Spring 2022

Our Joint Accessibility Plan

The Municipality of the County of Kings, and the Villages of Aylesford, Canning, Cornwallis Square, Greenwood, Kingston, New Minas and Port Williams

Accessibility Plan

Spring 2022

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Prepared by:

Intelligent Futures and
Level Playing Field.

Prepared for:

The Municipality of the County of Kings, and the Villages of Aylesford, Canning, Cornwallis Square, Greenwood, Kingston, New Minas and Port Williams.

Executive Summary

With the introduction of this Accessibility Plan, the Municipality of the County of Kings [The Municipality], and the Villages of Aylesford, Canning, Cornwallis Square, Greenwood, Kingston, New Minas and Port Williams [the Villages], commit to ensuring everyone has meaningful access, regardless of ability. As the first Accessibility Plan for the Municipality and the Villages, this document provides the strategic vision and detailed direction necessary to guide these communities towards an accessible future.

To do this, the Accessibility Plan provides a long-term vision, clear goals for each focus area, as well as measurable indicators. It also includes a detailed approach to implementation in the first three years, proposing 17 short-term actions to move the Municipality and the Villages forward.

Vision

The Municipality and the Villages are dedicated to providing an inclusive, accessible community for all.

These communities strive to be welcoming and inclusionary to everyone, regardless of ability. Everyone is treated with dignity, with equal opportunities and meaningful access to make their own choices.

Focus Areas

The Accessibility Plan is intended to be a flexible and evolving document that builds on the current priorities of the Municipality and the Villages. It will also be responsive to changing conditions. The plan includes seven key focus areas to help guide action by all eight parties towards the vision:

- Goods and Services
- Information and Communication
- Transportation
- Employment
- Awareness
- Built Environment
- Recreation

Each of the seven focus areas includes a goal, a summary of current state achievements and barriers, and supporting indicators. They also include several guiding policy statements to assist in accessibility decision-making. These focus areas are actioned using 17 short-term actions for the Municipality and the Villages.

Short Term Actions

Multiple actions were proposed by the public, literature, site assessments and staff feedback through the development of this plan. The initial 17 actions were selected using a series of criteria, found in section 4.1 of this plan, to establish a foundation for new accessibility actions. The following actions were identified as necessary to start in 2022, as their development will influence the development of other actions:

- Investigate and create a designated Accessibility Coordinator Position in the Municipality of the County of Kings.
- Each party shall conduct individual accessibility audits of Municipal and Village buildings, parks, pathways, beaches, playgrounds and any other public area.
- Each party will develop and administer new training offerings for staff, Municipal Council and Village Commissions specific to accessibility and disability issues.

Other short-term actions for both the Municipality of the County of Kings and the Villages include:

- Review maintenance procedures in places with sidewalks and bus shelters (owned by one of the 8 parties).
- Complete a review of communications policies, procedures and practices to remove barriers. Include accessible design in strategies and brand guidelines.
- Review and modify hiring, funding evaluation,and procurement policies and procedures to prioritize accessibility and equitable opportunities for persons with disabilities.
- Review provincial customer service policy and further adopt an Accessible Customer Service Policy for the Municipality and the Villages.
- Deliver public-facing accessibility workshops in partnership with private entities committed to employment and awareness building.
- Each party shall, within their jurisdiction, review all transit stops, signage and pedestrian access elements to determine roles and responsibilities.
- Update Council and Village Commission procedures and engagement policies to provide accessible resources.
- Each party reviews current recreational programming and funding to programming to identify and propose accessible recreational programming options.
- Create a plan to help non-profits (particularly those responsible for playgrounds and public spaces, such as community halls) reach the agreed-upon plan goals.
- Review and amend all by-laws to include accessibility. An example could include the Municipal Vender's by-law #90.
- Each party creates a priority upgrade matrix for Municipal and Village projects, including capital project spending, physical infrastructure, communications and information, awareness building, and more.
- Update existing websites to be accessible.
- Create an online and physical accessibility information resource to help people with disabilities access information for the Municipality and the Villages.
- Each party shall standardize their signage to include braille and design elements for those with invisible or cognitive disabilities.

Welcome Message

On behalf of the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee [JAAC] for The Municipality of the County of Kings and the Villages of Aylesford, Canning, Cornwallis Square, Greenwood, Kingston, New Minas and Port Williams, I welcome you to read our first ever Joint Accessibility Plan. The JAAC, the Municipality and the Village have created this plan to ensure that all residents have fair and appropriate access to services and resources.

In 2017, The Province of Nova Scotia passed *The Accessibility Act*, the third provincial accessibility act in Canada. In accordance with this Act, The Municipality and the Villages created this plan, a stepping stone on the way to becoming a fully accessible province by 2030. The first part of creating this Accessibility Plan was the formation of the JAAC.

On March 19, 2021 the Municipality of the County of Kings and the Villages of Aylesford, Canning, Cornwallis Square, Greenwood, Kingston, New Minas and Port Williams came together to form the JAAC. In addition to Municipal and Village representatives, half of the JAAC is comprised of persons with disabilities or representatives from organizations representing persons with disabilities. The purpose of this committee is to provide advice to Municipal Council and the Village Commissions on identifying, eliminating and preventing barriers to access to municipal programs, services, initiatives and facilities by people living with disabilities. To start this process, we have played a pivotal role in developing this Accessibility Plan, and thank all of those who helped in its creation, including staff, stakeholders, and local community members.

In this Accessibility Plan creation process the Municipality and the Villages have heard from hundreds of local residents, business owners, stakeholders, and visitors. We've conducted assessments for dozens of physical locations, investigated print and online communications materials, and recorded best practices and policies necessary to making our communities as accessible as possible by 2030. All of these components are summarized in this document and its appendices.

The guiding vision for our Accessibility Plan is:

The Municipality and the Villages are dedicated to providing an inclusive, accessible community for all.

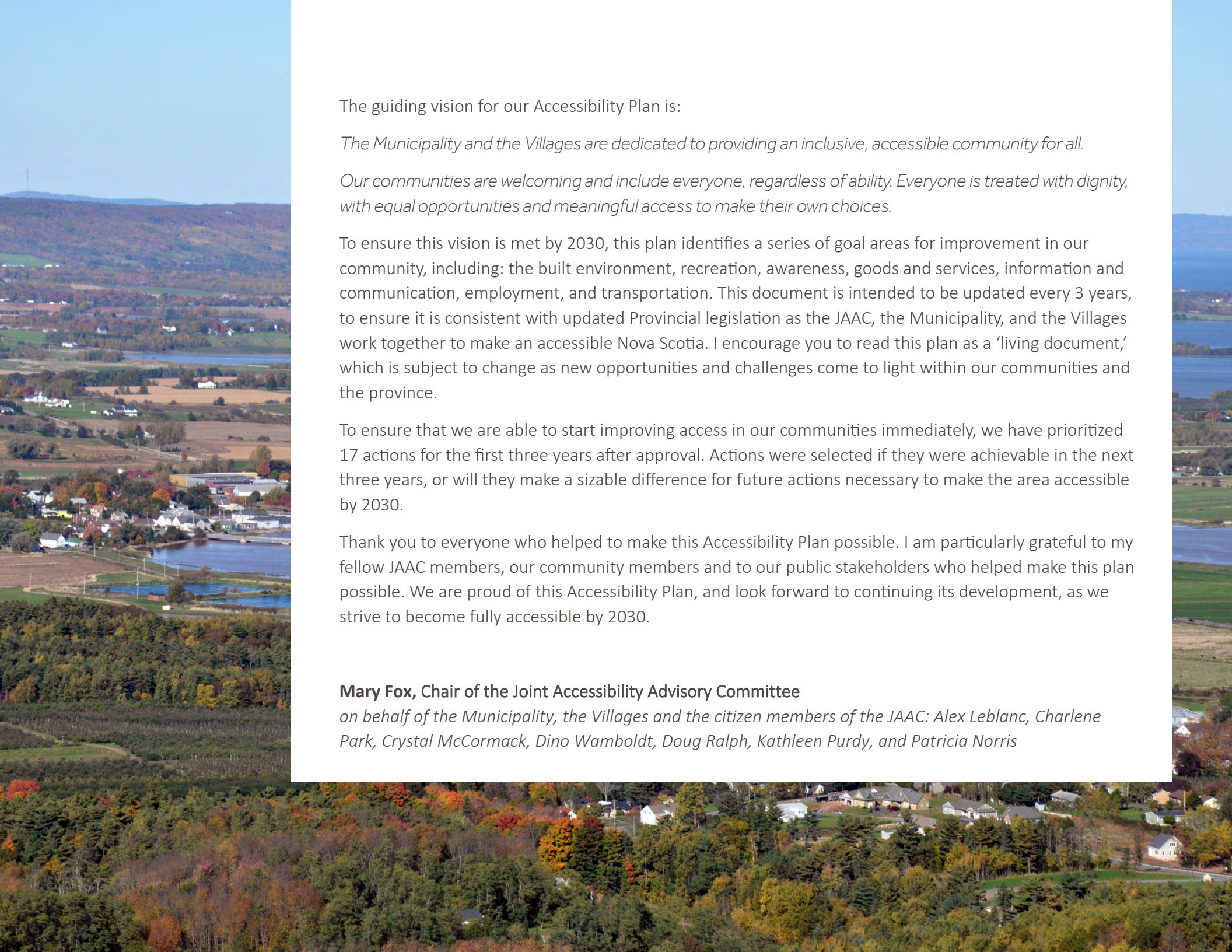
Our communities are welcoming and include everyone, regardless of ability. Everyone is treated with dignity, with equal opportunities and meaningful access to make their own choices.

To ensure this vision is met by 2030, this plan identifies a series of goal areas for improvement in our community, including: the built environment, recreation, awareness, goods and services, information and communication, employment, and transportation. This document is intended to be updated every 3 years, to ensure it is consistent with updated Provincial legislation as the JAAC, the Municipality, and the Villages work together to make an accessible Nova Scotia. I encourage you to read this plan as a 'living document,' which is subject to change as new opportunities and challenges come to light within our communities and the province.

To ensure that we are able to start improving access in our communities immediately, we have prioritized 17 actions for the first three years after approval. Actions were selected if they were achievable in the next three years, or will they make a sizable difference for future actions necessary to make the area accessible by 2030.

Thank you to everyone who helped to make this Accessibility Plan possible. I am particularly grateful to my fellow JAAC members, our community members and to our public stakeholders who helped make this plan possible. We are proud of this Accessibility Plan, and look forward to continuing its development, as we strive to become fully accessible by 2030.

Mary Fox, Chair of the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee
on behalf of the Municipality, the Villages and the citizen members of the JAAC: Alex Leblanc, Charlene Park, Crystal McCormack, Dino Wamboldt, Doug Ralph, Kathleen Purdy, and Patricia Norris



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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Statement of Commitment

The Municipality of the County of Kings [Municipality] and the Villages of Aylesford, Canning, Cornwallis Square, Greenwood, Kingston, New Minas and Port Williams [the Villages] commit to providing meaningful access to everyone regardless of ability. These parties commit to ensuring residents, workers and visitors have equal opportunities and can experience a high quality of life.

The Municipality and the Villages commit to ensuring their processes, policies, information, services, infrastructure, transportation, buildings and recreational programming support the following values:

- **Dignity:** Everyone is treated with respect and dignity
- **Meaningful Access:** Everyone's unique access needs are accommodated
- **Inclusion:** Communities include and welcome everyone
- **Equitable opportunity:** Providing support to ensure everyone can fully participate in society

By encouraging each other to explore and solve accessibility barriers, these communities aim to meet
and exceed *Nova Scotia's Accessibility Act [Act]* requirements for 2030 and beyond.

1.2 About the Accessibility Plan

The Municipality and the Villages recognize that accessibility is a human right. The *Act* has been mandated to these organizations to make their built environment and services accessible to everyone by 2030. This requires avoiding and removing barriers that restrict people from fully participating in society.

This Accessibility Plan provides a long-term vision for the Municipality and the Villages moving forward. This approach is highlighted through clear goals for each focus area, measurable indicators, and 17 short-term actions to be implemented over the next three years.

1.2.1 About the Municipality and the Villages

The Municipality, including the Villages, has a population of 47,918 residents, making it the third largest municipal unit in Nova Scotia. The Municipality includes the seven Villages, and large rural and coastal areas. The region is supported by robust agricultural, seafood and manufacturing sectors. It is further enhanced by Acadia University, a campus of the Nova Scotia Community College, and Canadian Forces Base 14-Wing Greenwood.

The seven Villages within the Municipality include Aylesford, Canning, Cornwallis Square, Greenwood, Kingston, New Minas and Port Williams. These Villages

each have their own Village Commissions and may own infrastructure. Their assets are recorded in the overviews found in section 3.0.

The Kings Transit Authority [KTA] serves the Municipality and the Villages, providing fixed transit services along the Valley corridor (primarily following the No. 1 Highway). As the Municipality is a major funder for this service, the Plan also includes references to transit. Fixed route service is provided by the KTA which is a municipal corporate owned by the Towns of Wolfville, Kentville, Berwick and the Municipality. Also, both the Municipality and some of the Villages do own some transit shelters, in addition to Atcom Outdoor. The transit stops also abut roads and/or sidewalks that are owned by other entities and require coordination with the road authority to improve.

1.2.2 The Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee

This plan was created with the involvement of the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee [JAAC]. The first meeting of this citizen, Council and Commissioner committee was June 2, 2021. It has 16 voting members and includes:

- One member of Municipal Council (who currently serves as a KTA Board member)
- One member from each of the seven Village Commissions
- Eight members of the public who either live with disabilities, or who work or volunteer with organizations that work with people living with disabilities

The JAAC's purpose is to provide advice to the Municipal Council, the Village Commissions and the Kings Transit Authority. They also identify, help prevent and work to eliminate barriers to access in Municipal and Village programs, services, initiatives and facilities for people living with disabilities.

1.2.3 The Nova Scotia Accessibility Act

The *Nova Scotia Accessibility Act [Act]* was adopted by the province in 2017 to make the province more equitable and accessible. The *Act's* goal is to make Nova Scotia accessible by 2030, by "prevent[ing] and remov[ing] barriers that restrict people with disabilities from fully participating in society." This *Act* outlines the roles of public sector bodies in helping the province achieve this goal.

This plan was created in accordance with the provincial guidance to start improving accessibility in the Municipality of the County of Kings and the Villages of Aylesford, Canning, Cornwallis Square, Greenwood, Kingston, New Minas and Port Williams.

1.3 Plan Methodology

This plan was developed through a series of research, engagement, staff and committee workshops, and site assessments. Some of the Plan's inputs include:

Site assessments: A sample of site assessments were conducted by the project's Accessibility Consultant, Level Playing Field. Site visits included: site access, including accessible parking spaces and curb cuts to entrances, sidewalks, trails, parks, public transit, libraries, recreation and community centres, and some Municipal and Village buildings. Assessments utilized visual inspection, walking, and using a mobilized scooter to traverse the various locations. Findings from this assessment can be found in Appendix B, Site Assessment Report.

Public Engagement: From October 11 to November 12, 2021, public engagement was undertaken which asked stakeholders and residents about current barriers, achievements, and ideas for accessibility. Throughout the course of the project, 348 public, stakeholder, staff, committee, and commission participants shared their feedback. To share questions, comments and insights, members of the public were encouraged to: attend a JAAC meeting, provide feedback at one of the three pop-up engagements, provide feedback online via the project website, fill out two online or paper surveys, and/or have a user experience interview with us to share their lived experiences. More information, and engagement findings can be found in Appendix D: Internal Research and Engagement Report.

Policy Direction: Provincial policies were investigated to understand what the Municipality and the Villages are required to do from a provincial standpoint. More information about the findings and recommendations can be found in this plan's policy sections, as well as in Appendix D: Internal Research and Engagement Report.

Case Study Research: Through this project, 6 case studies were documented from across Canada to help inform this plan. These case studies are documented in Appendix D: Internal Research and Engagement Report.

Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee: The JAAC has provided feedback throughout the development of this plan. Many of the components of this plan, including: the vision, statement of commitment, focus area commitments, and proposed short-term actions were either informed directly, or revised by the JAAC. More information can be found on the JAAC webpage, and in the JAAC's minutes.

Staff Input: Village and Municipal staff were consulted throughout the development of this plan, and helped to directly inform the scope and actions proposed in this plan. Staff workshops, and surveys helped to refine commitments, the vision, and the actions that were developed through various methods described above.

1.4 Glossary of Terms

The following definitions are provided for clarification. Accessibility-specific definitions are directly from or are adapted from definitions in the *Accessible Canada Act*, or the Canadian Standards Association CSA B651HB-18.

Accessibility Coordinator- A staff member of the Municipality who provides support services to the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee and oversees the implementation of the plan.

Accessibility Plan (Plan)- A plan to address the identification, removal and prevention of barriers in the policies, programs, practices and services of a public body.

Accessible – when used to describe a building, facility, or other site, means the location possesses the necessary characteristics for it to be easily entered, exited, utilized, and navigated by people with diverse physical, sensory and cognitive abilities.

Accessible route – is a pedestrian path of travel (either interior or exterior) that is free of barriers and obstructions. It is usable by all people, including those with physical or cognitive impairments and those requiring mobility aids and devices.

Barrier – Anything physical, architectural, technological or attitudinal, based on information or communications or that is the result of a policy or a practice that hinders the full and equal participation in society of persons with an impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment.

Blended transition – a connection with a slope of 1:20 (5%) or less between the level of a pedestrian walkway and vehicular path of travel.

Braille – a tactile system of raised dots used to represent letters and words. In Canada, Unified English Braille (UEB) is the standard used for Braille.

Cane-detectable – any object or change in surface texture that is within the detectable range of a white cane generally used by people with vision impairment.

Colour-contrast – The contrast between colours of the foreground and background of an element.

Curb ramp – a sloped surface built into a curb.

Depressed curb – also known as drop curbs; a continuous length of curb along a pedestrian route that is lowered to the level of an adjacent roadway. Such curbs may be located at vehicle loading/ unloading areas or at intersections.

Disability – a physical, intellectual, learning or sensory impairment, including an episodic disability, that hinders an individual's full participation in society.

Glare – excessive reflection of light from a surface.

Goods and Services – All tangible and in-tangible items or amenities that consumers purchase or receive independently or receive through the government. For the purpose of this document, goods and services will refer to government-owned or contracted services.

Illumination – the intensity of light on a surface or in a space, measured in lux (lx). 1 lux = 1 Lumen / m2

Luminance – the amount of light emitted or reflected from a surface in the direction of the observer. Commonly referred to as surface brightness

Municipality – a governmental body established under the *Municipal Government Act* that provides local government for rural areas outside the three incorporated towns. Municipality in this document refers to the Municipality of the County of Kings.

Ramp – sloping walkway leading from one level to another, which has a running slope with a ratio steeper than or equal to 1:20 (5%).

Recreation – The experience that results from freely-chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community wellbeing (National Framework for Recreation).

Signage – information that is provided in the form of visual and tactile communication. Includes one or more of the following elements: alphanumeric symbols, pictograms, illustrations, braille.

Slope – the ratio of rise on an inclined surface.

Tactile walking surface indicator (TWSI) – an internationally recognized standardized surface detectable underfoot by a white cane to guide persons with low vision or blindness.

Tactile attention indicator (TAI) – a type of TWSI made of truncated domes that signals a need for caution at a change in level or other potential hazard as entry into a vehicular route or train track.

Tactile direction indicator (TDI) – a type of TWSI with flat-topped elongated bars to facilitate wayfinding in open areas.

Village – a local level government that has a commission established under the *Municipal Government Act* for the purpose of providing municipal services to a defined area within the Municipality.

Wheeled mobility device – a collective term to describe a range of wheeled personal transportation devices (includes manual wheelchairs, powered wheelchairs and scooters).

2.0 Accessibility Overview

2.1 The Vision

The Municipality and the Villages are dedicated to providing an inclusive, accessible community for all.

Their communities are welcoming and inclusive of everyone, regardless of ability. Everyone is treated with dignity, and has equal opportunity and meaningful access to make their own choices.

2.2 Governance Structure

Through the implementation of this plan, the Municipality and the Villages will all ensure they each take steps to improve local accessibility. Change will occur as more information becomes available and more accessibility actions are undertaken. Three required actions for the continued improvement of overall accessibility within the Municipality and the Villages include:

- Developing future action plans and updating plan priorities every three years
- The JAAC will continue to work with Council and the Commissions to ensure actions progress and to provide advice on future accessibility initiatives
- This plan and the resulting actions will be updated as provincial legislation changes

2.3 Forces For and Against Accessibility

In a series of Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee sessions, the project team asked committee members to brainstorm about the forces working for and against accessibility. These forces are aspects of the community that will influence the development and uptake of this plan.

Forces working for accessibility

- An aging population that considers future barriers for themselves
- Provincial mandate to improve accessibility with potential for future funding
- Changing attitudes in the Municipality and the Villages to support aging well and leading a healthy lifestyle

- A caring and helpful community with a desire to be inclusive and a belief that everyone is important
- Opportunities to further build better standards and facilities for people with disabilities or the aging population
- Parallel focuses on broader diversity and inclusion initiatives and accessibility plans at the regional level, to make the Municipality and the Villages more accessible and comfortable for everyone
- Provincial, Federal and other grants and funding opportunities
- The Municipality has an opportunity to work closely with the Villages
- Access to Acadia University, which may be a resource for accessibility studies
- Accessibility is receiving more attention, and there is an opportunity to build on that
- The contribution of the JAAC and the plan itself
- There is physical space to make necessary changes like adding ramps
- The variety of community advocacy groups
- Community pride in being leaders in accessibility

Forces working against accessibility

- Lack of funding to implement accessibility retrofits and changes
- Specialized companies are needed for building modifications
- Limited empathy, education and understanding of accessibility barriers, issues and accessible design
- The Municipality and the Villages must abide by Legislation that may not reflect evolving accessibility standards
- Lack of available training for staff to feel confident meeting the needs of the diverse disability community
- Inconsistent accessibility requirements and specifications among by-laws
- Lack of powerful allies to champion cause
- Physical retrofit restraints in historical buildings
- Limited understanding from the communities that accessibility is a priority
- Lack of motivation to act
- The dispersed geography of the County

Forces for and against accessibility speak to large-scale issues that affect accessibility in the Municipality and the Villages, and control the 'sandbox' that the actions in this plan are able to work within.

2.4 Our Communities' Priorities

This section is an overall summary of input received across themes, primarily from community engagement. In our phase one online and print survey, the project team asked participants to indicate how accessible different elements in their community were. The results are summarized in the proportional graph on the following page.

Please note that "Not Applicable" indicates that the specific survey element was not relevant, was not appropriate, or did not apply to the particular respondent.

Elements that were reported as being the least accessible in the Municipality, the Villages which includes the Kings Transit Authority were:

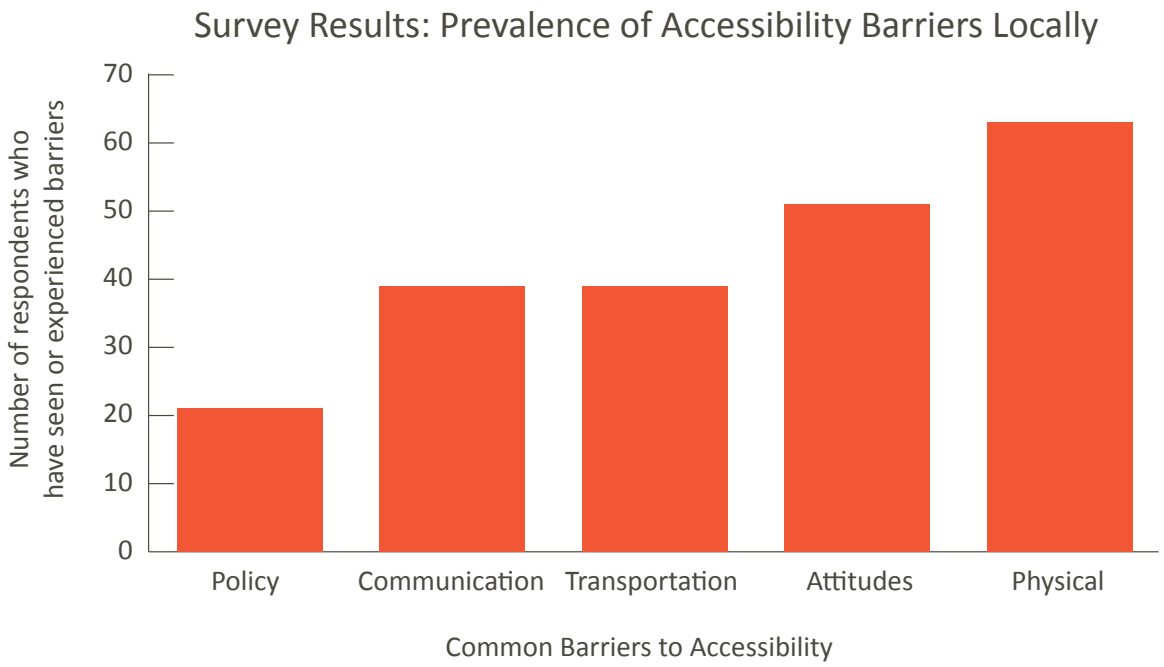
- Finding local accessibility resources
- Moving along roads and sidewalks
- Accessing and reading local government documents
- Local transit service stop locations and access

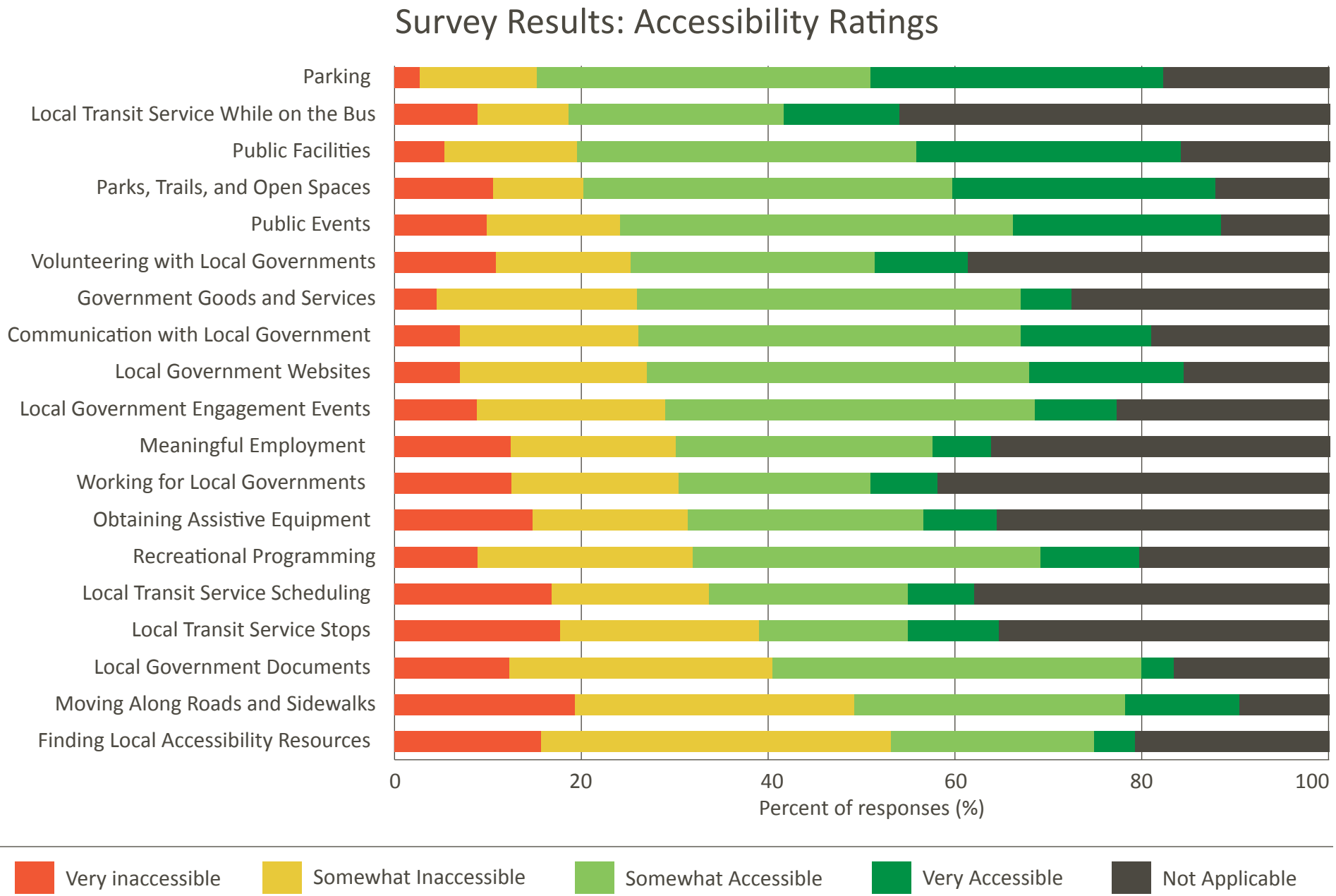
The elements reported as the most accessible include:

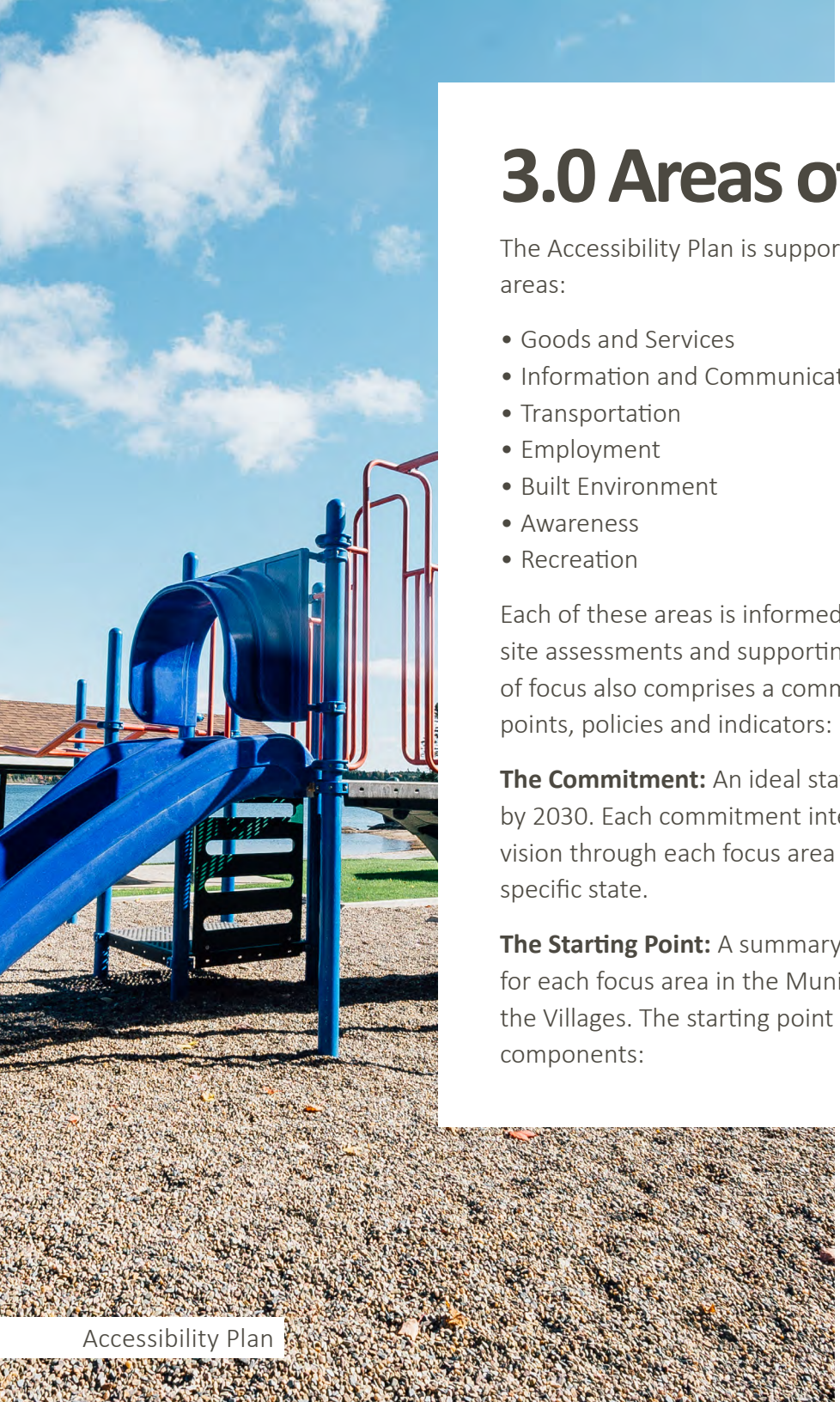
- Parking at Municipal and Village Facilities (for example, parks, trails, and open spaces)
- Public facilities (for example, community centres)
- Parks, trails and open spaces
- Public events

Survey participants were also asked to select all of the accessibility barriers they have seen or experienced in the Municipality, the Villages or the Kings Transit Authority. Results for this question can be seen below.

