



ACCESSIBLE ANTIGONISH COUNTY

2025-2028

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Welcome, Bienvenue, Pjila'si,

Accessibility is evolving, the understanding of terms, needs, guidelines, codes and people living with both visible and invisible disabilities is changing. More conversations are changing. Understanding that accessible for all means that with this evolving plan along with our Equity, Anti-hate and Anti-racism plan we will continue to support change and where possible lead in doing the work to make it happen. This doesn't cover everything, as we do work or facilitate projects in various departments, we are trying to ensure accessibility and equity lens are used. We will continue to use this as a guide and flex and maximize opportunities as we find them to work towards making our communities accessible for all.

Sincerely,

Warden N. MacInnes,
Councillor District 6

The Municipality of the County of Antigonish would like to thank our inaugural Accessibility Advisory Committee who worked hard to make our original plan practical, inclusive and action focused. We would like to acknowledge the passing of Johnny Rodgers a committee member we lost this year, he was a champion of accessibility in Nova Scotia and beyond over the past 4 decades, Johnny was a friend to the County and to many in the County. He was an activist, a musician, a comedian and the head and the heart of a leader. He will be missed. Johnny will never be far from the work we do, and we will continue to hear him applauding our successes while asking what next.

I continue to welcome you to reach out to myself or any of my colleagues on Council or staff at the Municipality as you have ideas, need assistance or want to propose a project regarding accessibility. We have renamed our committee the Accessible Antigonish County Committee, with the name change the role will still be to advise, inform and support work of the County team, while representing first voices, community at large and connecting their needs and work with ours.

Sincerely,

Councillor Gary Mattie, District 8
Chair of Municipal of the County of Antigonish's Accessibility Advisory Committee

Executive Summary

In 2017 Nova Scotia became the third province in the country to develop and enact Accessibility Legislation. This plan is part of the public sector responsibility within that legislation, originally developed in 2022 with our committee and municipal team, it served as a base for this updated plan, it will continue to evolve, with another full review in 2028. Accessible Antigonish County outlines what the municipality has responsibility and ability to do in each of these areas, as well explores how to engage and educate on accessibility.

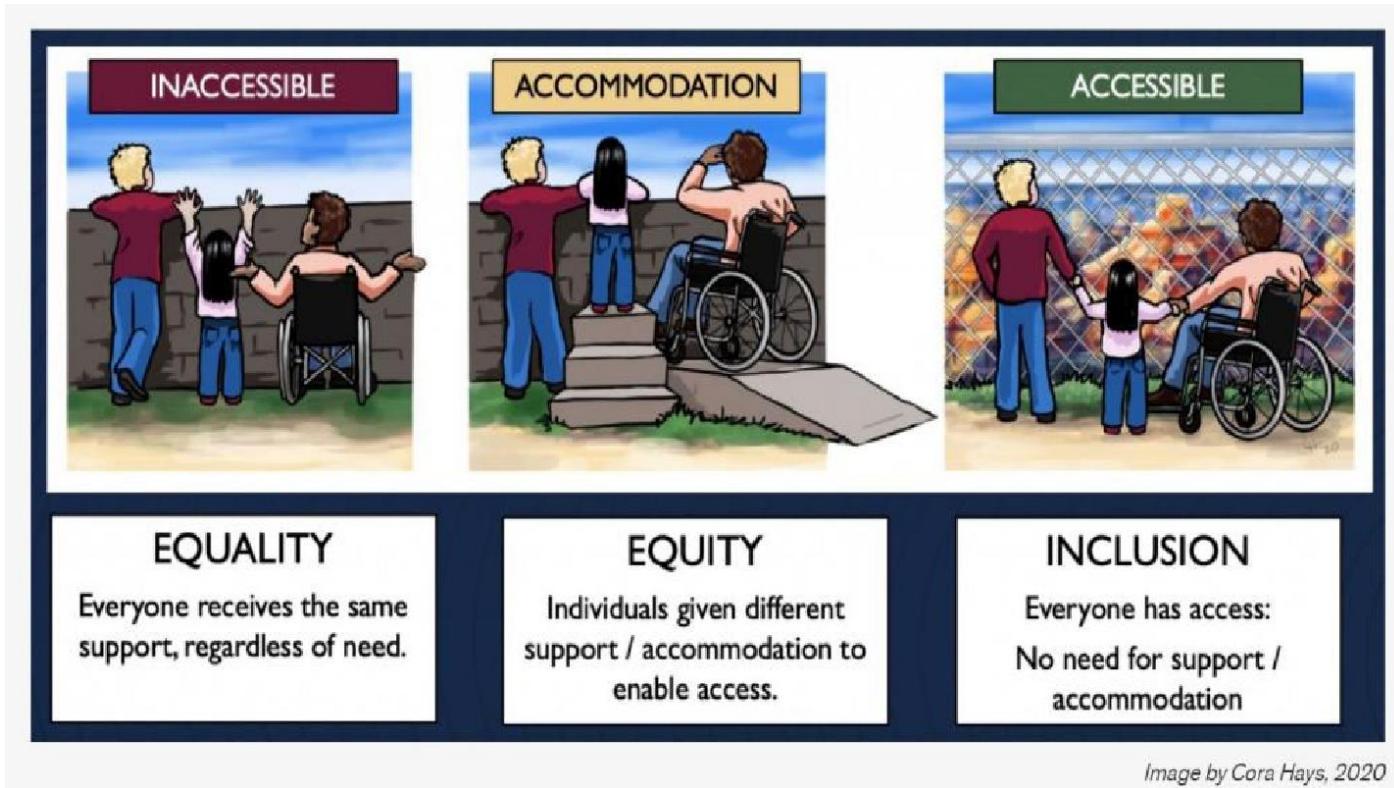
Important to remember Nova Scotia had the highest rates of

