation:** The personalized adaption of a workplace to overcome the barriers faced by persons with disabilities.

**Active Transportation:** Using your own power to get from one place to another. This includes walking, biking, skateboarding, in-line skating/rollerblading, jogging and running, and non-mechanized wheel chairing.

**ASL:** American Sign Language

**Barrier:** 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."

**CART:** Communication Access Realtime Translation

**Disability:** Nova Scotia's Accessibility Act defines a 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."

**Eastern Shelburne County:** The Municipality of the District of Shelburne, the Town of Shelburne, and the Town of Lockeport.

**Equity/Equitable:** A commitment to fairness. Equitable access is different from equal access. Equality means each individual or group is provided with the same resources or opportunities. Equity recognizes that each person has different circumstances and allocates the exact resources and opportunities needed to reach an equal outcome.

**Plain Language:** Language that is clear and easy for the reader or listener to understand.

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

**RHFAC:** Rick Hanson 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).)



# AWARENESS

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## Our Commitment

We will create a culture of accessibility across our three municipal units. This includes increasing public awareness about the rights of persons with a disability, barriers to accessibility, and celebrating the contributions of our community members with disabilities.

## Policies

The Municipality of the District of Shelburne, Town of Shelburne, and Town of Lockeport will:

- Promote social inclusion in municipally led programming and events.
- Increase disability representation in promotional materials.

## Actions

- Develop and initiate a public awareness campaign designed to educate about the rights of persons with disabilities, promote positive perceptions and greater social awareness towards persons with disabilities, and promote recognition of the skills, merits, and abilities of persons with disabilities and of their contributions to the community.
- Promote National Accessibility Week and any associated accessibility and/or inclusion activities or events.
- Provide accessibility awareness training for Council and senior leadership.
- Create a dedicated accessibility newsletter that is made available both online and in print.
- Hold regular public meetings and educational events to increase accessibility.
- Provide ongoing accessibility content on the Town's website and Facebook page to keep people engaged and accessibility on people's minds.
- Publish accessibility-related news, such as recently completed accessibility improvements and upcoming events, in local media outlets.



# GOODS & SERVICES

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## Our Commitment

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

## Policies

The Municipality of the District of Shelburne, Town of Shelburne, and Town of Lockeport will deliver all goods and services without bias. No resident shall be denied service because of a disability.

## The Starting Point

### Overview

The following are some of the services delivered to the public by the Town of Lockeport either independently or jointly with the Municipality of the District of Shelburne or the Town of Shelburne:

- Handling meetings of Council and Advisory Committees
- Maintaining parks, trails, and open spaces.
- Maintaining streets and sidewalks.
- Providing recreational programming and equipment loans.
- Providing emergency services such as fire and EMO.
- Providing grants and support to local community groups.
- Maintaining sewer, and waste services.

### Achievements

- The Community Coordinator and Building Inspector have enrolled in the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification training.

- The Town now provides online credit card payment options for municipal taxes and certain municipal services in addition to in-person, online, and telephone banking payments options.
- The new stage and associated improvements at Seacaps Park make community events more accessible.

## Barriers

- Many of the facilities that house programs and services are not accessible for people of all ages and abilities.
- It is hard to find out what kind of services and programs are available for people with disabilities.

## Actions

- Develop accessible customer service policies which support the principles of independence, dignity, integration, and equal opportunity.
- Provide inclusive customer service training to:
  - All Town employees (this includes full-time, part-time, and contract positions) whose duties require interacting with members of the public.
  - Any staff involved in the development of Town policies (this includes managers, senior leaders, and elected officials).
- Create an “Accessibility” page on the Town website that provides consolidated information about accessibility services, programs, and resources available through the municipality and provincial and federal governments. Include an embedded form that allows anyone to provide feedback or submit accessibility-related services requests and questions.
- Promote adaptive recreation equipment available for public use.
- Ensure a minimum of one public service counter is provided at a wheelchair-appropriate height in all applicable public buildings.
- Establish an accommodation fund to provide services for residents who need accommodation, such as Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) and American Sign Language (ASL).