Physical barriers were the most frequently identified among survey participants, followed by attitudes, communication, and transportation. It was anticipated that fewer survey participants would have interacted directly with policy documents compared to other barrier areas.




Survey Results: Accessibility Ratings
Parking
Local Transit Service While on the Bus
Public Facilities
Parks, Trails, and Open Spaces
Public Events
Volunteering with Local Governments
Government Goods and Services
Communication with Local Government
Local Government Websites
Local Government Engagement Events
Meaningful Employment
Working for Local Governments
Obtaining Assistive Equipment
Recreational Programming
Local Transit Service Scheduling
Local Transit Service Stops
Local Government Documents
Moving Along Roads and Sidewalks
Finding Local Accessibility Resources
0
20
40
60
80
100
Percent of responses (%)
Very inaccessible
Somewhat Inaccessible
Somewhat Accessible
Very Accessible
Not Applicable



3.0 Areas of Focus

The Accessibility Plan is supported by seven key focus areas:

- Goods and Services
- Information and Communication
- Transportation
- Employment
- Built Environment
- Awareness
- Recreation

Each of these areas is informed by stakeholder input, site assessments and supporting research. Each area of focus also comprises a commitment, local starting points, policies and indicators:

The Commitment: An ideal state for the focus area by 2030. Each commitment interprets the high-level vision through each focus area to provide an ideal, specific state.

The Starting Point: A summary of the current state for each focus area in the Municipality and each of the Villages. The starting point contains three sub-components:

- **Overview:** A discussion of the current assets, systems and services that are provided by the Municipality, the Villages and the KTA
- **Achievements:** Positive moves now being made towards greater accessibility
- **Barriers:** Resident and site assessment-identified limitations for accessibility in the community

Policy Statements: These policy statements will be used to inform accessibility decision-making across the Municipality, and the Villages. For instance, Council or Commission reports may arrive with an evaluation as to how the policy statements are supported by an item before Council or a Village Commission.

Indicators: A measure of accessibility performance that can be tracked over time. These indicators will be gathered and monitored by each Village and the Municipality as actions are implemented and reported to the JAAC as updates. Targets can be set once the Municipality and the Villages are aware of an indicator's current status.

Goods and Services

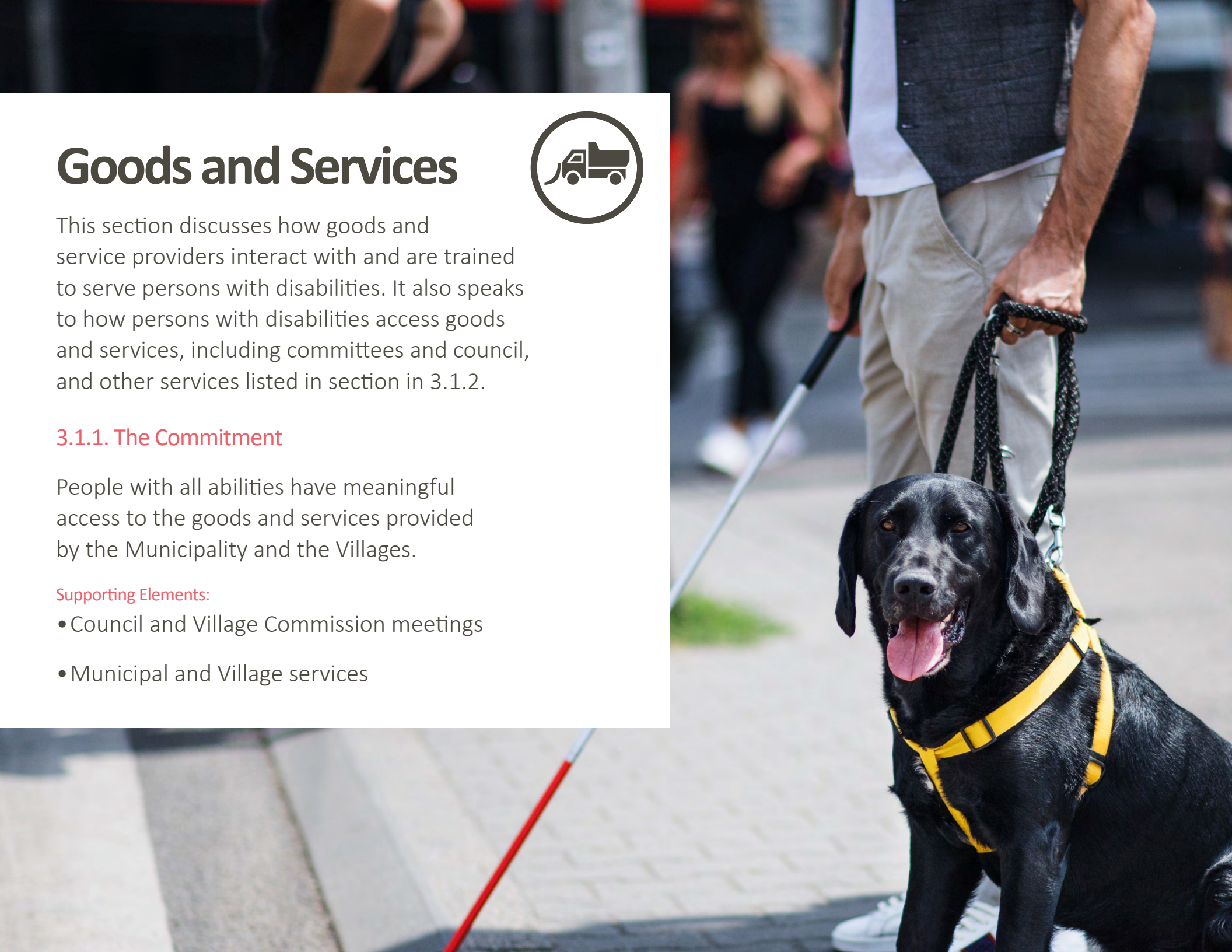
This section discusses how goods and service providers interact with and are trained to serve persons with disabilities. It also speaks to how persons with disabilities access goods and services, including committees and council, and other services listed in section in 3.1.2.

3.1.1. The Commitment

People with all abilities have meaningful access to the goods and services provided by the Municipality and the Villages.

Supporting Elements:

- Council and Village Commission meetings
- Municipal and Village services



3.1.2. The Starting Point: Goods and Services

3.1.2.1. Overview

The goods and services provision varies from Municipality to Village to KTA.

The Municipality provides services including:

- Road maintenance on Municipal roads
- Sidewalk maintenance for locations outside of Village boundaries
- Parks and recreation services
- Animal control services
- Sewer and water utilities
- Building and Enforcement services
- Civic addressing
- Fire and emergency services
- Community grants and funding
- Planning and Development services
- Police services
- Waste management
- Kings Transit Authority

Village responsibilities vary, but often include:

- Sidewalk maintenance within their borders
- Elections and voting for their respective Village Commissions
- Recreation program provision and bookings
- Care of respective recreational areas
- Water and/or sewer central services
- Fire department, fire hall or community space
- Sidewalk ownership and maintenance

The KTA is responsible for the maintenance of their fleet, communications and the distribution of transit service, including the bus stops.

3.1.2.2. Achievements

- Municipal Hearing Loop installation located in the Council Chambers of the Municipal administration complex
- Front-line staff at the Municipality have a base sense of accessibility awareness in customer service
- Municipality provides inspections (building and fire) that ensure the base level of mandated accessibility is being met as per the Nova Scotia Building Code Regulations and Fire Code Act
- The 2021 Active Transportation Master Plan identifies a winter maintenance strategy to be created as an overall network improvement area, including accessibility considerations

There are accessible components to the front entrance to the Canning Fire Hall.

- The KTA is initiating the mail-out of passes and tickets for those unable to purchase tickets at physical locations

3.1.2.3. Barriers

- Parking, entrances and wayfinding were noted as barriers to goods and services- Examples include a lack of accessible stalls adjacent to a building entrance, or a lack of accessible door hardware in entrances
- Signage font type, font size, branding and inclusion of tactile characters and Braille is not standardized; some building and street signage is not always large enough to be read from a distance
- Lack of provisions for American Sign Language [ASL] support to ensure all people have equal access to goods and services
- Lack of understanding and clarity on accessibility among staff, council and the commissions when providing accessible services and programming
- Inconsistent access to high-speed internet through the community
- Some services are dependent on the internet within the Municipality
- Struggles with funding, specifically for those with physical disabilities

3.1.3. Policies

The Municipality and the Villages will:

- Develop policies and procedures for snow removal and snow storage (see Active Transportation Plan)
- Deliver all goods and services without any ability-based bias

3.1.4. Indicators

- The Municipality and the Villages will monitor the following items related to Goods and Service provision:
- Number of investigations and complaints due to accessibility concerns
- Percentage of meetings that are recorded with closed captioning online, and which have screen reader compatible documentation
- Accessibility rating of goods and services provided by the Municipality and the Villages- Consider monitoring through a citizen satisfaction survey, or an online poll

For more information on specific aspects of Goods and Services please see the project's site plan assessment in Appendix B, and public feedback in Appendix D.

Village of Greenwood office with inaccessible entry

Information and Communications

This section discusses how the Municipality and the Villages distribute information and communications to everyone, including to persons with disabilities.

3.2.1. The Commitment

Everyone can meaningfully access, understand and share the information provided by the Municipality and the Villages. Each of the parties in the plan continue to take steps to expand outreach and connections in order to further advocate for accessibility awareness.

Supporting Elements:

- Public policies and reports
- Websites and communications materials
- Engagement methods and locations

3.2.2. The Starting Point: Information & Communications

3.2.2.1. Overview

The Municipality and the Villages have differing levels of information and communication materials available. For the Municipality, there is a brand strategy in development, and a two-page overview is available which does not currently include accessibility considerations. A municipal engagement strategy was developed in 2017, and lists inclusivity and accessibility as its first core values.

The Municipality and the Villages of Aylesford, Kingston, Canning, Greenwood, New Minas, Cornwallis Square and Port Williams each have their own websites for information and communications. The most commonly used platform by these groups is Facebook, with five parties having their own Facebook pages.

The Villages and the Municipality use many local communications channels, including:

- Valley Journal-Advertiser
- Annapolis Valley Register
- The Valley Wire
- The Chronicle Herald
- 14 Wing Greenwood's Aurora newspaper
- Magic 94.9/ AVR 97.7
- Rewind 89.3
- The Canning Gazette
- Grapevine Publishing

3.2.2.2. Achievements

- A variety of communications channels are currently used, including radio, social media and websites
- Microphone system is used in Council Chambers, at the Municipal administration Complex, for all meetings
- Some videos, public meetings and presentations are uploaded to YouTube, and include closed captioning
- The Municipality has a bi-annual print newsletter delivered to all taxpayers to ensure residents are informed
- Party district meetings are held in accessible halls
- Ongoing incentives are reported in real time to social media
- Funding grants are provided to non-profit organizations to support programming (for example, playgrounds)
- The Municipality offers hybrid meetings as an in-person alternative
- Committee materials include increased font size for minutes and emails

Example of a high-contrast sign found in New Minas' Jones Park

- Ongoing communication between the Municipality and Village parties to ensure awareness and transparency for the goals and objectives of the JAAC and the Accessibility Plan

3.2.2.3. Barriers

- Currently there are no publicly available American Sign Language [ASL] supports for public meetings
- There is inconsistency across the Municipality and the Villages for audio and visual recordings of committees, Council, and Village Commission meetings

3.2.3. Policies

The Municipality and the Villages will each:

- Provide information in an accessible, customized format or with communication support (ASL interpreters, oral translators and real-time captioning)
- Ensure all digital materials are made accessible for all ages and abilities
- Hold all in-person public meetings in barrier-free spaces, when possible, given community centres are not owned by the Municipality or the Villages

3.2.4. Indicators

The Municipality and the Villages will monitor the following items related to Information and Communications:

- Percentage of public communications that are accessible
- Number of websites that have links to accessible resources
- Percentage of web pages that meet accessibility standards
- Accessible space/database website traffic

For more information on specific aspects of Information and Communications please see the project's site plan assessment in Appendix B, and public feedback in Appendix D.

Engagement for the Accessibility Plan held in a low-barrier public space

Transportation

This section discusses transportation accessibility. Much of this section speaks to the Kings Transit Authority (KTA), which is a municipal corporation. The Municipality provides funding to the KTA and serves on the corporation's Board of Directors.

3.3.1. The Commitment

Everyone is able to move throughout the Municipality and the Villages to get where they need to go, when they need to get there.

Supporting Elements:

- Public transportation buses, stops, network and scheduling
- Alternative modes of transportation (for example, taxi, rideshare, active transportation)
- Maintenance and snow removal (for example, snow removal from sidewalks, bus stops)
- Transit communications, stop location and information

3.3.2. The Starting Point: Transportation

3.3.2.1. Overview

The Kings Transit Authority (KTA) is a municipal corporation that supplies fixed transit services along the Valley corridor (primarily following the No. 1 Highway). Service is based out of a facility located in New Minas. The fleet consists of 12 buses, including four which run in the Municipality's core area. There are approximately 250 bus stops in total.

Bus shelters for the KTA are primarily owned by an external advertising agency, Atcom Outdoor Advertising Inc. (12 are reported on their website for Kings County). Other bus shelter ownership will be clarified when pursuing Action 9, which is described in detail in Appendix A.

The KTA is expected to undergo a multi-year transportation study to inform their future transit service delivery. It is understood that future rebranding efforts, along with other guiding documentation, will be updated in alignment with this transportation study.

Kings Point to Point [KPPT] is a community-based, non-profit charitable organization offering accessible transportation services to all residents of Kings County who are in need of transportation. Priority is placed on seniors and those with accessibility challenges. The Municipality of the County of Kings is one of five sponsors for this service, and the KTA is a supporter.

Active and car-oriented transportation infrastructure and objectives are documented in the built environment section below.

3.3.2.2. Achievements

- Some accessible transit stops provide covered rest areas and benches
- Buses are equipped with appropriate ramps, tie-downs and kneeling capabilities to accommodate all users
- Current communication channels (website, email lists, social media) update users on all buses with service news, including cancellations and delays
- Kings' Point-to-Point service's availability and accessibility

3.3.2.3. Barriers

- The KTA does not provide transit stop coverage for all of the villages within Kings County
- Buses are not approachable for individuals with sensory issues due to noise levels and often a lack of personal support

Kings Transit Authority Low floor buses
Source: Kings Transit Authority, 2020

- The lack of accessible pathways and sidewalks with appropriate curb cuts and tactile indicators makes some transit stops inaccessible. Some stops require a culvert to be installed over the existing ditch on Provincial roads in order for improved accessibility
- Inflexible transit schedule with limited bus service frequency
- Lack of transit stop signage
- The cost and reliability of using Kings' Point-to-Point
- Costs for everyday transit services are high
- Lack of rural transportation access

3.3.3. Policies

The Municipality and the Villages will work with the KTA to:

- Ensure that no person is denied access to a transit service due to a disability
- Ensure that no person is charged any additional fees for bus service due to a disability
- Ensure that, whenever possible, any event held by the Municipality or the Villages will be conducted at times that allow anyone with a disability to arrange alternate transportation methods, if needed

3.3.4. Indicators

The Municipality and the Villages will work with KTA, to work toward the ability to monitor the following items related to Transportation provision:

- Number of accessible bus stops
- Number of bus drivers who have taken a diversity and inclusion workshop

For more information on specific aspects of Transportation please see the project's site plan assessment in Appendix B, and public feedback in Appendix D.

Unprotected bus stop in Port Williams without space for a wheeled mobility device outside of the sidewalk's path of travel.

Employment

This section discusses employment practices, policies, and procedures for the Municipality and the Villages. Some external achievements and barriers were highlighted as well.

3.4.1. The Commitment

The Municipality and the Villages are accessible workplaces and actively support meaningful access in their employment policies and practices.

Supporting Elements:

- Municipal and Village workspaces
- Municipal and Village hiring, and diversity and inclusion training
- Community employment partnerships and connections

3.4.2. The Starting Point: Employment

3.4.2.1. Overview

Employee numbers and responsibilities vary between each Village and the Municipality. Each body has its own Human Resource Policies. Many have an Equal Opportunity Employment Policy that addresses those living with a physical or a mental disability. These policies are often available publicly on Municipal and Village websites. However, some employment policies and the equity available to applicants are not transparently posted and require further internal investigation.

In the section below, summer students are included in seasonal staff member counts. Staff numbers for each of the Villages and the Municipality include:

- Municipality of the County of Kings: 77 Full time County staff, 18 seasonal staff, and nine pool staff
- Village of New Minas: 17 full-time staff, nine part-time staff and 10 seasonal staff
- Village of Port Williams: five full-time staff, one part-time staff and three seasonal staff
- The Village of Kingston employs: six full-time staff, one contract staff and six seasonal staff
- The Village of Canning: four full-time staff, five part-time staff, and six seasonal staff
- The Village of Greenwood: three full-time staff
- The Village of Cornwallis Square: One part-time staff member
- The Village of Aylesford: No paid staff

3.4.2.2. Achievements

- Public buildings incorporate elements of accessible design, parking and entrances, increasing access to employment within the Municipality

3.4.2.3. Barriers

- Private buildings and businesses do not fully incorporate accessible design (including accessible entrances, parking and washrooms) beyond what the Nova Scotia Building Code Regulations requires
- The Municipality and the Villages do not currently offer ease of accessibility for hiring processes (braille, read-outs, etc.)
- Lack of appropriate supports to accommodate different needs in various working environments and situations
- Negative perceptions and attitudes towards individuals with disabilities can exist during the hiring and procurement process

Image of the JAAC using the Municipality of the County of Kings' Council chamber with microphone system

- Lack of an accessible employment and procurement process that includes reader-friendly and closed-caption options

3.4.3. Policies

The Municipality and the Villages will each:

- Ensure that training and hiring materials for positions include information about recruiting and hiring people with disabilities
- The Accessibility Coordinator will work to educate and build an understanding of the value of accessibility and inclusion in the workforce
- Consider what accommodations could be offered during their own recruitment and employment retention efforts that expand available accommodations

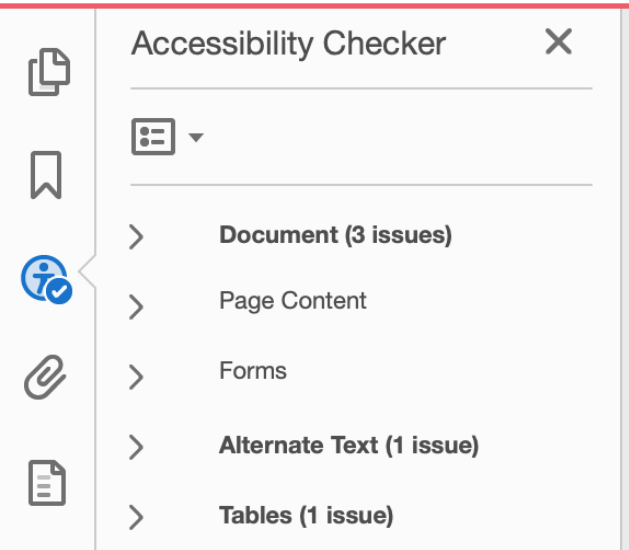
3.4.4. Indicators

The Municipality and the Villages will each monitor the following items related to Employment:

- Number of workspaces that are fully accessible
- Percentage of hiring documents that are accessible
- Number of employees that self-identify as having a disability
- Employee-identified support rating for those employed with a disability in Municipal and the Village workspaces (administered through staff survey)

For more information on specific aspects of Employment please see the project's site plan assessment in Appendix B, and public feedback in Appendix D.

Below: Example of a public job description with screen reader compatibility barriers.



JOB DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

1. **Processing Planning Applications, Land Use By-Law Amendments and Development Agreements (70%)**
   - 1.1. Evaluate planning applications and draft staff reports for presentation to Municipal Council and Committees
   - 1.2. Organize and host Public Information Meetings
     - 1.2.1. Coordinate, with area Councillor, the date and location of public information meetings in communities within the Municipality;
     - 1.2.2. Ensure that necessary advertising requirements are met, such as providing notification to neighbouring property owners within 500 feet and advertising in local newspaper and on municipal website;
     - 1.2.3. Prepare power point presentation explaining planning application/project, outline policy goals, objectives, and evaluative criteria, highlight other key considerations such as ensuring that other applicable regulatory bodies are consulted and provide necessary approvals (e.g. DTIR), highlight key steps in process;
     - 1.2.4. Answer questions from public concerning nature of application, potential impacts on

Built Environment

This section discusses the physical assets of the Municipality, and the Villages. Some barriers and achievements are representative of larger barriers in the community that extend beyond Municipal and Village assets alone.

3.5.1. The Commitment

The Municipality and the Villages commit to upgrading and building new and existing buildings, streets, sidewalks and shared spaces that they own and/or operate, to provide meaningful access for everyone.

Supporting Elements:

- Public infrastructure and parking spaces
- Public buildings and washrooms
- By-laws and funding policies
- Open spaces, parks and playgrounds

3.5.2. The Starting Point: Built Environment

3.5.2.1. Overview

The built environment includes physical infrastructure owned and operated by the Municipality and the Villages. There are a series of Municipal and Village by-laws and policies that regulate the built environment, which are updated regularly with new provincial legislation.

Public assets within the Municipality, the Villages (and the KTA) varies depending on location. Some of the built environment infrastructure (not including recreation), as referenced in Appendix C of the Request for Proposals 21-11 document, includes:

- The Municipality of the County of Kings has a series of public assets, including 26.83 kilometres of roads, 18.16 kilometres of sidewalks, 93 intersections, 51 access roads/trails, and 63 public buildings
- The Village of Canning has seven buildings, 2.2 kilometres of trails, one parking lot, and more than 2,000 metres of sidewalk
- The Village of Greenwood has one building, 7 kilometres of trails, 10 kilometres of sidewalks, and leases one parking lot and one pedestrian bridge
- The Village of Kingston has eight public buildings, three parking lots, 5.8 kilometres of trails, and 9.67 kilometres of sidewalks
- The Village of New Minas has more than 15,000 metres of sidewalk, 17 public buildings, three outdoor washrooms, six parking lots and three pathways or trails
- The Village of Port Williams has 11 public buildings, two pathways, three outdoor washrooms, five parking lots, and more than 4,000 metres of sidewalk.
- The Village of Cornwallis Square has 13km of sidewalk, 4 bus shelters (with included civic numbers), the Waterville Fire Department, the Waterville and District Fire Department Station 2 in Woodville, a Satellite Station, Water Supply Building and War Memorial Cenotaph
- The Village of Aylesford has 3.7 kms of sidewalk, Aylesford Village Office and Fire Department

The KTA is responsible for its facility in New Minas, 12 public transit buses and approximately 250 bus stops.

An example of varied parking signage and markings, from the Woodville Community Centre (not an asset of the Village of Cornwallis Square)

3.5.2.2. Achievements

- Some parks, pathways and playgrounds are well maintained and were made with wheelchair-compatible materials
- New and maintained roadways and crosswalks with appropriate curb cuts
- Most public buildings and infrastructure are updated and maintained including appropriate entrances, ramps and technologies

3.5.2.3. Barriers

- Many park pathways are made of loose gravel and lack railings in areas with steep grades
- Bridge crossings are in disrepair and often lack necessary safety features like guardrails, tactical warnings, ramps/ curb cuts and walkways that are wide enough for multiple users
- An inadequate number of appropriately labeled accessible parking stalls on public properties to go above building code standards
- Parking lots do not delineate crossing spaces for pedestrians and mobility device users
- Lack of sidewalks and crosswalks along busy streets
- Unmaintained sidewalks and crosswalks (potholes, cracked pavement, etc.)
- Sidewalks lack accessible infrastructure including being wide enough, appropriate lighting, tactical coverings, railing and curb cuts
- Crosswalks lack accessibility features including tactile coverings, audio cues and ample street crossing time for those with mobility issues
- Private residences typically need to be heavily renovated to accommodate wheelchair users who want to be independent
- Private and public buildings with inaccessible entryways (rotating doors, narrow entrances, no ramps or open door buttons)
- Inaccessible Community Halls
- Furniture orientation and height that often is not compatible with mobility devices
- Some existing buildings do not meet the most recent building code requirements for accessibility due to no mandated updates unless triggered by a renovation
- Building code requirements and enforcement differ between the municipalities within the region, which can impact affordability

Harvest Moon Trail Bollards

3.5.3. Policies

The Municipality and the Villages each will:

- Conduct a review of spaces owned and leased by the Municipality and the Villages and ensure that all facilities meet or exceed the accessibility requirements of the Nova Scotia Building Code Regulations- An action plan will be developed for any spaces that do not meet the code or regulations
- Ensure the provision of accessible parking locations, signage and associated curb cuts at all Municipal and Village owned or leased spaces
- Ensure when the provision of crosswalks and curb cuts in areas with regular pedestrian activity, such as spaces near schools and parks
- Educate private developers and business owners on the benefit of having their facilities meet the Accessibility requirements of the Nova Scotia Building Code Regulations even if not legally required to do so (at this time)

3.5.4. Indicators

The Municipality and the Villages will monitor the following items related to the Built Environment on properties they own:

- Number of parking spaces that meet Nova Scotia Building Code Regulations standards
- Number of properties with proper wayfinding and meaningful access
- Distance of accessible sidewalk
- Number of Municipal and Village buildings with washroom facilities that meet Nova Scotia Building Code Regulations standards

For more information on specific aspects of Built Environment please see the project's site plan assessment in Appendix B, and public feedback in Appendix D.

Accessible sidewalk in the Village of Canning

3.6. Awareness

This section discusses the training, and information sharing throughout the Municipality, and the Villages to build knowledge of accessibility. Many awareness barriers are systemic and extend beyond assets, to the lived experiences of those with disabilities.

3.6.1. The Commitment

Municipal and Village staff, the Council and Commission elected officials are mindful of the barriers to meaningful access and actively promote awareness about the importance of accessibility.

Supporting Elements:

- Staff, Village Commissions, Council, and Kings Transit Authority awareness
- Community awareness
- Business awareness

3.6.2. The Starting Point: Awareness

3.6.2.1. Overview

The Municipality and the Villages report a growing understanding of inequalities as well as increased emphasis on diversity and inclusion. In November 2012, the development of an Action Plan for Ending Racism and Discrimination in the Municipality included strategic focus areas and actions. These approaches aimed "to create a safe and welcoming community that meets the social, cultural and economic needs of all residents regardless of age, ability, race, ethnicity, religion, gender, language, sexual orientation or socio-economic status." The Municipality has a Diversity Specialist within the Community Development department to enact actions proposed in this action plan.

There is still much work to be done with accessibility awareness, as the second most referenced barrier to the built environment was personal attitudes. This observation was repeated throughout interviews, survey results and pop-up engagement events alike.

