



THE MUNICIPALITY
OF THE COUNTY OF
RICHMOND

LA MUNICIPALITÉ
DU COMTÉ DE
RICHMOND



Richmond

Accessibility

Plan

SPRING 2022



The Municipality of the County of Richmond Accessibility Plan
Spring 2022

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Municipality of the County of Richmond
2357 Highway 206
Arichat, Nova Scotia

Executive Summary

With the introduction of this first-ever Accessibility Plan for the Municipality of the County of Richmond, the Municipality is beginning its journey to becoming fully accessible by 2030. This plan was created in partnership with the Village of St. Peter's and our shared Accessibility Advisory Committee. Together, we have drafted a shared vision, statement of commitment, and series of focus area commitments and actions for our Municipal units to pursue together or in tandem. The Municipality of the County of Richmond and the Village of St. Peter's are committed to providing a barrier-free environment for all who use our facilities, contact us or access our information.

As a Municipality, we are committed to applying the accessibility standards outlined in the Nova Scotia Accessibility Act, 2017, and adhering to future accessibility recommendations as more information from the Province is released. We are committed to ensuring the full inclusion of all persons with disabilities by advocating and providing support for accessibility in the public, private and non-governmental sectors to create a fully accessible County.

Vision

Vision: *The County of Richmond is inclusive and provides meaningful access for all regardless of ability or age. As a community, we will promote awareness, remove barriers, and put lived experience at the forefront of future decisions.*

Focus Areas

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

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

Each of the five focus areas includes a goal, a summary of current state achievements and barriers, and supporting indicators. They also include several guiding policy statements to assist in accessibility decision-making. These focus areas are actioned using 14 short-term actions for the Municipality of the County of Richmond.

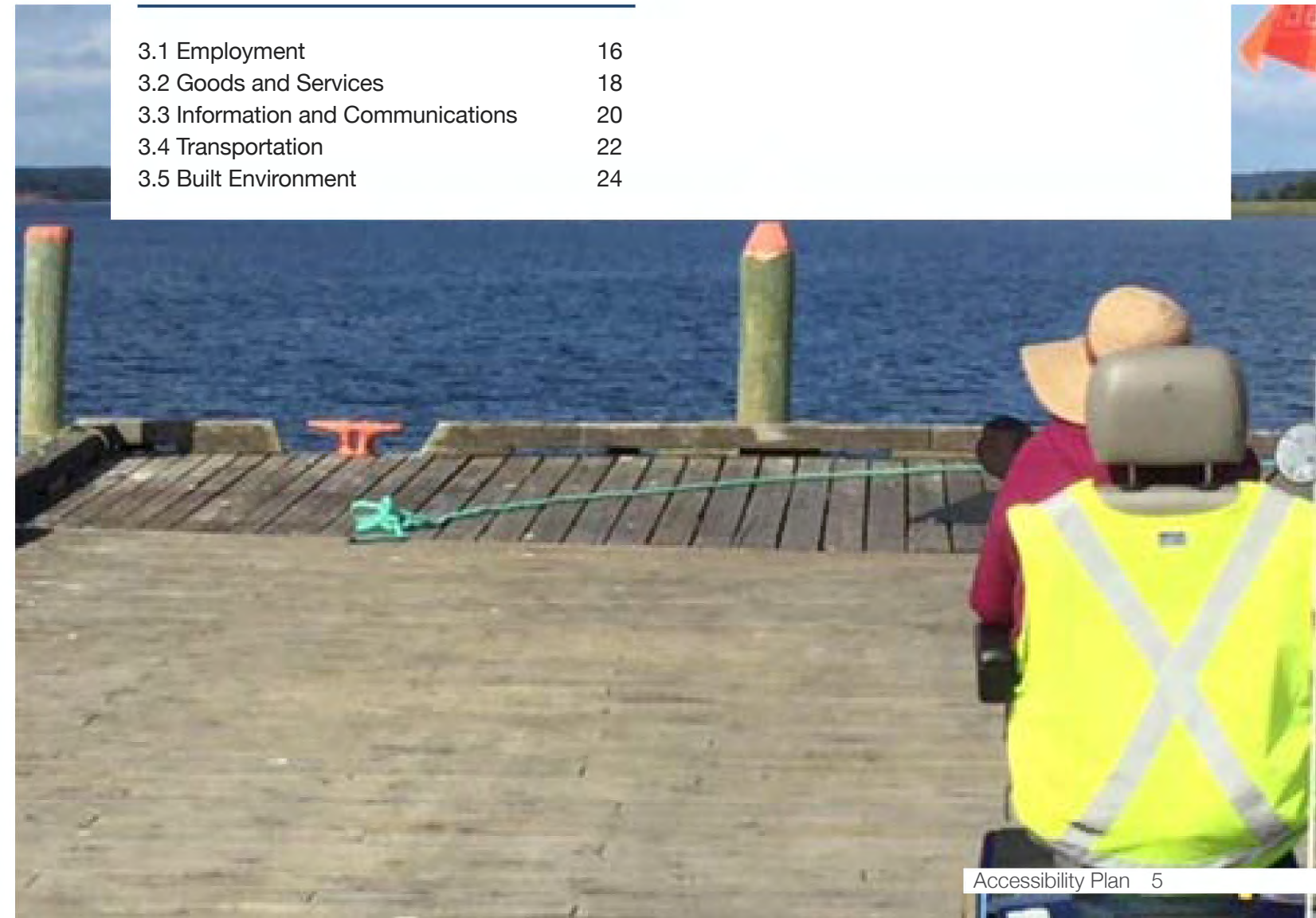
Initial Actions

1. Review maintenance procedures for gravel and snow removal for all sidewalks in commercial areas, residential areas and at key facilities.
2. Modify hiring, funding evaluation, and procurement policies and procedures to prioritize persons with disabilities, both upon hiring, through onboarding and beyond.
3. Advocate for accessibility improvements to widen the paving of shoulders and create an improved winter maintenance procedure.
4. Partner with the Village to create a business survey to understand and create a record of which businesses are accessible.

5. Update Committee and Council communications policies and procedures to provide accessible resources for meetings and engagements, removing accessibility and technology barriers.
6. Partner with the Village to review current accessibility standards at key facilities and conduct Rick Hansen Certifications (or alternative certification) for Municipal Buildings, particularly for entrances.
7. Update the municipal website to an accessible standard.
8. Update and standardize all County signage with Braille, tactile and other design elements.
9. Review current recreational programming to identify and propose accessible recreational programming options.
10. Review the pedestrian road crossing locations and advocate for well-painted locations with visual/ audible cues.
11. Partner with the Village to offer training and professional development for staff, Commission and local businesses for accessibility, including accessible customer service, information and communications, and accessible design standards.
12. Attract more people with lived experience to the AAC.
13. Advocate for and support accessible trail development to ensure the network is safe and accessible for all users.
14. Review and revise emergency management planning to include accessibility.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Statement of Commitment

The Municipality of the County of Richmond and the Village of St. Peter's are committed to promoting awareness, removing barriers and creating equitable and accessible spaces for all. We commit to ensuring that opportunities in our society are open for everyone in Richmond County to participate in a dignified and barrier-free manner.

