Annapolis County Joint Accessibility Plan

2026 - 2028

The Village of Lawrencetown Nova Scotia The one in the Valley

County of Annapolis Naturally Rooted

Town of Middleton Heart of the Valley

Annapolis Royal Nova Scotia

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Introduction

In April 2017, the government of Nova Scotia passed the Accessibility Act. This law requires all towns and municipalities to develop plans to improve their services for everyone. In January 2025, the Municipality of the County of Annapolis, the Town of Annapolis Royal, the Town of Middleton, and the Village of Lawrencetown signed a Terms of Reference to work on joint plans for inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility for their communities.

A key aspect of any inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility (IDEA) plan is engaging individuals with real-life experience. This involves regularly communicating with the community to ensure their voices are heard. The plan is also intended to be adaptable, allowing for changes and improvements as new insights are gained.

Nova Scotia has the highest rates of disability in Canada, including physical, mental, and learning challenges that make it harder for people to take part in everyday life. Municipal units can help make communities work better for everyone.

Overview

Before 2022, all four municipal units in Annapolis County made their first accessibility plans. This updated plan brings all those plans together into one complete document, created with help from the IDEA Committee.

This plan focuses on looking at buildings and projects that have been completed or are planned over the next 3-4 years (*See Appendices C, D, E, and F for details*). We have also started our first Equity and Anti-Racism plan for Annapolis County Region, developed with help from the IDEA Committee and representatives from each municipal unit. This will be shared as a separate document.

IDEA Vision

We imagine a place where everyone is treated fairly and can take part in their community without any obstacles. Our goal is to ensure that all municipal leaders consider accessibility and inclusion in everything they do. This means everyone, regardless of background or ability, should have a voice and be respected. We want to create a community where there is no racism or prejudice, where everyone feels safe and included, and where both visible and invisible disabilities are recognized and respected.

The IDEA Terms of Reference includes some important principles that are listed in *Appendix A*.

Barriers

Our initial accessibility plans have taught us a lot. All four municipal units and their staff have had to adjust and learn new things. We've made great progress in a short time and have completed many new accessibility projects; however, we still need to do more to change the way people think about, and provide services for, improved accessibility. Our senior leaders need to involve all staff in finding new ways to improve accessibility beyond just buildings.

BY WORKING TOGETHER, WE CAN BREAK DOWN BARRIERS, SHARE SKILLS, AND PROVIDE TRAINING TO MAKE OUR COMMUNITIES MORE ACCESSIBLE FOR EVERYONE

Methodology

This plan was created with help from people in our community, the IDEA Committee, and our staff. Building a fair and welcoming community takes time. It starts with listening to those who often feel left out and building trust. This plan is a continuation of our journey together.

To help shape this plan:

- We spoke directly with residents in familiar places, such as community halls and fire halls, to hear their experiences and perspectives.
- We asked about accessibility, inclusion, belonging, and fairness, and heard many stories, concerns, and ideas.
- We held five public meetings, along with a community survey, small focus groups, and one-on-one conversations to better understand what people need and want.
- We looked inward at our own workplace through the IDEA Check-In, where staff shared what inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility mean to them, what helps them feel included, and what changes could improve the workplace.
- We engaged Council members and staff across departments to gather diverse internal perspectives.

By combining community voices and municipal input, we are building a plan grounded in real experiences, thoughtful reflection, and a shared commitment to making Annapolis County a more inclusive, fair, and welcoming place for everyone.

You can find summaries of the surveys and public meetings in Appendix B, along with action items under each category. We also looked at related plans and research. Reports from the Nova Scotia Accessibility Directorate guided us in developing this plan.

IDEA Committee

The Partners would like to thank the Association of Municipal Administrators group and the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) committee members for their support and advice in creating the plan.

The IDEA members include:

- Cameron Stiff, Vice Chair
- Elizabeth Mason-Squires, Member
- Larry Peters, Member
- Catherine Jean Voysey, Member
- Tina Hiltz, Member
- Brenda MacDonald, Member

Staff Support

- Rob Frost, CAO County of Annapolis
- Sandi Millet-Campbell, CAO Town of Annapolis Royal
- Ashley Crocker, CAO Town of Middleton
- Melissa Roscoe, Village Clerk, Village of Lawrencetown
- Debra Ryan, Director of Community Development, County of Annapolis
- Alyssa Blais, Strategic Initiatives Coordinator, County of Annapolis
- Lisa Fenton, Active Living Coordinator, Town of Middleton

Accessibility Plan

The five areas of focus that all municipalities must address in their accessibility plans include:

- **Built Environment:** making public buildings, streets, sidewalks, and shared spaces accessible to all.

- **Information and Communication:** ensuring all people can receive, understand, and share the information they need. To increase awareness and education about accessibility rights and opportunities that can benefit the whole community.

- **Goods and Services:** ensuring that people with disabilities have equitable access to goods and services provided by the Municipality. .

- **Employment:** making workplaces accessible and supporting people with disabilities in finding meaningful employment.

- **Transportation:** making it easier for everyone to get where they need to go.

- **Implementation/Evaluation:** including a section on the plan implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Built Environment

The four municipal units will work to improve their buildings and spaces to meet the requirements for accessibility, as outlined in the Nova Scotia Built Environment Accessibility Standards. *Appendices C, D, E,* and *F* show what has been finished and what still needs to be done. All new construction and renovations, both indoor and outdoor, must meet Nova Scotia's accessibility requirements.

Actions

- Provide training and education on the Nova Scotia Built Environment Standards to all staff, including those in recreation, parks, public works, procurement, planning, and building inspections, to ensure guidelines are well understood and applied.