3.6.2.2. Achievements

- Increased awareness of what the universal design principles are
- Accessibility upgrades are becoming more prevalent in public areas

3.6.2.3. Barriers

- Limited partnerships and access to information on goods and services between people with disabilities, supporting organizations the Municipality and the Villages
- Lack of awareness within the community on different types of disabilities (visible and invisible)
- Lack of support and training within the community and among the Municipal and Village staff in how to accommodate various needs including mental health supports
- Lack of resources for seniors to access information, connect with financial and government services and inability to arrange transportation

3.6.3. Policies

The Municipality and the Villages will each:

- Train front-line staff in communicating with people of all ages and abilities, providing information in an accessible format
- Better inform residents with education, training and awareness programs around the Accessibility Act, barriers to accessibility and what accessibility looks like through the work of the JAAC

3.6.4. Indicators

The Municipality and the Villages will each monitor the following items related to Awareness:

- Number of workshops provided to improve the knowledge about accessibility
- Number of partners with a public comment or complaint portal
- Number of Municipal and Village staff who have taken accessibility workshops

For more information on specific aspects of Awareness please see the project's site plan assessment in Appendix B, and public feedback in Appendix D.

3.7. Recreation

This section discusses the physical and programmatic aspects of recreation in the Municipality and the Villages, including parks, playgrounds, trails, and programming.

3.7.1. The Commitment

The Municipality and the Villages work to ensure there are many recreational activity and facility options accessible to people of all abilities.

Supporting Elements:

- Recreation facilities
- Parks, playgrounds and open space
- Recreational programming
- Public events
- Public trails and walkways

3.7.2. The Starting Point: Recreation

3.7.2.1. Overview

The number of recreation facilities varies across the Municipality and the Villages. When it comes to the number of indoor and outdoor recreation facilities, partnering governments are responsible for the following:

- Municipality of the County of Kings: 54 outdoor recreational spaces with at least one building at Aylesford Lake Beach
- Village of Canning: Three recreational spaces (gazebo, park, and playground)
- Village of Greenwood: Six outdoor recreational spaces
- Village of Kingston: 13 recreational spaces
- Village of New Minas: Three recreational buildings, 29 outdoor recreation spaces, and 54 pieces of supporting recreational furniture
- Village of Port Williams: 13 outdoor recreational spaces
- Village of Cornwallis Square: does not own any recreational areas or trails. However, over 7km of the Harvest Moon Trail runs through the Village boundaries, in addition to recreational programs and facilities run by their respective communities (Cambridge, Waterville, Grafton and Woodville)
- The Village of Aylesford: Aylesford Park and Picnic Area, 2 baseball diamonds and a trail

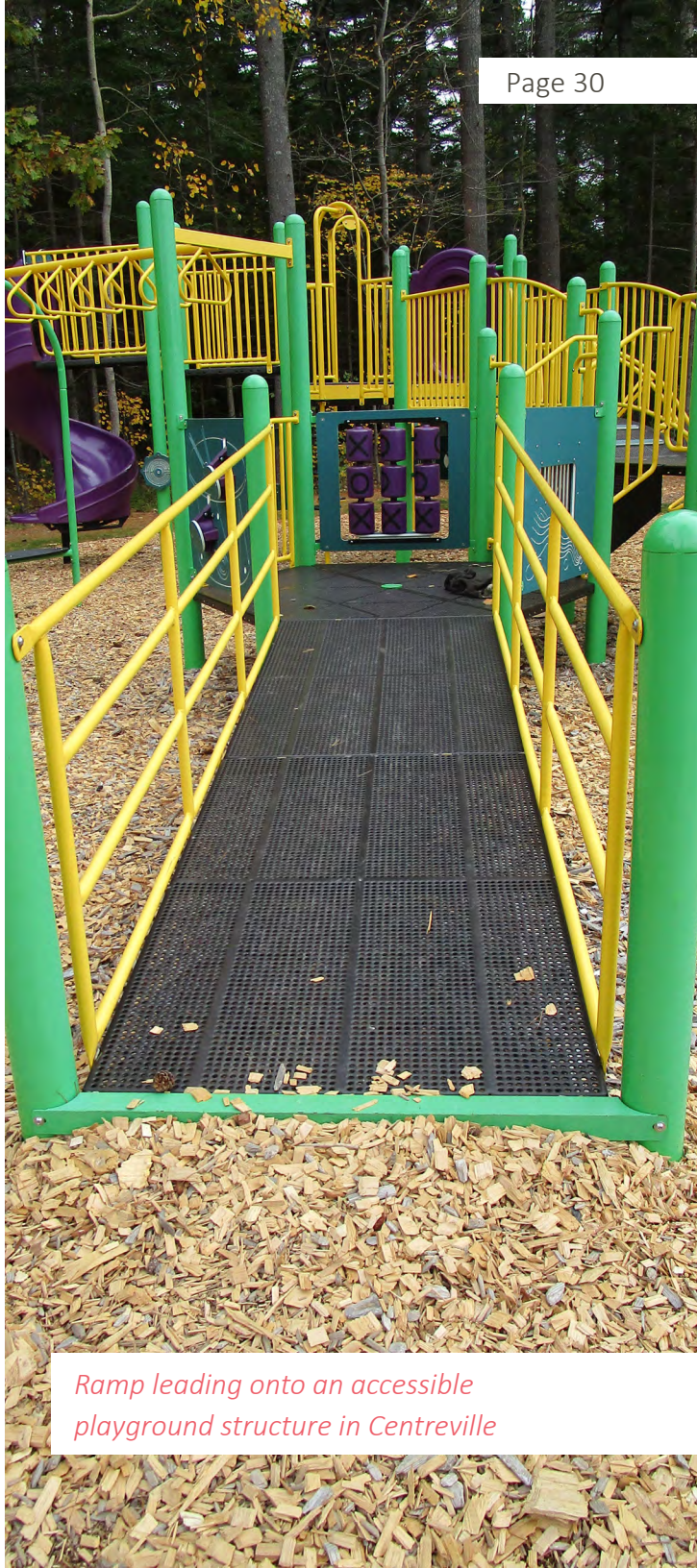
Most playgrounds are on land owned by the Municipality and leased by a Village, non-governmental or community group who own the playground equipment.

3.7.2.2. Achievements

- Some parks and some trails are easily traversable
- Some accessible playgrounds and an accessible spray park with a level entrance
- Recreation facilities have accessible parking and entrances with some accessible facilities inside
- Some programming specifically targeted to persons with disabilities is available (wheelchair tennis and basketball)
- The 2021 Active Transportation Master Plan identifies an increased number of access points to the Harvest Moon Trail as an overall network improvement area priority

3.7.2.3. Barriers

- Most playgrounds are inaccessible to persons with disabilities due to curb perimeters, incompatible surfaces and



Ramp leading onto an accessible playground structure in Centreville

distance to other park elements (parking, washrooms, and benches, etc.)

- Lack of public playgrounds that can accommodate adults with disabilities for family playground usage
- Not all internal facilities in recreation centres are accessible, such as washrooms or doorways
- There is a limited amount of affordable accessible programming
- While not operated by the Municipality or the Villages, many large events such as the Apple Blossom or Gala Days are too far away for residents who rely on transit

3.7.3. Policies

The Municipality and the Villages will each:

- Work toward ensuring adequate recreation programming for all ages and abilities
- Work towards ensuring all recreation owned, leased and managed facilities are accessible to all ages and abilities
- Include American Sign Language [ASL] support to ensure all people have equal access to recreation programs

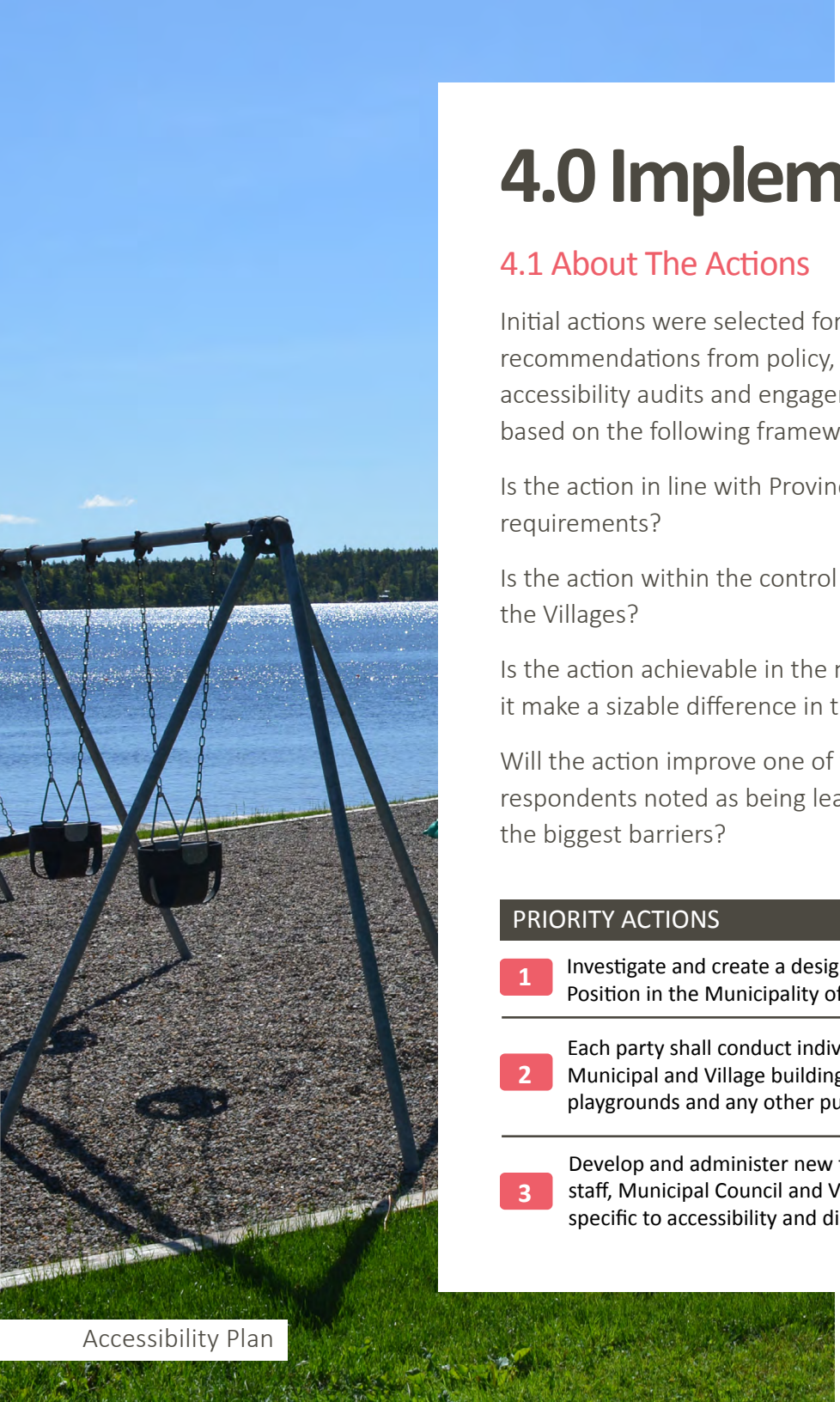
3.7.4. Indicators

The Municipality and the Villages will each monitor the following items related to Recreation:

- Number of playgrounds that meet accessibility standards
- Kilometres of Harvest Moon Trail that are accessible to all
- Number of fully accessible programs per year

For more information on specific aspects of Recreation please see the project's site plan assessment in Appendix B, and public feedback in Appendix D.

This playground in New Minas shows the current state of many of the playgrounds in Kings County. With a wooden curb and pea gravel, the playground is not accessible. There is also no accessible playground equipment.



4.0 Implementing the Plan

4.1 About The Actions

Initial actions were selected for this plan using recommendations from policy, case studies, accessibility audits and engagement. These actions are based on the following framework:

Is the action in line with Provincial policies and requirements?

Is the action within the control of the Municipality or the Villages?

Is the action achievable in the next three years, or will it make a sizable difference in the future?

Will the action improve one of the areas survey respondents noted as being least accessible, or one of the biggest barriers?

4.2 Actions

Using the framework above, 17 key actions were identified for the first three years of implementation for the Municipality, the Villages and the KTA. Of these 17 areas, three key actions were highlighted as priority actions due to support from the JAAC and Municipal and Village staff. They are seen as the most urgent actions, requiring work to begin in 2022.

The remaining short-term actions are identified below. The remainder of these actions have been organized in chronological order, based on the expected dates of completion.

These actions are described in detail, with actionable key steps in Appendix A.

PRIORITY ACTIONS	2022	2023	2024
1 Investigate and create a designated Accessibility Coordinator Position in the Municipality of County of Kings.			
2 Each party shall conduct individual accessibility audits of Municipal and Village buildings, parks, pathways, beaches, playgrounds and any other public area.			
3 Develop and administer new training offerings for staff, Municipal Council and Village Commissions specific to accessibility and disability issues.			

OTHER SHORT TERM ACTIONS	2022	2023	2024
4 Review maintenance procedures in places with sidewalks and bus shelters.			
5 Complete a review of communications policies, procedures and practices to remove barriers. Include accessible design in strategies and brand guidelines.			
6 Review and modify hiring, funding evaluation,and procurement policies and procedures to prioritize accessibility and equitable opportunities for persons with disabilities.			
7 Review provincial customer service policy and further adopt an Accessible Customer Service Policy for the Municipality and the Villages.			
8 Deliver public-facing accessibility workshops in partnership with private entities committed to employment and awareness building.			
9 Each party shall, within their jurisdiction, review all transit stops, signage and pedestrian access elements to determine roles and responsibilities.			
10 Update Council and Village Commission procedures and engagement policies to provide accessible resources.			
11 Each party reviews current recreational programming and funding to programming to identify and propose accessible recreational programming options.			
12 Create a plan to help non-profits (particularly those responsible for playgrounds and public spaces, such as community halls) reach the agreed-upon plan goals.			
13 Review and amend all by-laws to include accessibility.			
14 Each party creates a priority upgrade matrix for Municipal and Village projects.			
15 Update existing websites to be accessible.			
16 Create an online and physical accessibility information resource to help people with disabilities access information for the Municipality and the Villages.			
17 Each party shall standardize their signage to include Braille and design elements for those with invisible or cognitive disabilities.			

4.2 Monitoring and Evaluation

4.2.1 Indicator Tracking

Indicators are used to track accessibility performance over time. While measures of success record the completion status of what is being done, indicators identify if the actions being completed are making the Municipality and the Villages more accessible overall. Indicators are a way of telling the story of how accessibility areas may be improving or worsening as a result of the actions being pursued.

These indicators will be gathered as part of the JAAC work and monitored by the Accessibility Coordinator on a quarterly basis, as actions begin to be carried out. Targets can be set once the Municipality and the Villages are aware of an indicator's current status.

Recognizing that resources might be limited for indicator tracking, this report recommends that the Accessibility Coordinator create a framework to track indicators. If there is a need to further prioritize and refine indicators, this report recommends tracking the following indicators at minimum:

- Percentage of committee meetings or council meetings that are recorded with closed captioning online, and which have screen-reader-compatible documents
- Percentage of fully accessible bus stops (including surrounding pathway access)
- Percentage of crosswalks that have curb cuts, and tactile surfaces
- Percentage of staff who have taken an accessibility workshop or training course
- Number of fully accessible public facilities, to comply with the government of Nova Scotia's Building Code and Regulations

4.2.2 Monitoring

The status of the Accessibility Plan's actions and indicators will be evaluated using a report card structure. These reviews will be completed on a quarterly basis, by the conclusion of each fiscal year. Indicator numbers and action completion status will be reported in a clear and consistent manner.

4.2.3 Schedule and Evaluation

Short-term actions recorded in section 4.2 above are to be completed between 2022 and 2024. Future actions planning will include a process to revisit community priorities and the assessment suggestions found in Appendices B and D. Additional community considerations and provincial legislative changes will be taken into account during the next evaluation period.

In 2025, the Municipality and the Villages will conduct a comprehensive review and update to this plan and its proposed actions. This review will identify another series of actions to be executed between 2025 and 2027, based on the factors listed above.

4.3 Responding to Questions and Complaints

Accessibility needs in the Municipality and the Villages are continuously changing and evolving. To ensure the parties continue to address and improve accessibility barriers in the long term, the Municipality's Accessibility Coordinator will respond to any public questions or complaints around accessibility and ensure that the correct owner of the built environment responds. Suggestions for principles and processes to guide these responses are outlined below.

Any accessibility issues or complaints will be forwarded to the Joint Accessibility Coordinator at the Municipality. The Accessibility Coordinator will respond to the question or complaint in a timely and respectful manner, but acknowledges that assets are not all under the jurisdiction of th Municipality. Depending on the needs of the individual, the question or complaint will be answered in one of the following ways:

The Accessibility Coordinator will answer or forward any questions to the appropriate staff member(s) responsible for the Municipal or Village service in question. If staff member requires assistance in obtaining an answer, the JAAC will be utilized as a resource at the earliest possible meeting.

Complaints about physical infrastructure as mandated by the *Act* will be assessed by the Accessibility Coordinator and other departments as necessary.

Complaints that can be addressed operationally will be forwarded to the responsible department. Complaints that require new capital spending will be filtered through the priority upgrade matrix in Action 14.

If a complaint about Municipal or Village staff, goods and services, information, communication or any other category unrelated to the built environment is received, the Accessibility Coordinator will evaluate if actions are already being addressed in an ongoing action. Complaints not addressed in an ongoing action will be brought forward to the JAAC for discussion for suggestions on reaching a potential resolution. Solutions may be proposed immediately, or may be suggested in the updated action plan in 2025.

Anyone can ask to be heard at a meeting of the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee or Council if they are not satisfied with the response received by the Accessibility Coordinator.

Appendices

Appendix A: Action Details

Detailed information about actions to be undertaken between 2022 and 2025.

Click here to read Appendix A.

Appendix B: Site Assessment Report

A report documenting the accessibility status as documented in the site assessment.

Click here to read Appendix B.

Appendix C: Stakeholder List

A list of stakeholders that were communicated with, and that should be considered in future action outreach and planning.

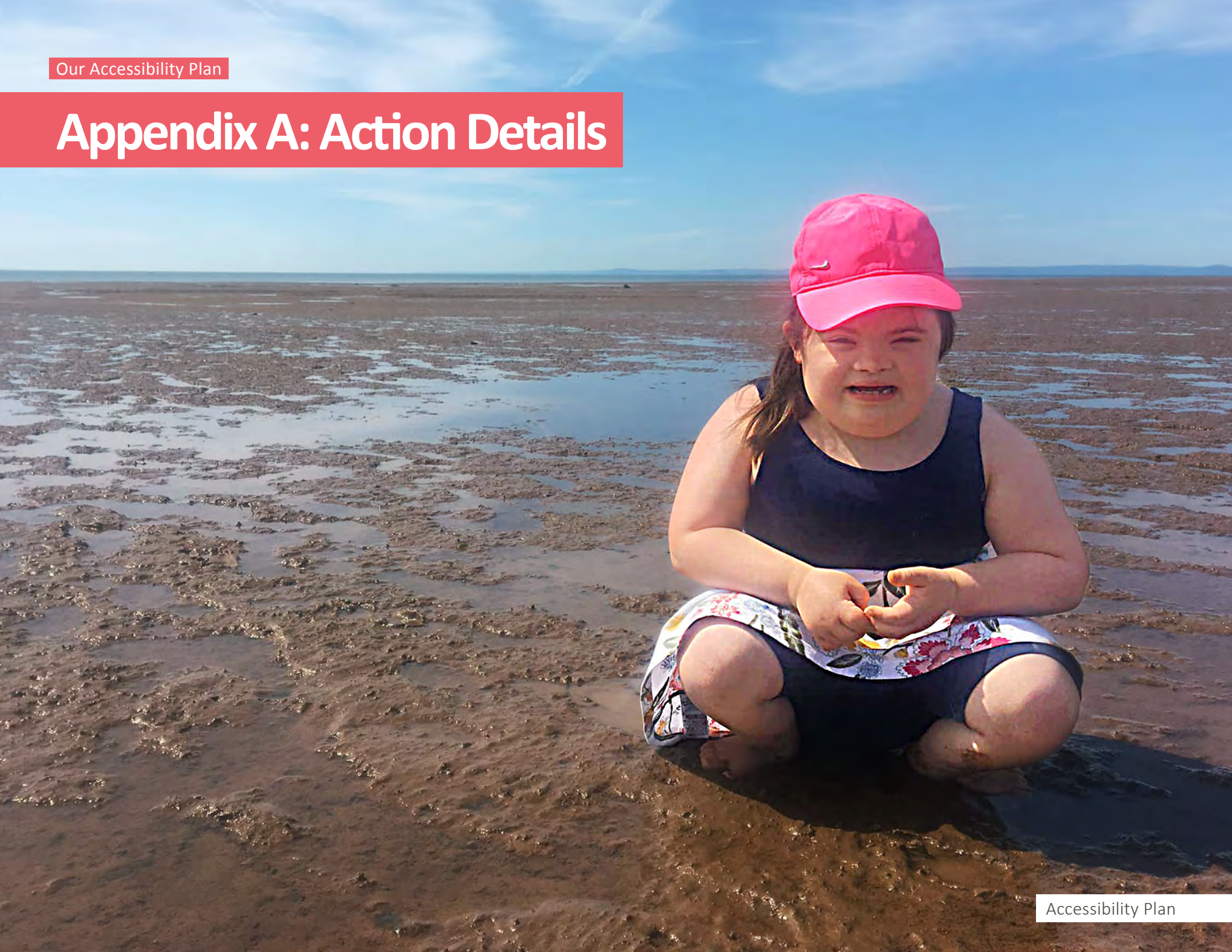
Click here to read Appendix C.

Appendix D: Internal Research and Engagement Report

An overview of what was done for public engagement and research.

Click here to read Appendix D.

Appendix A: Action Details



Action 1

Investigate and create a designated Accessibility Coordinator Position.

To complete an assessment of the accessibility coordinator position and determine whether there is a need to promote a full or part-time position designated to making the Municipality and Villages accessible. This position has potential to continue with the needs of the plan and to implement change as the parties continue toward the 2030 accessibility initiative and beyond.

Why this action matters

Accessibility and inclusive communities are important now and in the future to ensure the Municipality and the Villages remain welcoming for all. An Accessibility Coordinator would continue to implement the plan and ensure that accessibility barriers are removed.

This position will greatly impact the communities and public the Municipality & Villages serve.

Plan goals supported with this action

- Built Environment
- Information & Communications
- Awareness
- Goods & Services
- Transportation
- Employment
- Recreation

Key steps in the process & timeline

- Create a job description for the Accessibility Coordinator's Role
- Include funding for a dedicated Accessibility Coordinator in the Municipal and Village budgets

- Coordinate hiring with the JAAC and Municipal partners.

Estimated resources required

Staff resourcing: 1 staff member, part-time effort.

Additional funding: $25,001-$75,000

Departmental Responsibilities

Lead department: Land Use Planning and Inspections

Contributing departments: Administration/Council & Finance

Government Roles

Role of The Municipality:

- Leader/Owner: The Municipality embodies the accessibility goals through their internal policies and actions
- Provider: The Municipality directly delivers programs, services and facilities
- Broker: The Municipality acts as a facilitator and connector to bring together organizations and individuals
- Supporter: The Municipality assists and builds capacity for other organizations
- Storyteller: The Municipality shares stories that build an inclusive narrative

Potential Community Partners

- Stakeholders identified in Appendix C

Measure of success

- The Accessibility Plan has been completed, and implementation on actions for the first three years have been coordinated
- If enough evidence is available to support a full or part-time position, a presentation will be provided to Council
- Council approval
- Accessibility coordinator hired, or another department appointed Accessibility Coordinator duties

Other Notes

- Further investigation and consideration should be given for someone in this position being hired with a disability
- Consider hiring a person with American Sign Language [ASL] training for this position so they can help facilitate requirements

Action 2

Individual accessibility audits of Village & Municipal buildings, parks, pathways, beaches, playgrounds and public areas.

Each party shall conduct individual accessibility audits of Municipal and Village buildings, parks, pathways, beaches, playgrounds and any other public area. There are multiple responsible parties in Kings County and individual audits will clarify what can be impacted by local governments.

Why this action matters

To improve on the accessibility areas identified in this plan, the Municipality and the Villages need to understand the status of each individual asset to understand where they need to go.

Once individual assessments are completed, then individual facility plans and budgets can be implemented.

Plan goals supported with this action

- Built Environment
- Goods & Services
- Employment
- Recreation

Key steps in the process & timeline

- Identify a list of the individual properties and assets owned by the Municipality and the Villages
- Use the Priority upgrade matrix (see Action 9) to identify the updates that need to be prioritized first

- Once evaluated, identify a budget and implementation plan for the Municipality and the Villages

Estimated resources required

Staff resourcing: Multiple staff members, full-time effort

Additional funding: $75,000 + (for capital implementation after audits)

Department Responsibilities

Lead department: Engineering and public works

Contributing departments: Building Inspections, Recreation, finance, lands and parks

Government Roles

Role of The Municipality:

- Leader/Owner: The Municipality embodies the accessibility goals through their internal policies and actions

Role of The Villages:

- Leader/Owner: The Villages embody the accessibility goals through their internal policies and actions

Role of The KTA:

- Leader/Owner: The KTA embodies the accessibility goals through their internal policies and actions
- Broker: The KTA acts as a facilitator and connector to bring together organizations and individuals

Measure of success

- Individual assessments have been completed on all publicly owned buildings

Other Notes

- Individual inspections will take a lot of time as the Municipality of the County of Kings has over 50 parkland parcels alone
- Future upgrades include most facilities mentioned in the built environment and recreation sections, including: sidewalks, pathways, playgrounds, government building entrances, washrooms, and Council chambers

Action 3

Develop and administer new training offerings for staff, Commissions, & Council on accessibility & disability.

Develop and administer new training offerings for staff, Municipal Council and Village Commissions specific to accessibility and disability issues.

Why this action matters

To ensure the best experience for residents and tax payers of all abilities through all Municipal, Village and transit programming.

Plan goals supported with this action

- Built Environment
- Information & Communications
- Awareness
- Goods & Services
- Transportation
- Employment
- Recreation

Key steps in the process & timeline

The Accessibility Coordinator, with consultation with the Municipality's Diversity Specialist, will consider the specific needs for the accessibility training, including:

- Will it be blanket training for all staff or specific to certain roles and/or departments?
- What type of training should be prioritized?
- How much budget is required for

each type of training?

Once these specifics have been determined, the Accessibility Coordinator will proceed to:

- Establish a timeline for all staff training modules to be completed
- Establish and approve the required budget for training
- Based on above, identify if training will be facilitated by an internal or an external instructor
- Hire the trainer or prepare training module (by end of 2022)
- All staff to complete by mid 2023 (as budget allows)
- Establish baseline for ongoing training beyond 2024

Estimated resources required

Staff resourcing:

- Internal training: 1 staff member, time to research and prepare training, present to groups, part-time effort
- External training: 1 staff member to book trainer and schedule staff for workshops, part-time effort

Additional funding: $0- $25,000

Departmental Responsibilities

Lead: Accessibility Coordinator and the JAAC

Contributing Departments: Administration - Human Resources; Finance; Community Development (Diversity Specialist); Each department will contribute by sending staff members to training

Government Roles

Role of The Municipality:

- Leader/owner: The Municipality embodies the accessibility goals through their internal policies and actions
- Internal training: Provider: The Municipality directly delivers programs, services and facilities
- External training: Broker: The Municipality acts as a facilitator and connector to bring together organizations and individuals- finds trainer and shares the information

Role of The Villages:

- Leader/owner: The Villages embody the accessibility goals through their internal policies and actions- commitment to ongoing education for all staff

Role of The KTA:

- Leader/owner: KTA embodies the accessibility goals through their internal policies and actions- commitment to ongoing education for all staff

Potential Community Partners

- Accessibility Services Canada
- Provincial Government
- Educational partners listed in Appendix C

Measure of success

- 100% of staff complete accessibility training module

Other Notes

- This action will also influence and be influenced by Action 7, as new accessible customer service policies come from the province in spring 2022

Action 4

Review maintenance procedures for sidewalks and bus shelters.

Review maintenance procedures in places with sidewalks and bus shelters (owned by one of the eight parties). This includes reviewing snow maintenance contracts to ensure that accessibility considerations are implemented by:

- Ensuring sidewalks are cleared, particularly in commercial and recreational areas, to ensure those using scooters, canes, or other mobility devices able to access essential and Municipal goods and services.
- Ensuring commonly used multi-use trails are cleared for access
- Ensuring that bus shelters remain accessible throughout the winter months

Why this action matters

Able bodied and non-able bodied persons need to be able to access essential, Municipal and Village owned goods and services at all times of year.