- Incorporate accessibility design, criteria, and features in procurement and buying practices where feasible.
- Develop a procedure for alerting the public when facilities or services that people with disabilities usually use are temporarily unavailable (ex. elevator or accessible washroom is out of service). Notices of service disruptions should include the reason for the disruption, expected duration, and any alternative measures in place.

# INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION

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## Our Commitment

We will ensure that all people can receive, understand and share information and communication provided by the Municipality of the District of Shelburne, Town of Shelburne, and Town of Lockeport, regardless of disability.

## Policies

The Municipality of the District of Shelburne, Town of Shelburne, and Town of Lockeport will:

- On request, provide information in an accessible format or with communication support that considers a person's individual need, at no charge.
- Ensure that all public meetings are as accessible as possible to all members of the public by offering material in various formats and offering support to facilitate equitable participation. Train front-line staff in effective methods for communicating with people of all ages and abilities.
- Provide information in an accessible format.

## The Starting Point

### Overview

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

- Digitally via email, Facebook, and the Town website.
- In-person at the various facilities which host meetings of Town Council and Advisory Committees, and other services.
- In print via newspapers, newsletters, and direct mail.
- Digital bulletin board at Seacaps Park (61 Hall Street).

### Achievements

- Council meeting minutes are posted on the Town website.

- The Town has installed a large outdoor digital screen listing Town news, services, and initiatives, and providing associated contact information.
- The Town has produced recreation programs in large print format.

## Barriers

- Not everyone has access to a computer or the internet or does not desire to learn about technology. Other means of communication need to be available.
- The Town website is difficult to navigate and is not accessible to people with visual impairments.
- Finding the information you are looking for is difficult. There is not enough information about who you can call to find what you are looking for.
- It is hard to find out what kind of services are available for people with disabilities.
- There are no policies around how information and communication materials must be provided to the community.
- Many people do not know that others face barriers to accessibility.
- Limited signage can make wayfinding through the Town a challenge.

## Actions

- Provide key municipal resources in accessible formats promptly and at no cost.
- Train relevant staff in plain language and inclusive communication strategies.
- Video content posted to the Town website or Facebook page will include closed captions where possible and described video where appropriate.
- Ensure that any digital communications are screen-readable.
- Establish and implement a plan to ensure that the Town website complies with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 by 2025.
- Develop guidelines for information and communications materials to ensure they are accessible to individuals with disabilities.
- Continue to gather resident feedback on how to improve the accessibility of information and communication on an annual basis.
- Conduct a review of wayfinding signage throughout the Town.

- Establish a fund to cover the cost of providing communication supports, including ASL interpretation and Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART), at council and other public meetings upon request.
- Explore the feasibility of setting up a dedicated information centre in the Beach Centre.



# TRANSPORTATION

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## Our Commitment

We will make it easier for everyone in the Municipality of the District of Shelburne, Town of Shelburne, and Town of Lockeport to get where they need to go. We will do this by promoting and supporting community-based transportation and active transportation options which provide equitable access for people of all ages and abilities.

## Policies

The Municipality of the District of Shelburne, Town of Shelburne, and Town of Lockeport will:

- Continue to support the Sou'West Nova Transit Association as it provides a valuable service to residents throughout Eastern Shelburne County.
- Ensure that infrastructure to support safe active transportation (e.g. walking, rolling, cycling) is provided along main corridors.

## The Starting Point

### Overview

There are no public transportation services provided by the Town of Lockeport. The Town provides funding to support the continued operation of the Sou'West Nova Transit Association. The Sou'West Nova Transit Association has been providing rides throughout Shelburne County since 2012, and currently operates a fleet of four vehicles in addition to volunteer drivers who use their own vehicles. The fleet includes minivan and Transit van which provide wheelchair-accessible transportation.

### Achievements

- The Town provides funding to support transportation services by Sou'West Nova Transit.
- The Town has received funding to improve the Town's active transportation network.

## Barriers

- There are no public transportation services operated by the Town.
- Current service provided by Sou'West Nova Transit, while great, is limited in its coverage, hours of operation, and flexibility for bookings.
- There is no taxi service.
- Accessible parking is limited.
- The informal nature of parking in the Town core makes it difficult and unsafe for pedestrians.
- Many sidewalks are in poor condition and are often blocked by snow (see Built Environment).
- Streets in the Town are narrow which creates safety concerns.
- The designated truck route through the Town core creates dangerous conditions for pedestrians.
- Accessing services outside of Lockeport is challenging for those without access to a private vehicle.