Built Environment

- County staff person to be trained in Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Standards to support improved accessibility across municipal spaces.

- Share best practices among staff from the four municipal units through training sessions and collaboration.

- Plan, design, and upgrade buildings, parks, trails, and other outdoor spaces with accessibility and universal design in mind, including consulting accessibility experts when designing new buildings or additions.

- Provide seasonal maintenance for accessible spaces, including clearing pathways of weeds, grass, leaves, debris, and snow, and monitoring for erosion to ensure safe access year-round.

- Ensure Council chambers and meeting rooms are accessible for everyone, including those who use wheelchairs and need audio support.

Built Environment

- Include accessibility and equity considerations when planning active transportation (like walking and biking) in our communities.
- Link sidewalks to pathways and include rest stops to make our community more livable for everyone.
- Install clear signs along main roads to help people easily find accessible parks and parking.

Information & Communication

In 2026, additional guidelines to improve website and technology accessibility will be released by the province.

Actions

- Use simple, clear language in all municipal documents so everyone can understand them easily, including websites, social media, posters, advertisements, brochures, speeches, contracts, policies, and reports.

- Provide training for municipal staff on plain language, accessible communication, and serving people with disabilities, including those with hearing or vision challenges and people who use service animals.

Information & Communication

- Create a simple way for residents to share their thoughts on what is working and what needs improvement in the accessibility plan over the next three years.

- Teach communities, businesses, and developers on the importance of providing accessible services.

- Highlight completed and upcoming accessibility projects through the municipal budget to keep everyone informed.

- Address the need for American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters by exploring training options and providing training in Computer-Aided Real-Time Transcription (CART).

- Include people with disabilities in community publications, especially in materials related to recreation and tourism.

Information & Communication

- Add Quick Response (QR) codes to new signs in parks and trails to make it easier for people to access information.

- Design signs with high-contrast colours (like black on white) and avoid putting text over confusing backgrounds or images.

- Review all wayfinding and information signs to ensure they meet accessibility standards.

- Create a list of municipal parks and trails that shows the accessibility features available at each location.

- Explore technologies such as speech-transfer systems and hearing loops to help at reception desks, meeting rooms, and Council chambers with proper setups for ASL interpreters.

Goods and Services

Actions

- Municipal planning for emergency services, such as the Regional Emergency Management Organization (REMO), will consider the needs of people with disabilities when preparing for disasters and local emergencies.

- Provide recreation programs, projects, and events for everyone, regardless of age or ability, and regularly check whether they meet these needs.
    - Provide accessible equipment, like personal flotation devices (PFDs), available at Raven Haven to help people with disabilities enjoy water activities.
    - Create and share lists of accessible recreation equipment and make it easy for each municipal unit to borrow them.

Goods and Services

- Council, Committee, and public meetings will be accessible to everyone. These meetings will be held in welcoming spaces that are easily accessible, with on-site washrooms.

- Place Mobi Mats at Raven Haven Beachside Family Park, Annapolis Basin Tidal Beach Park, and other beaches during the summer so everyone can have easy access.

- Develop and share a list of funding opportunities and resources for communities and businesses to help improve accessibility. This includes options from federal, provincial, municipal, and foundation sources.

- Ensure front desks and payment services are accessible and welcoming, provide accommodations for residents with disabilities, and post advance notice of any closures at entrances, on the website, and on social media.

To ensure that people with disabilities have equitable access to goods and services provided by the Municipality.

Employment

To make workplaces accessible and supporting people with disabilities in finding meaningful employment.

Actions

- Create a culture of belonging for everyone by having leaders, senior staff, and managers work together to find ways to improve and support inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility (IDEA).

- Job postings will state that people with disabilities are welcome to apply and that they can request any accommodations or support they may need in the workplace.

- Review hiring processes to ensure there are no barriers that prevent people with disabilities from applying.

Employment

- Actively invite people with disabilities to join various municipal committees, not just those focused on IDEA, to ensure our groups represent the whole community.

- Hire a Promotions, Accessibility, and Diversity Facilitator to help with these efforts.

Transportation

To make it easier for everyone to get where they need to go.

Actions

- Improve sidewalks and trails by adding resting areas, ensuring timely snow removal, and putting in features that help people with visual impairments.

- Find out what people with disabilities need to use Kings Transit and Trans County Transportation and provide recommendations to the agencies.

- Make sure transit stops and sitting areas are cleared of snow and have staff check them throughout the winter, making recommendations for improvements as needed.

Implementation/ Evaluation

The plan is part of the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) Terms of Reference. The Chief Administrative Officers (CAOs) from each municipal unit will manage it. Each unit will need to create its own budget based on the money it has available. They will use two types of budgets: operating budgets for day-to-day expenses and capital budgets for long-term projects.

Like all budgets, municipal units will look for funding from different levels of government to help make the region easier to access and more inclusive for everyone. The plan will be reviewed at least every three years, following rules from the Province and the Accessibility Act.

The plan will undergo an annual review and will be updated based on the insights we gain from our partners and within our organizations.

Appendix A: Commitment to Principles of IDEA Terms of Reference

As part of each local government's ongoing and daily plan to ensure that its programs, services, and infrastructure are inclusive, diverse, equitable and accessible, we commit to uphold and adhere to the following principles:

1. To articulate and regularly demonstrate our commitment to ensuring that any mission, values, and strategic objectives related to our focus on equity, inclusion, and anti-racism are well documented and communicated publicly.
2. To ensure that the senior leadership of each local government is educated on, and demonstrates a commitment to, equity and anti-racism principles through their policies and practices.
3. To undertake a review of all local government policies beginning in 2025 and every five years thereafter, to confirm that the policies and practices of each local government promote inclusion, diversity, and anti-racism.
4. To review and provide effective oversight of public works and infrastructure operations to ensure equitable placement of future infrastructure and replacement of current infrastructure, scrutinizing for systemic biases and accessibility, while promoting and educating all staff on inclusive and anti-racism training, policies, and initiatives.
5. To provide ongoing, practical training, awareness, and development opportunities for staff, Council, and commissioners

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on inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility, ensuring this knowledge becomes part of the daily culture and practices.