The Municipality and the Village commit to ensuring all goods, services, information, communication, infrastructure, transportation, buildings, and employment practices align with the following values:

- **Inclusivity** - Ensuring that the county is inclusive and welcoming to everyone regardless of ability, age, race, class, gender identity or access to technology.
- **Meaningful Access** - Continuously removing accessibility barriers and providing equitable opportunities so that everyone can fully participate in our community.
- **Representation** - Putting the voices of people with lived experience among those at the centre of the decision-making process.

By coming together as a community, we will continue to find new ways to reduce barriers, improve accessibility, and ensure that we meet or exceed the 2030 Nova Scotia Accessibility Act requirements.



1.2 About the Accessibility Plan

About the Municipality of the County of Richmond and the Village of St. Peter's

Located in the Canadian province of Nova Scotia, Richmond County is ideally situated on the East Coast of North America. The Municipality of the County of Richmond is the smallest of Nova Scotia's 18 counties. Lying on the Cape Breton side of the Strait of Canso, adjacent to international shipping lanes, the county is bordered on the south by the Atlantic Ocean and the north by the Bras d'Or Lakes.

The Village of St. Peter's is situated within Richmond County on the Fleur-de-Lis trail and the Bras d'Or Lakes Scenic Drive trail. It is a commercial centre in the County and it is incorporated as a Village under the Municipal Government Act, making it a separate municipal unit. The Municipality and the Village are working together to improve accessibility in the County. The St. Peter's Canal bisects Richmond County by joining the Atlantic Ocean with the World Renowned Sailing Destination of the Bras d'Or Lakes.

Mi'kmaw, Acadian, Scottish, and Irish cultures create a kaleidoscope of rich cultural activities for all to enjoy. Whether you are enjoying Richmond's many Acadian festivals, singing along at a local Milling Frolic or participating in ceremonies with the Mi'kmaw community of Potlotek; Richmond County has something for every taste.

With approximately 8,900 people, the county is largely rural and boasts 230,000 acres of forested land and miles of pristine coastline. About one-third of Richmond's residents speak both French and English, and the county is home to several vibrant Mi'kmaw, Celtic, Acadian, and a variety of other cultures that contribute to our

rich history, which is celebrated during numerous festivals and events held around the county throughout the year.

The Accessibility Advisory Committee

This plan was created with the involvement of the Accessibility Advisory Committee [AAC]. This citizen, staff, and Council committee was created on July 14, 2021. Its members include:

- Two elected Councilors designated by the municipal council
- One elected Commissioner, designated by St. Peter's Village Commission
- Four members of the public, with at least half of the members being someone with a disability or representing an organization that works with people with disabilities
- Municipal and Village staff

The AAC's purpose is to provide advice to the Municipal Council and Village Commission. They also help to identify, prevent, and eliminate barriers to access in Municipal and Village programs, services, initiatives, and facilities for people living with disabilities. This committee plays an important role in helping Richmond County become more accessible.

The Nova Scotia Accessibility Act

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

This plan was created in accordance with the provincial guidance to start improving accessibility in the Municipality of the County of Richmond.

1.3 Plan Methodology

This Accessibility Plan was developed in conjunction with the Village of St. Peters and an Accessibility Advisory Committee shared between the two municipal bodies. As a result, much of the content and guiding statements are identical as they have been developed to ensure a shared vision across the County of Richmond. The community feedback, goal areas, and action lists have been tailored to the specific realities of the two different bodies.

Many different inputs have informed and shaped this plan, including research, community engagement, committee discussions, and a series of site assessments. The main inputs that have shaped this plan are as follows:

Site Assessments: The project’s Accessibility Consultant, Level Playing Field, conducted a sample of site assessments at crucial locations across Richmond County. Sites that were assessed included: accessible parking spaces and curb cuts to entrances, sidewalks, trails, parks, libraries, health centers, recreation and community centers, and some Municipal and Village buildings. Assessments utilized virtual methods and on-location photography to inspect the accessibility of these locations

for those walking or using a wheeled mobility device. Findings from this assessment can be found in Appendix B: Site Assessment Report.

Public Engagement: Between January 17, 2022, to January 30, 2022, a series of public engagement activities were undertaken to understand what currently works well, what barriers exist and what opportunities there are surrounding accessibility in the County of Richmond. Throughout those two weeks, a total of 147 community members were engaged. To share insights and ask questions, the community was encouraged to complete an online or paper survey, phone our call-in accessibility line, or attend one of two virtual workshops. An invitation to participate in the planning and on the committee was mailed to every household in the County. More information about the engagement findings can be found in Appendix C: Internal Research and Engagement Report.

Policy Direction: A series of provincial and local policies were investigated to understand the existing direction that this plan should both adhere to and take recommendations from. More information about the findings and recommendations can be found in this plan’s policy sections, as well as in Appendix C: Internal Research and Engagement Report.

Case Study Research: Five case studies of municipalities across Canada that have undertaken similar initiatives were explored in this plan to guide current best practices. These case studies are documented in Appendix C: Internal Research and Engagement Report.

Accessibility Advisory Committee: Many of the plan components were either directly informed by or revised by the AAC. Their feedback has ensured that the plan reflects the committee’s objectives. The AAC helped shape the plan’s vision, statement of commitment, focus area commitments, and short-term action list.

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

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

Barrier - The Accessible Canada Act defines a barrier as - “anything—including anything physical, architectural, technological or attitudinal, anything that is based on information or communications or anything that is the result of a policy or a practice—that hinders the full and equal participation in society of persons with an impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment or a functional limitation.”

Blended transition – Canadian Standards Association CSA B651HB-18 defines a blended transition as - “a connection with a slope of 1:20 (5%) or less between the level of a pedestrian walkway and vehicular path of travel.”

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

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

Colour-contrast – A significant contrast in light and dark colours between the foreground and background of an element.

Curb ramp – A sloped surface built into a curb.

