

RICHMOND IDEAS

Inclusive, Diverse, Equitable, Accessible Strategy



THE MUNICIPALITY
OF THE COUNTY OF

LA MUNICIPALITÉ
DU COMTÉ DE

RICHMOND

Spring 2025



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RICHMOND

Inclusive, Diverse, Equitable,
Accessible Strategy by:
The Municipality of the County of
Richmond

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Richmond
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Key Terms:

Accessibility: When our environments, services, products, and policies are proactively designed and constructed so that people with a disability can fully and equitably participate without experiencing barriers.

Diversity: The practice or quality of including or involving people from a range of different social and ethnic backgrounds and of different genders, and sexual orientations.

Equity: Equity acknowledges that not everyone starts from the same place in society. Some individuals face adverse conditions and systemic barriers that make it more challenging to achieve the same goals, even with equal effort. Advocating for those who have been historically disadvantaged, equity takes into account historical and contextual factors to determine what is fair. It promotes proactive measures and reasonable accommodations to identify and address structural, systemic, and cultural barriers, combat discrimination and unfairness, and create equitable pathways and opportunities for all.

Inclusion: Equal access and opportunity and resources for those who may otherwise be excluded or marginalized.

Underrepresented: A group of people who are not adequately represented or have limited presence or visibility in certain domains or contexts, such as social, political, economic, educational, or cultural spheres. These communities typically experience marginalization, discrimination, or exclusion due to various factors, including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status, or other characteristics.

Underserved: Implies that the community is not receiving/has not received an adequate level of support or attention from institutions, organizations, or government agencies. This lack of access can manifest in various areas, including health care, education, employment, housing, transportation, and social services.

About Richmond County

Richmond County is bordered on the south by the Atlantic Ocean and the north by the Bras d'Or Lake. This gateway to the Bras d'Or is a rich mix of cultures, including Mi'kmaq, Acadian, Irish, and Scottish.

This land of 1,000 coves is home to the First Nation Community of Potlotek, nestled along the southern shores of the Bras d'Or Lake. This region is also a rich fishing ground, producing some of the world's best lobsters.

Richmond County is shaped by the sea, proud of its past, and ready to move into a bold future.



Messages from our leaders

In the spring of 2022, the Municipality of the County of Richmond approved its first ever Accessibility Plan. Working in partnership with the Village of St. Peter's, the Municipality is committed to adhering to all current and future provincial accessibility standards and ensuring the full participation of its residents, including those with disabilities, in all aspects of their lives.

The Accessibility Plan articulates our vision for the Municipality: "The County of Richmond is inclusive and provides meaningful access for all regardless of ability or age. As a community, we will promote awareness, remove barriers, and put lived experience at the forefront of future decisions."

Plans are updated every three years, and the new plan will incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion. The newly branded Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) Committee is committed to ensuring that Richmond County is a community that welcomes everyone and strives for the full participation of all its residents.

Many thanks to the Committee members for their work on this important undertaking and to those residents who have contributed to the discussion thus far. We look forward to being a part of this journey as it continues to unfold for Richmond County and its residents.



**Lois Landry, Warden
Municipality of the County
of Richmond**

Messages from our leaders

Thank you for exploring Richmond County's first-ever strategy for Inclusivity, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) in our communities!

Central to understanding the importance of this document is recognizing that when we use acronyms like DEI (or in the case of this plan, IDEA), that we are talking about ways to help our family members, neighbours, and friends to receive fair treatment and to be able to participate fully in our communities. Richmond County has long been blessed with caring communities, and our IDEA strategy builds on this with a focus on our greatest asset: our people!

"People In the Know," "People Are Involved," "People Are Safe," and "People On The Move" are the four key themes that emerged from our community engagement process over the last year. Through the lens of these themes, we

have developed a set of actions that will have a tangible impact on the ability of all people to be informed about what's happening in Richmond County, to feel safe and welcome in their communities, and to be engaged in social, professional, and civic activities.

It's important to note that this will be a living document. It builds on the great work started in 2021 with our joint Committee on Accessibility with Richmond County and the Village of St. Peter's, and has now evolved to include Diversity, Equity and Inclusion as a wider strategy. Many thanks to everyone who contributed so far, including members of the public who helped keep us on track even when we faltered – we are leading the way, which sometimes means we need to course correct and we wouldn't be able to do that without you! Also, a very special thanks to the staff at both the Village of St. Peter's and Richmond County who dedicated endless hours of planning and effort to get us to this point.

Our newly renamed and reimagined IDEA Committee is on a journey of learning and leadership to make a change for the better for everyone in Richmond County!