6. To develop a reporting and evaluation system, and work in collaboration with the Advisory Committee, to regularly report on relevant data and initiatives related to improving, advocating for, and completing activities related to inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility across Annapolis County.
7. To regularly and sincerely engage each year with underrepresented and underserved groups and communities in a meaningful way, including developing joint programs, services, and infrastructure where possible and feasible, vocally speaking in favour of IDEA concepts and plans and denouncing publicly and unequivocally any attempts to orally or in writing, spread hate or fear respecting any person, group, or community within Annapolis County or beyond that respects the principles of IDEA.
8. To carry out all local government functions and decision-making with equity, anti-racism, and accessible lenses, demonstrating community leadership through transparency of actions, accountability for decisions, and open and honest discussions regarding racial biases and the fundamental human rights of fairness and accessibility.
9. To always consider the physical, geographical, and communications methods for local government operations, meetings, and events, by providing the broadest range of

Appendix A: Commitment to Principles of IDEA Terms of Reference

opportunities and access to public services where financially reasonable and technologically possible.

10. To publicly commit to fairness and a desire to ensure underrepresented and underserved communities are aware and encouraged to apply for employment opportunities at all organizational levels, with preference given to persons who meet the job requirements but may otherwise not have been chosen because of a non-recognition of IDEA.

11. To consider establishing and supporting an employee resource group for underrepresented and underserved staff to provide opportunities for learning, education, advocacy, support, and training.

Appendix B: Survey Overview and Public Meeting Summary

Demographics

- 98 responses collected, average duration 15:37.
- 85 identified as White/European descent; 24 as persons with disabilities; 36 seniors aged 60+.
- Gender identification: 52 women, 26 men, eight gender diverse/non-binary.

Experiences with Municipal Services

- 51 respondents (54%) had good experiences with town/ County services; 18 (18%) did not.
- 22 respondents (14%) faced barriers in accessing municipal programs.

Suggestions for Improvement

- 65 responses on improving inclusivity: accessibility for mobility challenges, better advertising of programs.
- 63 responses on feeling included: better social media engagement, community events, and welcoming initiatives.

Celebrating Diversity

- 65 responses on recognizing different cultures: more events, support for pride, and cultural festivals.
- 70 responses on challenges to inclusion: accessibility issues, lack of understanding, and transportation barriers.

Appendix B: Survey Overview and Public Meeting Summary

Community Engagement

- 65 responses on decision-making: regular surveys and open meetings suggested.
- 54 responses from community leaders to consult: local churches, businesses, and inclusive groups.

Communication Preferences

- Preferred communication methods: 56 social media, 43 email, 39 website updates.
- 36 respondents (42%) want to stay connected; 49 (58%) do not.

Public Meeting Results - Highlights

Theme 1: Accessibility and Infrastructure

Accessibility and Infrastructure emphasize creating barrier-free, welcoming environments. This includes accessible buildings, sidewalks, signage, public spaces, events, and ensuring policies and communications are in clear, accessible formats.

1. Enhancing Physical Access to Buildings, Facilities, and Public Spaces

- Building Standards and Renovations
  - New municipal buildings and major renovations must comply with the Building Code, all Accessibility Standards and any other related Provincial requirements.

        - Assessments and audits will be conducted as feasible to address accessibility concerns, and the findings will be integrated into five-year capital investment plans.
        - When changes occur in the built environment, the budget will be sufficiently resourced to ensure the effective implementation of codes and standards mentioned above.

- Sidewalks and Infrastructure
    - Sidewalks and curb cuts should meet Canadian Standards Association (CSA) accessibility guidelines and be properly maintained, including snow and gravel removal.
    - Improvements, developments, and ongoing maintenance of these structures must prioritize the inclusion of safe and accessible alternative pathways.

2. Fostering Accessible and Inclusive Public Spaces and Events

- Inclusive Public Spaces
    - Trails and parks should be upgraded with accessibility features and play spaces.
    - Support community organizations in enhancing accessibility by providing practical guidance, promoting resources on the website, and offering grants when applicable.

- Develop community audits and/or assessments to assess whether current programming and projects meet the needs of equity-deserving groups.

- Inclusive Events
  - Develop and follow an accessibility and inclusion checklist for staff and Council to use for events, meetings, and programs.

3. Ensuring Accessible Policies, Bylaws, and Communications

- Accessible Communication
  - Train staff to use plain language and inclusive communication.
  - Municipal documents—including policies, forms, and bylaws—should be able to be made available upon request in multiple formats (large print, Braille, languages other than English, and plain language).
  - Municipal websites should comply with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).

Appendix C: Municipality of the County of Annapolis

2025 Facility Accessibility Assessments

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Annapolis County Facility Accessibility Assessments 2025

In January 2022, the Municipality of the County of Annapolis created an assessment of accessibility in municipal assets including buildings, parks, and trails.

Accessibility assessments were done again in October 2025. This document provides an update of facility improvements and additions that have been made since 2022.

In addition to assessments of existing facilities, three new parks were added:

- Upper Clements Trails
- Annapolis Basin Tidal Beach Park
- Hollow Mountain Community Park (in progress in 2025)

An accessible addition to the Nictaux Park and Playground was completed in 2025. The new fully accessible Bear River Comfort Station was also completed in 2025.