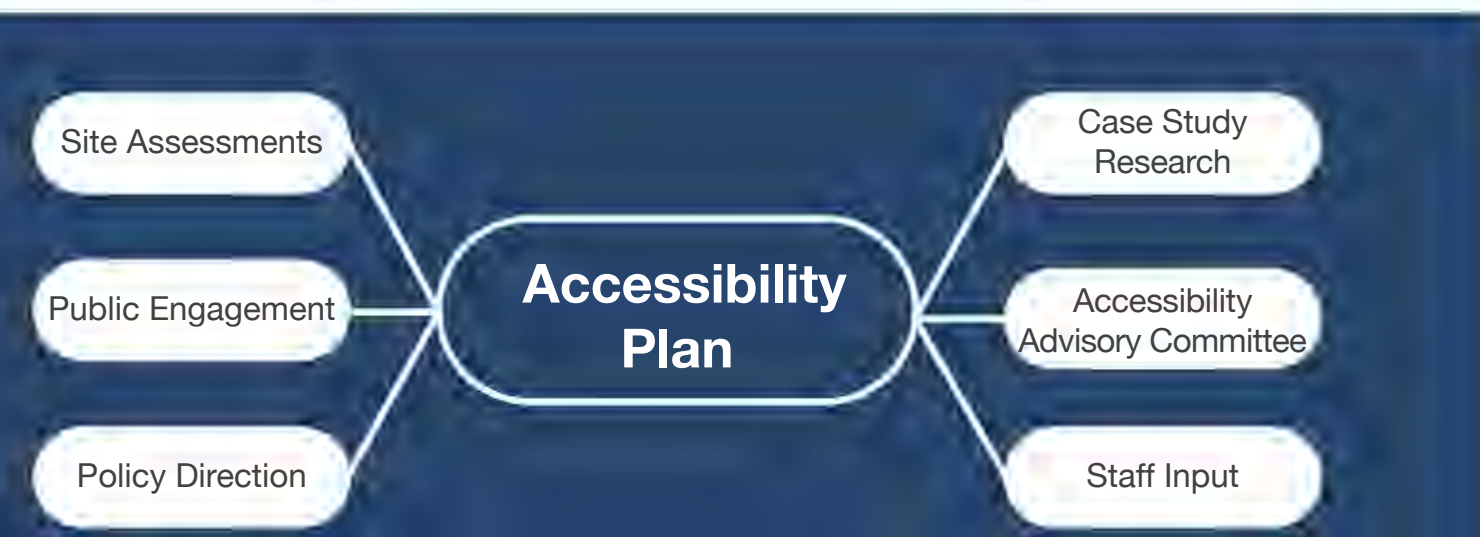
Depressed curb – Also known as drop curbs; a continuous length of curb along

1.4 Glossary of Terms

The following definitions and their meanings are provided for clarification. These definitions were created based on standards and definitions found in the *Accessible Canada Act*, or the *Canadian Standards Association CSA B651HB-18*.

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

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



a pedestrian route that is lowered to the level of an adjacent roadway. Such curbs may be located at vehicle loading/unloading areas or at intersections.

Disability – A physical, intellectual, learning or sensory impairment, including an episodic disability, that hinders an individual’s full and effective participation in society.

Glare – Canadian Standards Association CSA B651HB-18 defines glare as “excessive reflection of light from a surface.”

Goods and services – All tangible and intangible items or amenities that consumers purchase independently or receive through the government. For the purpose of this document, goods and services will refer to government-owned services, including snow removal, or waste management.

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

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

Municipality – A governmental body established under the Municipal Government Act that provides local government for rural areas outside incorporated towns. Municipality in this document refers to the Municipality of the County of Richmond administration and government.

Ramp – Canadian Standards Association CSA B651HB-18 defines a ramp as a “sloping walkway leading from one level to another, which has a running slope with a ratio steeper than or equal to 1:20 (5%).”

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

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

Slope – The ratio of rise on an inclined surface.

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

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

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

Village – A type of community that has a commission established under the Municipal Government Act for the purpose of providing municipal services to a defined area within a larger county or district municipality.

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

2.0 Accessibility Overview

2.1 The Vision

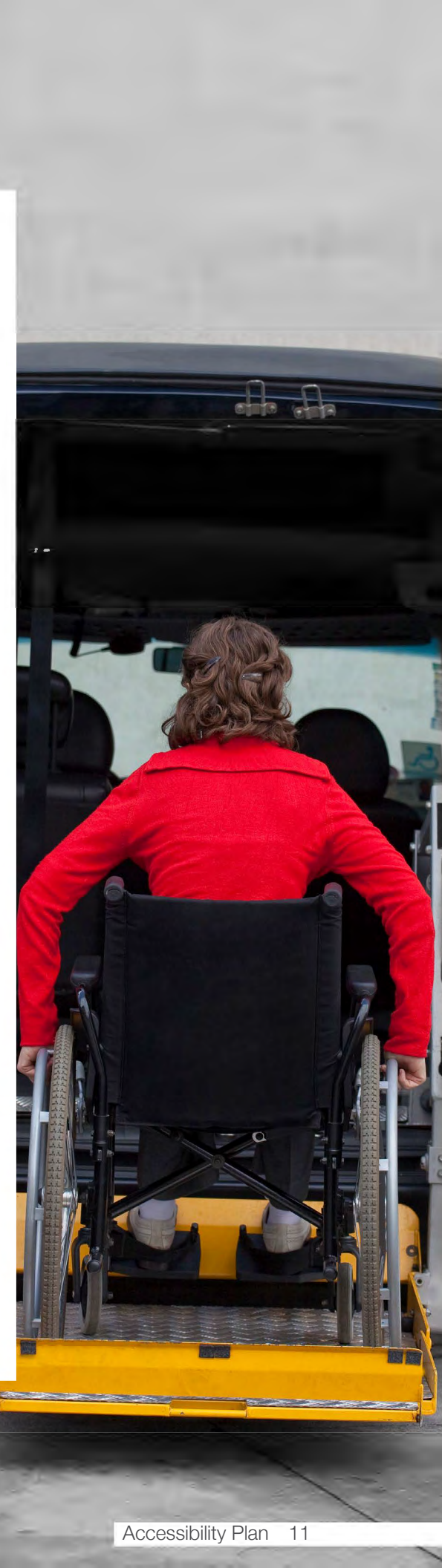
The County of Richmond is inclusive and provides meaningful access for all regardless of ability or age. As a community, we will promote awareness, remove barriers, and put lived experience at the forefront of future decisions.

2.2 Governance Structure

The Municipality of the County of Richmond will ensure that they are taking steps to improve accessibility across the County of Richmond through the implementation of this plan. As actions are completed, and a better understanding of accessibility challenges is developed, there are steps that the Municipality should take in order to continue improving accessibility in the County. They are:

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

The forthcoming plan will require significant time, energy, and resources to make the necessary changes in the Municipality to become more accessible. Therefore, it is recommended that the Municipality explores the creation of either an internal position or a shared position with neighbouring Municipalities, including St. Peter’s, to create an Accessibility Coordinator Position. Their role as the Accessibility Coordinator would be to assist with implementing this plan and assist the AAC with their responsibilities.



2.3 Forces For and Against Accessibility

The Accessibility Advisory Committee [AAC] identified some of the forces working for and against accessibility. These forces are aspects of the community that will influence the development and uptake of this plan as the Municipality continues to improve accessibility.