Please reach out if you'd like to join us – everyone is welcome!



Amanda Mombourquette
Chair, IDEA Committee



Plan Overview

In 2021, the Municipality of the County of Richmond and the Village of St. Peter's established a joint Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC). The committee's initial plans were guided by Access by Design 2030, a framework set by the Province of Nova Scotia and aligned with the standards outlined in the 2017 Nova Scotia Accessibility Act. With the support of a consultant, the committee developed its first accessibility plans, which were submitted to the province in the spring of 2022. These plans focused on five key areas: Goods & Services, Built Environment, Information & Communication, Employment, and Transportation.

Over the next two years, the committee assessed the plan's effectiveness, identifying gaps and necessary improvements. In response to the province's Dismantling Racism and Hate Act (2022) and Equity and Anti-Racism Strategy (2023), the committee recognized the need to integrate Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) into its accessibility work. To reflect this expanded focus, the AAC was renamed the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) Committee in 2024.

Community engagement was central to developing the new IDEA Plans, ensuring that community voices guided the process. To gather input on improving government services and fostering inclusivity, diversity, equity, and accessibility for all, the committee distributed a survey to residents of Richmond County and the Village of St. Peter's. Following the survey, the committee hosted small discussion sessions with Potlotek First Nation members, community group representatives, Acadian culture advocates, newcomers, and African Nova Scotian residents to deepen engagement and gather additional feedback. Further guidance was provided by IDEA Committee members who represent various organizations and or persons with disabilities, as well as guidance from provincial offices, including L'nú Affairs, African Nova Scotian Affairs, the Nova Scotia Accessibility Directorate, and the Office of Equity and Anti-Racism.

This IDEA Strategy is a living document that aims to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to accessibility, diversity, equity, and inclusion. Updated every three years, it will continue to evolve based on community input and collaboration, ensuring a more inclusive Richmond County and Village of St. Peter's

Areas of Focus

Through engagement and reviewing results from the 2024 IDEA survey, four themes emerged. These themes highlight our ongoing efforts to foster a county where everyone feels valued, supported, and empowered to thrive.

1. PEOPLE IN THE KNOW

This section focuses on the role of effective municipal communication and accessible learning opportunities; While ensuring everyone has access to the knowledge, resources, and training needed to understand and engage within our County.

2. PEOPLE ARE INVOLVED

Explores how we actively engage individuals from diverse backgrounds in shaping IDEA efforts and promoting collaboration.

3. PEOPLE ARE SAFE

Addresses the importance of policies and practices that protect individuals from discrimination and harassment, creating a secure space for everyone.

4. PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

Evaluate how we provide equitable opportunities for transportation, connection, access, development, and advancement for all within the Municipality of the County of Richmond.

People in the Know

This section focuses on the role of effective municipal communication and accessible learning opportunities; While ensuring everyone has access to the knowledge, resources, and training needed to understand and engage within our County.

Timeline guide:

Short-term
(1 - 3 years)

Long-term
(3+ Years)

Action	Timeline
Review of the Municipality of the County of Richmond's website to ensure it aligns with the accessibility standards when enacted.	Long-term (3+ Years)
In partnership with the Village of St. Peter's, The Municipality of the County of Richmond will provide information to and support participation in training opportunities for staff, community, and Council reflecting IDEA.	Short-term (1 - 3 years)
The Municipality of the County of Richmond will continue to welcome and celebrate proclamations of council from the public.	Short-term (1 - 3 years)
Update Committee and Council communications policies and procedures to provide accessible resources for meetings and engagements, removing accessibility and technology barriers.	Long-term (3+ Years)

People are Involved

Explores how we actively engage individuals from diverse backgrounds in shaping IDEA efforts and promoting collaboration.

Timeline guide:

Short-term
(1 - 3 years)

Long-term
(3+ Years)

Action	Timeline
In partnership, identify and celebrate the cultures and communities that reside within Richmond County, especially underserved and underrepresented communities.	Short-term (1 - 3 years)
In partnership with community, facilitate awareness campaigns.	Short-term (1 - 3 years)
The Municipality of the County of Richmond will continue efforts to attract individuals with lived experiences to the IDEA Committee.	Short-term (1 - 3 years)
Continue to foster critical community partnerships, through authentic conversation and engagement.	Short-term (1 - 3 years)
Celebrate the identity and the diverse stories of our County in collaboration with the community.	Short-term (1 - 3 years)

People are Safe

Addresses the importance of policies and practices that protect individuals from discrimination and harassment, creating a secure space for everyone.