This report includes a list of recommended improvements to County facilities to be considered in the next 5 years, pending budget allocations.

An accessibility assessment for the Town of Annapolis Royal is found in Appendix D; for the Village of Lawrencetown in Appendix E; and for the Town of Middleton in Appendix F. The Town of Middleton created a new park called the Middleton Wetland Restoration Trail which has accessible features. The Town of Annapolis Royal has made upgrades to

their active transportation links and upgraded their playground with accessible opportunities. The Comfort Station in the Town of Annapolis Royal Comfort Station is a fully accessible facility.

These assessments give a general overview of the state of the region's infrastructure with respect to accessibility, as well as evaluating and recognizing successes. As new indoor and outdoor facilities are upgraded or as new facilities are built, they will have to conform with the Nova Scotia Built Environment Accessibility Standard, which is now law in Nova Scotia and follows along the regulations under the Nova Scotia Accessibility Act.

From the Built Environment Accessibility Standard Overview:

"The Built Environment Accessibility Standard is a new set of regulations that are different than the Nova Scotia Building Code Regulations. This standard addresses parts of the built environment that the Building Code does not - such as outdoor spaces, recreational spaces, and maintenance."[1]

Municipalities and organizations in Nova Scotia have new requirements for designing, constructing, and managing their built environments in accessible ways.

"The built environment means human-made spaces in which people live, work, learn and play. This includes inside and outside buildings as well as outdoor spaces such as trails, parks, and beaches."[2]

[1] Built Environment Accessibility Standard Overview
[2] Built Environment Accessibility Standard Overview

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Compliance with the Built Environment Accessibility Standard regulations will not be enforced until April 1, 2026. After April 1,2026 people in Nova Scotia may make complaints about non-compliance. The Built Environment Accessibility Standards mostly applies to new construction.

Upgrades to existing infrastructure, such as parks, trails and other outdoor spaces, need to be assessed through an accessibility lens during planning, design, and implementation. The NS Standards make reference to the Transportation Association of Canada and rules in the CSA/ASC B651, which is also referenced by the National Building Code of Canada, so a thorough understanding of those regulations is also necessary.

This report focuses on publicly owned facilities that are open to the public. Municipal sites such as Municipal Operations (Public Works) work sites, storage areas, and the animal control facility were not included in this assessment. These facilities will need to be evaluated in future assessments.

Guidelines and Principles

Several general principles, discussed in the following section, were used to guide assessments. The interim guidelines give some common measurements to be included in the general assessments, which include, but are not limited to the following:

- A 1:20 ratio (5 %) slope is recommended for new trail installations, including pathways, with a maximum cross-slope of 1:50 (2 %). (Cross-slope allows drainage from trails and pathways.)

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Some facilities do not meet the new criteria, but did meet the building code requirements of the day. Not all parks can be made fully accessible, but accessible additions and improvements can be made.

The NS Built Environment Accessibility Standard Regulations are grounded in the following three core principles that are key to all accessible planning and future training:

1. Whole Journey Approach

All parts of the journey, from arrival to destination, 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.

2. Universal Design

Environment should be designed to meet the needs of anyone wishing to use it, regardless of their age, size, ability, or disability.

3. Seasonal Maintenance

Seasonal conditions, such as snow and ice, can create barriers to accessibility. Seasonal maintenance can help to ensure that public spaces are made and remain accessible when conditions change.

Additional guidance for accessible spaces

- Signage, wayfinding, ramps, stairs, and handrails are to be strategically located to allow individuals of different sizes, ages, and abilities to manage a journey.
- Accessible parking spaces must be located close to the accessibility entrances.

- In newer facilities, exterior pathways and entrances must be designed with minimal level changes, so that people of all abilities may easily enter or leave.
- Where there are other pathways and/or road crossings, clear directional signage is required.
- Seating should be provided along the trailway and at key points where possible.
- In outdoor parks, all exterior pathways that connect parking areas with facilities and amenities must comply with the accessibility routes criteria outlined for sidewalks, including grade.
- Area playgrounds, parks, parking areas and other facilities should be connected by at least one accessible route.
- Adequate space should be provided for children and their caregivers to move through, in, and around the play space.
- There should be equipment in the playground that can be enjoyed by individuals with sensory, visual, or physical disability.
- There should be quiet areas, with seating, to support those who prefer to play alone.
- Waste receptacles must be secure, colour-contrasting, of appropriate height, and reasonably close to structures.
- Picnic tables that meet the accessible picnic table guidelines should be provided. (Not all tables need to be accessible in a park setting; however, depending upon the size of the park, there should be more than one, dispersed throughout the park).

- Signage must use clear, simple font in large sizes, printed on a high-contrast background. Where appropriate, Braille lettering should be included.

A Quick Response (QR) code is a small marker that can be read with a smartphone to provide information such as read-aloud capability or additional resources. QR codes for both information signs and interpretive signs at county facilities can provide additional accessibility for users.

Many of the parks, trails and open spaces owned by the County of Annapolis were not designed with accessibility in mind, although upgrades have been made to many of these.

A municipal site accessibility checklist will be developed that is based upon provincial standards.

General Observations

The County is planning for each park or trail facility to have at least one accessible parking space and an accessible picnic area with signage by the end of year three of the plan. The County is working to assess the cost of including an accessible toilet or portable toilet at each park location over time.

There are plans to upgrade and promote County parks and trails, showcasing accessible features and including the universal accessible sign in our publications.

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2025 County-Owned Facility Assessments

The general assessments that follow include completed improvements, as well as planned or recommended improvements. Upgrades and improvements will meet current accessibility standards.