Forces working for accessibility

- Richmond County has an engaged, tight knit community
- There are many opportunities to collaborate with local organizations to move forward on accessibility goals
- Information sharing through social media such as Facebook
- Telile service which provides vital information to people without an internet connection
- Great potential for improving the trail system to be more accessible
- Richmond Literacy Network and other programs are helping to close the skills gap
- General positive attitudes about moving towards a more accessible community
- Municipal facilities are leading by example by ensuring accessibility wherever possible
- Strait Area Transit provides an option for accessible transportation

Forces working against accessibility

- Poorly maintained and poorly designed roads and sidewalks
- Aging infrastructure that prevents accessibility upgrades

- Limited awareness of accessibility needs
- Limited accessible work opportunities
- Language barriers for French speaking residents trying to access municipal information
- Complicated funding applications for accessibility grants
- Internet accessibility and the digital divide
- Public transportation is difficult to access and navigating it can be intimidating for many people with disabilities
- Accessible parking spots are very limited
- Transportation options are very limited
- Many outdoor public spaces are inaccessible for people with mobility issues

2.4 Our Community's Priorities

During the engagement phase of the Municipality and Village's Accessibility Plan, we asked residents via an online and print survey how they would rate the accessibility of key components of their community. The following chart shows the overall accessibility ratings from residents of those who were from the County of Richmond.

It should be noted that this chart is organized from the highest number of "very accessible" and "somewhat accessible" responses to the lowest number. It should also be noted that respondents were able to answer "not applicable" for elements that they do not interact with.

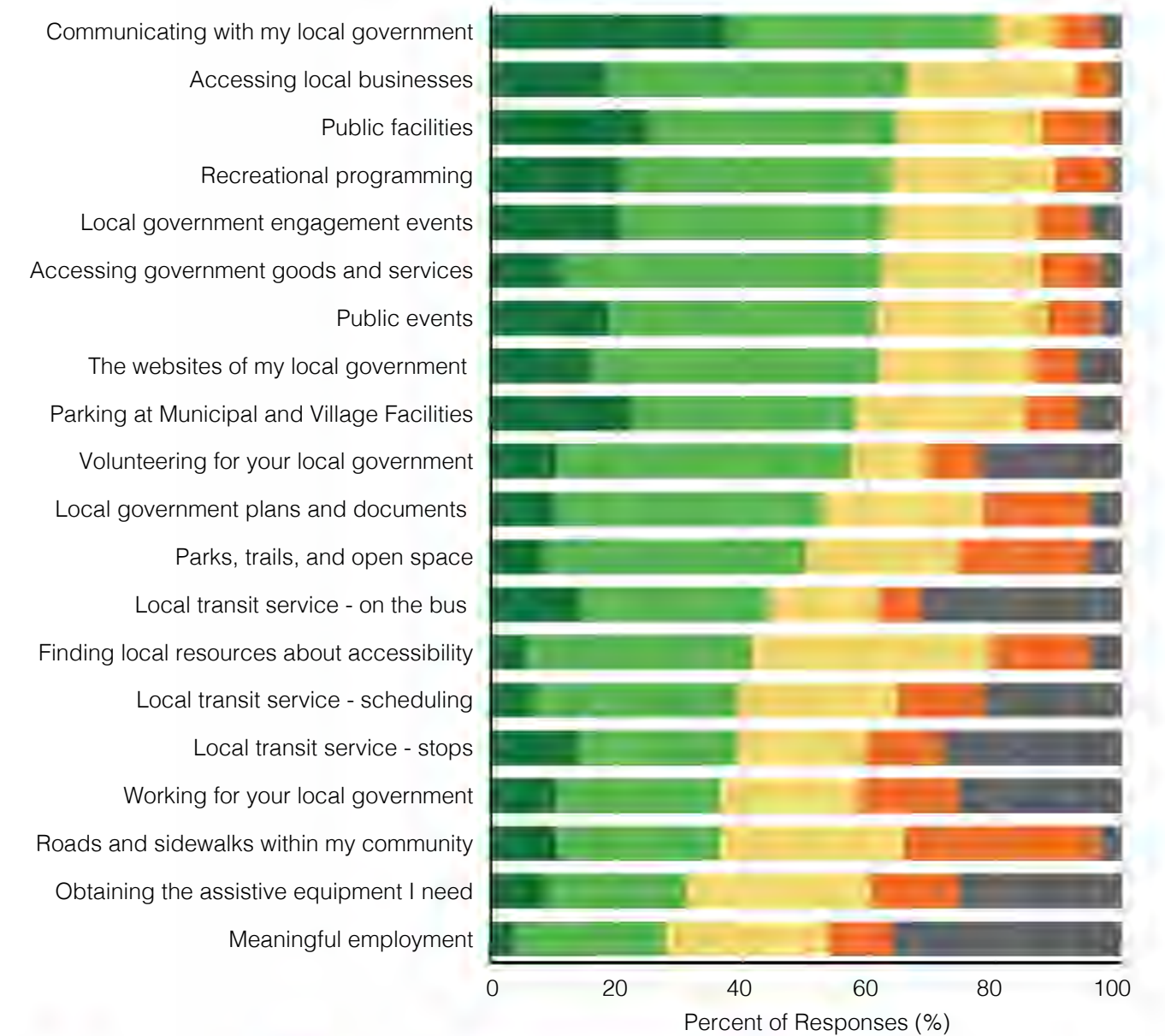
The three most accessible elements reported as either very accessible or somewhat accessible for the Municipality include:

- Communicating with the local government
- Accessing local businesses
- Public facilities

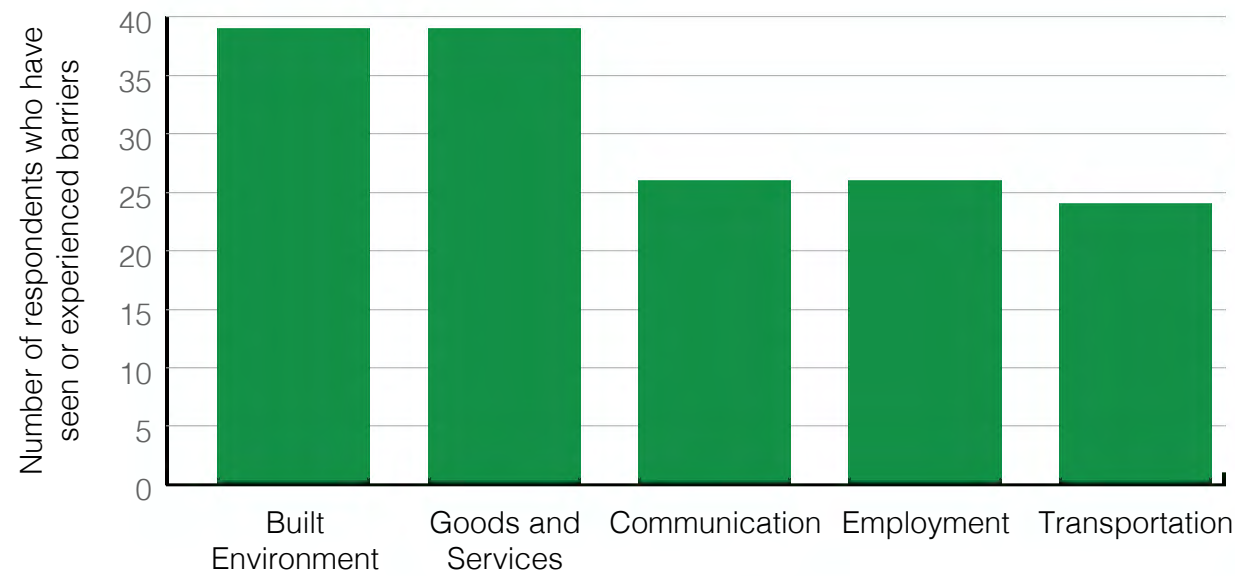
The three least accessible elements, reported as very inaccessible, or somewhat inaccessible (not including "not applicable" options) included:

- Moving along roads and sidewalks within my community
- Finding local resources about accessibility
- Obtaining the assistive equipment I need

Survey Results: Accessibility Ratings



Survey Results: Prevalence of Local Accessibility Barriers



The bar chart above shows all of the responses to the statement, “Select the accessibility barriers you’ve seen or experienced in the Municipality of the County of Richmond and the Village of St. Peter’s.”

2.5 Education and Awareness

During engagement, it was found that generally, there was a lack of awareness about accessibility needs across focus areas in the Village and the Municipality. Many of the actions highlighted in Section 4 of this report will help ensure progress towards each focus area and general education and awareness. In particular, Action 11: Partner with the Municipality to offer training and professional development for staff, Commission and local businesses for accessibility, acts to support the education and development of resources for staff, and businesses in The Village and Municipality.

Additionally, residents highlighted the “can do” attitude and dedication of many existing non-profit and community groups in the Municipality and the Village. Throughout the development of this plan’s actions, these groups should be sought out for potential partnerships and collaboration to further the impact of any accessibility actions made by the Village and Municipality.

Lastly, residents highlighted the potential for growing the positive working relationship between Potlotek First Nation and the Municipality. Throughout the pursuance of this plan, partnerships with Potlotek should continue to evolve and grow to ensure that all communities are involved in creating an accessible community for all.

3.0 Areas of Focus

The Accessibility Plan is supported by five key focus areas, which are:

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

Stakeholder input, site assessments, and supporting research have informed these five focus areas. Each of these areas has been organized to include a commitment, an overview of the starting point, and a set of policies to inform the Municipality. Each of the focus areas is comprised of the following sections:

The Commitment: an ideal state to achieve by 2030 for each focus area. Each commitment provides the high-level goal and intent for the focus area to meet over the coming years.

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

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

Policy Statements: These policy statements will be used to inform accessibility decision-making in the Municipality. These are informed from provincial standards for accessibility and will ensure that the Municipality takes the necessary steps to improve accessibility.

Employment

3.1.1. The Commitment

The Municipality of the County of Richmond and its partners provide, create awareness, and advocate for employment opportunities that are accessible to people of all abilities, including those with disabilities.

Supporting elements:

- Public workspaces
- Public hiring practices
- Workplace culture
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion training, policies and practices
- Community employment partnerships
- Flexibility for modified workforce participation

3.1.2. The Starting Point

Overview

Employment opportunities in the Municipality vary by industry. The top 6 industries in the Municipality are: 1) agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, 2) mining and oil and gas extraction, 3) manufacturing, 4) utilities, 5) construction, and 6) wholesale trade.

According to the 2016 County Profile, the local labour participation rate is 53.52% in the County, with an employment rate of 43.1% and an unemployment rate of 19.48%. According to the same report, the largest employers in the County include Port Hawkesbury Paper, NuStar Energy, Premium Seafoods Group, Lobsters R Us, Clearwater Seafoods Acadia Drywall/Cabot Gypsum, NSPower, Samson Enterprises Ltd. & Samson Industrial Ltd., and Strait Supplies.

The Municipality of the County of Richmond employs 26 staff, including full-time and seasonal workers.

Achievements

- Municipally owned buildings have some accessible features, such as ramps, accessible washrooms and automatic doors, which improve access to employment at the Municipality for those with a disability
- There is a willingness from the County to be more inclusive with their hiring practices
- Richmond County Literacy Network has programs for older adults which help to prepare people for employment
- The YMCA Cape Breton employment office (Nova Scotia Works) is a great resource for residents who need employment support
- The Richmond County TimeBank (stopped services) was a great resource to connect skilled workers with opportunities

Barriers

- There is chronic underemployment in Richmond County for those with a disability
- Limited information sharing about accessible work sites/ accessible jobs available in Richmond

- There is a lack of mentors or resources for individuals to try different initiatives
- Few work opportunities for people with disabilities, youth and older adults in the County
- Limited internet services create difficulties for people to connect with work opportunities in Richmond and for work from home opportunities
- Many businesses are located in older buildings that are not accessible for employees or customers with mobility restrictions

3.1.3. Policies

The Municipality will:

- Guarantee that training and hiring materials incorporate guidance about recruitment and hiring best practices for people with disabilities
- Consider what accommodations could be offered during their recruitment and employment retention endeavours that build upon current accommodations offered

Goods and Services

3.2.1. The Commitment

All staff and service providers supply and advocate for accessible goods and services in the Municipality of the County of Richmond and continue to identify and improve barriers to the use of local services.

Supporting elements:

- Council and Committee meetings
- Relationship building and advocacy
- Affordability of services
- Building code and bylaw enforcement
- Location of services
- Maintenance and snow removal
- Online and offline delivery options

3.2.2. The Starting Point

Overview

The Municipality of the County of Richmond offers a range of services to the local population. The Municipality provides services including but not limited to administering building permits, dog licensing, emergency management, public works, recreation services, and tax services. Some services included on the eServices portion of the County website allow residents to apply for permits, register a heritage building, and change their address using the virtual format. The Municipality is also responsible for maintaining 1.7 kilometers of their roads, with the remaining nearly 30 kilometers of J-class roads being maintained by the Nova Scotia Department of Public Works.

The local area also hosts a robust accommodation sector to service the growing tourism base. The community health centre in L'Ardoise is a good example of a centre with a range of health services provided to the community. Richmond County is also home to community halls such as; The Lions Community Hall, the Rocky Bay Irish Club, and the Little Anse Social Action Centre that host local events. The Richmond County Winter Festival is an example of a local event hosted in the area each year.

The Municipality of the County of Richmond is governed by a County Council, which has a variety of committees of Council, including the shared Accessibility Advisory Committee with the Village of St. Peter's.