disability in Canada, this hasn't changed since 2022. We continue to incorporate accessibility into our book of business and future planning. As in 2022, income, affordability, diversity, racism, and cultural inclusion are all issues in our community; they are not the explicit focus of this plan but are inherent considerations when moving to implementation and changing our norm. This plan aligns with our [Nalikitquniejk, Antigonish Equity, Anti-Hate, and Anti-Racism Plan](#). Where possible and for efficiency we will combine efforts to get the best results.

Vision & Commitment To Accessibility

Our vision and commitment remain unchanged since 2022, learning from mistakes and striving to do more, and to keep things as simple as possible. The Municipality of the County of Antigonish respects diversity among community members. We recognize members of our community have a diverse range of hearing, movement, sight, and cognitive abilities. We are committed to striving for inclusive access to our programs, communications, information, services, spaces, and buildings. The municipality ultimately wants our community to be welcoming, safe, supportive, and respectful.

We value providing service and access with dignity, integrity, and comfort for all. Dignity and wellbeing are paramount. The Municipality recognizes accessibility as a human right, and we are committed to working to equity and inclusion through identification and dismantling of barriers and meeting the requirements and recommendations of the Nova Scotia Accessibility Act.



Accessibility Areas of Focus:

The municipality is committed to removing barriers and creating accessibility in the following key areas as outlined in the Nova Scotia Accessibility Act, based on standards set by the province in the following areas.



Nova Scotia Accessibility Legislation

Nova Scotia became the third province in Canada to adopt accessibility legislation in April 2017 with the passing of the Accessibility Act. This Act was developed over a two-year period starting in 2015 with public consultations.

The Accessibility Act, S. N.S. 2017, c. 2. Subsection 39(2) provides:

39... (2) A municipality, university or organization shall prepare and make publicly available an accessibility plan within one year of being prescribed as a public sector body.

The act prescribes each municipality to create an accessibility plan, to be developed in partnership with your accessibility advisory committee. All plans will be developed with standards provided by the province in six key areas listed above. The municipality will play a support role through advocacy for more support and resources for accessible gains in our community.

2025 Accessibility Initiatives at or supported by the MCA



Built Environment

- Enhanced facilities at Pomquet Park Beach (partnership with provincial department of Natural Resources) and working on a plan for outdoor spaces through winter 2025, hoping to include more work on parks, community spaces and other beaches.
- Main entrance renos and work to all washrooms for staff & public at 285 Beech Hill Rd, Municipal Admin Building. All doors reworked and automated

to all washrooms and hallway in building. More renos in progress, front main entrance is being redesigned for accessibility in a changing climate. (in progress).

- Addition of tactile paver panels on newly constructed municipal sidewalks and inserting on older installations when repairs are planned.

Education & Awareness

- Access Awareness Day,
- Staff and Councillor trained Rick Hansen Foundation
- Ongoing staff and councillor training and education to understand accessibility is as diverse as the people in our community.

Transportation

- Development and support of Antigonish Community Transit; new review of transit in 2025
- Active Transportation corridor and planning for connecting accessible pathways in community.