Timeline guide:

Short-term
(1 - 3 years)

Long-term
(3+ Years)

Action	Timeline
Modify and apply an equity lens to hiring, funding evaluations, and procurement policies and procedures to prioritize persons with disabilities, both upon hiring, through onboarding, and beyond.	Short-term (1 - 3 years)
Advocate for non-municipal organizations and businesses to apply an equity lens to hiring, and other policies and procedures to prioritize persons with disabilities, both upon hiring, through onboarding, and beyond.	Short-term (1 - 3 years)
Review and revise emergency management planning to include the launch of our Voluntary Vulnerable Persons Registry.	Short-term (1 - 3 years)
The Municipality of the County of Richmond will review current accessibility standards at key facilities and conduct Rick Hansen Certifications (or alternative certification) for Municipal Buildings, particularly for entrances.	Short-term (1 - 3 years)
The Municipality of the County of Richmond will continue to review recreational programs to ensure they are equitable and support an age-friendly community.	Short-term (1 - 3 years)
The Municipality of the County of Richmond is committed to creating safe spaces for all by exploring a Code of Conduct that would governs all buildings owned by MOCR.	Short-term (1 - 3 years)

People on the Move

Evaluate how we provide equal opportunities for transportation, connection/development, and advancement for all within the Municipality of the County of Richmond.

Timeline guide:

Short-term
(1 - 3 years)

Long-term
(3+ Years)

Action	Timeline
Advocate for Strait Area Transit service improvements and the exploration of additional transit solutions.	Short-term (1 - 3 years)
Advocate for organizations and businesses within Richmond County to attend additional training relating to IDEA.	Short-term (1 - 3 years)
The Municipality of the County of Richmond will explore opportunities to update and standardize all interior signage with Braille, tactile, and other design elements in all Municipal buildings.	Long-term (3+ Years)
Support accessible trail development to ensure the network is safe and accessible for all users.	Long-term (3+ Years)
Review the pedestrian road crossing locations. Advocate to the Province for well painted locations with visual and audible cues.	Long-term (3+ Years)

Conclusion

We sincerely appreciate your ongoing support as we work together to promote Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) in Richmond County. Your commitment and contributions help drive meaningful change, ensuring that our community remains a place where everyone feels valued and empowered. We look forward to continuing this important work with you and making an even greater impact in the future.

Thank you!

Contact

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2357 Highway 206 Arichat,
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IDEA (Inclusive, Diverse, Equitable, Accessible) Committee Members :

- Councillor Amanda Mombourquette
- Shannon Mury
- Danielle Martell
- Meghan Hayter
- Jessica MacDougall
- Allison Martell
- Esther MacDonnell
- Ashley Lavandier
- Shelley Dorey
- Chantal Boudreau
- Donna Dittrick
- Dorothy Booher

Contact

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Appendix A - 2022 Accessibility Plan

Appendix A

Accessibility Advisory Committee

2022 Plan

Richmond County Accessibility Plan

The Richmond County Accessibility Plan was officially approved by Council on April 25, 2022. You can view the plan by clicking the link below, visiting the "Plans, Reports, and Reviews" section on the Municipal website, or scanning the QR code provided.

<https://www.richmondcounty.ca/council/plans-reports-and-reviews/2607-2022-accessibility-plan-with-appendix-a-b-c/file.html>



The background image is a blue-tinted photograph of a presentation. A large screen at the front of a room displays a video of a woman, an ASL interpreter, with the text 'ASL Intepre' (sic) next to her. The audience, seen from behind, is seated and looking towards the screen. The overall scene is dimly lit, with stage lights visible on the right.

Appendix B - Accessibility Advisory Committee Report Card



Accessibility Advisory Committee Report Card

Timeline: up to Aug. 31, 2024

Progress guide:

Completed In Progress Not completed

Action Item	Status	Comments and Updates
1. Review maintenance procedures for gravel and snow removal for all sidewalks in commercial, and residential areas and at key facilities.	In Progress	Village of St. Peter's shared their policy with The Municipality of the County of Richmond. Policy was provided to the Department of Public Works for review.
2. Modify hiring, funding evaluation, and procurement policies and procedures to prioritize persons with disabilities, both upon hiring, through onboarding, and beyond—advocate for non-municipal organizations and businesses to do the same.	In Progress	The Municipality of the County of Richmond has added a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion statement to their job opportunities and added accessible accommodations to their interview process.
3. Richmond - Partner with the Village to create a business survey to understand and create a record of which businesses are accessible.	In Progress	It was determined by the Committee that this could be done inhouse and there wasn't enough work for a student. Online platform also available to note the accessible public service providers.
3. St Peter's - Partner with the Municipality to create a business survey to understand and create a record of which businesses are accessible.	In Progress	It was determined by the Committee that this could be done inhouse and there wasn't enough work for a student. Online platform also available to note the accessible public service providers.