Achievements

- The Municipal office is well equipped and can accommodate hybrid meeting styles (virtual and in-person)
- Partnerships in place with local organizations to work with residents, such as the: Dr. Kingston Community Health Centre, which does outreach to residents, Autism NS, which created a Sensory Friendly skate at Richmond Arena and the Pan Cape Breton Food Hub, which helps with food security
- The Richmond County Literacy Network (RCLN) has general literacy and computer literacy programs to help people with basic skills
- Improvements are being made through partnerships with local ATV groups to make accessible multi-use trails
- There is a good suite of accessible recreation leisure activities offered by the municipality
- Events and services are located in various locations, many of which are accessible, which allows for improved access
- Lack of awareness and clarity on accessibility among service providers, including staff and council, when providing accessible services and programming
- Inconsistent access to high-speed internet throughout the community prevents people from connecting to services, sharing of information and opportunities
- Snow removal of local roads can leave those unable to clear their roads stranded or unable to access local businesses and services
- Some offerings from the Municipality and other local organizations are only offered in-person, but travel is not always an option for some people or those living in rural communities
- A lack of transportation options to access services, programming and volunteer opportunities
- Limited access to affordable and accessible service options throughout the county, including affordable housing

3.2.3. Policies

The Municipality will:

Build policies and procedures for snow clearing and snow storage into the Land Use By-law and Subdivision By-law

Provide all municipal goods and services with an inclusionary approach, prioritizing issues related to ability-based biases

Barriers

- Some buildings are not accessible, which limits the access to certain goods and services offered by the Municipality

Information and Communications

3.3.1. The Commitment

Everyone can meaningfully access, receive, understand, and use information provided by the Municipality of the County of Richmond, and their partners, regardless of ability, or technology availability.

Supporting elements:

- Communication using a variety of platforms/mediums
- Distribution of materials online and offline
- Availability of interpretation services
- Communicating in plain language

3.3.2. The Starting Point

Overview

Richmond county spans across a vast area of Cape Breton, meaning there are many unique communities within the county. The communities boast many outdoor activities that residents enjoy and indoor spaces to gather and hold events. The events and activities highlighted are promoted through many internal groups and networks. Information about events is posted on the festivals and events calendar for Richmond County Facebook page. Tourism has been established in the region as Cape Breton has invested in promoting the island. The County website has limited information about accessibility within the county and the events it hosts.

The Municipality of the County of Richmond currently has a website, www.richmondcounty.ca, where this Accessibility Plan's information is located.

The Municipality predominantly relies on Facebook, Telile Community TV, and the municipal website to digitally share County information. Along with other digital efforts, the Municipality uses in-person information-sharing methods, such as community mail-outs, the quarterly Richmond Reflections magazine, phone-in lines, and informal word of mouth.

Achievements

- A range of communication methods are currently used, including Telile, social media and the Municipal website
- The Municipality offers hybrid meetings to facilitate remote attendance, and Council sessions are live-streamed with a call-in line available
- The County Facebook pages have over 2300 followers
- The Reflections of Richmond online and print newsletter is circulated throughout the County and provides information about upcoming events
- RCLN (Richmond County Literacy Network) programs are a dependable resource
- County attempts to communicate through a wide range of informal media sources
- There is a strong collaborative spirit within the County through various groups, agencies and the Accessibility Advisory Committee

Barriers

- Most public information is only available online through social media and the Municipal website, which is exclusionary for those with limited broadband or tech access
- The County is bilingual, but there is minimal availability of information and communications in both official languages
- There is limited broadband internet service

available in parts of the County; many seniors are not connected to the internet

- There is a lack of in-person wayfinding signage
- The County website needs improvement to address accessibility concerns
- Access to information regarding accessibility is hard to find, and there are limited opportunities for residents to provide feedback
- Telile and SP Cable can be used more effectively
- ASL and literacy supports are not always available at local events
- There is a need to improve access to Council information; policies and Bylaws should use plain language

3.3.3. Policies

The Municipality will:

- Supply information in an accessible, customized format or with communication assistance (ASL interpreters, oral translators and real-time captioning)
- Ensure all electronic materials are made accessible for all age ranges and abilities, including those with disabilities
- Host all in-person public meetings in barrier-free locations

Transportation

3.4.1. The Commitment

Everyone in the Municipality of the County of Richmond is able to get to where they need to go through equitable transportation access.

Supporting elements:

- Transit providers
- Public transportation network and scheduling
- Alternative modes of transportation (Active transportation)
- Parking spaces
- Infrastructure repairs and development (sidewalks and roads)
- Advocacy

3.4.2. The Starting Point

Overview

External agencies and the Provincial Government primarily handle transportation in the Municipality. The Municipality owns approximately 1.7 kilometres of municipal roads, with the majority maintained by the Municipality. There are also 29.88 kilometres of local roads (J-class) that are technically owned by the Municipality, which the Province maintains. Lastly, The Municipality owns and maintains approximately 2.6 Kms of sidewalks (1.3 Kms in Louisdale, 0.8 Kms in Arichat and 0.5 Kms in Petit De Grat). The Province owns and/or maintains many roadways in the County of Richmond. Look to the built environment to learn more about built transportation infrastructure.

The Municipality of the County of Richmond is serviced by Strait Area Transit, a non-profit transit service. Strait Area Transit is a community-based transit system that delivers door-door accessible transportation within Cape Breton Island and beyond. This service relies on a pre-booked rider system, where riders are required to request a ride directly from their home to their destination the day before their trip. Service extends between Port Hawkesbury to Inverness. Richmond County is a partner funder in this transit initiative.

There are no taxi services available directly in Richmond County, but two taxi companies in the neighbouring Villages of Port Hawkesbury and Port Hastings. Similarly, there are no VIA rail train lines in Richmond County or rideshare platforms.

Achievements

- Some communities have well developed active transportation infrastructure, including paved sidewalks in Louisdale
- Strait Area Transit are equipped with appropriate accessibility features to accommodate all users, including kneeling entrance to vehicles
- The Victorian Order of Nurses (VON) has an appointment program that provides transportation to and from medical appointments.
- Most public buildings have an adequate provision of accessible parking stalls

Barriers

- Many roadways and sidewalks are unpaved or do not have shoulders, and have large drop-offs bordering them, creating dangerous travel conditions
- Limited public transit service creates a dependency on personal vehicles
- VON has been unsuccessful in trying to get a volunteer driver program running
- There is no local taxi service
- Strait Area Transit website is challenging to navigate and understand what services are offered
- Need to call in advance to book transit service and scheduling can become a barrier
- Transit is not required in municipal budgets and could be subject to potential cuts.
- ATV riders not abiding by regulations

in public spaces such as walking trails and beaches can cause conflict. More education and signage is needed.

- Biking on the road is unsafe due to lack of shoulders, cycling infrastructure in the County needs improvement
- Snowplows often block driveways - which can pose a challenge for people with mobility issues
- People experience isolation due to lack of transit and how intimidating it can be to use the transit systems available
- There is a need for more crosswalks in the County
- Hospital access is an issue as the road/street network makes it difficult to find a direct route to the hospital

3.4.3. Policies

The Municipality will:

- Support transit services in the County and ensure that all transit services have the ability to accommodate people with disabilities
- Guarantee that no person will be charged any additional fees for transit services as a result of their disability
- Whenever feasible, ensure that any functions hosted by the Municipality or Village will be held during times that enable people with disabilities to make alternative transportation arrangements, if needed

Built Environment

3.5.1. The Commitment

All infrastructure, buildings, streets, sidewalks, and shared spaces in the Municipality of the County of Richmond are safe, maintained, and provide meaningful access to all.