Information & Communication

- Communications plan completed in 2025, implementation plan currently being developed.
- Plain language training completed with all departments.
- Installation of [the Owl](#) in Council Chambers and meeting spaces, Including in multi-purpose room and board room. As well a touch screen [ViewSonic](#) for collaboration and ensure meetings are more accessible.
- Upgraded microphone, speakers and blue tooth for connection to personal devices for hearing support.
- Working on Closed captioning options and descriptive text.

Employment

- Creating work environment that is inclusive with accessible furniture and equipment, adjustable furniture available in most offices, working on AI and text to talk options.
- Developing accessible workspaces



Goods & Service

- Expansion of free equipment loan program. Some new major pieces of adapted equipment include an adult bike, PFDs, and beach wheelchair. Also added to the loan program were paddle boards, mountain bikes, lawn games, etc.
- Individual support by staff to complete forms and apply for programs and support.
- Development of alternative pay methods including phone and direct pay options.
- Financial support programs i.e.: low-income tax exemption, funding to support recreation program access.

What The Words Mean

(Glossary of Terms)

The following words are used in the plan or are part of implementation. This list is not exhaustive and to support learning and understanding we will continue to add to the list. The accessible advisory committee had discussions about the terms, barrier free, barrier friendly, able bodied, disabled and recognizes that individuals' strong feelings about the language used when discussing accessibility.

The definitions and language used throughout the plan is meant to be respectful and inclusive and encourages respectful and educational based discussion and debate.

A.

Accessibility

Nova Scotia's Accessibility Act suggests that accessibility is defined as "address(ing) the identification, removal and prevention of barriers in the policies, programs, practices and services."

The Rick Hansen Foundation elaborates on this definition as the "degree to which a product, device, activity, facility, service or environment allows everyone to participate

fully and is available to everyone on an equal basis." They add that "something cannot

be considered accessible if there have only been efforts to make it accessible to one group, such as those who are blind or people who are wheelchair users."

Meaningful accessibility meets the real needs of any user and responds to their entire experience, rather than simply completing a checklist of minimum requirements. As examples, an accessible meeting space is not useful if it is only accessed by a flight of stairs, and a ramp does not provide meaningful access if it is located at a separate entrance around the back of a building.

Accessibility Act

Also known as Bill 59, is the Nova Scotian legislation passed in April 2017, which

aims to make the province inclusive and barrier-free by 2030.

Accessibility Audit

A professional inventory, review and evaluation and sometimes grading of infrastructure, services, systems, policies, programs, and practices on how accessible things are. There are standards being developed by the province of Nova Scotia that along with the Rick Hansen Foundation Certification standards that will inform and guide the accessibility audit.

Accommodations

Modifications which have been made to facilities, objects, environments, or systems that enable persons with disabilities to be on an equal level to other individuals.

Adaptive Technology

Technology developed as a tool to increase accessibility of existing technology. Used in education and information sectors to support inclusion.

ASL

American Sign Language.

Auditory

Related to hearing or sensing sound.

B.

Barrier

Something that makes it harder for some people to participate. Nova Scotia's Accessibility Act defines a barrier as "anything that hinders or challenges the full and effective participation in society of persons with disabilities, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological

barrier, a policy or a practice.”

Braille

A reading and writing system for people who are visually impaired.

C.

CART

Communication Access Realtime Translation. CSA: Canadian Standards Association.

Closed Captioning:

A text version of the spoken component of a televised speech, movie, show or recorded visual presentation. Text can appear at the bottom of the screen.

CSA B651-18

A set of standards, released by the Canadian Standards Association, which outlines a set of technical recommended requirements for accessible design within built environments including sidewalks, buildings, signposts, etc.

D.

Disability

Nova Scotia’s Accessibility Act states that disabilities “include a physical, mental, intellectual, learning, or sensory impairment, including an episodic disability that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders an individual’s full and effective participation in society.”

The World Health Organization offers a holistic explanation of disability, stating, “In recent years, the understanding of disability has moved away from a physical or medical perspective to one that considers a person’s physical, social, and political context.

Today, disability is understood to arise from the interaction between a person’s

health condition or impairment and the multitude of influencing factors in their environment.”

Disabilities may be permanent, temporary (such as a broken bone), or situational (such as a driver unable to see through direct sunlight).

E.

EMO

Emergency Management Office.

Equitable/equity

A commitment to fairness. Equitable access is different from equal access. Equality means everybody is treated the same; equity means everybody is treated fairly, based on their needs and abilities. Infrastructure: The “underlying structure” that makes a place liveable and keeps its systems working (e.g., roads, sewers, clean water, electricity, and more).