## Actions

- Continue to work with the Sou'West Nova Transit Association to understand and contribute funding needed to expand the current service offerings to afford residents who rely on the service increased flexibility and freedom.
- Ensure that all public parking areas have accessible parking spaces which meet the standards set out in the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) B651-18, Accessible Design for the Built Environment.
- Continue removal of snow from Town facilities with a focus on ensuring barrier-free access to sidewalks, crosswalks, and accessible parking spaces.
- Investigate other opportunities for community partners to further expand access to transportation and increase connectivity within the Town and surrounding communities.

# EMPLOYMENT

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## Our Commitment

We will remove barriers to employment for persons with disabilities who seek employment with the Municipality of the District of Shelburne, Town of Shelburne, and Town of Lockeport. We will make our employment practices and workplaces accessible for both new and existing employees of all ages and abilities and will support young people with disabilities in finding and maintaining meaningful employment.

## Policies

The Municipality of the District of Shelburne, Town of Shelburne, and Town of Lockeport will:

- Offer 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.
- Provide educational opportunities for employees to build an understanding of the value of accessibility and inclusion.
- Ensure that an accessibility lens is applied when reviewing or developing programs or processes relating to employment.

## The Starting Point

### Overview

The Town of Lockeport employs seven permanent employees. The primary worksite for most employees is the Town Hall on North Street. Other worksites include the Recreation Centre, Public Works Department, Wastewater Treatment Plant, Crescent Beach Centre, Medical Centre, Seacaps Parks, and many other outdoor recreation spaces. In addition to the permanent employees, the Town also employs one part-time, three seasonal, and several summer employees. The Lockeport Town Council consists of five elected officials, including three Councillors, Deputy Mayor, and Mayor.

## Achievements

- A member of the Town staff has completed RHFAC training.
- An elevator was installed at Town Hall, making the second floor accessible for people who cannot use the stairs.

## Barriers

- Job openings are advertised using traditional print and online recruitment methods, which may not be accessible to some individuals.
- Management and staff are not generally trained in recognizing barriers that may limit job opportunities for qualified individuals.
- Historically, Town processes, systems, communications, and documents have not taken accessibility into account and may not be easily adaptable to assistive technologies.

## Actions

- Provide inclusion and diversity training for all Town staff and elected officials. This includes a mandatory requirement to complete the Working with Abilities online training provided free of charge by the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission.
- Conduct a formal review of all municipal workplaces concerning physical barriers to employment for persons with disabilities, and implement a plan to ensure that all appropriate municipal workplaces are barrier-free by 2030.
- Develop a formal Accommodation Policy.
- Ensure that announcements of job opportunities promote the availability of accommodations upon request, are made available in various formats, and are distributed through a broad range of intermediaries.
- Investigate different types of assistive technologies for the workplace and establish a centralized accommodation fund to pay for assistive devices and accommodations employees need to succeed at their job.
- Examine the municipal workforce to establish a benchmark of those already working with disabilities.
- Set out long-term goals for increasing the representation of people with disabilities in the municipal workforce and establish a strategy and timeline for achieving those goals.

- Actively recruit people with disabilities to serve on all Town committees and working groups.

# BUILT ENVIRONMENT

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## Our Commitment

We will ensure that all public buildings, streets, sidewalks, and public spaces within the Municipality of the District of Shelburne, the Town of Shelburne, and the Town of Lockeport will be accessible to people of all ages and abilities.

## Policies

The Municipality of the District of Shelburne, the Town of Shelburne, and the Town of Lockeport will:

- Establish a plan to ensure that all or most municipal facilities meet or exceed the accessibility requirements (Schedule “C”) in the most recent version of the Nova Scotia Building Code by 2030.
- Strive to achieve RHFAC Gold Standard for all new public buildings and facilities. Ensure that new public buildings and facilities meet or exceed the standard set out in the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) B651-18, Accessible Design for the Built Environment.
- Ensure existing sidewalks, curb cuts, and crosswalks are improved and maintained as soon as possible to meet the standard set out in the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) B651-18, Accessible Design for the Built Environment.
- Ensure that new sidewalks, curb cuts, and crosswalks are constructed to meet the standard set out in the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) B651-18, Accessible Design for the Built Environment.
- Ensure that accessible detours are available when a sidewalk or shoulder is closed for or affected by construction.
- Provide basic access for people of all ages and abilities to public buildings, public washrooms, and outdoor public spaces such as parks and beaches.
- Work with the local business community to promote the Municipality of the District of Shelburne, the Town of Shelburne, and the Town of Lockeport as accessible communities.