Plan goals supported with this action

- Built Environment
- Goods & Services
- Transportation
- Recreation

Key steps in the process & timeline

- Evaluate the sidewalk policy for response times
- Communicate the Accessibility Plan requirements with the awarded contractors

- Consult with the Active Transportation Master Plan and Transportation Department about the deployment of a winter maintenance strategy and identify a budget
- Adjust the Winter Maintenance Contract and budget if changes to scope are discovered

Estimated resources required

Staff resourcing:

- Multiple staff members, part-time effort.
- Contractors, part-time effort

Additional funding: $25,001-$75,000

Departmental Responsibilities

Lead department: Engineering and Public Works

Contributing departments: Lands and Parks, Finance, Administration, Transportation

Government Roles

Role of The Municipality:

- Leader/Owner: The Municipality embodies the accessibility goals through their internal policies and actions

Role of The Villages:

- Leader/Owner: The Villages embody the accessibility goals through their internal policies and actions

Potential Community Partners

- ATCOM Outdoor Advertising Inc., a local sign company specializing in transit shelters and signs
- Kings Transit Authority
- Service providing contractors

Measure of success

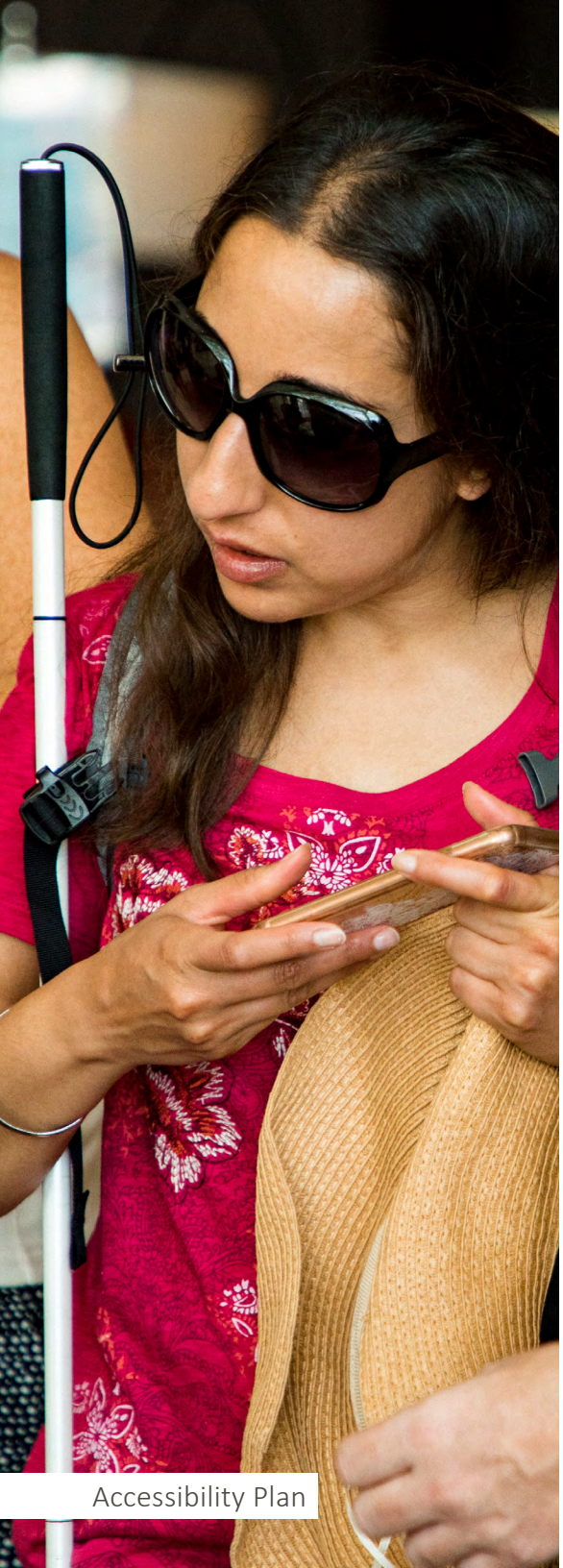
- Increased amount of snow cleared, and easy to access sidewalk and trail space

Additional Notes

The Municipality of the County of Kings' snow contracts are for 3-year terms and are due for renewal next year. The Municipality currently mirrors the Provincial policy for snow clearing, with updated times for sidewalks that lead to schools.

The KTA will need to involve ATCOM as they only own one shelter in New Minas, the rest of the shelters are ATCOM, and as their signs are basically on the shoulder of the road way otherwise and plan for safe shelters for those locations.

Establish a winter maintenance strategy is also an action also proposed in the Active Transportation Master Plan, which considers accessibility as one of its components. Those pursuing this action should also look to this plan.



Action 5

Review communications policies, procedures and practices to remove barriers and include accessible design.

Complete a review of communications policies, procedures and practices to remove barriers and include accessible design in strategies & guidelines.

This action aims to improve barriers making Municipal, Village, and KTA communications materials and events inaccessible. It will establish accessible communications guidelines based on proven best practices to eliminate barriers limiting access to information and events.

This action will update policies, procedures and practices to provide staff with a framework promoting the consistent use of inclusive and accessible communications strategies. It will also rework brand guidelines that do not meet accessibility standards.

Why this action matters

The Municipality and Villages values diversity, respect and transparency, and strives to be a "community of communities where all people belong."

The above actions would eliminate communications barriers impacting citizens of the Municipality and Villages, and foster a greater sense of inclusion.

Plan goals supported with this action

- Information & Communications

Key steps in the process & timeline

- Compile a list of action items that will address barriers impeding the accessibility of Municipal, Village, and KTA information
- Research, draft and propose accessible communications standards and guidelines
- Consult with villages to explore partnership opportunities
- Update all policies, procedures and practices once standards are approved
- Partner with organizations who promote ASL use
- This work could all be undertaken by the Communications Specialist in 2022

Estimated resources required

Staff resourcing: 1 staff member, part-time effort.

Additional funding: None

Department Responsibilities

Lead department: Communications Specialist

Contributing Departments: Support from Administration and Information Technology

Government Roles

Role of The Municipality:

- Leader/Owner: The Municipality embodies the accessibility goals through their internal policies and actions

Role of The Villages:

- Leader/Owner: The Villages embody the accessibility goals through their internal policies and actions

Role of The KTA:

- Leader/Owner: The KTA embodies the accessibility goals through their internal policies and actions

Measure of success

- Accessible communications standards adopted
- Related policies, procedures and practices updated to remove barriers
- Increased number of tools available to individuals with a range of communications needs
- Increased number of individuals reporting that they feel Municipal, Village, and KTA communications materials and forums are more accessible

Additional Notes

The Municipality of the County of Kings, and the Kings Transit Authority are currently planning to revisit and develop revised communications plans and branding guidelines. The inclusion of accessibility into these documents can be built into a part of these processes can be seamlessly integrated if made a priority before the completion of these documents.

Action 6

Review hiring, funding evaluation, and procurement policies and procedures to prioritize accessibility.

Review and modify hiring, funding evaluation, and procurement policies and procedures to prioritize accessibility and equitable opportunities for persons with disabilities. Ensure the process grants meaningful access, and is inclusive to all persons with disabilities.

Why this action matters

Updating practices ensures that governing bodies are providing meaningful access to persons of all abilities for employment. The execution of this action demonstrates that the Municipality, Villages and our partners value all people and taxpayers within our community, and that employment opportunities are available to all abilities.

Plan goals supported with this action

- Goods & Services
- Employment

Key steps in the process & timeline

- Identify and review current hiring practices, funding evaluation, and procurement policies and procedures
- Establish minimum, moderate and high level criteria for funding
- Propose changes and present to approving body
- Implement changes to evaluation procedures

- Communicate approved changes publicly and to applicants
- Assign future evaluation dates

Estimated resources required

Staff resourcing: 1 staff member, part-time effort

Additional funding: None

Department Responsibilities

Lead Department: Human Resources

Contributing Departments: Administration, Finance

Government Roles

Role of The Municipality:

- Leader/Owner: The Municipality embodies the accessibility goals through their internal policies and actions
- Provider: The Municipality directly delivers programs, services and facilities

Role of The Villages:

- Leader/Owner: The Villages embody the accessibility goals through their internal policies and actions
- Provider: The Villages directly deliver programs, services and facilities

Role of The KTA:

- Leader/Owner: The KTA embodies the accessibility goals through their internal policies and actions
- Provider: The KTA directly delivers programs, services and facilities

Potential Community Partners

- Accessibility employment agencies

Measure of success

- Hiring and procurement practices updated
- Removal of government-implemented barriers to employment in documentation for persons with disabilities

Action 7

Review provincial customer service policy and adopt an Accessible Customer Service Policy.

Review provincial customer service policy and further adopt an Accessible Customer Service Policy for the Municipality and the Villages.

To evaluate the Provincial Customer Service Policy (2022 release), and compare any current Municipal and Village Customer Service operating policy. Assess and implement customer service policy changes at all levels of responsibility.

Why this action matters

Including accessibility in customer service policies ensures that citizens with disabilities in the Municipality and Villages have access to channels that provide them with the right information on programing, funding and support channels.

Plan goals supported with this action

- Information & Communications
- Goods & Services

Key steps in the process & timeline

- Municipality reviews policy provided by the Provincial and Municipal levels of government by end of year, 2022
- Municipality identifies inaccessible customer service policy areas that do not comply with the provincial customer service policy
- Municipality to consult with the JAAC to identify shortcomings and key insights of current

policies. Have meetings with appropriate staff to assist with policy writing

- Municipality to develop accessible policies that consolidate findings identified through the process
- Request for Council approval by year end of 2024
- Municipality to draft template for Accessible Customer Service Policy for Villages to reference and modify for their own geographies. This policy can be referenced to the KTA for information sharing
- Villages to review and modify Policy to their local needs
- Villages to seek commission approval by the end of 2024

Estimated resources required

Staff resourcing: 2 Part-time staff members

Additional funding: None

Departmental Responsibilities

Lead Department: Administration- Human Resources

Contributing departments: Recreation; Finance; Land Use Planning and Inspections

Government Roles

Role of the Municipality:

- Provider: The Municipality directly delivers programs, services and facilities
- Broker: The Municipality acts as a facilitator and connector to bring together organizations and individuals
- Supporter: The Municipality assists and builds capacity for other organizations

Role of The Villages:

- Provider: The Villages directly deliver programs, services and facilities

Role of The KTA:

- Provider: The KTA directly delivers programs, services and facilities

Potential Community Partners

- JAAC and it's members
- Community groups who work directly in providing services to persons with disabilities or family/friends who support persons with disabilities (Appendix C)

Measure of success

- Completion of Customer Service Review
- Consultation with staff and external customers
- An informed customer service policy that is implemented throughout the Municipality of the County of Kings and its respective villages

Additional Notes

The policies implemented for this action will affect the accessibility training offered through Action 3.

Action 8

Deliver public-facing accessibility workshops for accessible employment and awareness building.

Deliver public-facing accessibility workshops in partnership with the Villages and private entities committed to employment and awareness building.

Partner with the community to provide workshops to educate the public on accessibility and disabilities. This is an opportunity to educate the public on accessibility in general but also employment needs, built environment needs, a day-in-the-life, and more.

Why this action matters

Delivering public-facing accessibility workshops helps to create awareness of the accessibility needs in the community. By leading these workshops, local governments help to open conversations about accessibility, and provides resources for those who want to learn more on their own disabilities and needs. These workshops would be an opportunity to educate the private sector on making their business more accessible, and further the reach of accessibility implementation in Kings' communities.

Plan goals supported with this action

- Information & Communications
- Awareness

Key steps in the process & timeline

- Consultations with private entities

and the villages on types of workshops they'd be interested in hosting

- Agreement with organization leading the workshop on when, where, and who will present
- Consider locations, frequency of workshops- East, West, Central, each Village
- Provide information sessions for employers about the benefits of hiring someone with a disability

Estimated resources required

Staff resourcing:

- 1 staff member, part-time to get the project started, make connections with private entities, and provide ongoing communication to ensure workshops continue

Additional funding:

- None- cost of workshops could be on public entity
- $0- $25,000- partially funded by the Municipality or the Villages for space rental or perhaps refreshments

Department Responsibilities

Lead department: Communications and/or Accessibility Coordinator

Contributing departments: Finance

Government Roles

Role of The Municipality:

- Broker: The Municipality acts as a facilitator and connector to bring together organizations and individuals

Potential Community Partners

- Flower Cart
- Community Inc
- JAAC
- Additional Stakeholders listed in Appendix C

Measure of success

- Completion of workshops, determined by finding and availability

Action 9

Review transit stops, signage & access to determine roles & responsibilities.

Review all transit stops, signage and pedestrian access elements to determine roles and responsibilities.

Transit stops and shelters are owned and operated by a series of different parties. This action involves identifying the owner or responsible party for all transit stops, wayfinding and pedestrian access to transit stops within the Municipality and Villages. The responsible party for each will complete an individual accessibility evaluation on each of all the above, and determine what changes that need to be made, a timeline for completion, and the associated cost.

Why this action matters

Barrier free access should be available for all residents and visitors of the Municipality and the Villages. By determining who is responsible for fixing these issues and setting a timeline, the responsible party can be held accountable by the other parties to fix the issues.

Plan goals supported with this action

- Built Environment
- Transportation

Key steps in the process & timeline

- Create a list of all transit stops, signs, and shelters that fall within Municipality or Village lines
- Establish the responsible party for each transit stop, and it's respective signage, shelter, and pedestrian access or sidewalk space
- Establish a timeline as a group for when the projects will be complete, to make a commitment

to one another and the communities being served

- Responsible party will have staff/ contractors fix the issues

Estimated resources required

Staff resourcing:

- Multiple staff members: part-time effort.
- Village/KTA staff: part-time effort
- Other (please describe): contractors

Additional funding: None

Department Responsibilities

Lead department: Engineering/Public Works

Contributing departments: None provided

Government Roles

Role of The Municipality:

- Leader/Owner: The Municipality embodies the accessibility goals through their internal policies and actions

Role of The Villages:

- Leader/Owner: The Villages embody the accessibility goals through their internal policies and actions

Potential Community Partners

- Department of Transportation
- Individual bus shelter owners (KTA and external contractor)

Measure of success

- Creation of a timeline for completion
- Percentage of transit stop upgrade completion, reported in an annual check-in to the JAAC

Action 10

Update Committee, Council and Village Commission procedures, policies to provide accessible options.

These accessible resources could include:

- Oral or electronic descriptions or maps of meeting room layouts, emergency exits, and amenities
- Aids for hearing impairment
- ASL interpreter list
- Closed captioning
- Braille print house list and/or screen reader compatible materials
- Offer to make available reports, agendas, slides, or other materials in alternative formats if requested. Check for adjustable lighting in the meeting rooms.

Why this action matters

It is important for all residents to understand there are no barriers to participation and should one exist, there will be clear direction of how to communicate this so it can be addressed.

Plan goals supported with this action

- Information & Communications
- Awareness

Key steps in the process & timeline

- Investigate for existing guidelines.
- Review existing guidelines

- Develop a template that can be easily viewed, used, and understood by all
- Provide draft/red line changes to approving body including a future review date
- Identify budgets for the Municipality and the Villages
- Once approved, provide training to those involved
- Partner with organizations who promote ASL use
- Create communication for the public to be aware of available resources

Estimated resources required

Staff resourcing: 1 staff member, full-time

Additional funding: $0 to $50,000

Department Responsibilities

Lead department: Administration

Potential Lead: Policy Analyst

Contributing departments: Administration

Government Roles

Role of The Municipality:

- Leader/Owner: The Municipality embodies the accessibility goals through their internal policies and actions
- Provider: The Municipality directly delivers programs, services and facilities

Role of The Villages:

- Leader/Owner: The Villages embody the accessibility goals through their internal policies and actions
- Provider: The Villages directly deliver programs, services and facilities

Role of The KTA:

- Leader/Owner: The KTA embodies the accessibility goals through their internal policies and actions
- Provider: The KTA directly delivers programs, services and facilities

Measure of success

- All existing guidelines have been reviewed and assigned a future review date
- If no existing guideline exists; the creation of an approved guideline with a future date for review assigned

Other information

- Guidelines could be in the form of Policy, Standard operating Procedure, By-Law

Action 11

Review current recreational programming to identify and propose accessible options.

Review current recreational programming and funding to programming to identify and propose accessible recreational programming options.

Look at recreation programming being offered in the Municipality and Villages and try to improve options to ensure everyone can participate.

Why this action matters

Recreation is an essential part of life and affects the health and well being of all. It is important that the benefits of recreation are available to everyone in our community regardless of ability.

Plan goals supported with this action

- Recreation

Key steps in the process & timeline

- Provide a workshop to all Municipal Recreation staff on accessibility and what accessible programming looks like
- Review all current programming with an accessibility lens to decide which programs The Municipality and the Villages offer are currently accessible
- Examine why some are not accessible and make recommendations to improve the accessibility in those programs
- Identify recreational programing budgets for the Municipality and the Villages
- Purchase equipment, if possible, to

enhance accessibility of programs

- Create a checklist to guide future programming to ensure accessibility is not an issue

Estimated resources required

Staff resourcing: Current Staff

Additional funding: $0-$25,000

Departmental Responsibilities

Lead department: Recreation Team- Office of the Deputy CAO

Government Roles

Role of The Municipality:

- Leader/Owner: The Municipality embodies the accessibility goals through their internal policies and actions
- Provider: The Municipality directly delivers programs, services and facilities

Role of The Villages:

- Leader/Owner: The Villages embody the accessibility goals through their internal policies and actions
- Provider: The Villages directly deliver programs, services and facilities

Potential Community Partners

- Stakeholders in Appendix C
- All other municipalities in the County (Kentville, Wolfville, etc.)
- Communities, Culture, Tourism, and Heritage for possible funding through grants

Measure of success

- Completed policy and procedures that are utilized across all municipalities in Kings County
- Number of accessible programs offered
- Number of participants in programs having a self-identified disability. Compare each year

Accessibility Plan

Action 12

Create a plan to help non-profits reach the agreed plan goals.

Create a plan to help non-profits (particularly those responsible for playgrounds and public spaces, like community halls) reach the Accessibility Plan's goals to become more accessible in their operations and capital projects.

Why this action matters

Nonprofits and community organizations own the majority of playground equipment on Municipal and Village lands. This plan would help to identify the best way to make these properties accessible.

The plan to help non-profit organizations improve accessibility will empower parties outside of the government context to make our community more accessible overall.

Plan goals supported with this action

- Built Environment
- Goods & Services
- Recreation

Key steps in the process & timeline

- Consult with local non-profits, including groups leasing land for playgrounds, to identify concerns and where the municipalities can assist
- Examine funding sources for nonprofits to assist with meeting accessibility goals, and identify budgets for the Municipality and the Villages
- Look at whether The Municipality of Kings can develop new parameters for current grants to meet the need for non-profits to become more accessible

- Develop a draft plan based on the findings from information gathering listed above
- Have the plan approved by key groups and council if needed
- Promote new opportunities for funding if that is the result of the plan

Estimated resources required

Staff resourcing: Current staff

Additional funding: $75,000 + (Funding could be huge if money is offered to non-profits or none if only providing information on accessing other grants to these agencies).

Departmental Responsibilities

Lead department: Finance

Contributing departments: Recreation and Engineering

Government Roles

Role of The Municipality:

- Leader/Owner: The Municipality embodies the accessibility goals through their internal policies and actions
- Provider: The Municipality directly delivers programs, services and facilities

Role of The Villages:

- Broker: The Villages act as a facilitator and connector to bring together organizations and individuals

Potential Community Partners

- Non-Profit groups, Community Halls, communities that have a lease for playgrounds

Measure of success

- Completion of a plan to assist non-profits become more accessible
- Number of non-profit groups that improve accessibility through their programming or spaces
- Number of applicants for grants if applicable

Accessibility Plan

Action 13

Review and amend all by-laws to include accessibility.

Review and amend all by-laws to include accessibility. An example could include the Vendor by-law. The Municipality and the Village have many By-laws that may need to be rewritten to reflect inclusiveness and the needs of the communities they serve.

Why this action matters

It's important to evaluate the By-laws in order to ensure a more inclusive community and that no one feels left out. An example is the Taxi By-law. Although currently unable to enforce a private company to include an accessible taxi, an amendment to govern this is a way to ensure an accessible taxi is included in a private fleet.

Plan goals supported with this action

- Built Environment
- Transportation

Key steps in the process & timeline

- Review of By-laws by 2022-year end
- Recommended amendments made in the first quarter of 2023
- Identify budgets for the Municipality and the Villages
- Presented before Council by year end of 2023
- Possible extension beyond 2024

Estimated resources required

Staff resourcing:

Multiple staff members, part-time effort

Possible need for legal input

Additional funding: $0-$25,000

Departmental Responsibilities

Lead department: Land use Planning and Inspections. Enforcement Division

Contributing departments: Administration

Government Roles

Role of The Municipality:

- Leader/Owner: The Municipality embodies the accessibility goals through their internal policies and actions
- Provider: Broker: The Municipality acts as a facilitator and connector to bring together organizations and individuals
- Supporter: The Municipality assists and builds capacity for other organizations

Potential Community Partners

Buy-in from the private sector (i.e. Taxi companies)

Measure of success

- Completion of the Bylaw's review
- Inclusion of amendments to By-laws
- Recommendation to Council
- By-laws approved and enacted
- Links to other and FUTURE actions, if applicable
- This includes continued improvements to the land use bylaw, and taxi-bylaw as new legislation is made available in the spring of 2022

Action 14

Create priority upgrade matrix for Municipal and Village projects.

Create priority upgrade matrix for Municipal and Village projects, including capital project spending, physical infrastructure, communications and information, awareness building, and more.

This action can be more simply described as a listing of criteria used to evaluate assets; each criteria is assigned a score. Upon completion of an asset review, its total score is calculated which decides where in a priority list it falls.

Why this action matters

Assets are regularly evaluated for upgrades, it is important accessibility is a factor that is included to ensure meaningful access to all residents.

Plan goals supported with this action

- Built Environment

Key steps in the process & timeline

- Review current upgrade review matrix
- Insert accessibility considerations into matrix formula

Estimated resources required

Staff resourcing: One staff member, part-time

Additional funding: None

Departmental Responsibilities

Lead Department: Planning and development

Contributing Departments: Engineering and Public Works

Government Roles

Role of The Municipality:

- Leader/Owner: The Municipality embodies the accessibility goals through their internal policies and actions

Role of The Villages:

- Leader/Owner: The Villages embody the accessibility goals through their internal policies and actions

Potential Community Partners

None

Measure of success

Updated matrix with Accessibility Considerations

Action 15

Update websites to be accessible.

Review the current website based on proven accessibility standards, and introduce new accessibility tools that address existing communication barriers.

Why this action matters

The website is a primary point of contact for people wanting to learn more about the Municipality/ Village, or access Municipal/Village services. The Municipality and the Villages are here to welcome and serve them all, and want our communications materials to reflect that commitment by eliminating barriers impeding inclusion.

Plan goals supported with this action

- Information & Communications

Key steps in the process & timeline

- Complete website review evaluating website's accessibility
- Identify service gaps impeding accessibility
- Identify website development budgets for the Municipality and the Villages
- Draft a plan for introducing new tools and design changes that will make the website more accessible

Estimated resources required

Staff resourcing: Multiple staff members, part-time effort

Additional funding: $25,001- $75,000

Departmental Responsibilities

Lead department: Communications

Contributing departments: Information Technology

Government Roles

Role of The Municipality:

- Provider: The Municipality directly delivers programs, services and facilities

Role of The Villages:

- Provider: The Villages directly deliver programs, services and facilities

*Only for Villages with websites

Role of The KTA:

- Provider: The KTA directly delivers programs, services and facilities

Measure of success

- Improved accessibility standards and rankings for the Municipal website, the KTA's website, and websites of participating villages

Action 16

Create an online and physical accessibility information resource

Create an online and physical accessibility information resource to help people with disabilities access information in the Municipality, Village, and other partnering organizations' programs and services.

Why this action matters

If citizens with a disability are not aware of the programs and services that are available to them, they will have a difficult time feeling included, informed, and will lack a sense of belonging.

Plan goals supported with this action

- Information & Communications
- Awareness

Key steps in the process & timeline

- Examine what online resources the Municipality and Villages currently has available and develop a list of gaps
- Outreach to stakeholders identified in Appendix C to amalgamate a variety of accessibility resources
- Using this information to develop a convenient web page off that could provide this information and ensure that each municipality has been included and involved in the process
- Identify budgets for the Municipality and the Villages
- Advertise the creation of this new tool

Estimated resources required

Staff resourcing: 1 staff member, part-time effort

Additional funding: $0- $25,000

Departmental Responsibilities

Lead department: Information Technology

Contributing departments: Communications and Recreation

Government Roles

Role of The Municipality:

- Leader/Owner: The Municipality embodies the accessibility goals through their internal policies and actions
- Broker: The Municipality acts as a facilitator and connector to bring together organizations and individuals

Role of The Villages:

- Provider: The Villages directly deliver programs, services and facilities

Potential Community Partners

- Community groups who work directly in providing services to persons with disabilities or family / friends who support persons with disabilities (Appendix C)

Measure of success

- A developed web page that highlights resources and services provided by partnering accessibility organizations
- Village web pages linked to the centralized accessibility page for accessibility resources
- Number of hits on webpage
- Feedback from persons with disabilities on whether the page is meeting their informational needs

Action 17

Standardize Municipal and Village Signs

Standardize Municipal and Village signage to include braille and design elements for those with invisible or cognitive disabilities.

Why this action matters

Clear signage is necessary for Accessibility and safety.

Plan goals supported with this action

- Built Environment
- Information & Communications
- Goods & Services
- Employment
- Recreation

Key steps in the process & timeline

- Create a design that meets 911 needs and accessibility requirements
- Create a plan for priority of what signage gets improved, and standardized first
- Budget for signage upgrades for the Municipality and the Villages
- Signs should include: two tone colours, braille, 911 info, universal symbols, raised numbering, follow CSA standards where applicable, and be visible and readable from a distance

Estimated resources required

Staff resourcing: Multiple staff members, part-time effort

Additional funding: $25,001-$75,000

Departmental Responsibilities

Lead department: Engineering and Public Works

Contributing departments: Communications, Lands and Parks, Development Control, Finance

Government Roles

Role of The Municipality:

- Leader/Owner: The Municipality embodies the accessibility goals through their internal policies and actions
- Broker: The Municipality acts as a facilitator and connector to bring together organizations and individuals

Role of The Villages:

- Leader/Owner: The Villages embody the accessibility goals through their internal policies and actions

Role of The KTA:

- Leader/Owner: The KTA embodies the accessibility goals through their internal policies and actions

Potential Community Partners

- Signage providers

Measure of success

- Number of complaints received on the new signs
- Number of parking, entry, transit, and wayfinding signs installed with two tone colours, braille, 911 info, universal symbols, raised numbering, follow CSA standards where applicable, and be visible and readable from a distance.

Spring 2022

Our Joint Accessibility Plan

The Municipality of the County of Kings, and the Villages of Aylesford, Canning, Cornwallis Square, Greenwood, Kingston, New Minas and Port Williams

Appendix B: Site Assessment Report

ACCESSIBILITY &
UNIVERSAL DESIGN AUDIT
OF

SITE ASSESSMENT ANALYSIS

PREPARED FOR:

THE MUNICIPALITY OF THE COUNTY OF KINGS

level
PLAYING FIELD
an accessibility agency

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

WHAT WE DID

Level Playing Field (LPF) reviewed the current accessibility of the Municipality of the County of Kings and seven villages within. The work began with a desktop exercise to determine what locations to visit and experience in person. We viewed potential locations on Google Street View, reviewed the Municipality transit information and assessed how easy it was to find relevant accessible transportation information on the transit website. We also reviewed Wolfville's, Kentville's , and other accessibility strategies.

The assessment included the Municipality of the County of Kings and seven villages within:

New Minas

Greenwood

Aylesford

Canning

Cornwallis Square

Kingston

Port Williams

WHAT WE DID - CONTINUED

Site visits focused, but were not limited to, the following:

- Site access, including accessible parking spaces and curb cuts to entrances
- Sidewalks
- Walking & Bicycle Trails
- Parks
- Public Transit
- Libraries, Recreation Centres and Community Centres
- Municipal and Village Buildings

Assessments utilized visual inspection, walking, and using a scooter to traverse the various locations.

SITE VISIT LOCATIONS

VILLAGES WITHIN THE MUNICIPALITY

- Aylesford
- Canning
- Greenwood
- Kingston
- New Minas
- Port Williams
- Cornwallis Square

BUILDINGS

- Louis Millet Community Centre
- Kingston Library & Village Office
- Murdoch C. Smith Memorial Library
- Canning Library & Heritage Centre
- Canning Village Office
- Greenwood Village Office
- New Minas Fire Department
- Glooscap Arena

TRANSIT SYSTEM

- General Bus Stops & Shelters
- Kings Transit Authority

KEY SIDEWALKS & PATHWAYS

- Kingston Bridge St. Sidewalk
- New Minas Roundabouts & Sidewalks
- Rail Trail System
- Port Williams Bridge

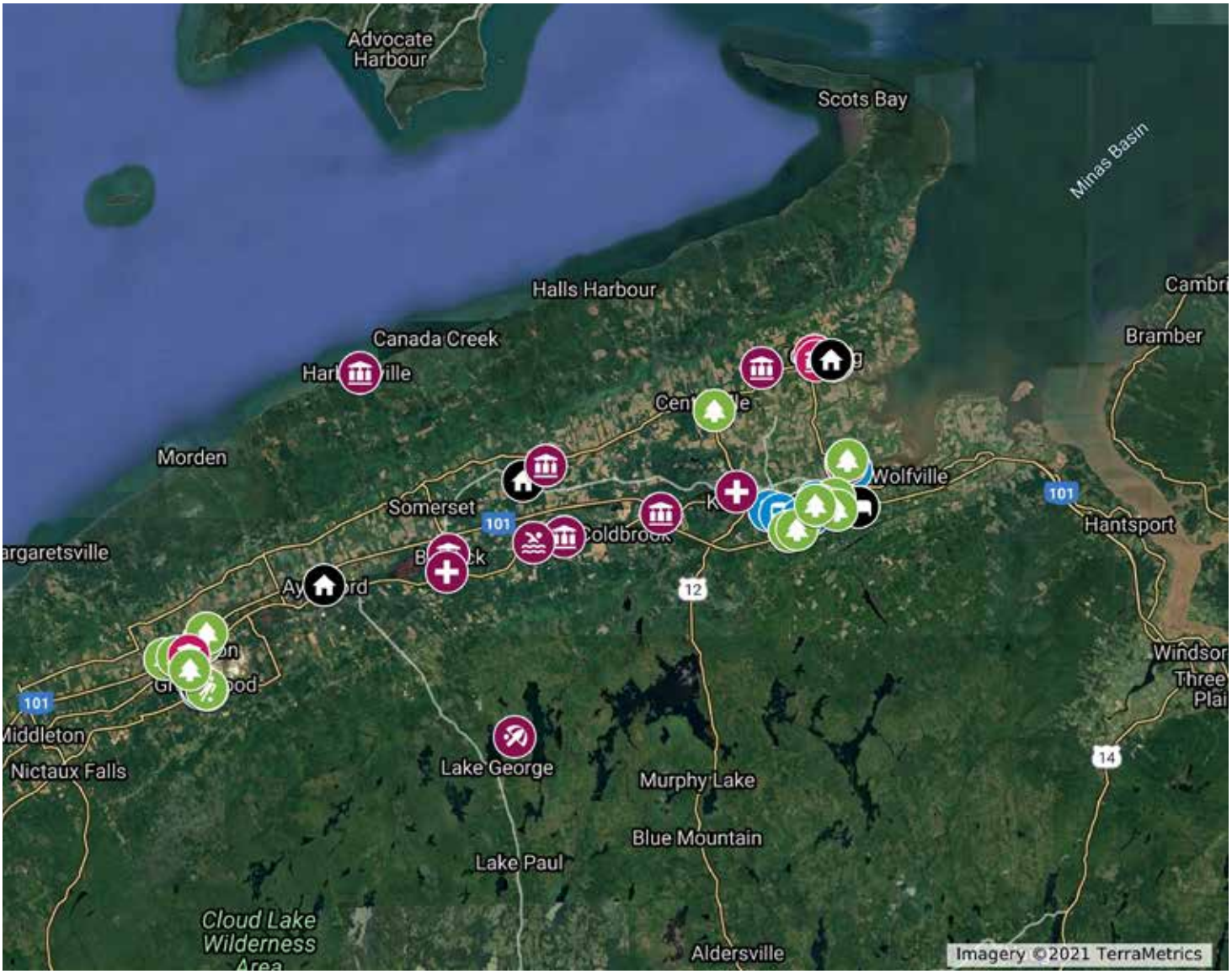
PARKS & OPEN SPACES

- Aylesford Centreville Park
- Stronach Park
- Lockhart Ryan Memorial Park
- Lonnie Milne Memorial Park
- Jones Subdivision Park
- Golf View Playground
- Meadow Terrace Playground
- Port Williams Park
- Greenwood Soccer Pitch
- Centennial Park
- General Playgrounds & Sport Fields
- Tennis Courts / Skating Rinks

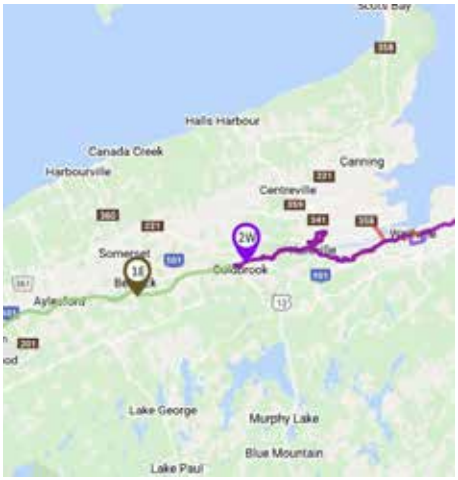
ADDITIONAL LOCATIONS

- Valley Regional Hospital
- Municipality of the County of Kings Complex
- Indoor Pool at Youth Centre
- Western Kings Memorial Health Centre
- Berwick Recreation
- Woodville Community Centre
- Harbourville Community Hall
- Sheffield Mills Community Hall
- The Cambridge Community Centre
- Aylesford Lake Beach

SITE VISIT LOCATIONS MAP



2.0
WHAT WE OBSERVED



TR 1 | Kings Transit live bus location map
Source: *Kings Transit Authority, 2021*

TR 2 | Bus Stop in Port Williams, no accessible space not in path of travel

TR 3 | New Minas bus stop with accessible space next to bench

1.1 TRANSIT

OBSERVATIONS

Buses and Routes

The Kings Transit Authority serves Annapolis Royal, Bridgetown, Clementsport, Cornwallis, Digby, Lawrencetown, Middleton and Weymouth. The transit service provides four bus routes with an option to live track a bus location. The tracking is found on the Kings Transit "Double Map" and provides users with up to date locations of buses and where they currently are on the route. The tracking service helps users know where the bus is and rough estimates for when it will arrive at their stop.