F.

First Voice

First Voice is the shared perspective, story, insight, and knowledge from an individual or group of individuals that lives or has lived the experience, or life or community of the subject or question.

I.

Inclusion / Inclusivity

To provide space and supports that allow authentic engagement and use of programs, products, services. It considers physical ability, cognitive ability, financial, cultural, social, and other needs which extend past

those of the perceived ‘average’ or ‘typical’ user. It is an active commitment to value, respect and welcome all.

M.

MCA AAC

Municipality of the County of Antigonish Accessibility Advisory Committee, the committee developed to advise and assist with development of the Accessibility Plan and with municipal policies, programs, and services for persons with disabilities.

Mobi Chair

MobiChair® is a high-quality floating beach wheelchair that floats thanks to its flotation wheels and armrests, the ultimate partner for leisure time and entertainment. DMS’ Mobi- Chair® floating beach wheelchair is designed with everyone in mind: wheelchair users, people with special needs, or even children can benefit from the convenience, portability, and comfort of the Mobi-Chair®.

Mobile Date Computer Software Computerized software used in public transit vehicles and taxis to communicate digitally with a central dispatcher.

obi Mat

Deschamps Mats Systems Inc. designs, produces, and delivers Mobi-mat® accessibility mats and sand fences for cities, national parks, commercial and residential throughout the United States and Canada.

Portable Beach and Ground Reinforcement Access Mats designed for greater accessibility on soft soil for pedestrians, wheelchair users, strollers, ATVs, and small crafts. <https://shop.mobi-mat.com/>

N.

NSFM

Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities.

P.

Pedestrian

A person walking outside or using an assistive device outside to travel at a walking speed.

Plain language

Language a reader or listener can understand easily and completely. Ensuring that writing is clear, concise, well-organized, and able to be properly understood by a diverse group of individuals, regardless of their intellectual or educational backgrounds.

R.

Retrofit

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

RHF

Rick Hansen Foundation.

RHFAC

Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification. (Learn more at www.rickhansen.com/become-accessible/rating-certification.)

T.

Tactile

Related to the sense of touch.

Tactile Ground Surface Indicators A system of textured ground surface indicators found on footpaths, stairs, bus stations platforms and more to aid pedestrians who are visual impaired.

U.

Universal Design

Universal Design is the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood, and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability, or disability. An environment (or any building, product, or service in that

environment) should be designed to meet the needs of all people who wish to use it. (<https://universaldesign.ie/what-is-universal-design/>)

There are seven principles of universal design.

Principle 1: Equitable Use

Principle 5: Tolerance for Error

Principle 2: Flexibility in Use

Principle 6: Low Physical Effort

Principle 3: Simple and Intuitive Use

Principle 7: Size and Space for Approach and Use

Principle 4: Perceptible Information

W.

WCAG

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. (Learn more at www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/wcag).

KEY AREAS FOR ACTION BETWEEN 2025-2028



Built Environment

Our Commitment and Goal

Our buildings and spaces will be accessible, including our public washrooms, ramps, municipally owned roads, trails, and sidewalks. We will work with Eastern District Planning Commission to provide information on accessibility for new developments and new builds. The municipality encourages residents, the business community, and developers to work in making our community accessible.

Areas of Action

- Implement a safety and maintenance program to help report accessible issues and link to repairs or work.
- Upgrade municipal infrastructure signage using wayfinding and Nova Scotia approved symbolism as developed with accessible signage standards.
- All new builds or major retrofits will incorporate principles of universal design.
- Development of an annual funding program to support accessible building upgrades for non-profits.
- Work with Eastern District Planning Commission to develop and share accessible standards for built environment for the private sector to align with the provincial goals for 2030.
- Create interior spaces that are sensory friendly for service delivery.
- Define municipal role in accessible housing.
- Develop action plan for increasing accessibility in built environment where ownership or operation is shared with municipality or municipal programs are offered (i.e., Antigonish Arena, beaches, shared trails).
- Participate in and share Nova Scotia's provincial parks and recreation accessibility educational program when available.
- Develop and share a list of funding opportunities/ resources for local organizations and businesses to improve accessibility.





Education & Awareness

Our Commitment and Goal

The municipality will create opportunities for Council, staff, and the community to learn and build capacity regarding accessibility. We are committed to facilitating learning and training opportunities on developing allyship and strive for excellence in accessible service delivery.