Accessibility Advisory Committee Report Card

Timeline: up to Aug. 31, 2024

Progress guide:

Completed In Progress Not completed

Action Item	Status	Comments and Updates
4. Richmond - Advocate for accessibility improvements to widen the paving of shoulders and create an improved winter maintenance procedure.	In Progress	Department of Natural Resources and Renewables has communicated a maintenance plan for Pondville Beach which will include new parking, and upgrades to the boardwalk, change rooms, etc.
4. St. Peter's - Update Village Commission communications policies & procedures to provide accessible resources and remove accessibility and technology barriers for meetings and engagements.	In Progress	Village staff are working on creating a formal Communications Policy for the Village.
5. Richmond - Update Committee and Council communications policies and procedures to provide accessible resources for meetings and engagements, removing accessibility and technology barriers.	In Progress	Communication plan has been updated and implemented that includes providing information to the public in a more accessible manner.
5. St. Peter's - Partner with the Municipality to review current accessibility standards at key facilities and conduct Rick Hansen Certifications for Village Buildings, particularly for entrances.	In Progress	The Village hired a Rick Hansen Certified consultant to review the Community Hub plans and make recommendations.



Accessibility Advisory Committee Report Card

Timeline: up to Aug. 31, 2024

Progress guide:

Completed

In Progress

Not completed

Action Item	Status	Comments and Updates
6. Richmond - Partner with the Village to review current accessibility standards at key facilities and conduct Rick Hansen Certifications (or alternative certification) for Municipal Buildings, particularly for entrances.	In Progress	Assessments have been completed for the Richmond Administration, Waste Management Facility Scale House, and Petit-de-Grat Library. Funding has been secured and tenders have been issued for some work. Some upgrades have taken place at each location with the tentative completion date to be March 2025.
6. St. Peter's - Embed accessibility considerations into new website design.	In Progress	Ongoing work is taking place to increase the accessibility of the website.
7. Richmond - Update the Municipal website to an accessible standard	Completed	Upgrade has taken place in 2023 with guidelines provided to staff to help maintain an accessible website.
7. St. Peter's - Update and standardize all Village signage with tactile and design elements for those with invisible or cognitive disabilities.	In Progress	Staff are working on new interior signage for buildings and upgrades to current exterior signage throughout the Village.



Accessibility Advisory Committee Report Card

Timeline: up to Aug. 31, 2024

Progress guide:

Completed In Progress Not completed

Action Item	Status	Comments and Updates
8. Richmond - Update and standardize all County signage with Braille, tactile, and other design elements.	In Progress	Signage will be upgraded at Municipal facilities that will participate in the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification process.
8. St. Peter's - Review the pedestrian road crossing locations. Upgrade or advocate to the Province for well painted locations with visual and audible cues.	In Progress	Ongoing advocacy conversations with the province to provide upgrades when needed.
9. Richmond - Review recreational programming to identify and propose accessible recreational programming	In Progress	Funding has been secured for accessible equipment. Mobi chairs and mats have been installed at Pt. Michaud. Additional equipment options will be added as funding and resources permit.
10. Richmond - Review the pedestrian road crossing locations and advocate for well-painted locations with visual/audible cues.	In Progress	Ongoing advocacy conversations with the province to provide upgrades when needed.



Accessibility Advisory Committee Report Card

Timeline: up to Aug. 31, 2024

Progress guide:

Completed In Not
 Progress completed

Action Item	Status	Comments and Updates
11. Municipality & Village partner to offer training and professional development for staff, Council, and local businesses for accessibility.	In Progress	Partnered with AMANS to host plain language training for Municipal and Village staff , as well as for surrounding Municipalities and Villages
12. Attract more people with lived experience to the committee.	In Progress	Fifty percent of the committee are first voice members
13. Richmond - Advocate for and support accessible trail development to ensure the network is safe and accessible for all users.	In Progress	Municipal staff are working with community groups to offer funding opportunities to make trails more accessible for all. Trails strategy was completed in Fall 2022
14. Richmond - Review and revise emergency management planning to include accessibility.	In Progress	Municipal staff are establishing a voluntary vulnerable persons registry as well as a emergency alert system.