Transit Stops

Bus Stops are found throughout Kings County. With four bus lines operating directly within the county limits, many passengers have moderate access. Routes for the most part, follow highway 1 which mean the stops are located on a single roadway. This limits who accesses the buses as they have to commute to the highway from within their communities.

TR 4 | Low floor buses
Source: Kings Transit Authority, 2020

TR 5 | New Minas location of the Kings Transit Authority

TR 6 | Attendant aiding a passenger Source: *Kings Transit Authority, 2020*

1.1 TRANSIT

OBSERVATIONS

Transit Accessibility

Transit in Kings County is accessible as all buses are fully accessible. Low floor buses are now the standard for transit and provide great accessibility. As seen in image TR4, the buses have ramps and a wide entrance to accommodate wheeled mobility devices. Inside the bus, space is provided for users to tie down wheelchairs. We heard from some users of the bus system that the tie-downs were sometimes difficult to use.

One limiting factor is only zero turn mobility devices can be accommodated on the bus. Meaning those who have wheeled mobility devices with greater turning radius require advanced maneuvering or must find alternative transport.

Traveling With An Attendant

Kings Transit is welcoming to riders who require an attendant to help with using transit. The fare is free to those who are acting as an attendant. All the attendant needs to do is get an attendant card from Kings Transit and then show it to the driver when getting on board with the person needing additional assistance.

TR 7 | Village of Greenwood , bus stop sign on electrical post

TR 8 | Kings Transit bus
Source: *Kings Transit Authority, 2020*

TR 9| Kings Transit bus headed to Wolfville.
Source: *Kings Transit Authority, 2020*

1.1 TRANSIT

OBSERVATIONS

Schedule

The schedule for Kings Transit is moderately frequent at two hour intervals. This range allows users to have time frames to use transit to access different areas of the municipality. Most routes are in service between 7:00 am and 9:00 pm leaving riders with 7 time options to use transit. The two hour window gives users enough time to get to the bus stops from other more distant locations off the highway.

Fares

The fares for Kings Transit range depending on what age grouping the rider falls into. A 46% decreased rate is applied to riders who are considered seniors. The same discount it applied to children between the ages 5 - 11 where as children under 5 can ride transit for free.

Tickets

Tickets are sold at 25 locations throughout the region. With the high amount of available locations riders are able to choose the most convenient
and most accessible location to purchase tickets.
It is important that each of these locations are accessible.

PS 1 | Uneven sidewalks in front of Port Williams Library

PS 2 | Pot holes leading to Port Williams bridge

1.2 PATHWAYS & SIDEWALKS

OBSERVATIONS

Port Williams

The pathway outside of the library is in need of an accessibility upgrade. This narrow path can only accommodate single pedestrian traffic. Those using wheeled mobility devices would be unable to pass next to each other and one user would be required to leave the pathway. The pavement is uneven and has no tactile indication warning pedestrians they are leaving a sidewalk and entering a parking lot.

PS 3 | Lack of sidewalks forces users to walk along an active roadway

PS 4 | Single pathway with ramp crossing Kingston bridge

1.2 PATHWAYS & SIDEWALKS

OBSERVATIONS

Residential Pathways

The lack of sidewalks in residential areas forces users to walk along the road or ditch. It was observed that when parked on the side of the road pedestrians would have to choose between walking in the ditch or on the active road.

Bridge Sidewalks

The Village should advocate to have the Province upgrade bridge crossings as part of the mandated Accessibility Plan. Kingston bridge is in need of an accessibility and pedestrian retrofit. The sidewalk is on an elevated platform and only accessible from steep ramps. No colour contrasting strip is found on the curb edge where it drops to roadway. If two users in wheeled mobility devices would enter the pathway from opposite end one would have to back up to let the other through.

1.2 PATHWAYS & SIDEWALKS

OBSERVATIONS

PS 5 | Canning sidewalk that is wide enough for two wheeled mobility devices

Canning Sidewalk

The sidewalk seen in image PS5 is a good example of how a sidewalk should look. The sidewalk is wide enough to accommodate passing and any obstructions in the path do not reduce the width down to an inaccessible width.

PS 6 | Sidewalk in Port Williams is restricted by obstacles along the sidewalk

Port Williams Crosswalk

This crosswalk represents the current state of accessibility in Kings County with obstructions hindering access to the crosswalk. The crosswalk path is not a single surface and does not have any tactile warnings before to indicate entrance into a roadway. There are no signals to notify vehicle traffic or pedestrians respectively. Finally, vertical signage is not present to indicate a road crossing.

PS 7 | Updated crosswalk in Kingston

Kingston Crosswalk

The crosswalk in image PS7 demonstrates an improvement to the pedestrian experience. With flashing lights and signage, oncoming vehicles are warned of pedestrians crossing. The crosswalk could further be improved with tactile warnings to indicate a entrance into an active roadway.

KA 1 | Front entrance to a building along main street in the Village of Canning

KA 2 | Accessible front entrance at the Memorial Library in Port Williams

KA 3 | Canning Library with sloped access and unaccessible book return

1.3 ACCESS TO KEY FACILITIES

OBSERVATIONS

Sidewalks

Incorporating accessibility into entryways of existing businesses shall be a future consideration of all sidewalk construction.

Memorial Library

This site has good access with a level platform at the entrance. The door is accessible and has a automatic opening button on the side wall. The button location could be improved, as it is within the swing of the door and users would likely get hit by the door once pressed. Lighting is good and the entrance provides shelter from inclement weather conditions.

Canning Library

This site has tried to increase accessibility of the entrance by adding a ramp to the door. The ramp is steep and does not provide a level landing at the top so that a user can maneuver the door. The door is also not equipped with an automatic opener. The after-hours book return is located off the level pathway and is over accessible height. The signage on the building is not colour contrasted and does not have any tactile characters on it. In addition the signage material creates glare making it hard to read from a distance.

KA 4 | Front entrance to arena

KA 5 | Accessible ramp to the south of the front entrance

KA 6 | Power Door Control at Entrance

1.3 ACCESS TO KEY FACILITIES

OBSERVATIONS

Glooscap Arena

This property sits on land owned by the Annapolis Valley Regional Centre for Education and is operated by the Canning and District Recreation Commission.

This building has some good accessibility features. The front entrance is level and wheelchair accessible. Automatic door openers are provided and are located out of the swing of the doors.

The ramp on the south side of the entrance is provided for accessible access to parking stalls. The current ramp can present a tripping hazard for some users due to it's lack of colour contrast. The lack of railing reduces way finding for those with reduction in visibility. In addition a railing would ensure that no vehicle could encroach on the accessible pathway when parking in the adjacent stall.

The Parties shall keep accessibility improvements and upgrades a condition of future grants.

1.3 ACCESS TO KEY FACILITIES

OBSERVATIONS

KA 7 | Front entrance to the Canning Fire Hall

KA 8 | Pathway leading to the Canning Fire Hall

KA 9 | Stairs leading into the front entrance of the Sheffield Mills Community Hall

Canning Fire Hall

The newly constructed fire hall in Canning has a firm, level pathway leading up to the front entrance. The entrance has push button access located at the face of the doorway. Using the button would require the user to be within the door swing. Some other accessible features of the entrance include the vertical signage, the shelter from elements, and the outdoor lighting.

A wide pathway leads to the front entrance of the fire hall. The sidewalk is wide enough to permit passing of two wheeled mobility devices. This front pathway is a good example of what the County of Kings should strive for to achieve universal design.

Community Halls

Community halls often have accessibility limitations both physically and visually, mainly due to their age. The front entrance to the building often requires a user to climb steps. Halls that do not a main accessible entrance may be forced to locate one at the less desirable side of the building. Doors with a lever style knob are more accessible than a door knob handle which requires full dexterity.

The Municipality can further encourage these public building upgrades within grant applications.

KA 10 | Accessible entrance to Sheffield Mills Community Hall

KA 11 | Front entrance to the New Minas Village Office

KA 12 | Exterior ramp to access interior rooms within the illage office

1.3 ACCESS TO KEY FACILITIES

OBSERVATIONS

Community Halls

Community Halls often have a side entrance that doubles as the accessible entrance. The visual appearance of the side door is often less welcoming than the front. The landing before the door is not a solid, level surface and the door has a knob on it. These entrances often do not contain signage promoting the use of the door as an accessible access point and there is often no accessible path leading to the doorway.

Village Office (New Minas)

The village office in New Minas was another good example of public buildings with good access. The level entrance was one solid surface with enough space to maneuver to use the door. The push access was located on the front wall which might put the user in the way of the door swing. The entrance was covered and had good lighting and signage.

Louis Millett Community Complex (New Minas) The community complex is two levels and does not have an interior elevator. An exterior ramp is provided but is not inclusive . The provided railing does not contain a lower rail which could cause harm to those in a wheelchair.

KA 13 | Typical unaccessible playground found throughout county

KA 14 | Entrance path to accessible playground in Centreville

KA 15 | Ramp leading onto an accessible playground structure

1.3 ACCESS TO KEY FACILITIES

OBSERVATIONS

Playground Access

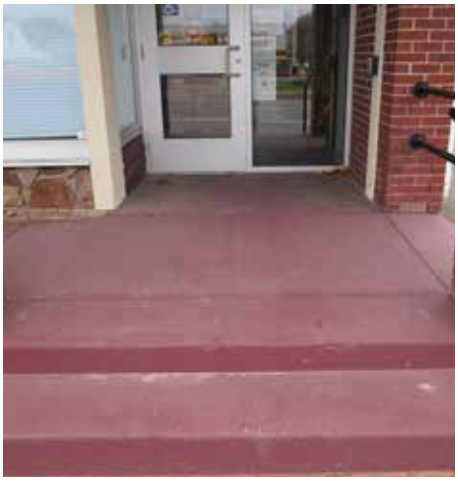
This playground shows the current state of many of the playgrounds in Kings County. With a wooden curb and pea gravel, the playground is not accessible. There is also no accessible playground equipment.

Accessible Playground

One of the County of Kings Accessible playgrounds is located in Centreville. This example of universal design is a good step forward toward a more inclusive playground. The pathway to the playground is level and offers a route for anyone using a wheeled mobility device. In addition, access to the play structure is also inclusive. A ramp is provided for anyone who wishes to go up onto the structure. The ramp offers an upper and lower railing and is colour contrasting for those with limited vision.

The accessible playground is a great addition to the county, but could still be improved. The wood chips that line the ground can get caught in wheelchair spokes. With heavy rain or snow, pooling might occur if a hole was dug by a child in the wood chips.

KA 16 | Kingston Regional Library



KA 18 | Front door to the Kingston Village Office

KA 19 | Ramp leading away from entrance

1.3 ACCESS TO KEY FACILITIES

OBSERVATIONS

Kingston Regional Library

The library in Kingston has a firm and level entrance landing. The entrance is covered, has signage, and there is outdoor lighting. The book return is placed so that it blocks manouevering space at the door and provides a reduction in entrance visibility. The entrance is also on a podium raised above the parking lot. The change in grade at the sides should be highlighted with colour contrasting stripping to warn users of a drop.

Kingston Village Office

The village office in Kingston has accessible access. The entrance is covered, has good vertical signage and has a narrow ramp to the doorway. The automatic door button is located in a spot on the wall that is within the door swing. In addition the ramp leading to the entrance follows a unusual path where a 90 degree turn is located with a slope change. Current ramp designs have a level platform for users to change direction. With a slope and pathway change users might lose control.

KA 20 | Credit Union Centre in Kingston

KA 21 | Front door to the Village of Greenwood Office

KA 22 | Accessible entrance at the Wee Folk Centre in Greenwood

1.3 ACCESS TO KEY FACILITIES

OBSERVATIONS

Credit Union Centre Arena

The recreation centre entrance in the Village of Kingston is in need of an accessibility upgrade. The existing door handles on the front entrance are not access friendly as they require full dexterity to pull. The entrance also does not have push access. The entrance is also on a slightly sloped podium that could cause unknowing users to stumble. Some elements are good on the entrance such as the outdoor lighting and the protection from elements.

Village of Greenwood Office

The Wee Folk Centre located in the Village office building does not have an accessible front door. The main entrance is located on a platform with a single step up. This step up has no visual indication and could pose a tripping hazard to those with reduced visual ability.

There is a secondary entrance on the building that is accessible. The accessible entrance has a push button that is located outside of the door swing.
In addition, a low slope brings users to the door. Attention could be given to the ramp as the surface is beginning to show signs of disrepair.

The Village office building is not currently accessible for them or their tenants.

KA 23 | Lockhart Ryan Memorial Park Spray Park

KA 24 | Access to the Lockhart Ryan Memorial Park Spray Park

KA 25 | Pathways from Parking to the Main Park Area

1.3 ACCESS TO KEY FACILITIES

OBSERVATIONS

Lockhart Ryan Memorial Park

Lockhart Ryan Memorial Park is located within the Village of New Minas. The spray park is accessible as the surface it is on is firm and level and it is made of a solid material. The spray park is accessible, but there is no defined pathway leading to it from parking. Users must cross a long grass area to get to the spray park. With the addition of a hard packed pathway, users would have reliable access to the spray park.

PA 1 | Accessible parking at Centreville Recreation park

1.4 PARKING

OBSERVATIONS

Community Parks

The Accessible parking at community parks need to be present. Larger accessible stall signage along with a dedicated access aisle would create a better parking experience. This should be addressed as part of future lease agreements.

PA 2 | Credit Union Arena Accessible parking

Credit Union Recreation Complex

The accessible parking at this recreation centre has good and bad elements. The stall would benefit from new surface paint to clearly indicate an accessible parking stall. The signage is also using the outdated and derogatory term "handicap" instead of "accessible". Each parking stall requires an adjacent access aisle that can accommodate side loading of vehicle.

PA 3 | Parking at Canning Library

Canning Library

The parking at the Canning Library does not have an accessible parking stall. The reserved signage is not clear as to who the stall is reserved for. Misinterpretation can easily occur and further direction is needed. The parking lot does not contain marked parking or signage and no clear access aisle is present.

PA 4 | Accessible parking at Glooscap Arena

PA 5 | Accessible parking signage at Glooscap Arena

PA 6 | Parking at Canning fire hall

1.4 PARKING

OBSERVATIONS

Glooscap Arena

The accessible parking at the Glooscap Arena is present and for the most part is well designed. The issues found with the overall design include the slope of the stall itself. When an accessible parking stall is sloped it can effect whether the personal vehicle lift will operate. In addition, the signage on the wall is contradictory as it states "No parking" while also being the accessible parking stall. Finally the separated path to the entrance is elevated slightly with a lip. The original design probably did not intend on the lip being present but it is currently a tripping hazard.

Canning Library

The parking at the Canning Fire hall is a very good example of accessible parking. Well defined accessible stalls are immediately visible and adjacent to the building entrance. All accessible stalls have a dedicated access aisle and curb cut. The pathway to the front is clear and wide enough for passing of wheeled mobility devices.

1.4 PARKING

OBSERVATIONS

PA 7 | Accessible parking at the back of the Village of Kingston Village Office

Village of Kingston Village Office

The accessible parking at Village of Kingston Village Office is located at the back of the building. The signage is present and provides no clear indication of a path to enter the building. The door sign is an accessibility image, but access requires maneuvering a step. There is no pedestrian access aisle as the sidewalk is raised forcing accessible access to the roadway.

PA 8 | Sloped path to parking lot leading away from Hospital

PA 9 | Parking at Valley Regional Hospital (not part of audit)

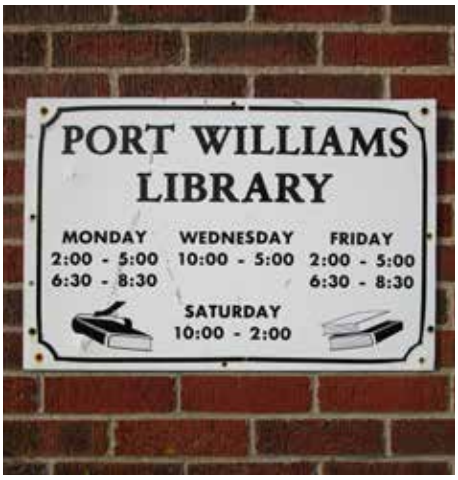
Valley Regional Hospital

This site does not fall within the jurisdiction of the Municipality of Kings, however given its importance to the community, all parties should advocate for the Province to make this a priority site.

The site does have accessible parking located in the drop off zone, which remains an active space. The parking lot with additional accessible parking is located in a lower area and has a sloped pathway leading to it. The pathway slope appears to be too steep and some users would struggle to maintain control.

Once at the top of the slope users will find that the pathway has no curb cuts. Without this, users in wheeled mobility devices would struggle to find the accessible path as there is no signage indicating a recommended direction of travel.

WS 1 | Credit Union Centre front entrance doors



WS 2 | Port Williams Library front entrance sign

WS 3 | Front entrance sign at the Canning Library

1.5 WAYFINDING & SIGNAGE

OBSERVATIONS

Credit Union Centre

The signage at the Credit Union Centre is colour contrasted and located at an appropriate height. The signage should be located on a wall instead of a doorway, this is to ensure a clear view even when the door is open. Finally, tactile characters and braille should be provided on the updated signage for those with reduced visibility.

Port Williams Library

The library signage has good colour contrast and provides operating hours. The addition of tactile characters and braille would help to make it more inclusive. Updated signs should provide increased font size to allow for visibility at a further distance.

Canning Library

The signage at the Canning Library is difficult to read due to wear and reflection/ glare on the surface. The sign also lacks tactile characters and braille. Colour contrast between text and background is also lacking.

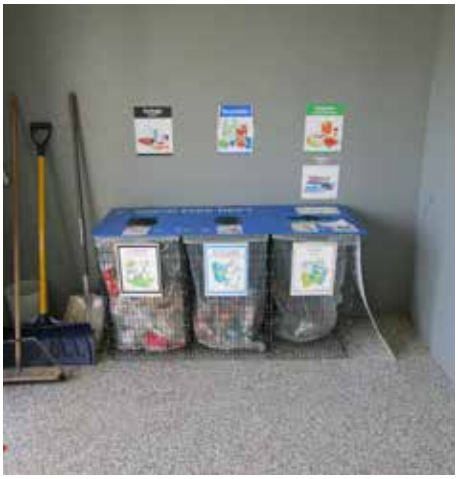
WS 4 | Womans washroom door at Glooscap Arena.

1.5 WAYFINDING & SIGNAGE

OBSERVATIONS

Interior Bathroom Signage

Washroom signage is an important information source for anyone wishing to use the facilities. If signage is on a door users might not see it if the door is propped open. In addition, there is no indication on the signage on whether or not the washroom is accessible.



WS 5 | Recycling at Glooscap Arena

Refuse Signage and Organization

Continuing at the Glooscap Arena, the area where recycling is needs further defining. Having colour coded bins is one method to differentiate the three types of refuse bins. The images of items that go in each bin are a good addition but tactile characters and braille would also be a welcome addition.

WS 6 | Bus stop signage

Kings Transit Signage

The sign in image WS6 was found on the interior of a bus shelter, above eye level. Visibility of the sign is sometimes difficult due to the reflection and glare coming off of the glass. The colour contrast between the font and background is good and with repositioning the sign would be more accessible. Braille should be added to the signage as well.

WS 7 | Village of Canning Village Office Entrance Sign

WS 8 | Kingston Library Entrance Sign

WS 9 | Lonnie Milne Park outdoor signage

1.5 WAYFINDING & SIGNAGE

OBSERVATIONS

Kingston Village Office

The directional vehicle signage at the Kingston village office helps to increase accessibility and wayfinding. The sign is colour contrasted and uses a font that is readable at a distance. The directional indication helps users know where to go when visiting the village office and community hall.

Kingston Library

The library exterior signage is good for colour contrast but lacks in a few elements. The sign has no lighting facing it and it is hard to see at a distance and in dark conditions.

Outdoor Park Signage

The sign seen in image WS9 shows a typical outdoor sign for parks in Kings County. The colour contrast on the sign is good for those driving or walking.

A helpful addition to the sign would be a map of destinations within the park along with tactile characters.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 TRANSIT

RECOMMENDATIONS

Bus

Although there are accessible buses with low floors, kneeling capabilities and ramps - they are sometimes difficult to maneuver when exterior conditions worsen. Ensure floor and ramp surfaces are kept dry, free of ice and slip-resistant.

Bus Stops

Increase the size of bus stop signs so they can be read from a further distance and place consistently in all locations. Ensure that all signage is placed to avoid shadows and glare. Accessibility can be increased by providing the routes travel direction (ie. east) as well as a stop number. The stop number should correspond with website route information. It is also recommended that additional signage be provided that includes tactile characters and Braille.

Shelter

Covered bus shelters are provided sporadically. Ensure all covered stops are adjacent to an accessible path of travel and contain a level pad that is large enough to accommodate the turning radius of a wheeled mobility device. Provide bus shelters at all locations if feasible.

3.2 PATHWAYS & SIDEWALKS

RECOMMENDATIONS

Surface

Pathway surfaces should be firm, level and slip-resistant. Worn pavement presents tripping hazards for some users. Pathways should be regularly maintained and kept clear of snow and ice.

Width

Ensure all pathways are wide enough (1700mm recommended) to allow for passing of people using mobility aids.

Bridge Crossings

Bridge crossings are currently inaccessible. Paved pathways end prior to bridge crossings and people are forced to traverse the roadway and gravel to get to the bridge sidewalk. The bridge sidewalks are too narrow for even a single wheelchair to use and a steep, asphalt ramp is provided to access them. The Port Williams bridge was covered in road gravel at the time of our visit, making it very slippery. LPF recommends widening the sidewalk and providing a color contrasted warning strip along the curb edge to warn of a drop into the roadway. A guardrail on the road side of the sidewalk can be used in future construction to increase safety.

Grade Changes

A colour-contrasted, textured strip at least 50mm in width should be placed at locations where grade changes occur in the pathway. Curb cuts with tactile walking surface indicators should be provided at all cross walks. Visual and audible signals should be provided at crossings to help direct both pedestrians and vehicles of the crosswalk. Many of the crossings we visited also had painted pavement and vertical signage for the crossing and it is recommended that the same is done for more of the intersections.

3.3 ACCESS TO KEY FACILITIES

RECOMMENDATIONS

Entrances

All public building entrances should have a level landing at the door that can accommodate the turning radius of a wheelchair. Automatic door operators should be placed out of, but adjacent to, the door swing and no more than 1500mm from it. Where there are two doors, such as in a vestibule, ensure both open in unison once the automatic door control is activated. It is recommended that all accessible entrance doors, as well as accessible washroom doors, are equipped with automatic openers.

Where automatic door openers are not provided, ensure all door hardware can be operated using a closed-fist position. Lever style handles are preferred. It is also important that the force to push or pull a door does not exceed 38N for exterior swing doors and 22N for interior swinging or sliding doors.

The threshold at the entrance door should not exceed 13mm and should be beveled at a slope not steeper than a ratio of 1:2.

Lighting

Illumination along pedestrian routes and in parking lots should be continuous and not create any dark or shadow areas. Components such as stairs, ramps and rest areas should be illuminated to at least 50lx at ground level.

Washrooms

At least one accessible (universal is preferred) washroom should be provided on each floor of public buildings. They should be easy to locate from the entrance of the building.

3.3 ACCESS TO KEY FACILITIES

RECOMMENDATIONS

Parks & Playgrounds

Playgrounds should have a level entrance and be free of curbs that limit access. The ground surface of playgrounds should be level and firm to promote interactive play between children of all abilities. Accessible equipment should also be provided at locations throughout the park (not only in one location). LPF recommends that the Municipality and Village websites highlight which playgrounds are currently accessible until upgrades can be done to the remaining sites.

3.4 PARKING

RECOMMENDATIONS

Accessible Spaces

Provide accessible parking spaces for expected use adjacent to accessible building entrances. Spaces should be 2600mm wide, with a 2000mm painted access aisle. All spaces should be provided on a firm, level surface with signage painted on the pavement and displayed vertically, on a post at the head of the stall. It is also important that these stalls are not misused by those who don't require them. A permit system is recommended.

Curb Cuts

Curb cuts at intersections should be improved to prevent difficult navigation and to avoid accidentally entering into vehicle traffic. Tactile walking surface indicators should also be provided at curb cuts placed at street crossings to warn those with limited or no vision, of a possible danger ahead. Ensure they are kept clear of ice and snow.

Limited Mobility Spaces

In addition to accessible parking spaces, LPF recommends adding limited mobility stalls within close proximity of accessible entrances. Limited mobility stalls are the same width as standard parking stalls but are dedicated with vertical signage to those with limited mobility.

Surface Condition

Parking lots should be firm, level and slip resistant. Ensure they are maintained and kept free of ice and snow.

Signage

Provide signage at parking lot entry to locate accessible spaces.

3.5 SIGNAGE & WAYFINDING

RECOMMENDATIONS

Road Signage

Explore the possibility of increasing the size of street signage when mounted on lights at busier intersections. This can help drivers safely navigate roads and prepare their lane choice if they need to turn in advance.

Transit Signage

Signage should include specific route and contact information to check timing for the next bus arrival. It is also recommended that tactile and braille signage be provided at 1200mm height.

Tactile Characters & Braille

Tactile braille should supplement the text of regulatory, warning, and identification signage. All public buildings with outdoor signage at pedestrian level should have braille describing the building accessibility conditions and constraints.

Websites

Accessibility online is an important addition to accessible physical space. Websites need to be accessible to provide local, up to date information for residents. Users with visual, cognitive or hearing disabilities should be able to use websites with ease. In addition, the Kings Transit website needs to ensure that accessibility is at the forefront of design to provide users with a positive transit planning experience.

Functional & Cognitive Barriers

These barriers can be avoided by providing architectural space that is logical and intuitive. Ensure excessive noise is not present and provide quiet space for users as required. Provide information that is not conflicting or difficult to read and understand.

4.0 CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

OVERVIEW

The Municipality of the County of Kings and seven villages within have positive, accessible components as well as areas where improvements would be beneficial for everyone in the community regardless of age, ability, mobility or circumstance. With physical, audible and visual accessibility enhancements and a meaningful accessibility strategy, The Municipality of the County of Kings and the Villages can become a leader in accessibility.

Improved accessibility can be created through refined access, ease of use of transit, pathways and sidewalks, access to key facilities and enhanced signage and wayfinding. The Municipality of the County of Kings and the Villages have incontestable components of accessibility and a good foundation to become a leader in accessibility across the Annapolis Valley. With a strong action plan, they can provide safe, inclusive communities for all of their residents.