Supporting Elements:

- Public infrastructure and buildings
- Parking spaces
- Access and safety
- Bylaws and development standards
- Building code and Municipal Planning Strategy

3.5.2. The Starting Point

Overview

The built environment in the Municipality of the County of Richmond is composed of sidewalks, roadways, buildings, placemaking furniture, and their components.

In terms of transportation built environment, the Municipality owns approximately 1.7 kilometres of municipal roads, with the majority maintained by the Municipality. There are also 29.88 kilometres of local roads (J-class) that are technically owned by the Municipality, which the Province maintains. Lastly, The Municipality owns and maintains approximately 2.6 Kms of sidewalks (1.3 Kms in Louisdale, 0.8 Kms in Arichat and 0.5 Kms in Petit De Grat). The Province owns and/or maintains many of the roadways in the County of Richmond.

The Municipality owns four buildings where the public has access: Richmond County Administration Building, Richmond County Solid Waste Management Facility Scale House, Richmond Arena, and Petit de Grat Library. In addition, the Municipality does not own or operate parks.

Achievements

- New and well-maintained sidewalks with appropriate curb cuts, particularly in Arichat and Louisdale
- Rest areas, with adjacent clear ground space for wheeled-mobility users, are provided at intervals along pedestrian pathways
- Most public buildings and private businesses have well maintained accessible parking stalls available
- Many buildings have accessible bathroom stalls with widened doorways
- The recreation department has worked on creating an accessible viewing platform at the Richmond arena
- Improvements to the multi-use trail system, with more shared trails with ATV users being developed
- There are a series of accessible community halls across Richmond County
- Many buildings in Richmond County have accessible features, such as automatic doors, ramps, and accessible washrooms
- Municipal buildings offer services in locations that are accessible
- There are many partnerships with other organizations such as the Seniors Safety & Social Inclusion Coordinator
- Resources throughout the community are available to support accessible goals, including; The Age-Friendly Plan, and many special interest groups to collaborate with

Barriers

- Aging infrastructure prevents some older buildings from being able to incorporate accessible design features
- The abandoned rail corridor along St. Peter's Bay is not accessible to people with mobility challenges, not managed/maintained, and coastal erosion is threatening to lose the trail.
- Lack of safe sidewalks or shoulders coupled with steep drop-offs along busy streets making it unsafe for travel
- Some of the sidewalks are unmaintained and require maintenance or further development/expanding where their coverage
- Parks, trails and beaches are not designed or maintained to accommodate wheelchairs or other mobility devices
- Crosswalks lack accessibility features, including tactile coverings, audio cues and ample street crossing time for those with mobility issues
- There is a scarcity of affordable housing that is wheelchair accessible
- A general sense of awareness is lacking in business owners about what accessible features are needed
- Certain County-sponsored events are held in locations that are not accessible or dangerous for those with disabilities
- There is a lack of awareness and measures in place for those with non-physical disabilities

- Road maintenance (snow and gravel clearing) restricts mobility and poses safety concerns
- Lack of paved roads in the County; there is a need for more provincial advocacy for the paving of roads
- Expensive and challenging process to receive grant funding to improve the accessibility of local businesses, parks or halls
- Some businesses and service areas are lacking accessible parking, features and washrooms

3.5.3. Policies

The Municipality will:

- Guarantee the allocation of accessible parking spaces, signage and associated curb cuts at all Municipal owned or leased spaces
- Establish the supply of crosswalks and curb cuts in areas with consistent pedestrian activity, such as areas near schools, paths and parks
- Engage private developers and business owners regarding the importance and benefits of having facilities that adhere to the Accessibility requirements of the Nova Scotia Building Code Regulations even if they are not currently legally required to



An example of a widened road shoulder in Petit de Grat for improved transportation access.

4.0 Implementing the Plan

4.1 About The Actions

Actions for this plan were selected using recommendations gathered from policy review, best practice case studies, accessibility audits conducted across the county, and findings from the community engagement. The actions have been based on the following framework:

- Is the action in line with provincial policies and requirements?
- Is the action within the control of the Municipality?
- Is the action achievable in the next three years, or will it make a sizable difference in the future?
- Will the action improve one of the areas respondents noted as being least accessible or one of the biggest barriers?

4.2 Actions

Fourteen key actions were identified for the municipality's implementation during the first three years using the framework described in the aforementioned section. These actions are listed below and are described in greater detail in Appendix A: Action Details.

1. Review maintenance procedures for gravel and snow removal for all sidewalks in commercial areas, residential areas and at key facilities.
2. Modify hiring, funding evaluation, and procurement policies and procedures to prioritize persons with disabilities, both upon hiring, through onboarding and beyond—advocate for non-municipal organizations and businesses to do the same.
3. Advocate for accessibility improvements to widen the paving of shoulders and create an improved winter maintenance procedure.
4. Partner with the Village to create a business survey to understand and create a record of which businesses are accessible.



5. Update Committee and Council communications policies and procedures to provide accessible resources for meetings and engagements, removing accessibility and technology barriers.
6. Partner with the Village to review current accessibility standards at key facilities and conduct Rick Hansen Certifications (or alternative certification) for Municipal Buildings, particularly for entrances.
7. Update the municipal website to an accessible standard.
8. Update and standardize all County signage with Braille, tactile and other design elements.
9. Review current recreational programming to identify and propose accessible recreational programming options.
10. Review the pedestrian road crossing locations and advocate for well-painted locations with visual/ audible cues.
11. Partner with the Village to offer training and professional development for staff, Commission and local businesses for accessibility, including accessible customer service, information and communications, and accessible design standards.
12. Attract more people with lived experience to the AAC.
13. Advocate for and support accessible trail development to ensure the network is safe and accessible for all users.
14. Review and revise emergency response planning to include accessibility.

4.3 Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring

The Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) will prepare an Accessibility Plan Report Card, which will report on the status of the actions outlined in this plan. This report card will be presented to Council by the end of each fiscal year (March 31). It will measure the performance of the policies and the progress of the actions. This report card will ensure that progress is reported clearly and consistently while also maintaining momentum in completing the actions.

Schedule and Evaluation

The actions outlined in section 4.2 are to be completed within the first three years of this plan, between 2022 and 2025. Future actions to improve accessibility and achieve the commitments noted in each of the focus areas will include a process to revisit community priorities and understand where progress has or has not been made. During this next evaluation period, additional community considerations and any potential legislative changes should be considered.

In 2025 (three years from now), the Municipality will conduct a comprehensive review and update to this plan in accordance with the 2017 Nova Scotia Accessibility Act (S.42. A public sector body shall update its accessibility plan every three years and make it publicly available). This review will identify the next set of short-term actions to be completed between 2025 and 2027, which will continue to improve accessibility in Richmond County. These actions will be chosen based on the framework described in section 4.1.