The background image is a blue-tinted photograph of a presentation room. A large screen at the front displays a video of a woman signing, with the text 'ASL Interpreter' visible on the right side of the screen. In the foreground, the silhouettes of several people are visible, some standing and some sitting, facing the screen. The overall scene suggests a professional or educational presentation.

Appendix C - IDEA Committee Achievements and Progress: 2021–2024

2021 Accessibility Advisory Committee Highlights

- May 2021 – Richmond County held its first official meeting of their Accessibility Advisory Committee
- July 2021 – The Village of St. Peter's joined the Accessibility Advisory Committee, forming a joint committee between the two municipal units, it was determined that a Village Commission and staff member would join the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee.
- September 2021 – Both municipalities worked together to ensure a consistent approach to accessibility planning, and Terms of Reference were updated.
- November 2021 – RFP was created and posted for Consultant Selection who would aid in the creation of the first Accessibility Plans for both the Municipality of the County of Richmond and the Village of St. Peter's
- Late November 2021 – Received two submissions from prospective consultants.
- December 2021 – Intelligent Futures was chosen as the successful consultant that would aid in the creation of Accessibility Plans for both the Village and the Municipality.



2022 Accessibility Advisory Committee Highlights

- January 2022 – Staff members from the Municipality and the Village along with 2 committee members attended a workshop with Intelligent Futures to begin the process of forming Accessibility Plans.
- Feb 2022 – A focus group was formed from the larger accessibility advisory committee; they worked together to come up with several action items that would be a major part of the initial accessibility plan.
- April 2022 – Final Action Items were brought forth for the Municipality and the Village, in total there were 14 action items brought forth for the Municipality and 9 for the Village.
- Late April 2022 – The Municipality approved its initial Accessibility plan.
- May 2022 – The Village of St. Peters approved its initial Accessibility Plan.
- May 2022 - both municipalities make Accessibility Week proclamations, with plans being made for a bigger contribution in 2023.
- August 2022 –The Village of St. Peters hires an Atlantic Accessibility specialist to review their community hub project plans.
- September 2022 – The Village of St. Peters receives the final report on the proposed community hub project plans.
- December 2022 – The Municipality of the County of Richmond had a consultant start the process of getting their buildings assessed for Rick Hansen certification.

2023 Accessibility Advisory Committee Highlights

- Jan 2023 – April 2023 – The committee continued to work diligently on recruitment and Accessibility Week plans for the May 2023 events.
- April 2023 – The Municipality of the County of Richmond revamped Website was revamped to be more accessible.
- May 2023 – Proclamation read by both municipal units, flag raising at the Municipal Building in Arichat, and the Community Hub building in St. Peter's. Two Accessibility Week Move It events were held to share information on both Accessibility plans. Partnered with NS Works to host Accessibility Week events. The Municipality and the Village partnered with the Partnership for Access Awareness for Nova Scotia(PAANS) and hosted a wonderful award and scholarship ceremony at the Municipal Building in Arichat.
- September 2023 – the Village of St. Peter's received funding for two adult change tables through the Community Accessibility Fund.
- October 2023 – Discussions on how to act on our plan priorities.
- October 2023 – Staff members from both municipalities attend a Volunteer Fair to share information about the committee and our Accessibility plans.

2024 Accessibility Advisory Committee Highlights

- January 2024 – Staff members and one committee member took Accessibility Foundations Training.
- January 2024 – May 2024 – The Committee continued to plan Access Awareness Week activities for Access Awareness in May 2024.
- February 2024 – The Accessibility Advisory Committee was informed of additional requirements to develop a plan to address systemic hate and inequity.
- March 2024 – A volunteer from the Adult Drop-In Program, based out of the St. Peter's Lions Hall, gave a presentation. Both the rewards and the challenges for the participants were shared.
- May 2024 – Access Awareness events took place in late May 2024, with flag raisings and proclamations in Arichat and St. Peter's. Two Move It events were held, including a walk where local elementary students completed six laps on the track. The Municipality of the County of Richmond also hosted the Mel Hebb Awards



2024 Accessibility Advisory Committee Highlights

- June 2024 – The first Silent Disco event was held in Louisdale, with many community members coming out to dance and enjoy the music and company.
- June 2024 – A working group was formed to work on plan refresh for both Accessibility needs as well as Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion components.
- October 2024 – A survey was mailed out to all residents in Richmond County to help gauge how government services and amenities could be improved. This community insight helped create an Accessible, Equity, and Anti-Racism plan for both municipalities.
- November 2024 – Survey data was collected. Staff also attended a conference hosted by AMANS (Association of Municipal Advisors Nova Scotia) to aid in plan development.