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Appendix C: Stakeholder List

Appendix C: Stakeholder List

- Annapolis Valley First Nation & Glooscap First Nation
- Aboriginal Peoples Training & Employment Commission (APTEC)
- Autism Nova Scotia- Annapolis Valley Chapter
- Canadian Mental Health Association
- Cerebral Palsy Association
- Community Association of People for Real Enterprise (CAPRE)
- Community INC, Community Living Alternatives Society (CLAS)
- CORAH Seniors Programming, Evangeline Club
- Flower Cart Group
- Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia CNIB
- Key2Access
- Kids Action
- Kings County Family Resource Centre
- Kings County Seniors' Safety Society
- Kings Transit Authority
- Kings Point to Point Transit Society
- Kings Regional Rehabilitation Centre
- Kinsmen, Kinette and Kin Clubs
- Kris Association
- L'Arche Homefires
- Lions and Lioness Clubs
- Open Arms
- People First Kings County
- People Works
- Rotary Clubs
- Rowan's Room Developmental Society
- Smile Program, Society of Deaf & Hard Hearing
- Support Services Group Cooperative
- The Achieve Program
- The Beehive Adult Service Centre
- The Flower Cart Group
- Valley African Nova Scotian Development Association (VANSDA)
- Valley Child Development Association
- Valley Child Development Association of Evergreen Home For Special Care
- Valley Community Learning Association
- Valley Youth Project

- Village Recreation Staff
- Wee Folk Center Inc.
- YREACH Program.

Our Accessibility Plan

Appendix D: Internal Research and Engagement Report

Appendix D: Internal Research and Engagement Report

November, 2021

Note for reviewers: The following Appendix reports the overall research, engagement, and site assessment findings that were used to inform the Accessibility Plan. Information has come to light since the creation of this document that has informed the Accessibility Plan further. In the case there is a discrepancy between information provided here, and the Accessibility Plan, refer to information in the Accessibility Plan.

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1.0 Executive Summary

This Current State Working Document is a gathering location for all information pertinent to the development of the Accessibility Plan for the Municipality of the County of Kings, the Villages, and the Kings Transit Authority [KTA]. Using the "How Might We…" question format as a guide, the overarching issue that the Accessibility Plan intends to solve through this process is:

How [might] we make our community accessible to everyone regardless of ability?

The information outlined in this working document represents all of the information gathered during Phase One of the development of the Municipality of the County of Kings Accessibility Plan. There have been four key sources of information that have led to the development of this working document:

- Community Engagement - Conducted during October and November of 2021, both in-person and virtually. This information is informed by a series of pop-up engagement events, an online and print questionnaire, a workshop with JAAC members and a series of user experience interviews.
- Accessibility Audits - Conducted in-person throughout the Municipality of the County of Kings to understand the physical limitations currently present in the County.
- Existing Practice Review - A series of other pertinent case studies were examined and reviewed to inform and provide paths forward for developing the forthcoming plan.
- Policy Review - A comprehensive policy review of all local and provincial documents was conducted to understand the current state of the policy framework and how this plan will fit within it.

These four sources of information have been compiled throughout this report and will ultimately inform the development of the Accessibility Plan. The information has been organized under seven focus areas; goods and services, information and communication, transportation, employment, built environment, awareness, and recreation. Each of the focus areas has been organized to present an overview of the current state, the achievements to date, barriers that have been identified, what policies pertain to it, and the potential improvements that have arisen during the community conversations. These seven focus areas provide the framework that the information has been organized and will influence the goals and actions in the plan to follow.

This report is designed to be a living document and be updated as more information presents itself. During November 29th and 30th, the project team will be conducting a Strategy Sprint to initiate Phase Two of the project. The information gained during that Sprint will then be incorporated into this document to ensure that this working document is reflective of all information gained.

2.0 Introduction / Purpose

The Current State Working Document is a gathering location for all information pertinent to the development of the Accessibility Plan for the Municipality of the County of Kings, the Villages, and the Kings Transit Authority [KTA] collected to date. Using the "How Might We…" question format as a guide, the overarching issue that the Accessibility Plan intends to solve through this process is:

How [might] we make our community accessible to everyone regardless of ability?

To begin the exploration of this question, the team developed a series of research questions to guide the background review and engagement process:

a) Local Context (50%): What are the barriers to access in the Municipality? Where are the opportunities for improvement? What are the current success stories? What does a day in the life of various persons with disabilities look like in this context? How can everyone access key services? What goods or services are not accessible? What does an entire trip look like (planning, leaving their house, modes of transportation available, accessing their destination)?
b) Provincial/federal/international context and trends (30%): What policies does this plan need to align with? What are the provincial, federal, and local accessibility goals? What does the literature suggest for creating a more accessible community?
c) Existing practice review (20%): What are other local municipalities doing for accessibility practices? What practices are municipalities doing elsewhere that would work for The Municipality of the County of Kings?

The Current State Working document aims to:

- Document the barriers, positives, opportunities and ideas of residents within the Municipality and the Villages have for accessibility
- Understand the policy context that the Accessibility Plan sits within
- Document what local or similar communities are doing for accessibility
- Record the lived experience and accessibility assessment of different site locations within the community
- Find success stories for inspirational next steps

2.1 Deliverable Purpose

The details for this deliverable are described in the 20210720 Proposal, which states: "Following the conclusion of the engagement process, we will use our 6-step process to analyze feedback across the various forms of community conver IF Feedback Process sation. This method provides a robust understanding of the issues that the community and stakeholders have identified. The engagement analysis would focus on themes that emerged from the engagement process, highlighting the relationships and tensions between these issues, providing insights to be explored and discussed in Phase 2 of the process. Process highlights (including process metrics, successes and challenges) will also constitute part of the summary in order to tell the story of community engagement and inform ongoing community collaboration into the future.

Rather than isolate community feedback from what was learned in the background and current situation analysis (Phase 1.2), we would develop a 'What We Learned' report. This working document would integrate the learnings from the analysis and integrate these findings with community feedback, resulting in a more robust understanding of the current state of accessibility in the County of Kings. This report would be presented to the County team, acting as a close of Phase 1 and obtaining County's insights as the project moves to the second phase."

This What We Learned Working Document was developed to inform the final Accessibility Plan. Components of this working document may change over time, as additional information becomes available through staff surveys, sprint processes, JAAC feedback, and further administrative research. As such, this document is not presented as a final report, but rather as a gathering location for information as it arises.

3.0 Methodology

This What We Learned Working Document was developed using four main sources of information:

1. Accessibility Audits: in-depth investigations into site-specific accessibility concerns and public spaces
2. Community Engagement: survey, pop-up, workshop, and interview conversations with members of the general public
3. Existing Practice Review: an investigation into existing Accessibility Plan documents from across Canada
4. Policy Review: an in-depth investigation into National Provincial and local policies that either provide direction for accessibility or affect accessibility locally

Methodologies for each of these sections are described in greater detail below.

3.1 Accessibility Audits

Level Playing Field (LPF) reviewed the current accessibility of the Municipality of the County of Kings. The work began with a desktop exercise to determine what locations to visit and experience in person. We viewed potential locations on Google Street View, reviewed the Municipalities transit information and assessed how easy it was to find relevant, accessible transportation information on the transit website. We also reviewed Wolfville's, Kentville's, and other accessibility strategies.

The assessment included the following Villages in the Municipality:

- New Minas
- Greenwood
- Aylesford
- Canning
- Cornwallis Square
- Kingston
- Port Williams

Site visits focused on, but were not limited to, the following:

- Site access, including accessible parking spaces and curb cuts to entrances
- Sidewalks
- Walking & Bicycle Trails

- Parks
- Public Transit
- Libraries, Recreation Centres and Community Centres
- Municipal Buildings

Assessments utilized visual inspection, walking, and using a scooter to traverse the various locations.

3.2 Community Engagement

From October 11 to November 12, an engagement process was implemented to ensure the general public, accessibility stakeholders, and Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee Members could share their insights and feedback on current barriers, achievements, and ideas for accessibility as part of the Accessibility Plan development for the Municipality of the County of Kings and Villages. Throughout the course of the project, we heard from 307 community participants.

To share questions, comments and insights, people were encouraged to:

- Attend one of the JAAC meetings held on September 8, October 13, October 27, or November 10 held in the County Council Chambers
- Provide feedback at one of the three pop-up engagements, held between October 24 and October 26 at the New Minas Atlantic Superstore, Sobeys Kingston (Greenwood), or The Great Devour! Community Supper
- Provide feedback online via the project website: https://www.countyofkings.ca/accessibility
- Fill out the online or paper survey, available at pop-up engagements, municipal and village offices, and public libraries
- Have a user experience interview with us to share their lived experiences.

Online Survey

The approach to online engagement allowed residents to share their insights for action in a way that allowed for 24/7 access with a relatively minimal investment in time. This enabled the project team to gain a wider variety of insights into accessibility in the Municipality of the County of Kings, the villages, and the KTA. We asked questions about barriers, achievements, and potential actions to improve accessibility in the area.

Between October 11 and November 12, the survey received 193 responses. For a detailed account of whom we heard from in the survey, please see Appendix B.

Pop-Up Engagements

Pop-up events allowed the general public who may not be connected to accessibility groups to share their views on the Municipality of the County of Kings and Villages Accessibility Plan in the places where they already were. We asked questions about accessibility barriers and opportunities. The project team undertook the following three pop-ups:

- New Minas Atlantic Superstore: 23 Participants
- Sobeys Kingston (Greenwood): 20 Participants
- The Great Devour! Community Supper: 38 Participants

Between October 24 and October 26, the pop-ups received a total of 81 participants.

Podcast

The creation of a podcast with 3 JAAC members, and our accessibility consultant, Darby Young of Level Playing Field helped to share knowledge about the project and the lived experiences of those both in and surrounding the Municipality of the County of Kings. The podcast was produced in October, and released via 360degree.city on October 16, 2021.

Workshops/Committee Meetings

Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee digital and in-person meetings each had a series of questions being asked about the big picture of accessibility in the Municipality of Kings and diving deeper into the subject's nuance. Using a dynamic mix of data, visual precedents, and real-time visualization, the committee sessions aimed to gain a deeper understanding of what forces work for and against accessibility in the Municipality of the County of Kings.

There are 16 members on the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee that meet monthly. In addition, four members of staff also provided input and answered questions in this monthly meeting.

User-Experience Interviews

When addressing significant systems change, the lived experiences of residents are often missed. This can lead to a detachment from the proposed change and solutions to the community it is intended to help. To address this issue, we underwent a set of discovery interviews with residents to understand life in the community in a precise way - leading to a more contextualized understanding of accessibility in the Municipality of the County of Kings and the Villages.

Between October 11 and November 12, we interviewed ten varied stakeholders who are on the JAAC, applied to be on the JAAC or connected to a JAAC member to understand the diversity of lived experiences in The Municipality of the County of Kings and the Villages.

Website

With a Municipal website landing page and Village website articles, the team shared project details, advertised engagement sessions, provided means for feedback and displayed ongoing developments as the process unfolded.

Engagement Communication

Engagement opportunities were communicated using the following:

- The Municipality of the County of Kings and Village websites
- Direct invitations to key stakeholders, interviewees, and surrounding nations
- Radio interviews on Rewind 89.3 (Lexie Misner)
- Newspaper advertisements in the Valley Wire and the Valley Journal Advertiser
- Social media advertisements via Facebook and Twitter (326 engagements and link clicks)
- In-person promotion during pop-ups
- Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee promotion and distribution
- Posters distributed to community partners, and public locations
- Digital posters circulated to community partners
- Podcast with JAAC members and Accessibility Specialist released through 360 degree City
- Public press release

3.3 Existing Practice Review

The existing practice review draws from pertinent case studies from across Canada. Case Studies were selected using the following rubric:

Level	Criteria	Description
1	Impact	Has the source led to positive and demonstrable impact?
2	Practice	Has the source been applied within a jurisdiction?
3	Scale / Context	Has the source been tailored to preferred scale / context?
4	Theory	Is the source theoretically sound?
5	Subject Alignment	Is the source aligned with the overarching subject?

Existing Practices that were selected include:

- Kentville Accessibility Action Plan
- Wolfville: Access by Design
- Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification (RHFAC) Ratings Professional Handbook
- Mobility/Accessibility Master Plan, City of Lethbridge (July 2020)
- Halifax: Accessibility Strategy (April 2021)
- City of Guelph: Multi-Year Accessibility Plan - Now to 2022

Each resource was summarized with key project takeaways to refer back to when developing the Accessibility Plan. Throughout this research report, these case studies can be found within sections that best reflect the case study's subject matter.

3.4 Policy Review

The policy review draws from documentation prepared by government (supranational, national, provincial, regional, local) and non-government organizations as described in the RFP. Policies that were investigated and summarized include:

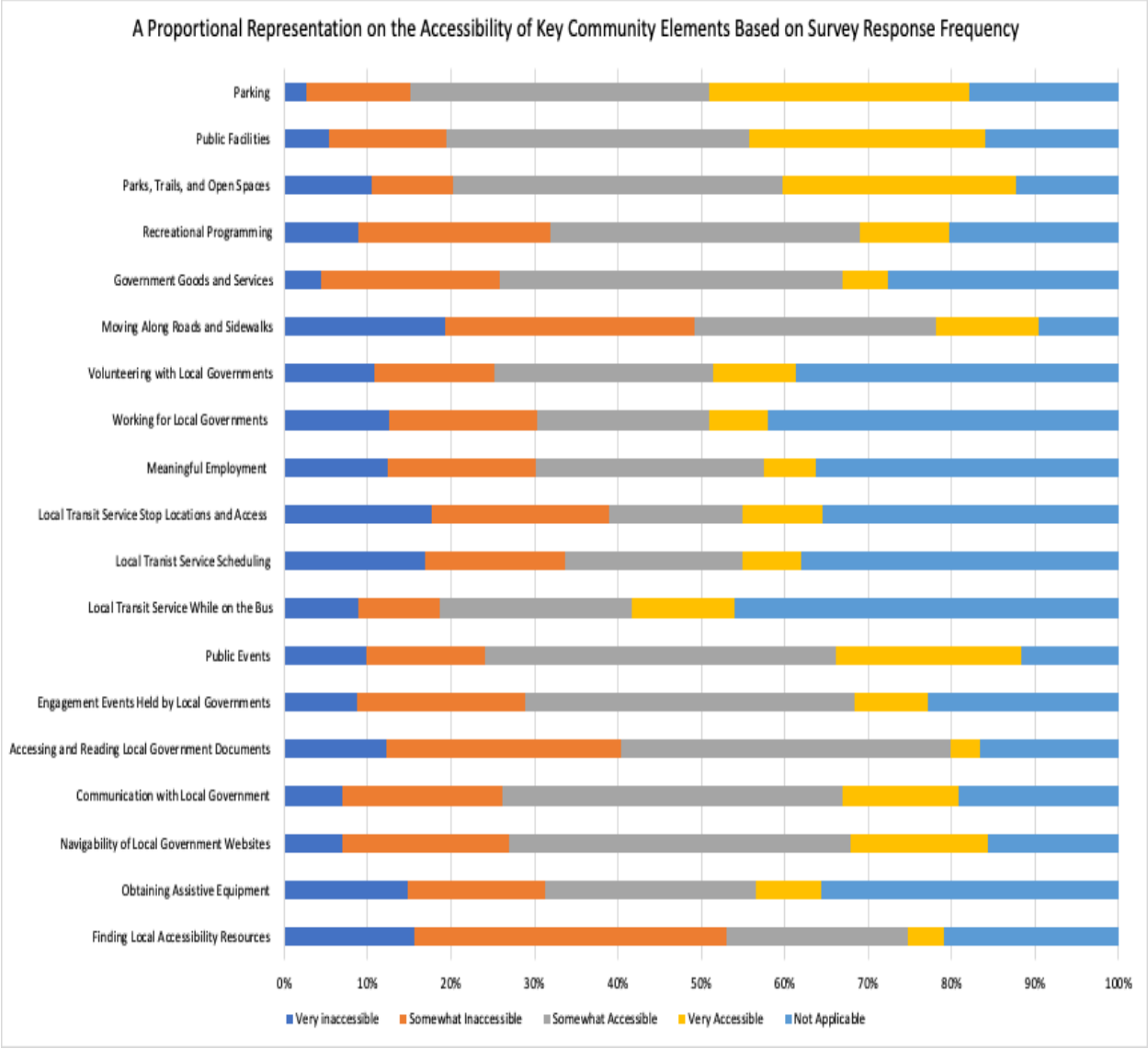
- CSA B651-18, Accessible Design for the Built Environment
- Accessibility Act. 2017, c. 2, s. 1
- Municipal Government Act 1998, c. 18, s. 1
- The Accessibility Directorate website
- Access by Design 2030
- The Accessibility Planning Toolkit for Municipalities
- Government of Nova Scotia Accessibility Plan
- Interim Accessibility Guidelines for Indoor and Outdoor Spaces
- Guide to Planning Accessible Meetings and Events
- Nova Scotia Building Code Regulations
- Intermunicipal Service Agreement between the Municipality and the Villages
- Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee Terms of Reference
- Municipal By-laws
- Municipal Policies
- Village By-laws
- Village Policies

Each of these documents was initially summarized to include the publication's: year, author, jurisdiction, key takeaways & best practices, and takeaways as they relate to each accessibility goal area, including; goods and services, recreation, transportation, built environment, information and communications, awareness, and employment. Initial summary tables can be found in Appendix A, and findings and recommendations for each accessibility goal area can be found under findings in section

4.0 Overarching Results

Survey Feedback

This section documents the overall summary of what was heard across themes, primarily from community engagement. In our online and print survey, we asked participants to indicate how accessible different elements in their community were. The results are summarized in the proportional graph below.



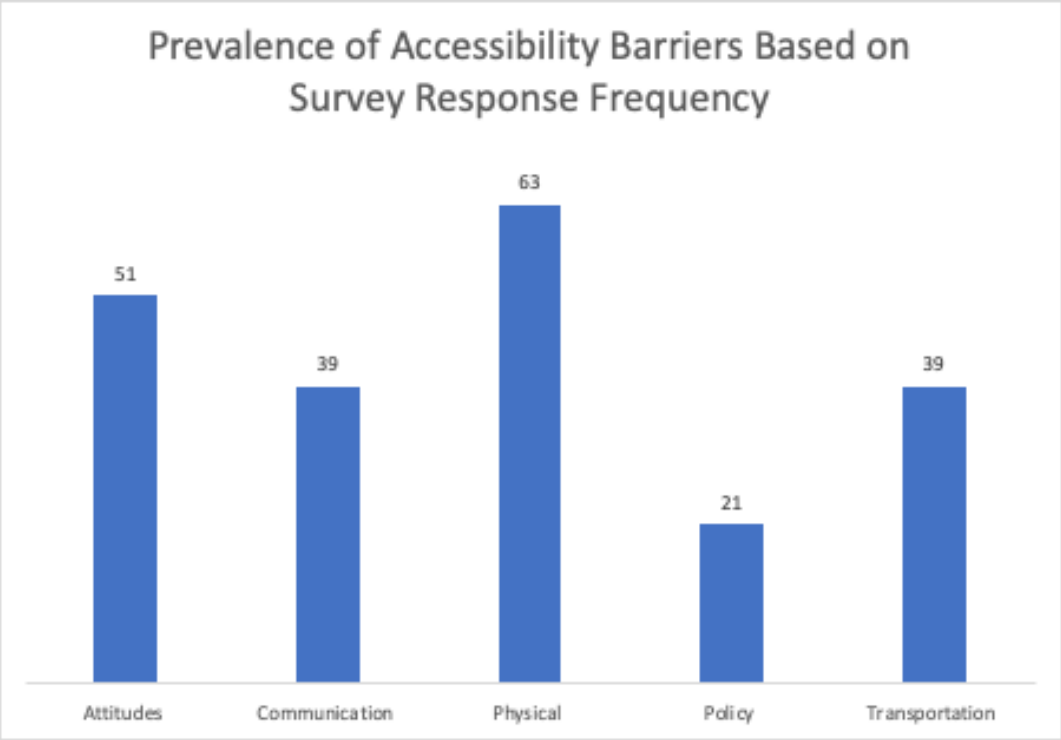
Elements that were reported as being the least accessible in the Municipality, the Villages, and the Kings transit Authority were

- finding local accessibility resources,
- moving along roads and sidewalks,
- accessing and reading local government documents, and
- local transit service stop locations and access.

Among those reported as the most accessible include: Parking at Municipal and Village Facilities (e.g. parks, trails, and open spaces), Public facilities (e.g. community centre), Parks, trails and open space, and public events.

We also asked survey participants to select all of the accessibility barriers they've seen or experienced in the Municipality of the County of Kings, the Villages, or the Kings Transit Authority. The results from this question can be seen in the bar graph below.

Physical barriers were frequently identified as barriers among survey participants, followed by attitudes, communication, and transportation. It was anticipated that fewer survey participants would have interacted directly with policy documents than other barrier areas, yet still, many participants identified policy as a barrier in general.



Together, these accessibility barriers and accessibility Likert questions will help prioritize initial accessibility actions proposed in section 7.0.

Forces For and Against

Throughout a series of Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee [JAAC] sessions, we asked committee members to brainstorm some of the forces working for and against sustainability. These forces are aspects of the community that will influence the development and uptake of this plan as the Municipality and the villages continue to work together to improve Accessibility.

Forces working for accessibility

- An aging population that considers future barriers for themselves

- Provincial mandate to improve accessibility with potential for future funding
- Changing attitudes in the County to support aging well and more exercise
- A caring and helpful community, with a want to be inclusive and a belief that everyone is important
- Opportunities to build new with better standards and facilities for people with disabilities or aging population
- Parallel focusses on broader diversity and inclusion initiatives and accessibility plans regionally, which are trying to make the County more accessible and comfortable for everyone
- Provincial, Federal and other grants and funding opportunities exists
- The municipality has an opportunity to work closely with the towns and villages
- Access to Acadia University, who may be a resource for accessibility studies
- Accessibility is front of mind right now, and there is an opportunity to capitalize on that
- The JAAC and having a plan moving forward is key
- There is physical space to make changes like adding ramps
- Many community advocacy groups
- We have lots of pride in being the leaders in accessibility

Forces working against accessibility

- Funding to implement accessibility retrofits and changes
- Specialized companies are needed to carry out building modification changes
- Lack of empathy, education and understanding of accessibility barriers, issues and accessible design
- Legislation can be a binding
- Lack of available training for staff to feel confident serving needs of the diverse disability community
- Inconsistent accessibility requirements and specifications
- Lack of powerful allies to champion this
- Physical retrofit restraints in historical buildings
- Not enough buy-in from the communities that this is a priority
- Lack of motivation to act
- The dispersed geography of the County

5.0 Topic Results

5.1. Goods and Services

5.1.1. The Starting Point

5.1.1.1. Overview

Goods and service provision varies from Municipality to Village to KTA.

The Municipality of the County of Kings provides services including; road maintenance and sidewalk maintenance for geographies outside of village boundaries, their respective park and recreation space services, animal control services, sewer and water utilities, building and development services, civic addressing, fire and emergency services, community grants and funding, and land use planning.

Village responsibility varies, but generally, they are responsible for sidewalk maintenance within their borders, animal control, building code enforcement, elections and voting, recreation program provision and bookings, care of their respective recreational areas, police services, and waste management.

The KTA is responsible for the maintenance of their fleet, communications and distribution of transit service.

For reference, we have identified the committee, Council, and Village commission as a service provided by the Villages and the Municipality. Barriers and achievements for the built environment and recreation amenities can be found in their respective sections.

5.1.1.2. Achievements

Site Assessment:

- Entrances
    - Most front entrances on public buildings have automatic controls and mitigations for an accessible entry so users can access services
- Parking
    - Many municipal buildings have accessible parking stalls provided adjacent to entrances with proper curb cuts and signage

Public Engagement

- Staff
    - Accessibility coordinators available for the Municipality and New Minas

5.1.1.3. Barriers

Site Assessment:

- Parking
    - Accessible stalls adjacent to building entrances
    - Signage
    - Curb cuts
- Entrances
    - Automatic door controls are preferred
    - Accessible door hardware with appropriate opening force if automatic controls are not provided
    - Level thresholds between exterior and interior
    - Sufficient clear area to manoeuver doors
- Wayfinding
    - Large, colour contrasted lettering so the building name can be seen from the street
    - Signage at parking lot entrances to easily find accessible parking & the accessible entrance

Public Engagement:

- Lack of Partnerships and Information
    - Many people with disabilities and organizations that support them struggle with finding funding, and are isolated from one another
    - Lack of accessibility representation on committees and Council
    - No relationship between accessibility-serving agencies and engagement staff
- Customer Service
    - Lack of understanding about accessibility among staff, council and commissions
    - Information is delivered without clarity, leaving citizens without a clear understanding and a lack of trust in government services
    - Entry to spaces is not friendly, and confusing for where to go for most with learning disabilities
    - Perception that Municipality and Villages are too worried about liability to do things to provide accessible goods and services - e.g. nothing to do with delivery of assistive equipment that is needed

    - No knowing what to expect for scheduling and public events can be overwhelming for those with learning disabilities - not knowing the plan in advance can cause anxiety and removal from participation
- Infrastructure
    - Much of the community does not currently have high speed internet and cannot access online meetings
    - Computers for internet access in some libraries are on the second floor, without an elevator
- Maintenance
    - Sidewalk snow clearing - particularly in commercial areas
    - Bus shelter snow clearing
- Funding
    - More funding available to those with learning disabilities, and not as much available for those with physical disabilities

5.1.2. Policies

Resource Name: Accessible by Design 2030, Nova Scotia Department of Justice, 2018
Takeaway(s):

- To understand how people with disabilities access goods and services, in addition to the current standards for delivering these services.
- Develop a government-wide accessible customer service policy to ensure service delivery is consistent across government

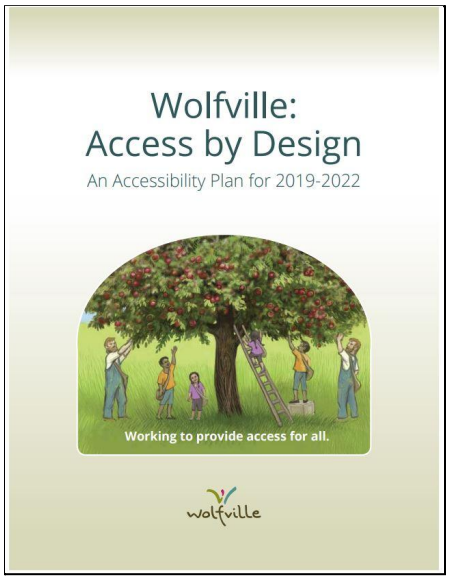
Resource Name: Government of Nova Scotia Accessibility Plan, Government of Nova Scotia, 2018
Takeaway(s):

- We will ensure people with disabilities have equitable access to goods and services delivered by the Government of Nova Scotia. This includes ensuring there are policies, procedures, and tools in place to promote accessibility in customer service.
    - Develop a government-wide Accessible Customer Service Policy with the aim of ensuring consistency in accessible customer service across the Government of Nova Scotia.
    - Ensure our public enquiries operators are equipped with information on services related to accessibility and disability.
    - Embed inclusion and accessibility into digital service design processes and ensure an inclusive and accessible by design approach.
    - Promote accessibility in procurement processes undertaken by the Government of Nova Scotia. This will include developing resource materials for Departments

to assist in identifying and including accessibility requirements in tenders for goods and services purchased by the Government of Nova Scotia.
    - Explore the establishment of accessibility navigators to assist persons with disabilities in accessing information and services.

5.1.3. Case Study Example

Wolfville - Access by Design



The Town of Wolfville is located within Kings County in a similar way to the Town of Kentville. This plan takes a focused look at equitable design promoting fair treatment based upon needs and abilities. The plan includes five areas of focus: Built environment, Information and Communication, Transportation, goods and Services, and Employment.

Key takeaways and best practices

- Establishing top priorities for each category throughout the town creating clear and attainable goals
- Plan priorities were guided by local residents, grassroots involvement from the beginning led to its successful adoption
- Plan has a legal requirement to be updated every three years

5.1.4. Potential Improvements

Public Engagement

- Partnership support
    - Help to connect social organizations and individuals with disabilities to one another and to information on funding and local supports
    - Create a list of agencies to connect to and a description for what each of them do
    - Partner with accessibility serving providers when doing engagement, to help those with learning disabilities meaningfully provide input.
    - Have people with disabilities at the design table for all accessible infrastructure projects
    - Support and advertise existing events happening within other accessibility organizations
- Council, Commission, and Staff training

    - Include accessibility training with diversity and inclusion training for Council, Commissions and staff
    - Ongoing training with guest speakers to educate about different users
    - Include spokesperson for accessibility on committees and Council
    - Consult the JAAC on accessibility decisions and guidance
- Service Delivery
    - Provide and spread awareness that further assistance is available through municipal services - in the case that someone needs interpretation, braille versions of documents, tax support, or to attend meetings virtually
    - Provide and communicate adaptive sensory hours with decreased light and noise during certain times of the day
    - Deliver services to all with the standards for accessibility as a standard, so everyone can participate without feeling isolated
    - Ensure there is someone at the entry to municipal offices to welcome people to the space and direct to where they need to go.
    - When giving information or instructing people about an inquiry, ensure that questions are being asked and never assume that the person on the other side fully understands (e.g. do you understand? Do you need any more information?)
- Maintenance
    - Clear snow from sidewalks and bus shelters, particularly in commercial areas for easy access with mobility device
    - Clear snow on some public trails in the winter
    - Bush and tree maintenance along sidewalks to ensure they are transversable
- Internet Infrastructure
    - Increase internet connection and access
    - Offer both in person and online service and attendance options
- Staffing
    - Hire and accessibility coordinator for each village
- Safety Program
    - Flagging system for those who use accessible equipment to communicate that they are in trouble or stuck (e.g. stuck on sidewalk in the winter)
    - Buddy system of seniors and those with disabilities

5.2. Information and Communications

5.2.1. The Starting Point

5.2.1.1. Overview

The Municipality of the County of Kings and Villages have differing levels of information and communication materials available. Municipally, there is a brand strategy in development and a 2-pager available which doesn't currently include accessible considerations. A municipal engagement strategy was developed in 2017 that lists inclusivity and accessibility as their first core value.

The Municipality, and the villages of Aylesford, Kingston, Canning, Greenwood, New Minas and Port Williams each have their own websites for information and communications. The most commonly used platform among Villages and the Municipality is Facebook, with five entities having their own Facebook pages.

Villages and the Municipality utilize the multiple communications channels available locally, including: Valley Journal-Advertiser, Annapolis Valley Register, The Valley Wire, The Chronicle Herald, 14 Wing Greenwood's Aurora newspaper, Magic 94.9/ AVR 97.7, Rewind 89.3, The Canning Gazette, and Grapevine Publishing, among others.