1. Queen Elizabeth 11 Jubilee Park

Facility improvements completed 2022-2025

- Accessible pathway from Granville Street to the playground.
- Procured a lift for the pavilion stage (to be installed in 2026)
- Paved boat launch area to improve water access.

Planned facility improvements

- Updates to natural playground to include accessible pathways, structures, and quiet areas.
- Improved access and safety features around the stage area.
- Improved accessible signage throughout the park.
- Accessibility improvements to interior washroom layout.
- Accessible parking spaces in both upper and lower parking areas.
- Improve access from the parking lot to the accessible pathway on the waterfront.
- Assess the floating dock system for potential accessible options.
- Safety and accessibility improvements to the bridge structure at Soloman Creek.
- Improved lighting along accessible pathway and in playground.

2. Bridgetown Memorial Ballfield

Planned facility improvements

- Create accessible parking space and signage near the bleachers.

3. Hebbs Landing Park and Boat Launch

Planned facility improvements

- Create an accessible parking space.
- Create accessible picnic space.
- Upgrade to an accessible portable toilet.
- Improved accessible signage throughout the park.
- Improved boat launch that is wider with improved surface.

4. Bridgetown Regional Outdoor Sports Hub

Facility improvements completed 2022-2025

- Three accessible washrooms with change stations.
- Improved accessibility in canteen area.
- Accessible ramp and decking with railing on the east side.
- Paved accessible parking spaces (2) at tennis courts.
- Accessible entrance to tennis courts.
- Three accessible picnic tables.
- Paved area from pathway on east side fence to synthetic track for wheelchair accessibility.

Planned facility improvements

- Pave area between perimeter pathway and accessible parking.
- Improved accessible signage throughout the park.

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The new planned building for storage, meeting and announcing on west side will be fully accessible. This will be a cooperative project between the County and the Annapolis County Outdoor Sports Society (ACOSS).

5. Annapolis County Municipal Building

An accessibility assessment was completed in October 2025.

Facility improvements completed 2022-2025

- Marked accessible parking spaces (4).
- New accessible counter at reception.
- Improvements to accessible washroom upstairs.
- Accessible bathroom and shower downstairs.

Planned facility improvements

- Improved accessible parking.
- Replace ramp to main entrance.
- Improve ramp to downstairs entrance.
- Exterior signage with accessibility features.
- Improve interaction with reception in lobby area.
- Public accessible washroom in lobby area.
- Improved upstairs washroom layout.
- Improved accessible kitchen layout.

6. Upper Clements Trails

Upper Clements Trails is a multiuse nonmotorized recreational trail network that includes a 500 metre accessible trail loop.

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Facility improvements since opening in 2023

- Created a new 500 metre flat looped accessible trail that is five feet wide and has wood perimeter board to define trail for those in wheelchair and for those that are seeing impaired with accessible picnic areas and rest areas.
- Improved signage throughout the park.
- Two accessible parking spaces with signage.
- Accessible portable toilet (year-round).

Planned facility improvements

- Regrade and compact accessible parking areas.
- Ongoing maintenance of pathways to prevent weeds and leaf blowing on accessible pathways.

7. Upper Clements Picnic Park

Facility improvements completed 2022-2025

- Accessible portable toilet (seasonal).
- Accessible picnic table.

Planned facility improvements

- Create picnic space that meets accessibility standards.
- Sheltered roofed picnic area in the park.
- Accessible parking space.

8. Annapolis Basin Tidal Beach Park

Annapolis Basin Tidal Beach Park is a new fully accessible park that was opened in 2023.

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Facility improvements completed 2022-2025

- Accessible portable toilet (seasonal).
- Accessible perimeter pathway with seating and rest areas.
- Expanded parking area with accessible parking spaces (2).
- Mobi-Mat for beach access (seasonal).

Planned facility improvements

- Improved accessible signage throughout the park.
- Assess the need in future for two paved accessible parking spaces.

9. Raven Haven Beachside Family Park

Raven Haven had accessible washrooms, parking areas, and ramps to the washhouse and canteen area prior to the initial facility assessment in 2022.

Facility improvements completed 2022-2025

- Two accessible picnic tables on site.
- Accessible PFDs available in a variety of sizes.
- Mobi-Mat in place for beach and water access.
- Floating Mobi-Chair available for use on site.
- Change tables purchased for washrooms.

Planned facility improvements

- Improved accessible pathways to connect parking, canteen building, and beach and water.
- Improved accessible signage throughout the park.
- Replace the ramp to the canteen building.
- Install change tables in washrooms.

- Create accessible canoe/kayak launch and fishing options.

10. Annapolis River Causeway Park

Planned facility improvements

- Improve dock accessibility.
- Resurface accessible pathway from parking to dock.
- Create accessible picnic area south of parking.
- Accessible portable toilet (seasonal).
- Accessible link to pathway.
- Improved accessible signage throughout the park.

11. Delaps Cove Wilderness Trail

The Delaps Cove Wilderness Trail is not accessible due to terrain constraints. The trailhead and parking area are now accessible.

Facility improvements completed 2022-2025

- Updated trailhead area with accessible parking, picnic area, information kiosk, and toilet.

Planned facility improvements

- Improved accessible signage throughout the park.

12. Youngs Cove Coastal Access Park

The pathway to the shore is compact and even, but does not meet accessibility standards due to grade.

Facility improvements completed 2022-2025

- Accessible parking area established
- Improved signage.

Planned facility improvements

- Improved accessible signage including grade and trail length.
- Accessible picnic table.
- Maintain pathway surface to retain accessibility.
- Regrade and compact surface on viewing area at shore.