Areas of Action

- Develop accessibility resources tools for day-to-day work.
- Engage on a regular basis with first voices to hear of accessibility challenges and successes.
- Support opportunities and workshops for community learning on accessibility.
- Develop an education series with First Voices documenting through video accessibility, it's challenges and successes in our community.
- Work with / support community organizations to develop first voice events and opportunities for the community to learn about accessibility rights and issues



Transportation

Our Commitment and Goal

To support accessible transportation options in the Municipality of the County of Antigonish, including accessible active transportation options.



Areas of Action

- Name site specific barriers to accessible vehicles at municipal properties and identify steps to make changes.
- Identify and improve virtual and supportive service delivery; options that don't require transportation to municipal sites.
- Provide accessible transportation to municipal events, and processes. i.e., elections, public engagements.
- Active Transportation aligned with universal design where possible.
- Document standards for storm and climate related clearance and repair; snow, ice, water, downed trees etc.



Information & Communications

Our Commitment and Goal

The Municipality will use accessible formats and platforms to share information about services and programs. Communication strategies will plan for simultaneous distribution of messages.

Areas of Action

- New communications strategy - develop best practices for delivering information on these platforms while working to eliminate barriers.
- Audit website for accessibility using Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) and ensure that website and web-based meetings and

- engagement are accessible (HTML, Word documents, accessible PDFs, ASL /audio versions, compatibility with screen readers and other assistive technology).
- Create standards and provide training for municipal staff in preparing public information and communications.

- Investigate options for ASL for public events, and announcements.
- Develop standards for signage and wayfinding connected to the built environment based on provincially developed accessible signage guidelines.



Employment

Our Commitment and Goal

The municipal work environment will be accessible. Our employment policies and practices, including recruitment and hiring, will be supportive of all.

Areas of Action

- Review employee handbook and human resource policies with accessible lens, clearly naming opportunities to improve accessibility.
- Provide training for Municipal staff on hiring and employing people with disabilities. Psychological and neurodivergent safe workspace.
- Assess current position descriptions and employee activities finding areas and corresponding actions needed for improvement.



Goods & Services

Our Commitment and Goal

Municipal services will be supported by policies and procedures that bridge from accommodation to accessibility. No community member will be denied service because of a disability, and the municipality will strive to provide goods and services without bias and become universally available..

Municipal goods and services considered during review and plan development:

- Water and wastewater.
- Solid Waste Collection and Management
- Tax Account Management
- Land Use Planning and Building Services in partnership with Eastern District Planning Commission.
- Maintaining municipally owned roads and sidewalks, and Active Transportation.
- Emergency Management Service
- Recreational programming and equipment.
- Community program & event support
- Municipal communications
- Elections & Governance and public participation i.e.: Committee of the Whole, Asset Management and Council.
- Public Engagement on community development and change.

Areas of Action

- Develop education plan for staff, council and partner organizations..
- Educate team and develop a plan for sensory-friendly service hours.
- Document service standards and practices for storm and climate related clearance and

repair; snow, ice, water, downed trees etc.; and maintenance.

- Establish a list of community resources or competent person(s) to provide sign language interpretation at community events, and on request at county led programs, sourcing ASL resources.
- Audit website for accessibility using as outlined in Communications.
- Ensuring points of service are accessible i.e., the municipal building(s)., explore mobile service delivery.
- Try new ideas that are creative and innovative for engaging more equitably.

Implementation, Ongoing Engagement and Monitoring

The Municipal team is responsible for adopting and overseeing the Accessible Antigonish County Plan. This plan will be supported by the CAO, our Director of Sustainable Communities as Accessibility lead, and the Accessible Antigonish County Committee (AAC). The advisory committee will provide feedback and recommendations to Municipal Council as they monitor the plan and continue to develop engagement opportunities to hear from our community.

All municipal policies are currently under review and where appropriate will include ongoing assessment and evaluation from an accessible and equity perspective. Changes will be introduced to ensure policy evolves as needs and reality of the community does.

Currently the Municipality of the County of Antigonish has first voice perspective on our Council and staff teams. They contribute invaluable to the change we are working towards. The County remains committed to not exhausting this resource and to ensure a safe, supportive environment for all, one that allows participation and education while not overusing or having unrealistic expectations on our first voice resources.

This document serves as a guide to our work, we will continue to engage and when unexpected opportunities arise we will act where resources allow.

This plan will be reviewed and revised in 2028.

A Word of Acknowledgment & Request for input and participation.

Thank You!