5.2.1.2. Achievements

Site Assessment:

- Websites
    - Some websites have screen reader access
- Park Signage
    - Some outdoor parks have large, colour contrasted signs
- Parking Signage
    - The Canning Village Office is a good example of parking lot wayfinding

Public Engagement

- Existing private entities
    - There are already strong ties between those with learning disabilities and autism and their employers and program coordinators.
    - Accessibility service providers and groups already have a series of resources to share, which just need to be distributed.

- There are already great connections between private partners in the accessibility space

5.2.1.3. Barriers

Site Assessment:

- Websites
  - Ensure information on websites are accessible for people of all abilities
- Outdoor Signage
  - Park signage could be improved with the addition of tactile characters, braille and maps outlining their accessibility features and paths
- Building Entrance Signage
  - County standards need to be created as all public buildings have different entrance signage
  - Tactile characters and braille should be provided on all informational signage at entrance doors
  - Position signage to reduce reflection, shadowed areas and glare
- Parking Signage
  - Outdated language is present in many parking lots
  - Wayfinding is needed to direct users to accessible parking stalls

Public Engagement

- Deaf and hard of hearing communication
  - Caretakers, and staff that they interact with don't know ASL - Isn't able to fully communicate due to verbal disability
  - Masks without see through cover - doesn't allow for lip reading
- Internet Infrastructure
  - Limited access to high speed internet and therefore, online materials
  - Limited opportunity to book online without internet
- Technology
  - Oftentimes those with fine motor skill issues and learning disabilities have trouble accessing web platforms and using computers without deleting programs
- Websites
  - Websites are hard to navigate

5.2.2. Policies

Resource Name: Government of Nova Scotia Accessibility Plan, Government of Nova Scotia, 2018

Takeaway(s):

- We will ensure persons with disabilities can equitably receive and understand information and communications delivered by the Government of Nova Scotia.
    - Complete a review of communications policies, procedures and practices to improve accessibility and ensure they are not creating barriers to accessibility. This will include: Government of Nova Scotia Communications Policy and supporting guidelines; Government of Nova Scotia brand standards; communications platforms including print, electronic and digital (i.e. video).
    - Implement a phased launch of a more user-centric government website, beginning in 2018-2019. The website will be accessible in line with the international standards (WCAG 2.0 AA), and augmented with user experience best practices. Future phases will include transactions (e.g., Adobe PDF forms) documents and other web assets that were produced separate from the new website (e.g., video, live webcasts).
    - Conduct a review of industry standards for ICT services, policies, practices and procedures and leverage this information to promote accessibility in the design, development and implementation of new ICT services, products and systems. An example of this, ICT Services will consider accessibility requirements in the upcoming tender for laptop and desktops devices used by Government of Nova Scotia employees.

Resource Name: Accessible by Design 2030, Nova Scotia Department of Justice, 2018

Takeaway(s):

- To ensure that all information shared and received by Nova Scotians is provided through accessible formats including accessible websites and technologies.
- Actions:
    - Launch a new Government of Nova Scotia website that is focused on the users' needs and meets international accessibility standards.
    - Develop new training resources for staff about accessibility and disability issues.
    - Promote accessibility in government procurement processes.
    - Explore the possibility of establishing accessibility navigators to help persons with disabilities access information and services.

Resource Name: Interim Accessibility Guidelines for Indoor and Outdoor Spaces, Nova Scotia Accessibility Directorate, 2020

Takeaway(s):

- Assistive listening systems should be used in areas where people assemble. This includes—but is not limited to— classrooms, auditoriums, meeting rooms, and theatres with
    - an area of 100 square metres; or
    - 75 or more fixed seats; and/or
    - installed speakers

Resource Name: Guide to Planning Accessible Meetings and Events, Nova Scotia Accessibility Directorate, Department of Justice, 2018
Takeaway(s):

- Where possible, ensure that the timing of your event does not conflict with another event that many people with disabilities and service providers may be attending.
- Disability support and service agencies (ASL/ English interpreters, oral translators, and real-time captioning professionals) are in great demand and short supply, so must be booked weeks in advance.
- Asking for and using information regarding participants' accessibility needs is the essence of a person-centered and respectful approach to planning an inclusive event. Be sure to invite participants to identify any accommodation needs early in the planning process.
- Planning may involve providing large print or braille documents, electronic and audio versions of documents, ASL/ English interpretation, real-time captioning (CART), and sighted guides. The person(s) for whom you are booking the service should be consulted on their preferences and involved in booking service providers.

5.2.3. Case Study Example

Kentville - Accessibility Action Plan

The Town of Kentville has recently undergone a review of its accessibility. The outcome of the audit is the creation of the town's Accessibility Action Plan. This plan sets out to develop accessibility standards across the town. In addition, the plan sets out how the town will support marginalized groups and how it will uphold accessibility standards. The plan also includes a section that focuses on monitoring accessibility which is set out to change municipal policy to reflect provincial standards.

Key takeaways and best practices

- Community Digital Kiosk to create a physical space for marginalized community members to come and access town information
- Accessibility Rating System – Help citizens make informed choices on what spaces are accessible while also establishing what buildings and public spaces need accessibility improvements first.
- Accessible parking is a major issue to Transportation

5.2.4. Potential Improvements

Public Engagement:

- Hard of Hearing and Deaf communication
    - ASL interpreter on municipal staff, particularly for Council meeting interpretation
    - ASL resources are made available through Municipality for further development in the private sector
    - Ensure all community spaces have an audio system and use microphones
- Advanced scheduling
    - For public events and meetings, ensure that there is an agenda released in advance with a description of what participants are going to expect
- Plans and public-facing materials
    - Ensure materials are easy to understand, use simplified language, and that complex projects have an overview of their content with a low reading level (HL suggests using Flesch reading scale)
    - Public plans and documents are made screen-reader friendly (e.g. images have alternative text).
    - Braille versions of public plans are made upon request
    - High colour contrast is ensured in all public facing documentation
    - Make interfaces visual and use icons for those with learning disabilities
- Communication Technology
    - Provide communication technology at staff offices for those who may need speech to text service
    - Council meeting and committee exports to have closed captioning or transcription provided
    - For buildings that have staff interacting with the public for presentations, allow for auditory systems
- Wayfinding and clear signage

    - Provide clear signage in buildings, parks and trails, and along roads to ensure people can find their way when staff support isn't available or applicable
    - Tactical signage for the blind community
- Communications
    - Ensure there are various online and in-person options for communicating with residents (i.e. posters, newsletters, radio, newspapers).
    - Connect with existing accessibility agencies to engage with user populations in a thoughtful and respectful manner
    - Allow people to connect via phone
    - Be prepared for all engagement needs in advance instead of being reactionary
    - Advertise that events are accessible and what accessible supports are available
- Websites
    - Begin creating a user-centric website with easy to use and understanding materials

5.3 Transportation

5.3.1. The Starting Point

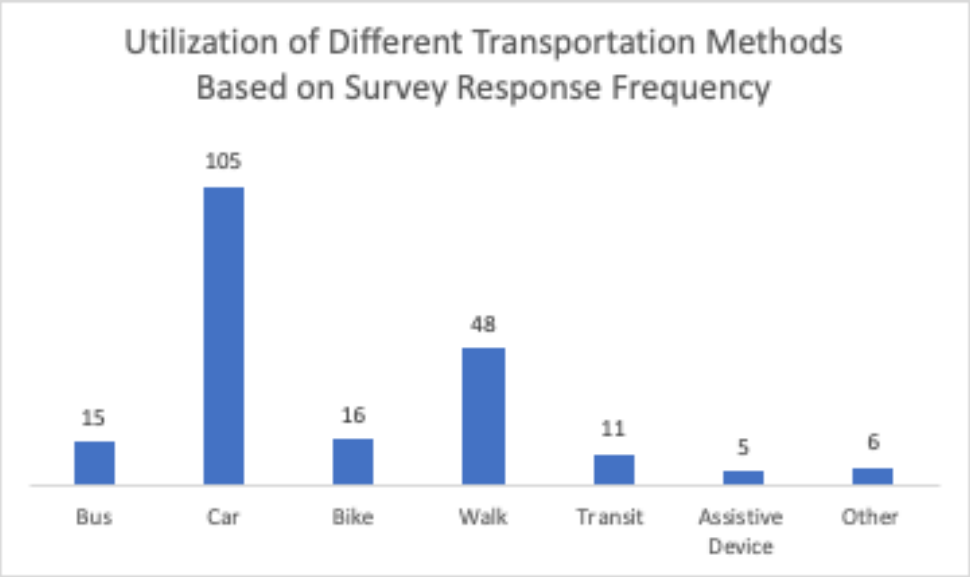
5.3.1.1. Overview

The Kings Transit Authority [KTA] is a municipally-owned corporation that supplies fixed transit services along the Valley corridor (primarily following the No. 1 Highway). Service is based out of a facility located in New Minas. The fleet consists of 12 buses, including four which run in the Kings County core area, and three spare buses for Digby and Annapolis Counties. There are approximately 250 bus stops.

Kings Point to Point [KPPT] is a community-based, non-profit charitable organization offering accessible transportation services to all residents of Kings County, east of Aylesford, in need of transportation, with priority placed on those with challenges and seniors. The Municipality of the County of Kings is one of 5 sponsors for this service, and the KTA is a supporter.

Active and Automotive transportation considerations are documented in Recreation and Built Environment sections, respectively.

Of those who took the public survey, most respondents commute primarily by car or walking, with 26 respondents commuting by bus or transit.



There were a series of specific locations that were listed as achievement and barrier areas for transit in public engagement. For specific spots that were identified, please [click here to see the web map] with specific comments.

5.3.1.2. Achievements

Site Assessment:

- Transit Stops:
    - Some transit stops provide users with a covered rest area
    - A bench is provided with space for a wheeled mobility device
- Transit Website:
    - Users are able to see live updates on the location of all buses in service. This provides flexibility and allows users to make informed decisions about using transit.
- Buses:
    - All buses in the Kings Transit fleet are accessible with provided ramps, tie-downs and kneeling capabilities
- Ridership:
    - For those who require additional aid in riding transit, a free ride pass is available for attendants

Public Engagement:

- KTA communication & support
    - The KTA emails accessibility-serving organizations when they are unable to make their run
    - Frequent posting on Twitter and mobility app for any cancellations or delays
    - Personally connect with residents of larger housing communities in need of assistance
- Busses
    - The busses, their tie downs, and staff are accessible
- Services
    - Kings Point to Point was highlighted as a shining example of transit accessibility
- Bus Stops
    - Some bus stops (e.g. Port Williams)

5.3.1.3. Barriers

Site Assessment

- Transit Stops
    - Signage is not consistently placed
    - There is no indication for new riders or visitors to go on the app for information
    - Located only along highway with no additional rural access
- Pathways
    - Pathways leading to bus stops are not always accessible
    - Curb cuts are not always present and are without tactile indicators

Public Engagement:

- Buses
    - Noise and lack of personal support can make riding the bus overwhelming for those with learning disabilities or Autism.
- Transit Network
    - Limited frequency of buses and bus scheduling
    - Limited bus network coverage (Canning, South Mountain, North Mountain and rural services were mentioned frequently)

    - Expensive for the everyday user
    - Organizing timetables easily causes anxiety
- Transit Stops
    - Lack of sidewalks and accessible pathways surrounding bus stops make the stops inaccessible
    - Limited bus stop locations
    - Limited covered bus stops with wheelchair accessible space

JAAC Input

- Transit does not service all areas, limiting access
- The transit schedule isn't flexible or accommodating

5.3.2. Policies

Resource Name: Accessible by Design 2030, Government of Nova Scotia Department of Justice, 2018
Takeaway(s): Goal set to ensure that travel in both rural and urban Nova Scotia is easy and accessible.

Resource Name: Interim Accessibility Guidelines for Indoor and Outdoor Spaces, Nova Scotia Accessibility Directorate, 2020
Takeaway(s):

- Seating should be provided at regular intervals along pedestrian routes and before level changes or decision points.
- Links to transportation should be accessible to all members of the community. An accessible transit stop will have a paved or concrete level surface connecting the transit stop to an accessible pedestrian route. Adequate snow clearing to the ramp of transit vehicles is essential.

Resource Name: Guide to Planning Accessible Meetings and Events, Nova Scotia Accessibility Directorate, Department of Justice, 2018
Takeaway(s):

- People with disabilities may need extra time to arrange transportation and prepare for an event. Additionally, be aware that, due to transportation arrangements, disabled participants may arrive early, and if the event runs over the scheduled time, people with disabilities may be unable to stay.

5.3.3. Case Study Example

Guelph - Multi Year Accessibility Plan Now to 2022

Since 1995 the city of Guelph has been committed to removing barriers and increasing accessibility throughout the city. The city has worked within provincial policy and found ways to build upon the provincial base. Guelph has committed to a results-based plan that holds itself accountable by setting goals and creating a route to achieving them.

Key takeaways and best practices:

- On-demand Accessible Transportation Services
- City Standards that meet and exceed provincial regulation of accessible design standards
- Physical and Digital Accessibility

5.3.4. Potential Improvements

Public Engagement:

- On-Bus Communication
    - Audible bus stop names announced for those with vision impairments
    - Ensure large font and colour contrast for upcoming bus stops
- Last-mile options
    - Create a way to connect rural and hamlet residents to the bus stops themselves, where geographically spread
- Pricing
    - Consider an affordable pricing program
- Service Expansion
    - Consider expanding service and creating more bus stops (Canning, South Mountain, North Mountain and rural services were mentioned frequently)
- Schedule communication
    - Make scheduling easier to understand
- Scheduling
    - Consider increasing bus frequency
- Bus stops
    - Make bus stops more accessible from the surrounding area
    - Provide wheelchair accessible covered shelters at bus stops
- Busses
    - Consider leaning busses or ramps with better traction

5.4 Employment

5.4.1. The Starting Point

5.4.1.1. Overview

It is not adherently clear what the full-time equivalent staff members for the Municipality, Villages, and KTA are, but it is known that the number and breadth of employees vary for each body. Each body has its own Human Resource Policies, and for many, an Equal Opportunity Employment Policy that includes those living with a physical or a mental disability. These policies are often available publicly on Municipal and Village Websites. Some employment policies and the equity available to applicants are not transparently posted and require further internal investigation.

5.4.1.2. Achievements

Site Assessment:

- Access to employment
    - Many public buildings have some form of accessibility built into the design of the building
    - Many buildings have accessible parking and an accessible entrance

Public Engagement:

- Providing opportunities
    - New Minas offers many volunteer opportunities in collaboration with those with disabilities - Flower Cart Group

5.4.1.3. Barriers

Site Assessment:

- Access to employment
    - Many private buildings do not have an accessible entrance making them off-limits for some users
    - Many buildings do not have an accessible washroom
    - Accessible parking is not always provided

Public Engagement:

- Lack of flexibility
    - Those with autism or learning disabilities can be overwhelmed on certain days and in particular environments. This includes school and work.
    - Lack of accessibility supports available with fast-paced work
- Hiring
    - Using hiring surveys or tests that are not screen reader friendly or that don't use closed captioning
    - Biased when looking at experience
    - Some negative attitudes when hiring, including not being open or accommodating
- Funding
    - If someone with a disability is able to work, their funding gets cut from the government
- Private businesses
    - Many businesses are not willing to change their practices or invest in accommodating people with disabilities
- Lack of transportation to employment
    - Transportation doesn't connect to places of employment

5.4.2. Policies

Resource Name: Government of Nova Scotia Accessibility Plan, Government of Nova Scotia, 2018

Takeaway(s):

- We will remove barriers to employment for persons with disabilities seeking a career within the Government of Nova Scotia. This includes ensuring our workforce reflects the province's diverse population and that we are making our employment practices and workplaces more accessible for new and existing employees with disabilities.
    - Investigate establishment of a centralized system within the Government of Nova Scotia to better support managers and employees across the public service with respect to accessibility and disability. This will also include analysis of re-establishing a centralized accommodations fund within the Government of Nova Scotia
    - Review recruitment and selection training materials for hiring managers and ensure that content reflects topics specific to the recruitment, selection and hiring of persons with disabilities into the public service of Nova Scotia.
    - Work with the Nova Scotia Works employment services system to develop a Diversity and Inclusion Plan that will incorporate accessibility into the provision

of employment programs and service delivery. In addition, build the capacity of Employer Engagement Specialists to provide support to employers in developing inclusive and accessible workplaces.
    - Support the development of an Accommodations Application for employers, developed by Saint Mary's University's Inclusion by Design partnership.

Resource Name: Accessible by Design 2030, Government of Nova Scotia Department of Justice, 2018
Takeaway(s):

- Goal to ensure equal access to meaningful employment for persons with disabilities
- Ensure government training materials for hiring managers include information about recruiting and hiring persons with disabilities into Nova Scotia's public service

Resource Name: The Accessibility Directorate Website, Government of Nova Scotia, 2020
Takeaway(s):

- The Employment Standard Development Committee will be announced in the fall of 2021 – no real work or recommendations appear to have occurred in this area yet. However, the goal is to make sure that persons with disabilities have equitable access to employment.

5.4.3. Potential Improvements

Public Engagement:

- Flexible work
    - Permit allowances for flexible work arrangements (e.g. allow for people to work from home or remove themselves from meetings in the situation they are unable to interact on that day).
    - Allow for accommodations where needed for work environment (e.g. working at slower times of the day for those who are easily overwhelmed with sensory inputs or locking applications to their desktop in the case they have issues with fine motor skills). Bring these up in the signing stages of the contract, and ensure accommodations are upheld as agreed upon.
    - Create a welcoming environment with the accommodations needed by the employee (e.g. ergonomic desks, or including music)
- Business Materials
    - Provide businesses with materials for how to onboard a new employee with differing ability levels
- Hiring

- Ensure all materials used in the workplace are compatible with different communications impairment needs - e.g. screen reader friendly and videos with closed captioning
- Consider applicants who may not have the provided job experience due to lack of other employer accommodations. Consider applicants with workshop experience and skills that are taught via non-formal institutions
- Partner with external agencies for employment support

5.5 Built Environment

5.5.1. The Starting Point

5.5.1.1. Overview

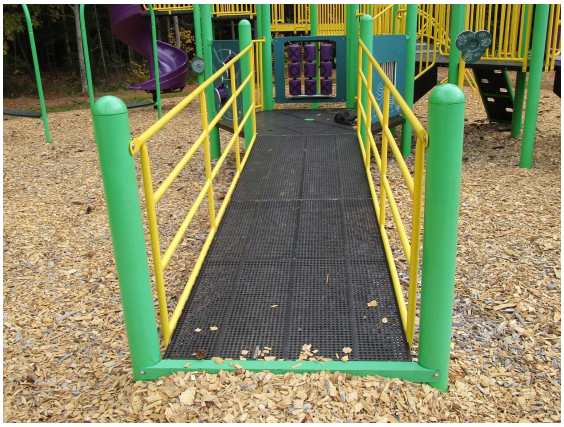
Ownership status among the Municipality, the village and the KTA varies depending on location. Some of their built environment infrastructure (not including recreation) includes:

- The Municipality of the County of Kings owns a series of public assets, including 26.83 kilometres of streets and roads, 18.16 kilometres of sidewalks, 61 crosswalks, 93 intersections, 51 access roads and trails, and 63 public buildings.
- The Village of Canning owns 7 buildings, 2.2 kilometres of trails, 1 parking lot, over 2000 meters of sidewalk, 5 intersections, and 3 crosswalks.
- The Village of Greenwood owns one building, 7 kilometres of trails, 25 kilometres of streets, 67 intersections, 10 kilometres of sidewalks, 17 crosswalks, 1 parking lot and 1 pedestrian bridge.
- The Village of Kingston owns 8 public buildings, 3 parking lots, 5.8 kilometres of trails, 9.67 kilometres of sidewalks, 6 crosswalks, and 12 village-owned vehicles or trailers.
- The Village of New Minas owns over 15,000 meters of sidewalk, 8 crosswalks, 17 public buildings, 3 outdoor washrooms, 6 parking lots, and 3 pathways or trails.
- The Village of Port Williams owns 11 public buildings, 2 pathways, 3 outdoor washrooms, 5 parking lots, 24 streets, over 4,000 meters of sidewalk, and 11 crosswalks.
- The KTA is responsible for its facility in New Minas, 12 public transit busses, and approximately 250 bus stops.
- The Village of Cornwallis Square and Aylesford numbers will be recorded in future reports

There were a series of specific locations listed as achievement and barrier areas for the built environment in public engagement. For specific spots that were identified, please click here to see the web map with specific comments.

5.5.1.2. Achievements

Site Assessment:



- Park Pathways
    - Park pathways are made up of many materials, but most are hard compacted gravel
- Building Entrances
    - Many public buildings and recreation centres have an accessible entrance
- Curb Cuts
    - Curb cuts can be found in many areas of the county in both residential and commercial areas
- Playgrounds
    - Accessible playgrounds have been constructed in some locations in the county

Public Engagement

- Parking
    - Some parking in larger centres and malls
- Buildings
    - Fire halls are accessible
    - Newly renovated public buildings, like the Port Williams Library renovation, White Rock Hall, the Canning Village renovation, the New municipal building in Coldbrook, the Louis Millett Community Complex
    - Generally good entries with ramps and buttons
- Roadways
    - New sidewalks and Crosswalks
- Pathways
    - Well maintained and new pathways

5.5.1.3. Barriers

Site Assessment:

- Park pathways
    - Some pathways are dangerously steep and are made up of loose gravel

    - Railings are needed in areas where grades are too steep
- Bridge crossings
    - Bridge pathways are in a rough state of disrepair
    - They are not wide enough for multiple users and lack tactile warning and guardrails at path edges
    - Temporary ramps have become long term solutions
- Curb Cuts
    - Curb cuts are not always present along pathways

Public Engagement:

- Parking Stalls:
    - Width of parking stalls, particularly in private malls. Limited ability to leave the parking stall without getting stuck when getting back into the van.
    - Most parking stalls are taken by seniors, leaving those in wheelchairs to find parking further away
    - Parking stall signage isn't consistent or clear
    - Not adequate number of accessible parking stalls
    - Lack of accessible parking enforcement for signs and placement
- Parking Lots:
    - Fast-moving traffic without delineated spaces for pedestrians and mobility devices to cross through. This causes anxiety and fear when leaving vehicle
- Private residences and buildings
    - Housing needs to be heavily renovated when someone in a wheelchair wants to be independent, which is expensive.
    - Few businesses have accessible entryways, including push buttons or ramps
- Washrooms
    - Bathrooms need additional adaptive equipment like ceiling lifts
    - Lack of public accessible washrooms
        - We have been provided with a list of 254 bathrooms in the Municipality and Villages that an engagement respondent has identified as inaccessible. This washroom list will be provided to staff for further investigation.
- Public buildings
    - Elevator buttons too low for those in mobility devices (quadriplegic)
    - Rotating doors induce anxiety and are difficult for some mobility devices (autism)
    - Narrow entrances and a few open door buttons in some locations
    - Inaccessible community halls

        - We have been provided with a list of 15 community halls with accessibility concerns from an engagement respondent. This list of community halls will be provided to staff for further investigation.
    - Multi-storey community halls without elevators
- Furniture
    - Furniture is too close together in some rooms for mobility devices to use
    - Furniture height isn't compatible with some mobility devices
- Roads & sidewalks
    - Roads without sidewalks or any amount of walker space along high traffic roads (see map)
    - Aging infrastructure with potholes and uneven surfaces hard to transverse, particularly for the blind and users of motorized scooters
    - Lack of public lighting on busy sidewalks - unable to see potholes
    - Cracked paving and gaps along sidewalks
    - No sidewalk on a busy street
    - For the visually impaired, not enough notice or warnings for curbs or steps. And many curbs/steps without railings that are unsafe
    - Sidewalk turning radius too tight for some wheelchairs and scooters
- Crosswalks
    - Crosswalk buttons inaccessible to reach (post base is not flush with the sidewalk)
    - Lack tactile coverings
    - Few crossings along busy streets
    - No crosswalk audio cue for some crosswalks
    - Some crosswalks do not allow ample time to cross the street
- Building code
    - Some buildings are not up to the most recent code requirements
    - Buildings not inspected for accessibility after construction
    - Building requirements, illustrations and municipal and village requirements are all different.
    - Nova Scotia building code doesn't have the same rigour as CSA
    - Impact of bylaw controls on affordability and ability to build ramps

JAAC Feedback

- Many trails in the community not accessible

5.5.2. Policies

Resource Name: Government of Nova Scotia Accessibility Plan, Government of Nova Scotia, 2018

Takeaway(s):

- We will ensure persons with disabilities can equitably receive and understand information and communications delivered by the Government of Nova Scotia.
    - Conduct a review of existing occupied spaces to determine accessibility issues and priorities and develop an action plan to achieve accessibility in Government of Nova Scotia owned and leased premises by 2030.
    - Incorporate clauses into new Government of Nova Scotia leases for occupied spaces that stipulate that landlords must meet the current Nova Scotia Building Code accessibility requirements.
    - Initiate standards development processes and develop initial accessibility standards for Nova Scotia (built environment)
    - Make improvements to provincial parks, beaches, and campgrounds to ensure that more services are accessible.
    - Increase the number of barrier-free sport-fishing sites across the province, and advertise sites to the public. This includes expanding support under the Nova Scotia Sportfish Habitat Fund for projects that improve public access to sport-fishing areas, including barrier-free access to fishing sites.

Resource Name: Accessible by Design 2030, Government of Nova Scotia Department of Justice, 2018

Takeaway(s):

- Goal set to address gaps in current regulations when it comes to making buildings, streets, sidewalks, and shared spaces accessible to all.
- Actions:
    - Conduct a review of spaces owned and leased by the government to determine their accessibility issues and priorities, and develop an action plan to make them accessible by 2030.
    - Incorporate clauses into new government leases for occupied spaces to ensure landlords meet the current Nova Scotia Building Code accessibility requirements.
    - Improve the accessibility of Nova Scotia courts, including the Amherst Supreme Court, Digby Justice Centre, Halifax Law Courts, and Annapolis Royal Court House.
    - Improve accessibility for persons with disabilities at provincial parks, beaches, campgrounds, and sportfishing sites. Provide barrier-free access to at least one provincial beach in every region by 2021.

Resource Name: The Accessibility Directorate Website, Government of Nova Scotia, 2020

Takeaway(s):

- Built Environment Standards Development Committee has submitted a recommendation to the Minister of Justice addressing gaps in the current regulations for:
    - Exteriors
    - Interiors
    - Emergency systems
    - Site selections
    - Housing and residence
    - Wayfinding and signage
    - Parks and recreation

Resource Name: Accessible Design for the Built Environment, CSA Group, 2018
Takeaway(s):

- This document provides tactile instruction on how to design spaces for people with varying physical, sensory, or cognitive abilities. The document provides building instruction on:
    - General requirements
    - Interior circulation
    - Interior facilities
    - Residential accommodations
    - Exterior Circulation, spaces, and amenities
    - Vehicular access
    - Passenger pick-up areas
- The document provides figures and tables to help visualize accessibility requirements in the built environment.

Resource Name: Interim Accessibility Guidelines for Indoor and Outdoor Spaces, Nova Scotia Accessibility Directorate, 2020
Takeaway(s):

- Whole journey approach—all parts of a journey are interlinked and equally important. A single obstacle can make it impossible to complete the journey, even if the rest of the way is accessible.
- Universal design—any environment should be designed to meet the needs of anybody wishing to use it, regardless of their age, size, ability, or disability.
- Seasonal maintenance—seasonal conditions, such as snow and ice, can create barriers to accessibility; seasonal maintenance can help to ensure that public spaces are accessible at all times.
- The minimum standards for a ramp slope according to the CSA is 1:12 (8.3%) or less, but the recommended slope is 1:20 (5%).

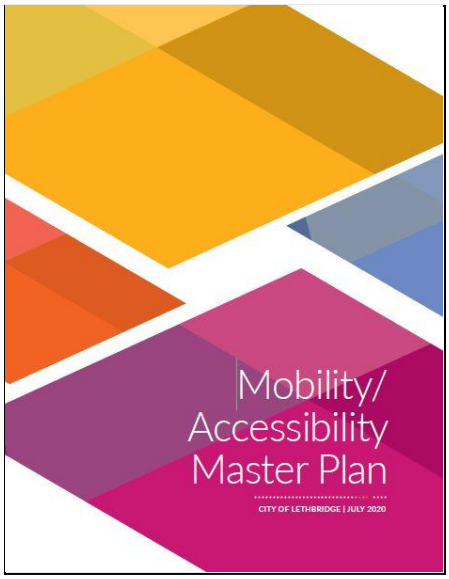
- The minimum standard for turning radius of a manual wheelchair is 1.5 metres
- Playgrounds should be connected to at least one accessible route, providing adequate space for all children and their caregivers to move through, and quiet areas to support children with invisible disabilities.

Resource Name: Guide to Planning Accessible Meetings and Events
Takeaway(s):

- A facility that is accessible also minimizes the number of additional arrangements to be made to accommodate participants with disabilities. Conducting a site visit before booking the location is the best way to determine how accessible a venue is.
- The size of the space, positioning of service providers such as ASL/ English interpreters and CART providers, lighting, audio systems, and assignment and positioning of seating all must be considered in relation to the needs of participants, and the content and objective of the event.

5.5.3. Case Study Example

Lethbridge - Accessibility Master Plan



This plan is unique due to its location and role within Alberta accessibility standards. This plan took a deeper dive into the city's built form and what elements were in a higher need of a redesign. Universal design was a recurring theme along with the associated municipal funding requirements. This document is intended to be a living document and will be adjusted as needed and as accessibility standards evolve over time.