13. Youngs Cove Coastal Access Park (adjunct)

This small adjunct park has no parking, due to the size of the property, it cannot be designed for wheelchair accessibility but the pathway is flat with no protruding rocks. There is a steep incline at the roadside start. It is primarily accessed along the beach from the Youngs Cove Coastal Access Park.

14. Nictaux Park & Playground

Nictaux Park & Playground comprises two play structures (one red & yellow, one brown & green) with a compacted gravel pathway, picnic tables, and benches.

Facility improvements completed 2022-2025

- Accessible pathway leading from Old Runway Drive to the playground.
- Accessible parking spaces (2), portable toilet (seasonal), and picnic table.
- Improved accessible signage throughout the park.

Planned facility improvements

- Create accessible pathway to swings.

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15. Nictaux Scotney Pathway

The Nictaux Scotney Pathway is an active transportation link that connects two neighbourhoods. It does not meet grade requirements for accessibility.

Planned facility improvements

- Maintain pathway surface to retain accessibility.
- The route could be extended westward to reduce grade.
- The flat gravel area at the Orchard Drive access could accommodate an accessible parking spot and a picnic table.

16. Old Mill Trail

The Old Mill Trail has been accessible since completion in 2000, with a compacted aggregate surface with wooden edging.

Planned facility improvements

- Improved accessible signage throughout the park.
- Maintain pathway surface, including approaches to bridges, to retain accessibility.
- Replace wooden edging where it has deteriorated.
- Accessible portable toilet (seasonal).
- Replace benches along trail.

17. Lake Pleasant Park and Boat Launch

A large parking area with a boat launch suitable for trailers.

Planned facility improvements

- Improved accessible signage throughout the park.
- Provide an accessible picnic site.

- Upgrade shoreline access trail and create accessible lakeside picnic site.

18. Shannon River Canoe Access Park

A small park with a steep pathway to the lake shore for launching kayaks or canoes.

Planned facility improvements

- Improved accessible signage throughout the park.
- Improve picnic site to accessible standard.

19. Cornwallis Park Veterans Park

Planned facility improvements

- Improved accessible signage throughout the park.
- Maintain pathway surface to retain accessibility.
- Provide accessible entry to gazebo.

20. Bridgetown Happy Tails Dog Park

The park was not included in the 2025 facility assessments. No amenities are provided.

21. Hollow Mountain Community Park

This is a new park currently under development in Port Royal. Accessible parking has been completed.

Planned facility improvements

- Accessible signage throughout the park.
- Accessible loop pathway with seating and picnic area.
- Playground with accessible opportunities.

Appendix C: Municipality of the County of Annapolis

Other County-owned Amenities

Bridgetown and District Centennial Pool

This facility was assessed in September 7, 2021 and no upgrades have been made. The County will assess additional accessibility needs of the pool in the next 3-4 years.

Bridgetown and District Memorial Arena

This facility was assessed in October 6, 2021 and no upgrades have been made.

Annapolis County Sidewalks, Crosswalks, and Parking

Capital improvements to sidewalks, crosswalks, and municipal parking lots in Bear River, Cornwallis Park, and Granville Ferry will meet all accessibility standards.

Bridgetown sidewalks, crosswalks and parking

Queen Street redevelopment including accessible sidewalks, crossings, lighting, and seating areas was completed in 2023.

A new paved accessible parking area was created east of the former town hall which includes designated accessible parking spaces.

A sidewalk upgrade to meet accessibility requirements along western Granville Street in Bridgetown is planned.

Bridgetown Library

The Bridgetown Library was previously assessed for accessibility, and a number of improvements have been made. Additional accessibility needs will be assessed in the next 3-4 years.

Appendix C: Municipality of the County of Annapolis

Other County of Annapolis Accessibility Initiatives

Education

- Provided workshops on plain language training by Inclusion NS for committee and offered to municipal staff.
- Advised businesses and community on accessibility funding, including on-site presentations of the whole journey approach and first-person lived experiences.
- Educational sharing and presentations from building inspectors, public works, information technology (IT), recreation staff, and community groups.

Communications

- AccessAbility Awareness Event: an annual event in partnership with towns, RCMP, and libraries to showcase national accessibility week with displays, activities, and programs.
- Annapolis County Website additions included a WIDGET called AccessiBe, making it easier for people to access our website.
- Proclamation additions to municipal policy to mark National Accessibility Week in the spring and the International Persons with Disabilities Day in early December.

Town of Annapolis Royal

Facility Accessibility Assessments

1. Built Environment

Achievements: General

- Accessibility inventory on all municipal buildings.
- Construction of the Community Hub, including a new library, which is largely accessible.
- Construction of the Comfort Station accessible washroom.
- Entrance ramp and accessible washroom at Town Hall.
- Accessible portable toilet (seasonal) at French Basin trailhead.
- Renovations at Town Hall to improve accessibility: automatic door opener, dual-height service counter, and improved access to the accessible washroom.
- Sidewalks in Town have recently been smoothed to ease mobility.
- Installed auditory, visual, and tactile markers at three intersections.

Planned Improvements

- Install auditory, visual, and tactile markers at additional intersections.
- Improve sidewalks and curb cuts to accessible standards.
- Contrast strips on the stairs at the Amphitheatre.

The Hub

The Hub houses a café, the public library, a “maker space”, a music room, and the Food Bank.

Achievements

- Braille and Large-Print signage

Planned Improvements

- Interior wayfinding
- An emergency signal in the accessible washroom
- Improvements to “flow” in the library

Town Hall

The Town Hall is a 100-year-old two-story building. The second floor is not accessible; thus, accessibility improvements are mostly on the ground floor.

