



ACCESSIBLE Yarmouth

Town of Yarmouth
Accessibility Action Plan:
Refresh 2025-2028

This plan has been designed and formatted to be more accessible to persons with disabilities.

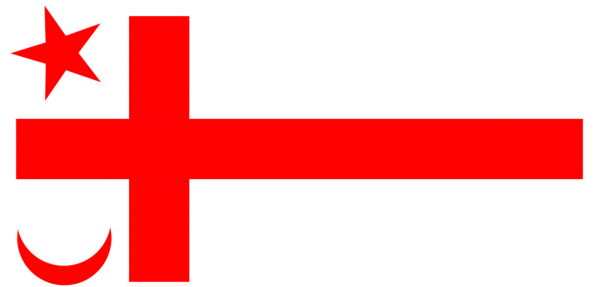


Action Plan Contents

Introduction.....	4
What We Believe.....	4
Areas of Focus.....	5
What We Have Achieved.....	6
Our Priorities.....	8
Upcoming Training and Development.....	10
Implementing the Plan Refresh.....	10
Timeline.....	10
Monitoring.....	10
Glossary of Terms.....	11
Reference Documents.....	12

Land Acknowledgement

This document was created in Mi'kma'ki, the traditional and territory of the Mi'kmaq People. We recognize that we are on the unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people, who have lived on and cared for this land for thousands of years. We recognize their deep and enduring connection to the land, waters, and resources of Nova Scotia.



Introduction

This Accessibility Action Plan Refresh was developed by the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) of the Town of Yarmouth.

The AAC committee provided advice to Town Council on identifying, preventing, and eliminating barriers experienced by people with disabilities in the first version of this plan, and this refresh. This included identifying barriers to municipal programs, services, initiatives, and facilities. The committee also worked closely with town staff on the development and oversight of this Plan Refresh

What We Believe

The Town of Yarmouth works to ensure its programs, services, and facilities are barrier-free and show leadership by supporting the goal of becoming an accessible province by 2030 under the Accessibility Act of 2017.

Areas Of Focus

The Province of Nova Scotia's Accessibility Act (2017) requires public sector organizations to have an Accessibility Advisory Committee to develop an accessibility plan. The plan must be updated every three years.

The plan must include the following:

- achievements to date in identifying, removing, and preventing barriers in policies, programs, practices, and services
- how we will identify, remove, and prevent barriers in policies, programs, practices, and services
- how we will measure the effect of our work to improve accessibility
- remove barriers over time

In this plan refresh we have identified priorities to improve accessibility within **five (5) areas of focus**.

These priority areas include:

1. Goods and Services
2. Information and Communications
3. Employment
4. Built Environment
5. Transportation

What We Have Achieved

Goods & Services

- Established a town-wide Accessible Customer Service Policy.
- Accessible Customer service training to staff that included:
 - » Accessibility Foundations Training
 - » Accessible Customer Service Training
- Specialized customer service training to support visually impaired customers and service animals.
- Engaged the community through work with our committee and with a public survey to receive input about our services.

Information and Communications

- Our website has been updated to better adhere to current Accessibility Standards.
- A screen reader/accessibility tool was added to the town's website.
- Information is shared in accessible formats wherever possible.
- Staff have completed Introduction to Accessible Communication, Core Skills of Plain Language and Core Skills of Digital Accessibility.
- A layered map using ArcGIS has been developed for the town's website showing town-owned accessible buildings, spaces and parking.
- Staff investigated best practices for delivery of content via social media.
- Staff created an accessibility page on the website, highlighting the Town's commitment to accessibility, action plan goals,

definitions, reports, etc.

Employment

- An Accommodation Policy was created.
- We surveyed the municipal workforce for baseline on the abilities of employees.
- The town has developed a statement of commitment to accessibility, equity, and inclusion that is included on our employment advertisements.
- The Human Resource Manager has completed “Breaking Barriers: The Art of Inclusive Hiring and Disability Confident Employer training.”

Built Environment

- Staff completed all audits of all Town-occupied buildings and spaces.
- Walk NS Completed an audit of our water street sidewalk and trail.
- More accessible Active Living Trails were built.
- Accessible picnic tables were added to parks and public spaces.

Transportation

- Transit fares were removed.
- New buses were purchased with accessible features that support transit users.
- Additional bus stops have been added to the route.
- A transit ride-along session with Canadian CNIB was conducted

and feedback on opportunities for improvements was received.