The Municipality of the County of Antigonish would sincerely like to thank all that contributed time, life experience, knowledge and research to the development of this Accessibility Plan. This plan is just a start, but a start that will create change and build a foundation of accessibility. Of special note, thank-you to the following people who are our inaugural Accessibility Committee Members:

Tiffany MacNeil

Carleton MacNeil James T Williams

Amanda Casey

Johnnie Rodgers Dep Warden Hughie Stewart

Councillor Gary Mattie

Warden Owen McCarron Glenn Horne

Allison Duggan

Daryl Myers

Tammy Feltmate

We want to hear from you. What do you think is a priority in our community? What does accessibility look like for you.

Reach out to Tammy Feltmate, our Accessibility lead at 902 863 1117, or by email at tammy.feltmate@antigonishcounty.ca. Or stop up to the municipal office and chat in person.

Please note accessible parking is available in the upper parking lot, with straight access to

our front entrance.

Our new committee will be announced in November 2025. Applications are currently being submitted.

Appendix A

Report Card on 2022 Plan

This report card is our first attempt to reflect on the plan from 2022, reassess and set new plans in motion.

Ratings:  **Work has started or stages of work are complete** |

 **In Progress** |  **Needs support, delayed or looking at a new approach.**

Section 1: Overall Accessibility Progress

Rating:  **In Progress**  **Needs support, delayed or looking at a new approach**

Comments: Overall, the municipality has developed a thorough level of accessible supports. Areas for improvement include development of guidelines and standards followed by education and tools for all municipal departments, programs, builds, and events. Integration of the plan's actions with the Equity, Anti-hate and Anti-racism plan will provide some momentum. Delays in the release of provincial guidelines and standards has impacted our work. Finding available, knowledgeable, and experienced contractors and specialists.

Section 2: Built Environment

Criteria: Accessibility of municipal buildings, public washrooms, sidewalks, ramps, signage, and adherence to universal design principles.

Rating:  **In progress but still much to do.**

Comments: work completed includes entrance pedway to municipal administration building, 285 Beech Hill Rd. Installation of new toilets and minor retrofits to washrooms in municipal buildings, 2xs issued RFP for complete washroom upgrade, and new entrance; currently prepping for a new release. Our Public Works team has been working diligently with all new sidewalks and road repairs to install accessible components where possible and include accessibility in all new builds. Recreation has accessibility in AT plan and new mini pitch development.

Grade	
Built Environment Actions Report	 Plan and dates  
<p>The Municipality of the County of Antigonish will complete detailed accessibility audits of our municipal infrastructure using the RHFAC tools in 2023.</p> <p>& Develop an action plan for built environment of municipal infrastructure.</p>	 Audits were completed. As work is done, accessibility is integrated. Specific plans need to be developed following budget development. Fall 2025
<p>Accessible washroom upgrades at the municipal administration building</p>	 On-going, challenges with existing infrastructure and design. To be completed in 2025.
<p>Implement a safety and maintenance program to help report accessible issues and link to repairs or work.</p>	 Safety Evolution Software has been acquired, by fall 2025 staff will be onboarded.
<p>Installation of tactile warning surfaces on sidewalk installations and building entries and will include color contrast that is maintained over time. Currently in place but we need to schedule maintenance.</p>	 PW ensures that these are installed on all new builds and placed in older builds when repairs are warranted. Will look in 2026-27 about updating older sidewalks.
<p>Upgrade municipal infrastructure signage using wayfinding and Nova Scotia approved symbolism as developed with accessible signage standards</p>	 On going, challenged with printing and time for printing. New signage in municipal building has braille, and contrast.
<p>All new builds or major retrofits will incorporate principles of universal design.</p>	 Tools are being developed to align with NSBC and go further towards universal design. Developing tools and education for staff and to include in all work.
<p>Development of an annual funding program to support accessible building upgrades for non-profits.</p>	 Until now an accessible lens has been put on current funding programs. New program and tools to coming in fall 2025.
<p>Work with Eastern District Planning Commission to develop and share accessible standards for build environment for the private sector to align with the provincial goals for 2030.</p>	 Work has been supportive. Share info and connected planning staff to communities of practice and online info networks.

Create interior spaces that are sensory friendly for service delivery



Installation of light dimmers and support of staff is ongoing. For public facing service delivery we will develop a plan during winter and spring of 2026, but we at Canada Day and rec programming they have included sensory times.

Define municipal role in accessible housing.



Ongoing, MCA supports affordable housing and in 2024-25 received Housing Accelerator Funding and a staff position. Work is ongoing.