Key takeaways and best practices

- Lethbridg's desire for Universal Design to become standard across the city
- Accessible design consistency in new construction
- Real Estate and Land Development Business Unit (City Department) helps to determine what is the next project to complete with the council's approval (Matrix)
- Prioritization matrix – proactive improvements over-reactive
- Accessibility across the city in winter and through construction areas

5.5.4. Potential Improvements

Public Engagement:

- Parking
    - Ensure parking spaces are wide enough for side unloading vans or ramps OR create spaces beside accessible parking stalls where no one can park.
    - In site plan design, ensure that developments have pedestrian crossing areas marked in parking lots from parking spots to the sidewalk
    - Create wheelchair-exclusive parking spaces
    - Ensure parking lots are well lit - unable to see potholes and cracks in pavement that damage or topple wheelchairs
    - Remove unnecessary curbs within parking lots to allow for wheelchair transversal
    - Clear and consistent parking signage
- Streets & sidewalks
    - Ensure there are ramped curbs to all crossings throughout the neighbourhood
    - Crosswalks all have auditory sound and tactile surfacing for crossings in addition to light signals
    - Bridge fixes in Kingston area (purported federal funding available)
    - Install lighting at busy sidewalk locations and bus shelters
    - Ensure sidewalks are flat and upgraded to remove cracks
- Buildings
    - Providing quiet public spaces for de-escalation
    - Ensure elevators have buttons that are the correct height for those in mobility devices
    - Create complexes that allow people with disabilities who have self-managed care to live and work together independently - independent living complex
    - Update all public buildings to the newest building code and ensure they are Rick Hansen Certified
    - Use a wheelchair or mobility device to test all public buildings
    - Make ramps more visible and accessible to use
    - Accessibility audit of all public and private buildings
- Land Use By-laws & building codes
    - Remove building footprint minimums to allow for affordable tiny home development
    - Ensure that all new facilities are designed, built, and enforced to be accessible
    - Ensure that accessible building code requirements are being met and enforced, particularly in regards to accessibility

    - Remove discrepancies in code recommendations and refer to CSA B651 standards whenever there are discrepancies
    - Educate all building professionals and businesses on accessibility standards (see awareness)
- Washrooms
    - Ceiling lift in one bathroom for each hotel
- Accessible L-grab bars implemented into all public bathrooms
- Create accessible bathrooms in line with CSA standards
- Ensuring there is adequate transfer space and seating space for those with disabilities and with different body types.
- Street Furniture
    - More benches along walking routes and sidewalks for seniors and those with mobility issues to rest
    - Battery charging stations for electric wheelchairs

5.6. Awareness

5.6.1. The Starting Point

5.6.1.1. Overview

Within The Municipality of the County of Kings and the Villages, there's reportedly a growing understanding of inequalities and increased emphasis on diversity and inclusion. In November of 2012, through the development of an Action Plan for Ending Racism and Discrimination in the Municipality of The County of Kings, there were strategic focus areas and actions that aimed "to create a safe and welcoming community that meets the social, cultural and economic needs of all residents regardless of age, ability, race, ethnicity, religion, gender, language, sexual orientation or socio-economic status." In April of 2021, the Municipality hired a Diversity Specialist under their community development department to enact actions proposed in this action plan.

There is still a long way to go with accessibility awareness, as the second most referenced barrier to the built environment was personal attitudes, which was repeated throughout interviews, survey results, and pop-up engagement alike.

5.6.1.2. Achievements

Site Assessment:

- In public areas, accessibility upgrades are being integrated into design

- Ramps and curb cuts are increasing
- Automatic door openers are being added to aid in accessible access

Public Engagement:

- There is effort being made to improve accessibility and a general shift towards universal design principles

5.6.1.3. Barriers

Site Assessment:

- Outdated language on parking signage even on new parking stalls
- Not all ramps provided are accessible due to their width, slope, lake of landings and tactile warnings

Public Engagement:

- Feeling isolated and different
    - Feels observed in small-town environment due to lack of exposure and education of fellow residents about different abilities
    - Some people make quick judgments about a person's capabilities based on their appearance. Some feel sorry for them, which is an uncomfortable feeling.
- Lack of support and training
    - Lack of public social support and awareness of how to manage different behavioural patterns among those with learning disabilities and autism
    - Some feel like their disability is overlooked in public events and within their government. This was highlighted for learning and communicative disabilities specifically.
    - Lack of publicly available mental health supports
- Invisible disability issues
    - Fragrances in public can exclude some people from events and locations

5.6.2. Policies

Resource Name: Government of Nova Scotia Accessibility Plan, Government of Nova Scotia, 2018

Takeaway(s):

- We will create a culture of accessibility across our organization. This includes increasing awareness of the Accessibility Act and building capacity for government staff to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to equitable participation.
    - Strengthen capacity within Departments to champion diversity and inclusion, including accessibility and disability issues across government. This work will align with development and implementation of the Public Service Commission's new diversity and inclusion strategy.
    - Develop new training offerings within the Public Service Commission Learning Environment specific to accessibility and disability issues. Make training compulsory for managers and staff across the provincial public service.
    - Continue to enhance policy analysis and program development, including building an accessibility framework for assessment of policy/program development initiatives.
    - Build capacity among Communications Nova Scotia staff to ensure they can support Departmental clients to build accessibility into their communications products and deliverables.
    - Develop and implement public awareness programs (internal and external), to build awareness around the Accessibility Act, barriers to accessibility and what an accessible Nova Scotia means.
    - Work with (support) public sector organizations prescribed under the Accessibility Act, to develop and implement accessibility plans and accessibility advisory committees

Resource Name: Guide to Planning Accessible Meetings and Events, Nova Scotia Accessibility Directorate, Department of Justice, 2018
Takeaway(s):

- Treat the person with a disability with the same respect that you extend to every person.
- Focus on the person as an individual, not their disability.
- Ask each person what will make them most comfortable during the event.
- Always ask the person if they need assistance and how you can assist; do not make decisions for the person or assume they need help.
- Address the person directly rather than the service provider.

Limited policies currently inform and direct the awareness of accessibility in the Municipality of the County of Kings.

5.6.3. Case Study Example

Halifax - Accessibility Strategy

This plan is relevant for the local comparison for Nova Scotia and the newly mandated provincial accessible policy. Halifax is a major city in contrast to Kings County, but it provides context. An interesting topic to explore would be inter-municipal accessible transit to and from Halifax. Halifax also has an accessibility tourism program where accessible trails and attractions are promoted.

Key takeaways and best practices

- Remove barriers: Systemic, attitudinal and Structural
- Partnerships with private and not for profit organizations
- Continued awareness toward improving accessibility

5.6.4. Potential Improvements

Public Engagement:

- Normalization
    - Increase conversation about ability, and normalize everyone through conversation
    - Treat people with disabilities as capable
    - Increased interactions with the disability community to increase empathy & normalization
    - Help others to understand that people need support, not just through physical buildings, but through their lives - services, and online platforms
- Knowledge Building
    - Knowledge building in the general public about different abilities and supports necessary
    - Centralized resources for where to access information about different abilities, needs, and programs, including self-managed care
    - Experiential learning among Council and staff about what it means to use different assistive equipment (e.g. Test washrooms with a wheelchair)
    - Share grant opportunities with other public and private entities to make it easier to implement accessibility needs
    - Share information on where to find accessibility equipment in the community
- Training
    - Provide training programs and resources for staff to understand how to interact with different disabilities and deescalate situations using trauma-informed practices.

    - Provide training to staff, Council and Commissions about accessibility and person-first training during diversity and inclusion training (e.g. reading someone's tax bill to them)
    - Provide toolkits to inform the business community and other partners of what makes an accessible environment (including built environments, furniture arrangements, employment, signage location, etc.).
- Engagement
    - Build relationships with client base via service agencies who have a pre-existing relationship with their clientele
- Policy
    - Reviewing policy to ensure that people are treated with respect and compassion
- Signage
    - Increased signage and wayfinding for all trails, buildings, and accessible parking stalls
- Advocacy
    - Create a rating system that advertises which accessible services a facility or a business has. For example, do they have dimmed lighting during certain times of the day? Do they have ramps? Ensure that details are described so that those with different disabilities know where to shop.

5.7. Recreation

5.7.1. The Starting Point

5.7.1.1. Overview

There are varying amounts of recreation facilities spread throughout the Municipality and the Villages. When it comes to the number of indoor and outdoor recreation facilities, partnering governments are responsible for the following:

- Municipality of the County of Kings: 54 outdoor recreational spaces
- Village of Canning: 3 recreational spaces (gazebo, park, playground)
- Village of Greenwood: 6 outdoor recreational spaces
- Village of Kingston: 13 recreational spaces
- Village of New Minas: 3 recreational buildings, 29 outdoor recreation spaces, and 54 pieces of supporting recreational furniture (benches and picnic tables)
- Village of Port Williams: 13 outdoor recreational spaces
- The Village of Cornwallis Square and Aylesford numbers will be recorded in future reports

Looking at these facilities, there are a series of achievements and barriers that are directly in Municipal and Village control.

5.7.1.2. Achievements

- Parks
    - Hard packed gravel access to local parks
    - Accessible playgrounds for children and guardians to use
    - Spray park with a level entrance
- Recreation Centres
    - Accessible parking
    - Automatic door openers at entrances
    - Accessible facilities within the recreation center

Public Engagement:

- Parks and some trails
    - Many park trails are easily transversable
    - Good distribution of parks overall were reported

5.7.1.3. Barriers

Site Assessment:

- Playgrounds
    - Most playgrounds are not accessible due to the curb perimeter
    - Rest area seating is commonly not adjacent to an accessible path
    - Playground ground surface is not wheelchair accessible
- Recreation Centres
    - Doors are not all accessible with push access, accessible hardware, appropriate opening force and level thresholds
    - Interior facilities, such as washrooms, are not all accessible

Public Engagement:

- Playgrounds
    - Little to no accessible and courtesy parking close to the equipment

    - Choice of ground cover (woodchips) is accessible, as well as equipment
    - Spread apart park elements - washrooms, equipment and garbages
- Trails
    - Rail trail: Limited access points, poor wayfinding, some difficulty travelling down
    - Dirt and gravel trails - loose gravel can be difficult to move down, mainly when gravel is fresh
    - Gates to move along pathways can make things difficult
- Program Exclusion
    - Many programs are reportedly not accessible to all, and are expensive if they are
- Parks
    - Some park trails and areas are not accessible via mobility device
    - Difficult to get to some parks without travelling by car
- Events
    - Events taking place in the same geographies that are too far for many residents relying on transit
    - Some events are not accessible, like Apple Blossom or Gala days

5.7.2. Policies

Limited policies currently inform and direct the accessibility of recreation services in the Municipality of the County of Kings.

5.7.3. Potential Improvements

Public Engagement:

- Playgrounds
    - Create playgrounds that are fully accessible (i.e. equipment, ground coverings, close to washrooms, garbages, and accessible parking, not spread apart)
    - Partner with schools to ensure school playgrounds are accessible
- Recreation Supports
    - Adaptive equipment supports like ice sleds for those who can’t skate
    - Recreational activities are affordable or free
    - Programs and camps inclusive of ability
    - Quiet activities for children who don’t like being in loud sensory environments
    - Adaptive play and recreational supports and activities
    - Additional staff supports for camps where accessibility needs indicated
- Recreational Facilities
    - An accessible swimming pool with a connecting bus route
    - Accessible change rooms
    - The track around indoor turf for mobility devices

    - Accessible spectator locations
    - Year-round recreational facility access
- Programs for all ages
    - More programming accessible to whole families
    - Accessible childrens' programming
    - Accessible seniors' programming
- Recreational trails
    - Remove bollards that do not allow a wheelchair to transverse
    - Connect growth centres to employment areas via accessible trails
    - Bike lanes and sidewalks throughout the County
    - Keep some trails open and accessible over the winter (see goods and services - maintenance)
- Events
    - Provide accessible event parking and potential viewing locations for parades
    - Accessible bathrooms available for events
    - Create and advertise events for different abilities (e.g. autism event)
    - Partner with event organizers to ensure the event is accessible
- Make an accessible beach location

6.0 Discussion

There are a series of considerations for each Village, Municipality and Kings Transit Authority to implement. This document is meant to raise awareness of some initial barriers, achievements, and proposed improvements. As such, recommendations from this report are an early attempt to consolidate the recommendations that we've heard and created from site assessments, engagements, policies and existing practices. This working document will continue to be built out as more information comes to light.

7.0 Recommendations

Using recommendations from policy, case studies, accessibility audits, and engagement, initial actions were selected from this plan based on the following framework:

1. Is the action in line with Provincial policies and requirements?
2. Is the action within the Municipality's, KTA or the Village's control?
3. Is the action achievable in the next three years, or will it make a sizable difference in the near future?
4. Will the action improve one of the areas that survey respondents claimed to be the least accessible or one of the biggest barriers?

Using this framework, a series of action areas were identified and revised in more detail during the Accessibility Sprint. The following is a list of actions that will be investigated in the sprint for implementation in the next three years:

1. Create a Central Accessibility Information Resource to help people with disabilities find and access information on programs and services.
2. Create a government-wide Accessible Customer Service Policy.
3. Update Committee, Council and Village Commission procedures, and engagement policies to provide accessible resources for meetings and engagements.
4. Build capacity among communications and clerk staff to build accessibility into their communications and website materials. Complete a review of communications policies, procedures and practices to remove barriers and include accessible design requirements in communications strategies and brand guidelines.
5. Conduct a feasibility analysis to construct an Accessible Recreation Centre, including an accessible pool.
6. Modify hiring and procurement policies and procedures to ensure they prioritize accessibility.

7. Develop and administer new training offerings for staff, Municipal Council and Village Commissions specific to accessibility and disability issues.
8. Review maintenance procedures and snow removal and government vegetation maintenance in areas that have sidewalks and bus shelters, particularly in commercial and recreational areas
9. Retrofit playgrounds to become accessible
10. Improve sidewalk access to transit stops, and ensure stops have wheelchair-accessible bus shelters and clear signage
11. Install consistent parking signage throughout Municipal and Village facilities.
12. Conduct an audit of Municipal and Village parking Stalls to ensure they are wide enough to provide side unloading and wheelchair access.
13. Conduct full audit of accessible parks and beaches
14. Upgrade all Municipal and Village buildings to have accessible washrooms
15. Upgrade all pathways & sidewalks to ensure each has curb cuts, level pathways, appropriate widths, maintenance, and tactile warnings
16. Implement braille accessible wayfinding signage throughout
17. Improve entrances to public buildings with ramp access, functional pushbuttons and wheelchair and visually impaired access to all floors

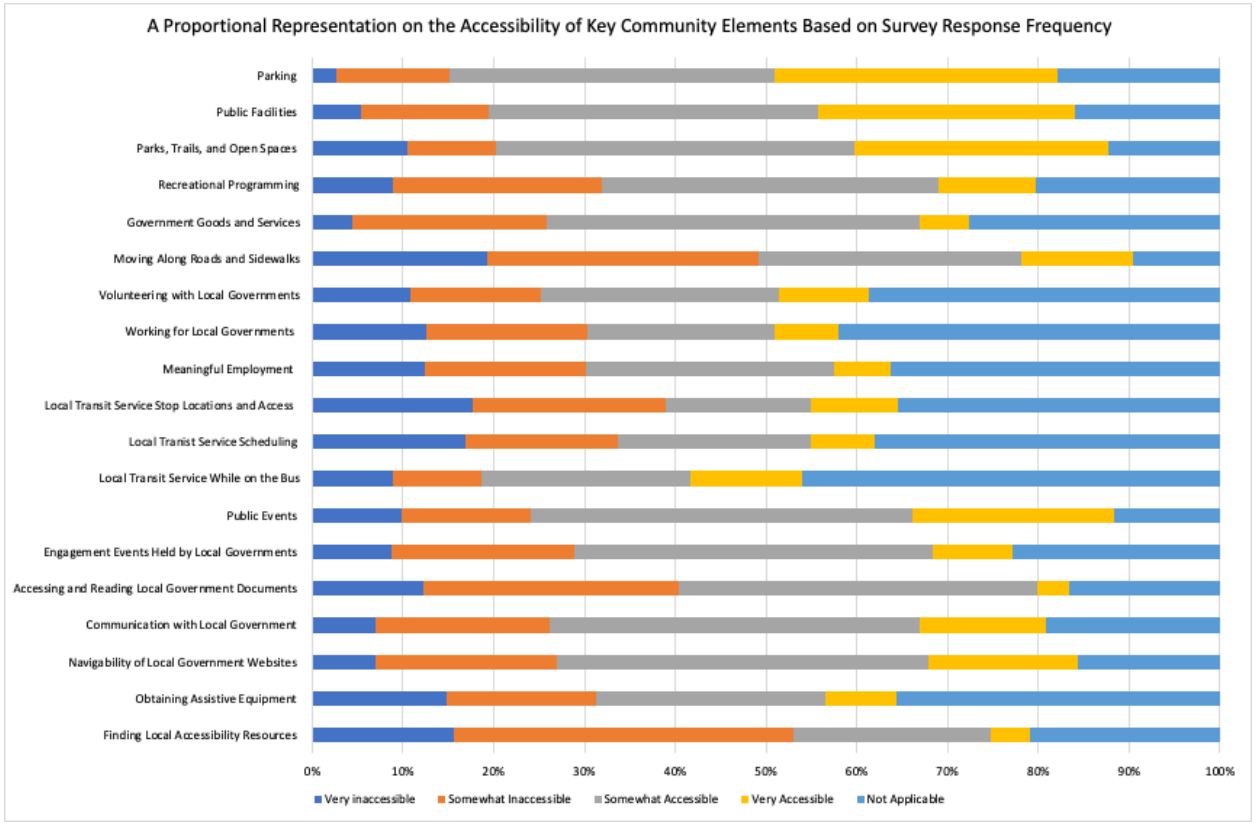
These actions are an initial brainstorm of short-term actions that fit the criteria listed above. These actions will be analyzed in detail in the strategy sprint and modified depending on staff feasibility identification. Longer-term actions will be listed in an appendix of the final document and based on what we continue to learn throughout the plan's development process.

Appendix A: Policy Recording Tables

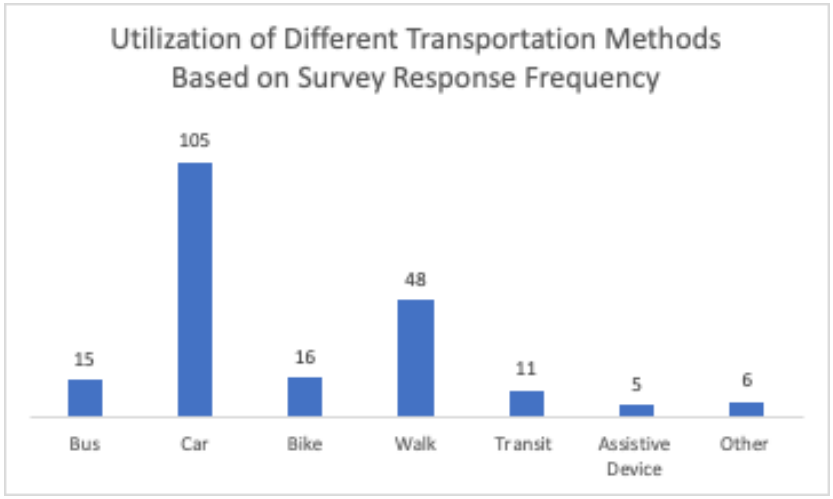
For document accessibility reasons, this appendix has been removed. To see policy tables, please reach out to a member of Municipal Staff directly.

Appendix B: Quantitative Survey Analysis

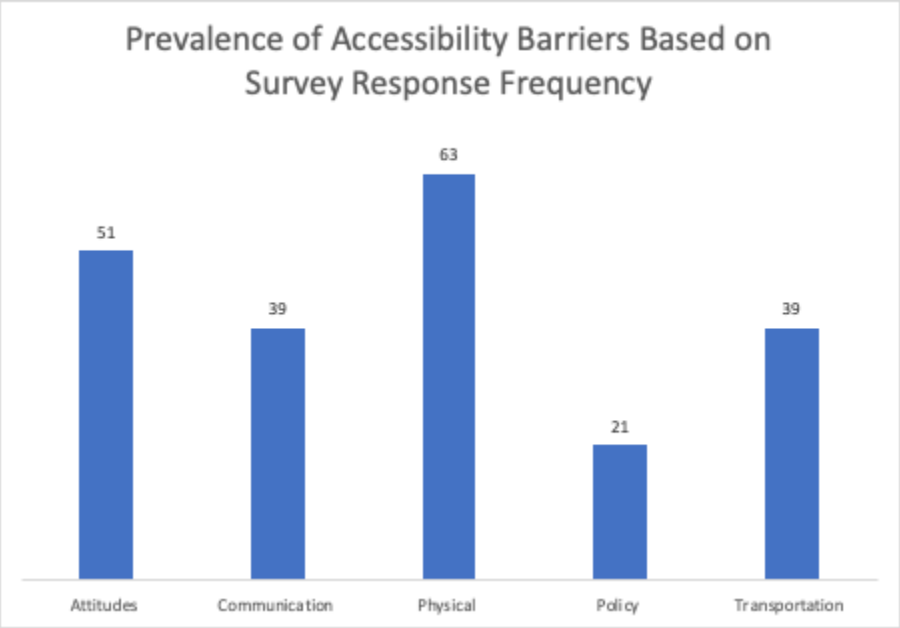
Accessibility of Key Community Elements



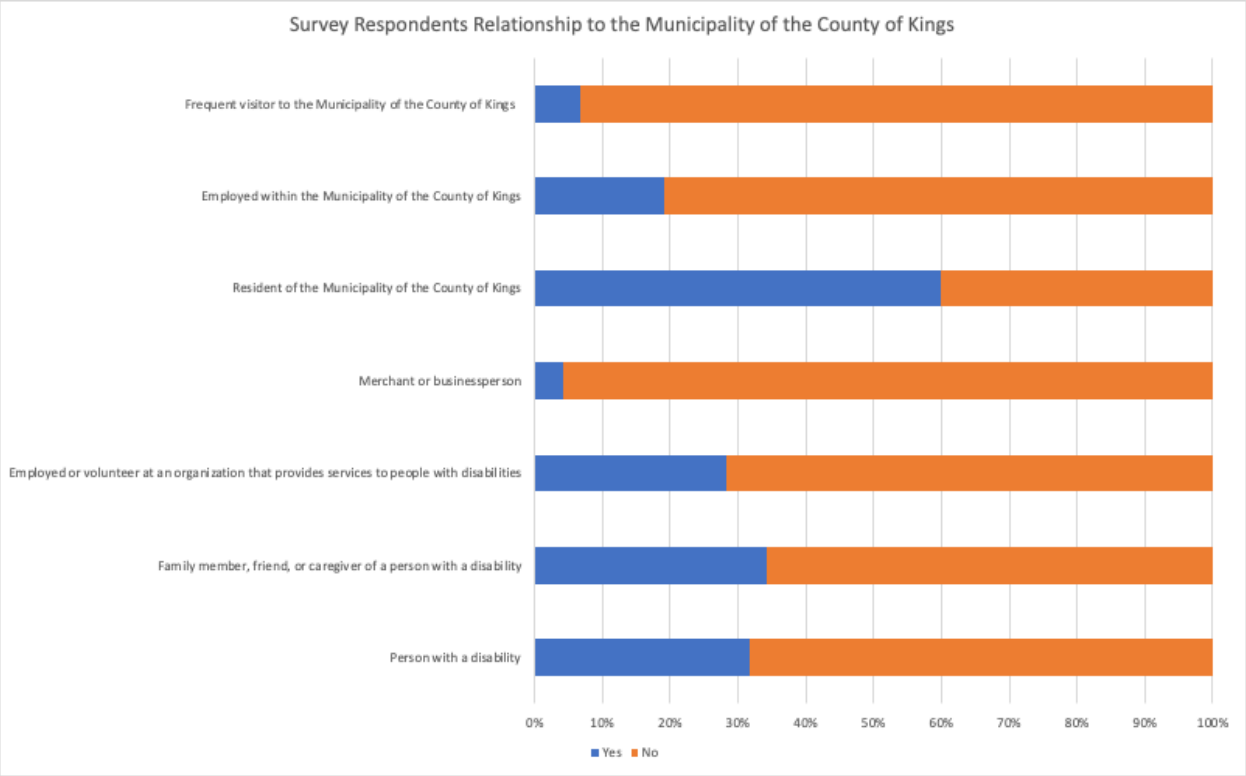
Transportation

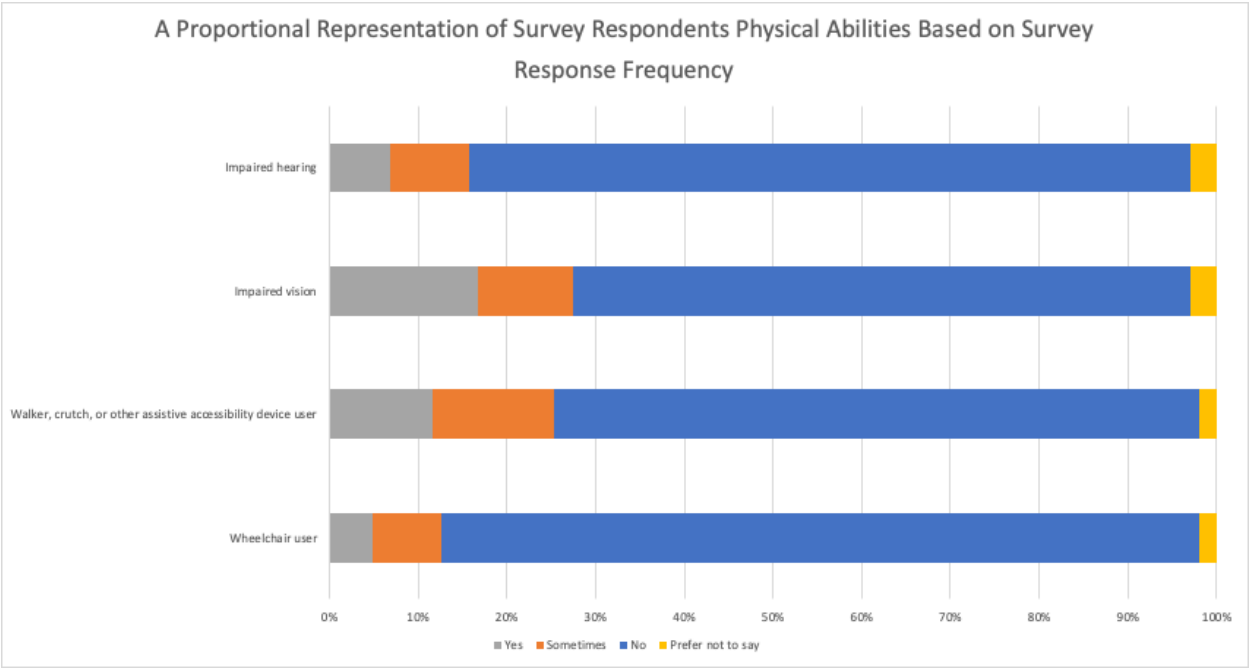


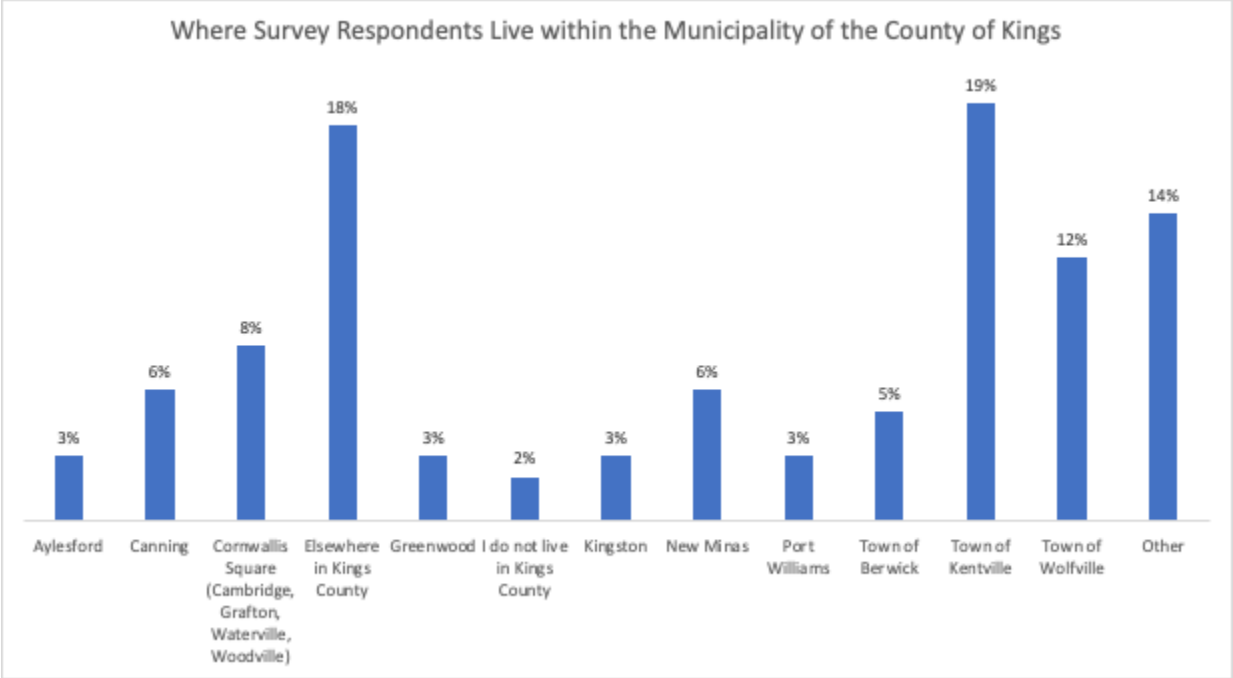
Accessibility Barriers



Demographics




A Proportional Representation of Survey Respondents Physical Abilities Based on Survey Response Frequency
Impaired hearing
Impaired vision
Walker, crutch, or other assistive accessibility device user
Wheelchair user
0%
10%
20%
30%
40%
50%
60%
70%
80%
90%
100%
Yes
Sometimes
No
Prefer not to say


Where Survey Respondents Live within the Municipality of the County of Kings
3%
6%
8%
18%
3%
2%
3%
6%
3%
5%
19%
12%
14%
Aylesford
Canning
Cornwallis Square (Cambridge, Grafton, Waterville, Woodville)
Elsewhere in Kings County
Greenwood
I do not live in Kings County
Kingston
New Minas
Port Williams
Town of Berwick
Town of Kentville
Town of Wolfville
Other