
ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

2025-2028

MUNICIPALITY OF THE DISTRICT OF
GUYSBOROUGH



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INTRODUCTION

The Municipality of the District of Guysborough (MODG) is committed to fostering an inclusive community by continuing to identify, prevent, reduce and remove barriers so that all facilities, services, and communications are accessible to everyone, regardless of ability. We strive to enhance the quality of life for all residents and visitors by identifying and removing barriers to access across the Municipality.

This Accessibility Plan is structured around five key focus areas:

**Buildings, Infrastructure &
Public Spaces**

Information & Communications

Employment

Delivery of Goods & Services

Transportation

The plan will be updated regularly to ensure continued progress and alignment with the Nova Scotia Accessibility Act.

“The Nova Scotia Accessibility Act recognizes accessibility as a human right and sets a goal to make Nova Scotia an accessible province by 2030. The purpose of the Act is to prevent and remove barriers that restrict people with disabilities from fully participating in society.”

With this in mind, the Accessibility Committee of the Municipality of the District of Guysborough is tasked with advising staff on the implementation of the accessibility plan that will not only meet the above described needs but also fall in line with our overall vision as a municipality. The accessibility plan is a living document which may require amendments from time to time. If we are to grow and prosper, then all segments of our population must have the ability to be full participating members of our community. Knowing that citizens can walk through any door within the municipality and not be met by physical barriers that limit access, or by societal barriers that limit acceptance and equity, then we can begin to feel that our municipality is a welcoming and open community. This goal is not only driven by provincially mandated law, but by the need to do the right thing and become a truly accessible and welcoming community.

In order to achieve this goal, we must be open to people with lived experiences, with open minds as to how we can all come together and break down the barriers that limit any people’s ability to grow and prosper within our municipality. The plan we are presenting to our residents is indeed a living document, one that will need to be updated every three years and reflect the ongoing changes and developments in our ever-changing environment. By involving community members, this document will truly be a collaborative effort, something that can lead to continued shared involvement in the overall well being of our municipality.

Let’s get to work and open our doors to all our residents and those wishing to come in and grow with us.

Paul Long
Warden
Municipality of the District of Guysborough

The District of Guysborough is one of three municipal units in Guysborough County. It occupies the eastern half of the county and the northeast corner of mainland Nova Scotia. The District's administrative centre is located in the shiretown of Guysborough. The District of Guysborough welcomed the community of Canso into the municipality through amalgamation in 2012. The Municipality surrounds the Town of Mulgrave and borders the St. Mary's municipal district to the west, Antigonish County to the north and the Strait of Canso and Atlantic Ocean to the east and southeast. The District was incorporated in 1879 and covers an area of 2,116.4 square kilometers, with more than 400 kilometers of coastline.

In local government, the District is divided into eight smaller districts, each represented by an elected councillor.

When our plan was updated in January 2025 a consultation was hosted between MODG and Devoted to Diversity Guysborough. Devoted to Diversity Guysborough is a community organization founded in 2021 that serves neurodivergent individuals and families in Guysborough and surrounding areas. There was forward thinking and educational suggestions on communication and program delivery that were taken into consideration by staff and implemented into the plan.



BUILDINGS, INFRASTRUCTURE & PUBLIC SPACES

The Municipality is dedicated to ensuring that all public buildings, infrastructure, and public spaces are fully accessible for individuals of all abilities. This commitment extends to both municipal-owned properties and leased facilities.

Our Starting Point

The Municipality owns and operates various public facilities, including:

- Municipal Building
- Chedabucto Lifestyle Complex
- Canso and Area Arena
- Parks and Sidewalks
- Pools and Playgrounds
- Recreation multi-use facilities
- Parking lots
- MODG also owns leased properties such as:
- Guysborough and Canso Libraries
- Guysborough and Canso Museums
- Guysborough and Area Food Bank

Achievements

- Building Inspector, Glenn Stirling successfully completed the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification (RHFAC)
- Walking trails have been enhanced and receive annual maintenance.
- Multi-surface courts are accessible.
- The Municipal Building, Canso and Guysborough Libraries, and Chedabucto Lifestyle Complex are accessible
- Fire alarm covers were installed at the Chedabucto Lifestyle Complex.
- Accessible parking is available at all major public facilities.
- Canso and Area Arena washrooms were renovated for accessibility.

- Need for additional sidewalks, including Braille paving for visually impaired individuals.
- Lack of viewing platforms at the Canso Arena for spectators with mobility challenges.
- Narrow doorways and walkways in some facilities
- Steep ramps without mid-ramp landings.
- Sidewalk snow clearing does not always meet accessibility standards.
- The high cost of retrofitting existing buildings.
- Some counters are not at an accessible height.
- Not all doors are automatic or easily opened.
- Accessibility projects face competition from other budgetary demands, such as water and wastewater services
- Signage at public spaces is only in one format - English & written text
- Canso & Area Arena warm room not accessible

Our Commitment

- Prioritize upgrading sidewalks, including adding Braille paving.
- Address accessibility issues in facilities, such as installing viewing platforms and improving door accessibility.
- Continue to improve snow clearing to meet accessibility standards.
- Develop a phased plan for retrofitting existing buildings.
- Allocate resources annually to support these initiatives.



INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Municipality is committed to providing accessible information and communication, ensuring that all residents can access municipal services and information regardless of ability.