Develop action plan for increasing accessibility in built environment where ownership or operation is shared with municipality or municipal programs are offered (i.e., Antigonish Arena, beaches, shared trails).



On going. Antigonish Arena has developed their plan, we are looking at beaches. We maintain a supportive and educational role where applicable.

Participate in and share Nova Scotia's provincial parks and recreation accessibility educational program when available.



Ongoing, Rec Dept is actively engaged.

Develop and share a list of funding opportunities/resources for local organizations and businesses to improve accessibility.



Will be developed and shared winter of 2026, this will be implemented with other changes to our communications strategy, a plan is in development in 2025.

Section 3: Transportation Criteria: Supporting accessible transport in a rural setting. **Rating:** ● In Progress **Comments:** Antigonish Community Transit is not owned by the County but financially supported. A review has been completed in 2025. Implementation of recommendations is next step.

Grade	
Transportation Accessibility Actions Report	● Plan and dates ● ●
Name site specific barriers to accessible vehicles at municipal properties and identify steps to make changes.	● Increased accessible parking spaces at municipal buildings, in number and size for varied exit, entry vehicle options.
Identify and improve virtual and supportive service delivery; options that don't require transportation to municipal sites.	● Online and call in support for distance payment is in place and for service support. Other opportunities to be identified as new tech comes in to play.
Provide accessible transportation to municipal events, and processes. i.e., elections, public engagements.	● Have provided for various community events, but we need to regulate this to be available to open meetings etc. Ensured availability for elections in 2024.
Support awareness and share information of accessible transportation options in the community.	● In all municipal communications we support and provide consistent updates to available accessible transportation options.
Develop standards for construction and maintenance of municipal owned roads, trails, sidewalks, and parking lots to ensure they are accessible.	● Ongoing, all new plans have accessible standards in place, strive for universal accessibility. Developing new tools developed to support this work.
Document standards for storm and climate related clearance and repair; snow, ice, water, downed trees etc.	● In place with PW. There is a triage system in place, time of storm, event or issue. Then clearance occurs within 3-6-9 to 12 hours and assigned priority.
Ensure implementation of the Municipality's Active Transportation Plan includes inclusive accessible design	● ● Main AT corridor does, all new paths, AT work will include accessible design.

Section 4: Information & Communication Accessibility

Criteria: Accessibility of website, public information, signage, assistive technology compatibility, and alternative formats.

Rating:  to 

Comments: This area needs work, communications strategy is being developed, accessibility to be addressed with new plan.

Information and Communications Actions Report	Grade	Plan and dates
Review virtual communication paths, including web and social media and develop best practices for delivering information on these platforms while working to eliminate barriers.		These actions are being assessed and included in the communications strategy development. What is not covered will be added through practice. Staff have been provided with training opportunities, and guidelines. During winter of 2025-26 we will develop templates with fonts, sizes, colors etc specific for the office.
Audit website for accessibility using Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) and ensure that website and web-based meetings and		engagement are accessible (HTML, Word documents, accessible PDFs, ASL /audio versions, compatibility with screen readers and other assistive technology).
Create standards and provide training for municipal staff in preparing public information and communications.		All signage, nameplates, wayfinding incorporates accessibility standards.
Development of a resource tool that provides information, contacts, resources, and tools about accessibility in Antigonish in one place.		Finding trained, competent printers who are up to date on the standards. This is a gap we have to cover.
Develop standards for all municipal written/ owned documents. (Use an accessible font (such as Arial, Helvetica, Verdana, Futura, Univers, or Franklin Gothic) in at least 12 to 14 point, and follow accessibility guidelines (such as the CNIB's Clear Print Guidelines) for all communications, Use headings and structure in your documents. Use alt		ASL is a challenge. Finding competent people, availability and cost. But we will continue to build this resource list and anyone reading that has new information, please connect.

text for all images. Check the colour contrast if using coloured text.) Use plain language in all materials and communications.

Investigate options for ASL for public events, and announcements.



Develop standards for signage and wayfinding connected to the built environment based on provincially developed accessible signage guidelines.



Section 5: Goods & Service Accessibility

Criteria: Inclusivity of municipal services, recreational programs, accessible customer service, and service accommodations.

Rating:

Comments: Service delivery excellence is important to staff and Council at the Municipality. The team responds well and goes above and beyond. Communications and building accessibility are a work in progress.

Grade

Goods & Service Accessibility Actions Report



Plan and dates



Inventory accessibility knowledge, experience, and training of municipal staff team; and identify areas for training and education.



Ongoing- Plan Language training, communications, accessible meetings, connecting safety and accessibility.