Achievements

- Interior wayfinding.
- Increase in width of cased opening leading to the accessible washroom.
- Installation of an automatic opener on the front door.
- Lowering of evacuation maps and fire extinguishers.

Planned Improvements

- An emergency signal in the accessible washroom.
- Braille signage.

Comfort Station Public Washrooms

The Comfort Station is the newest municipal building, designed to be accessible.

Planned Improvements

- Improved accessible parking.
- Curb cut and crosswalk re-located to be in line with the accessible parking.
- An emergency signal in the individual washrooms.

Market Square

Market Square is a large open event space.

Achievements

- Accessible parking improvements.

Planned Improvements

- Improvements to the stairs from the parking lot.
- Flatten and level the surface of Market Square.

French Basin Trail

The Trail is a 45-minute walk around a Ducks Unlimited wetland. While the trail-bed is compacted gravel, it is not up to current standards in all areas. Other improvements to the area will include:

Achievements

- Accessible parking.
- A consistently wide trail of compacted gravel.

Planned Improvements

- An accessible path to the off-leash dog park.

- An accessible path to the picnic tables.

Temporary disruptions / Construction mitigation

Public Works makes every effort to create accessible pathways around sidewalk disruptions or construction. These include high-visibility signage, protective barriers and ramps.

2. Information and Communications

Standards in this area will help to ensure all Nova Scotians can receive and share the same information. These may include accessible formats (for example, braille, American Sign Language, or large print), accessible websites and technologies, and standards for communicating with persons with disabilities.

Achievements

- Town Council and Committee of the Whole meetings are now available via Facebook live. This facilitates municipal participation for those with various accessibility challenges including mobility or hearing. Other advisory committees also have the option of meeting via Zoom which offers location flexibility and auditory support to include automatic subtitling.
- The newsletter, The Town Crier, is now available through multiple channels: email via MailChimp and through the website (as PDF) which facilitate access for those with vision challenges and large print hardcopy via free subscription or walk-in at Town Hall for those who may not be connected.

- The Town's website is of current design and is kept up to date. While improvements can be made, it scores moderately well on accessibility assessment software.
- The Town has installed an auditory loop which connects with hearing devices to support communication for those with impairment.

Planned Improvements

- Ensure the Town's web presence meets the latest Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).
- Develop and implement a public awareness program (for Town staff and the public) to build awareness around barriers to accessibility and what an accessible community means.
- Improve wayfinding within the Town to be high-visibility and include braille as appropriate.
- The Municipal Government requires the use of printed notices in newspapers for certain public meetings. This format is not accessible to all.
- Improved accessible signage throughout the Town.

3. Employment

Standards in this area will support persons with disabilities in finding meaningful employment.

Achievements

- The Town's HR policy is being updated to include language which explicitly supports a culture of inclusion.
- Members of Council receive iPads to access all documents. The flexibility of the display supports those who may need larger fonts or increased contrast.

Planned Improvements

- Update the employee training manual to include a section on respecting diversity. This will include training in working with people of all ages and abilities. All Town employees will be required to take the Working with Abilities online training provided free by the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission (workwithabilitiesns.ca).
- Share opportunities for accessibility training with residents and local businesses—online or in person with Town of Annapolis Royal staff training.
- Investigate strategies to reach a wider and more diverse audience with job postings. Include statements in the job postings to ensure applicants are aware that accommodation can be provided.

4. Goods and Services

Standards for delivering and receiving goods and services address how service providers interact with and are trained to serve person with disabilities.

Achievements

- The service counter at Town Hall will soon be dual-height making it wheelchair accessible and will have an auditory loop to support those with hearing aids. (Completed)
- Town Council and Committee of the Whole meetings are broadcast via Facebook Live. Other advisory committees also have the option of meeting via Zoom which offers location flexibility and auditory support to include automatic subtitling.
- The Active Living program oversees the maintenance of sporting facilities, play areas, and the trail system. The gym is accessible with a ramp and automatic door.
- The playground on lower St. George Street has been reconfigured and is now accessible.

Planned Improvements

- Provide an adapted listing of recreation programs and services for people of all ages and abilities and update it annually.

- Where applicable, include an “Accessibility Lens”/Impact Analysis in reports to council and in consultant reports delivered to staff and Council.

5. Transportation

Standards in this area will help make it easier for everyone to travel.

Achievements

- The Town works with King's Transit, whose buses are equipped with Global Positioning and Active Location technology for use with the DoubleMap app. This enables passengers to have accurate arrival times. The buses also have automatic voice announcements and low-floor kneeling capabilities and electric ramps.
- The Town removes snow at transit stops and in parking lots.
- The Town has a private taxi service for point-to-point travel, although it has no capacity to support accessibility options for its users.

Planned Improvements

- Town staff to work with Kings Transit staff to review snow removal at transit stops and steps (including costs) required to improve snow removal timelines.
- Ensure all transit stops are designed to meet or exceed Canadian Standards Association (CSAA) Standard B651-18, Accessible Design for the Built Environment.