# The Starting Point

## Overview

The Town of Lockeport owns several public facilities such as the Town Hall, Seacaps Park, The Crescent Beach Centre, and the Lockeport Fire Hall. Other municipal facilities and infrastructure include many roads and sidewalks, parks and green spaces, a boardwalk, and athletic fields.

## Achievements

- The Town carried out an accessibility audit of its facilities in 2020.
- The Town has installed an elevator at the Town Hall. Town Hall also has access ramps installed at both entrances.
- A quiet area and other improvements have been carried out at Seaside Play Park (12 Howe Street) to make it more accessible based on an Accessibility Audit performed in 2018.
- Hall Street will soon become a more accessible pedestrian route.

## Barriers

### Indoor Public Spaces

- Older public buildings are not as accessible as the newer ones, and it is expensive to update (retrofit) existing buildings to make them more accessible.
- Crescent Beach Centre's main meeting and gathering spaces are located on the second floor and only accessible by stairs.
- There are no power entry doors at Library and Fire Hall.
- Many of the public washrooms and doorways in municipal buildings are not accessible to people using wheelchairs.
- Accessible parking is limited.
- Meeting targets for capital projects, such as environmental and accessibility targets, is costly and it can be challenging to prioritize one over the other.
- Access ramps at Lighthouse Stage building (61 Hall Street) and Lillian Benham Library (35 North Street) do not extend to paved surfaces and come to an end on grass.
- Some power entry doors do not open in the appropriate direction.

### Parks and Open Spaces

- Some parks are not accessible for people using mobility devices.
- Beaches in the area are not accessible for people using mobility devices – for example, entrances to Crescent Beach are not wheelchair accessible and boulders at the base of the existing cement ramp prevent wheelchairs from passing through.
- There are no accessible pathways to access the Seaside Play Park.

## Infrastructure

- In the rural areas surrounding the town core, people must walk, operate their wheelchairs, etc. on the road because there is no safe shoulder.
- Some crosswalks do not have curb cuts and are not lit properly.
- There are not enough seating/rest areas throughout the Town.
- Many sidewalks, crosswalks, and paths are in poor condition and are not safe for people with visual impairments and mobility challenges.

## Actions

- Undertake accessibility audits for any town facilities which have not yet been audited. Identify and develop cost estimates for priority projects to be included in long-term budget planning.
- Ensure that locations holding public meetings or providing a public service are accessible for people of all ages and abilities – specifically Lockeport Recreation Department.
- Prioritize maintenance of sidewalks and ensure that curb cuts are provided at all intersections.
- Widen doorways and install/replace power door buttons or automated sliding doors at the entrance of municipal buildings and public washrooms. Ensure that power doors open in the appropriate direction and remain open for an adequate amount of time.
- Ensure that all crosswalks have adequate curb cuts and light controls and install auditory, visual, and tactile markers at busy intersections.
- Install additional seating/rest areas at key points throughout the Town.
- Provide beach access mats at Crescent Beach for wheelchair access.
- Work with organizations that lease municipally-owned buildings to undertake accessibility audits.



- Promote the province's Business ACCESS-Ability Grant Program to the local business community.
- Consider updating the Land Use By-Law or explore other options to mandate requirements for accessible parking.
- Paint lines to delineate walking surfaces for the visually impaired.
- Conduct an assessment of trails using an accessibility lens and develop a prioritized plan for accessibility improvements.
- Fix ramps at Lighthouse Stage building (61 Hall Street) and Lillian Benham Library (35 North Street).
- Install more accessible picnic tables in parks and open spaces.
- Install an accessible pathway to access play equipment in Seacaps Park.