Develop an understanding and a plan to provide sensory-friendly service hours.



To be done Winter 2026.

Document service standards and practices for storm and climate related clearance and repair; snow, ice, water, downed trees etc.; and maintenance.



Service standards are with Public Works. With priority areas. To be shared in Fall 2026.

Establish a list of community resources or competent person(s) to provide sign language interpretation at community events, and on request



Constantly on the look out. There was a ASL class in 2025 in MCA. Competent persons to do this work is challenging,

at county led programs, sourcing ASL resources.

Audit website for accessibility using Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) and ensure that website and web-based meetings and engagement are accessible (HTML, Word documents, accessible PDFs, ASL /audio versions, compatibility with screen readers and other assistive technology).

Ensuring access points of service are accessible i.e., the municipal building(s).

Develop and use engagement plans that support equitable participation through choice of location, delivery, and facilitation.

Maintain up to date list of recreation equipment, programs, and services for people of all abilities.

always a need.

Reflected in the Communications strategy, ongoing through 2025. Being addressed.

Ongoing, changing environments require consistent monitoring and work.

Ongoing, always room for improvement. Developing a check list for all to use when planning.

Recreation Dept. has a great list, updated in real time, and a borrowing program.

Section 6: Employment & Workplace Accessibility

Criteria: Accessible hiring policies, inclusive work environments, employee training, and adaptive workplace accommodations.

Rating: 

Comments: Traditionally we do not have huge turnover or new hires. Review of all policies and specifically the HR employee handbook is underway.

Documenting and developing processes for the practices in place needs to be done. Equity and supportive hiring practices is an area needing improvement.

Grade	
	Plan and dates
	
	

Employment & Workplace Accessibility Actions Report

Review employee handbook and human resource policies with accessible lens, clearly naming opportunities to improve accessibility.

Ongoing with policy review, this one is being looked at with ER, Governance Intern during summer 2025.

Provide training for Municipal staff on hiring and employing persons with disabilities.	●	Training is ongoing, but an education program will roll out winter of 2025, this will be available as supplement document in fall 2025.
Assess current position descriptions and employee activities finding areas and corresponding actions needed for improvement.	●	Evolving as we try new places and change job descriptions.
Develop strategies and standards for recruitment and advertising new employment opportunities with the municipality to ensure accessible platforms and formats are used.	●	Needs to happen, spring of 2026. Strategies, checklists and resources are being used and tested,
Work with an occupational therapy consultant to support a safe, accessible, and productive workplace for new staff comments:	●	OT's have come in on individual cases, we provide a basic needs assessment with new staff, and review needs at OHS.

Section 7: Education & Awareness

Criteria: Community engagement, accessibility training for staff, public education initiatives, and first-voice inclusion.

Rating: ●

Comments: Committee work fall of 2025 focus area. Public education opportunities and celebrations align with province and national dates. More work is needed; a yearly plan will come Fall 2025.

Education & Awareness Actions Report

Grade



Plan and dates



Ongoing, will be shared on website, Sept. 2025.



Ongoing, spring/ summer 2025.



Need to build this community with new committee Fall 2025.



This area need attention; we participate in all regional and national campaigns and national days of recognition to educate. We will plan for focused workshop and training experience opportunity Spring 2026.



Ongoing and evolving, we have components worked into onboarding process for both. Need to plan a larger workshop to develop a shared clear concise definition of accessibility in practice, beyond the text book definition. And this will support our commitment to striving for universal design, moving beyond the minimum standards.



Ongoing, will be a project in fiscal 2026.



Again ongoing, will develop with our communications plan and our anti-hate, antiracism, inclusion and equity plan.

Section 8: Recommendations for Improvement

In general, a lot of work is happening and ongoing. Much is dependant on funding, resource and standards of the day. Small changes don't always get documented, but staff and council consider accessibility in all of their work, we are developing a decision model/ project scanning model to support this work. Tools, checklists and more education are always needed. Communications will advance our work significantly. Our new Communications will help adding accessibility components to work plan(s) giving them new priority and practical action.

A call for new committee members will be released in September 2025.

Final Comments & Next Steps:

Important to recognize and commend staff on the work they are doing. We are good at responding to needs, but work needs to get to the next level accessibility integrated and a natural part of all we do and build. Striving for universal design, so that we aren't responding, but simply are accessible to all. New ideas, insights, tools, are all welcome and it is exciting to see new options for supports exploding around us. More interest and recognition of the importance of Accessibility is good to see. Change is happening.