Our Priorities

Goods and Services

- We are committed to providing assistive technology to customers that require additional support while conducting business at the town (screen readers, etc.).
- We are committed to plain language in our public facing documents (water bills, tax bills).

Information and Communications

- We are committed to purchasing assistive technology to be available for hearing-impaired individuals to participate in public meetings.
- Staff will work to identify accessible wayfinding signage requirements for Town-operated buildings.

Employment

- We will review our workplace evacuation plan to ensure it will support all visitors and employees, including those with disabilities.
- We will develop a workplace emergency response plan.
- We will create an Equitable recruitment toolkit to support managers.
- Managers will complete the “Breaking Barriers: The Art of Inclusive Hiring” and “Disability Confident Employer” training offered by SeaChange CoLabs.

- A formal Return-to-Work policy and plan will be developed.
- All job advertisements will only list as requirements the essential qualifications and skills that are necessary for performing the job.
- All applicants will be advised that individual accommodations can be arranged for all stages of the recruitment process.

Built Environment

- We will commit a portion of all new construction and renovation project budgets to install, maintain, or improve accessibility in town-owned public buildings and spaces.
- The accessibility committee will review and prioritize challenges to accessibility in the town-owned built environment, and will share their findings with council.
- When possible, we will incorporate 2030 standards when repairing and maintaining existing municipal infrastructure (i.e., sidewalks and trails).
- We will continue to improve accessibility in parks and open spaces (i.e., installing accessible picnic tables and other amenities).

Transportation

- We are committed to increasing the number of accessible bus shelters.
- We are committed to conduct a comprehensive review of wayfinding signage at transit stops to improve accessibility.
- We will provide accessibility training to the transit drivers.

Upcoming Training and Development

- Inclusive Leadership: Cultivating Accessibility Confidence
- Welcoming All: Accessible Customer Service
- Accessibility Confident Retention and Promotion

Implementing the Plan Refresh

- The EDI Coordinator will be responsible for working with all staff to ensure continual work towards meeting all plan refresh goals, receiving, and responding to all public concerns, complaints, and suggestions.
- Council is responsible for adopting and overseeing the Accessibility Action Refresh Plan
- The Chief Administrative Officer is responsible for implementing the plan and reporting to Council.

Timeline

The priorities outlined in this plan refresh will be completed over the next 3 years.

Monitoring

The Town of Yarmouth Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) will prepare a Monitoring Report for Council each year. This report will measure the priorities completion of this plan. The committee may also make recommendations to improve the plan. The Monitoring Report will be a public document. It will be posted on the Town's website.

Glossary of Terms

Accommodation: For the purpose of this Accessibility Plan, “accommodation” and “reasonable accommodation” are used interchangeably. The fundamental nature of the duty to accommodate imposes a positive duty on employers to provide employees or job applicants with an opportunity to perform the essential duties of the job. It is an individualized process which, to the point of undue hardship, involves the removal or alleviation of barriers that prevent an otherwise capable individual from participating equally in the workplace because of a disability as defined by the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act. Accommodation does not have to be perfect, but it does have to be reasonable.

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 communication barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice”.

Built Environment means the human-made space in which people live, work, learn and play and includes buildings, rights-of-way, and outdoor spaces.

Business ACCESS-Ability Grant Program: is a grant program offered by the Nova Scotia Government to enable businesses to apply for a cost- shared grant to make accessibility- related improvements.

Community ACCESS-Ability Program: is a grant program offered by the Nova Scotia Government to enable community groups to apply for cost- shared grants for accessibility related capital improvements.

Disability: A condition that makes it harder for a person to participate. The condition may always interfere, or only sometimes. Nova Scotia’s Accessibility Act defines disability as “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.”

Municipal Government Act: Provincial legislation that gives broad authority to municipalities to govern in whatever ways the councils consider appropriate within the jurisdiction given to them by the Government of Nova Scotia.

Plain language: Language a reader or listener can understand easily and completely.

Screen Reader is a form of assistive technology for persons with a visual impairment that reads text and image content as speech or braille output.

Reference Documents

Updating your Accessibility Plan: A Toolkit for Prescribed Public Sector Bodies -Accessibility Directorate, AUGUST 2024.

Mel Tool (Compendium of Data Collection Tool)

Access by Design 2030