Village of Lawrencetown

Facility Accessibility Assessments

Achievements

- Prioritized winter maintenance of Village-owned parking areas and sidewalks.
- The Village office, medical center and pharmacy are all barrier free.
- Village Commission meetings are held at the library which is accessible.
- Improved sound projection for village annual general meetings.
- Barrier-free workplace

Planned improvements

- Install crosswalk lighting and truncated domes at sidewalk cutouts.
- No staff members are trained in alternative communication methods, such as ASL.
- Investigate a railing option for the boat launch as well as improving signage
- Paint clearer sidewalk markings
- Update existing HR policies to include language which supports a culture of inclusion.
- Training for Commission & staff on equity & inclusion

Town of Middleton

Facility Accessibility Assessments

Progress to Date (2022–2025)

Significant achievements have been made across multiple accessibility domains:

1. Built Environment

- Installed new sidewalks on portions of Main Street, Gates Avenue, and Church Street.
- Repaired uneven surfaces by grinding high spots and replacing bricks with concrete on Commercial Street.
- Installed accessible pathways to key recreation amenities including the basketball and tennis courts at Rotary Park.
- Added new accessible picnic tables at Centennial Park and Rotary Park.
- Installed additional benches — six throughout town plus several at Rotary Park and along the trail.
- Created new accessible pathways and improved surfacing at Centennial Park.
- Upgraded the front service counter at Town Hall to be accessible.
- Replaced doorknobs in Town Hall with lever handles; added tactile signage for washrooms and offices.
- Purchased reflective tape to install at crosswalks and replaced high-visibility flags.
- Installed an evacuation chair for Town Hall's upper floor.

- Eliminated parking on Main Street (Queen Street westward) to improve pedestrian safety.
- Planned for new accessible parking along Main Street during our next street painting program.

2. Recreation & Community Assets

- Installed a pool lift at the Middleton Swimming Pool.
- Continued offering Para Sport “Try It” sessions including wheelchair basketball and sledge hockey.
- Added accessible picnic tables and seating areas at public parks.
- Created accessible education posters with QR codes in community kiosks.

3. Information & Awareness

- Established the *Middleton Accessibility Facebook Page* and *Middleton Neighbours Helping Neighbours* group to share resources, promote inclusion, and encourage mutual support.
- Hosted *Accessibility Awareness Weeks* annually (2021, 2022, 2024, and 2025) featuring education activities, flag raisings, colouring contests, and regional events in partnership with Bridgetown and Valley accessibility partners.

4. Policy and Administrative Improvements

- Integrated accessibility considerations into all new park and trail planning (e.g., Wetland Trail project).
- Incorporated accessibility checkpoints into procurement and signage design.

Planned Improvements (2025–2028)

1. Built Environment

Goal: Ensure all municipal buildings, parks, and public spaces barrier free and accessible as possible.

Actions:

- Conduct accessibility reviews for all municipal buildings and parks with costed recommendations.
- Include accessibility upgrades in the Capital Improvement Plan (e.g., tactile plates, ramps, auditory signals, and curb cuts).
- Install additional accessible parking spaces and clear year-round snow removal protocols.
- Incorporate accessibility design into new trail signage, benches, and park amenities.

2. Goods and Services

Goal: Provide equitable access to municipal services and programs for residents and visitors of all abilities.

Actions:

- Develop a public “Accessibility in Recreation” guide outlining adapted and inclusive programs.
- Provide staff training in accessible customer service and communication.
- Continue para-sport programming and expand adaptive recreation offerings.

- Establish an accommodation fund for ASL or CART services at public meetings and events if needed and purchase microphones for council chambers so audio is clear so closed captioning will be more accurate.

3. Information and Communication

Goal: Ensure that Town information is accessible and available in multiple formats.

Actions:

- Redesign the municipal website to meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.1).
- Offer accessible documents (large print, plain language, or Braille) on request.
- Standardize the use of sans-serif fonts and clear layout in print and digital materials.
- Add an accessibility statement to all Town communications.
- Develop internal training for staff on accessible communication practices.

4. Employment

Goal: Create an inclusive and barrier-free workplace for all Town employees and volunteers.

Actions:

- Review recruitment materials to ensure inclusive language and visibility for persons with disabilities.
- Provide assistive technologies or workplace accommodations as needed.
- Offer staff and Council training on disability awareness and inclusive leadership. Encourage intermunicipal training, when possible, to reduce cost and encourage shared experience.
- Track and report progress on inclusive hiring and workplace adjustments.

5. Transportation

Goal: Improve mobility and access for all ages and abilities.

Actions:

- Partner with Kings Transit and Trans County Transportation Society to research options for accessibility at stops, including shelters and benches.
- Maintain priority snow removal at bus stops and curb cuts.
- Collaborate with Bicycle Nova Scotia to complete the Blue Route accessible cycling connection.
- Continue repairs to sidewalks, crosswalks, and curb cuts for safe mobility.

6. Awareness and Capacity Building

Goal: Foster a community culture of inclusion, understanding, and accessibility leadership.

Actions:

- Continue annual Accessibility Week celebrations and awareness campaigns.
- Host accessibility training and information sessions and invite businesses and community groups.
- Work with local media and schools to share accessibility success stories.
- Encourage and recognize accessibility improvements by local businesses through social media promotion.

7. Cross-cutting Policy

Accessible Procurement

The Town will apply an accessibility lens to all procurements. RFPs will include accessibility requirements where relevant (e.g., WCAG 2.1 for software/web, CSA B651/NS standards for built works) and evaluate vendors on accessibility criteria.

Accessible Meetings & Events

Staff will use an event checklist covering venue access, wayfinding, assistive listening, clear audio/mics, seating, quiet space, and how to request ASL/CART or other accommodations. Accessibility features will be communicated in advance in plain language.

Temporary Disruptions & Detours

When accessibility features are temporarily unavailable (e.g., sidewalk under construction, lift (elevator) outage), the Town will: (1) notify the public promptly, (2) provide an accessible alternative route/service, and (3) post expected timelines and contacts.

Emergency Management & Snow Plan (access-first)

Snow clearance at curb cuts, crosswalks, and transit stops will be prioritized. Emergency communications will follow plain language and accessible format practices, and staff will coordinate with transit partners on accessible access during storms and outages.