Our Starting Point

MODG communicates with the public through various channels, including:

- Monthly Council Meetings
- Website
- Newsletter
- Email, social media platforms - Facebook, Instagram
- Municipal signage and notices
- Water, wastewater, and property tax bills

Achievements

- Council meetings are held at the accessible Municipal Building.
- Agendas and meeting minutes are posted online in a timely manner.
- Municipal contact information is readily available on the website for residents.

Barriers

- Meetings and website are not audio-recorded for individuals with visual impairments.
- The municipal website lacks features for people with visual impairments (e.g., screen reader compatibility).
- Printed materials (e.g., business cards, notices) do not include Braille.
- Job postings are not available in alternative formats.
- No staff are currently trained in American Sign Language (ASL).
- No bilingual staff available to assist non-English speaking residents
- No training currently offered to council/staff on implicit bias and Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility (EDIA)
- No training currently offered to staff on neurodiverse communities and invisible disabilities



Our Commitment

- Provide public information and notices in accessible formats upon request.
- Website to include audio recorded options for municipal services
- Train staff to communicate effectively with people of all ages and abilities, and to ensure materials are available in accessible formats
- Explore solutions for communicating with non-English-speaking residents.
- Explore ASL training for staff and offer translation services for key documents and meetings.
- Symbol Communication Signs at selected community playgrounds and one at main recreation facilities - CLC/Canso Arena

The Municipality is committed to removing barriers in its hiring practices and ensuring that the workplace is accessible and inclusive for employees of all abilities.

Our Starting Point

MODG currently employs 103 full-time and part-time employees. Council seats are publicly elected.

Achievements

- Councilors have access to iPads, laptops, and printers to access meeting agendas and documents.
- The Council Chambers is accessible
- The HR Coordinator is trained to recognize and accommodate barriers during the hiring process.
- Employees are offered accommodations to ensure success in their roles.

Barriers

- Job postings may not be accessible to all potential candidates (e.g., visual impairments).
- Some positions require full physical abilities, which may limit opportunities for some applicants.

Our Commitment

- Job postings will be available in accessible formats upon request.
- All employees will be encouraged to take accessibility and inclusion training, such as the "Working with Abilities" course offered by the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission.
- Remove unnecessary physical requirements from job descriptions where possible, and consider reasonable accommodations.

The Municipality is committed to ensuring that all persons have equal access to goods and services provided by MODG.

Our Starting Point

MODG provides a range of public services, including:

- Wastewater and water services
- Parks and recreation facilities
- Recreation programs
- Customer service
- Communication with residents

Achievements

- The front counter of municipal building has been renovated to be accessible.
- Multiple payment options are available for residents' utility and tax bills.
- Accessible doors installed at CLC multipurpose room and fitness centre
- Incorporating sensory friendly environment at main events hosted by the recreation department
- Sledge hockey equipment purchased for free equipment loan program

Barriers

- Canso and Area Arena requires additional accessibility upgrades.
- Fanning and Chedabucto fitness centers are not fully accessible.
- Tennis and multi-purpose courts need to be inspected for accessibility.
- Sidewalk snow removal often does not meet accessibility standards.
- Swimming pools need additional devices to ensure accessibility for people with mobility challenges.
- A high employment turn-over for municipal summer camps in delivering inclusive programs

Our Commitment

- Implement sidewalk snow clearing per municipal bylaws to meet accessibility standards.
- Prioritize upgrading facilities such as fitness centers and swimming pools to ensure full accessibility.

TRANSPORTATION

Currently, MODG does not provide public transportation but partners with the Transportation Association of Guysborough (TAG), which offers accessible transportation services.

Our Starting Point

TAG provides community-based transportation, including a fully accessible van.

Barriers

- Lack of public transportation services directly operated by MODG.
- Limited coverage of TAG's services in rural areas.

Our Commitment

- Advocate for expanded transportation options, especially in underserved areas.
- Continue supporting TAG's mission to provide affordable, reliable, and accessible transportation.



IMPLEMENTATION

Responsibilities

- MODG Council is responsible for adopting and overseeing the Accessibility Plan.
- Accessibility Coordinator is responsible for receiving public feedback and ensuring the plan is updated regularly.
- Accessibility Coordinator will review the plan every three years and provide feedback to Council.

Schedule

- The plan will be fully implemented by 2030, with annual budget allocations to support progress.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Reviews will be conducted annually, with a comprehensive evaluation of the Accessibility Plan before the start of each fiscal year.

Responding to Questions and Complaints

- The Accessibility Coordinator will address questions, complaints, and suggestions in a timely and constructive manner.



APPENDICES

WE HAVE MET OUR LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS UNDER THE ACCESSIBILITY ACT - 50% OF OUR COMMITTEE MEMBERS HAVE A DISABILITY OR REPRESENT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- PAUL LONG (CHAIR) – WARDEN
- KATHY GOSBEE
- AMBER HART
- DEREK LUMSDEN
- MANDAR KARANDIKAR
- SARAH MASON

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

- CHRISTINA BOWIE, MANAGER OF SPECIAL INITIATIVES & COMMUNICATIONS (COORDINATOR)
- GLEN AVERY, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS
- ANGIE TAVARES, DIRECTOR OF RECREATION

ACCESSIBILITY COORDINATOR

CONTACT INFORMATION

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