4.4 Responding to Questions and Complaints

The needs, barriers and opportunities for improving accessibility in the Municipality of the County of Richmond are ever-changing and evolving. To ensure the Municipality continues to address and improve accessibility barriers through to 2030 and beyond, the Municipality, in partnership with the Accessibility Advisory Committee, will respond to any public questions or complaints around accessibility. Suggestions for how to respond to these questions and complaints are as follows.

All accessibility questions or complaints will be forwarded to the AAC and the appropriate staff member(s) responsible for the Municipal service in question. The AAC will respond to the question or complaint in a timely and respectful manner. Depending on the nature of the question or complaint, it will be answered in one of the following ways:

- If a member of staff cannot answer the question or complaint, the question will be added to the subsequent AAC meeting agenda for review.
- The AAC and other responsible

departments will assess complaints or questions about physical infrastructure.

- Complaints or questions that can be addressed operationally will be forwarded to the responsible department.
- Complaints or questions that require new capital spending will be added to the subsequent AAC meeting agenda for deliberation.

If a complaint or question about Municipal staff, goods and services, information, communication or any other category unrelated to the built environment is received, the AAC will evaluate if actions are already being addressed in an ongoing action. Questions or complaints not addressed in an ongoing action will be brought forward to the AAC for discussion and potential resolution. Solutions may be proposed immediately or suggested as a priority action for the updated action plan in 2025.

Members of the public who bring forward a question or complaint will be encouraged to join the AAC to help develop a solution to the problem and help complete *Action #12 - Attract more people with lived experience to the AAC.*



Appendices

Appendix A: Action Details

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

Appendix B: Site Assessment Report

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

Appendix C: Internal Research and Engagement Report

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





THE MUNICIPALITY
OF THE COUNTY OF
RICHMOND

LA MUNICIPALITÉ
DU COMITÉ DE
RICHMOND

Appendix A

Richmond

Accessibility

Plan

SPRING 2022

Appendix A: Action Details

The following outlines the short term actions to be completed in the first three years of the Accessibility Plan. For each action, the following components have been described:

- **Overview** - general description of the action.
- **Why this action matters** - Articulating the meaning, importance and impact of the action.
- **Accessibility Plan focus areas that this action contributes to** - What plan focus areas that this action will help to improve and impact.
- **Key steps in the process & timeline** - The key steps that are necessary to make progress on this action in the next 3 years and add anticipated timelines for each.
- **Estimated resources required** - the expected range of resourcing needed to effectively deliver this action (staffing and budget)
- **Lead Department** - The department or role would be accountable for implementation of this action.
- **Contributing Departments** - Any departments will support the development of this action.
- **Municipal role** - Clarifying the kinds of activities the Municipality would play in this action.
- **Potential Community Partners** - any key actors in the community who can help realize the action.
- **Measure of success** - the identification of metric(s) that express progress on the action.



Action 1.

Review maintenance procedures for gravel and snow removal for all sidewalks in commercial, residential areas and at key facilities

To perform an in-depth review of current procedures for keeping Municipal owned sidewalks free of gravel and snow in all areas - commercial or residential - and at key facilities. The procedures will be reviewed for their timeliness and overall effectiveness.

Why this Action Matters

Sidewalks are a key piece of active transportation infrastructure and are one of the main ways of accessing businesses and services for many people. Snow and gravel prevent sidewalks from being used freely and effectively.

Accessibility Plan Focus Areas that this Action Contributes to

- Built Environment
- Transportation

Key Steps in the Process & Timeline

- Spring 2022 - Review current procedures for cleaning sidewalks
- Summer 2022 - Discuss any improvements that are required to implement the procedures
- Summer 2022 - Determine what is needed to implement improved procedures
- Fall 2022 - Implement improved procedures

Estimated Resources Required

Staff resourcing: Multiple staff members, part-time effort

Additional funding: \$0-\$25,000

Departmental Responsibilities

Lead Department: Public Works Department

Government Roles

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

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

Potential Community Partners

- Service providing contractors
- Strait Area Transit (SAT)

Measures of Success

- Completion of review
- Successfully identify improvements needed
- Successfully implement improvements to procedures
- More accessible sidewalks

Action 2.

Modify hiring, funding evaluation, and procurement policies and procedures to prioritize persons with disabilities, both upon hiring, through onboarding and beyond—advocate for non-municipal organizations and businesses to do the same

Prioritize persons with disabilities upon hiring through onboarding and beyond. Advocate for non-municipal organizations and businesses to do the same. Ways in which this can be achieved are through ensuring that print or digital documents are accessible for new or existing employees; updating all facilities to be accessible - indoors and outdoors; and through improved hiring practices to remove biases and ensure that anybody who self-identifies as having a disability is not blocked from hiring opportunities.

Why This Action Matters

Improving the County's hiring practices ensures that governing bodies are providing meaningful access to persons of all abilities for employment and that everyone has equal opportunities for employment. This also allows for an expanded applicant base.

Accessibility Plan Focus Areas that this Action Contributes to

- Built Environment
- Information & Communications
- Employment
- Awareness

Key steps in the Process & Timeline

- Spring 2022 - Identify and review current hiring practices, funding evaluation, and procurement policies and procedures
- Fall 2022 - Review grant funding policies and establish minimum, moderate, and high level criteria for funding with an accessibility lens
- Fall 2022 - Propose hiring and granting changes to approving body(ies)
- Winter 2023 - Implement changes to evaluation procedures

Estimated Resources Required

Staff resourcing: Multiple staff members, part-time effort

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

Departmental Responsibilities

Lead Department: Administration

Contributing department(s): All other departments

Government Roles

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

Potential Community Partners

- Accessibility employment agencies
- Local businesses

Measures of Success

- Hiring and procurement practices updated
- Greater employee performance/satisfaction
- Removal of government-implemented barriers to employment in documentation for persons with disabilities



Action 3.

Advocate for accessibility improvements to widen the paving of shoulders and create an improved winter maintenance procedure

Widen the roadway at least on one side and avoid blind corners through thoughtful design features. Upgrades have not been done in the past few decades and downhill areas have asphalt gutters that are not conducive to pedestrian or assistive device access. A paved walkway would improve the pedestrian experience.

Why This Action Matters

It is important for all residents and users to be able to travel safely and freely without barriers to get where they need to go, when they need to get there. Having a safe and accessible space to travel for users of all ages and abilities, including those with disabilities is necessary for healthy communities. Improving shoulders and implementing a better winter maintenance procedure can help with the lifespan of roadways, reducing costs in the long run.

Accessibility Plan Focus Areas that this Action Contributes to

- Goods & Services
- Built Environment
- Transportation

Key steps in the Process & Timeline

- Fall 2022 - Create a reporting form

for constituents to report road issues for use by Councillors (inventory)

- Ongoing - Advocate, with community partners, for improvements to roadways (barriers to Pondville Beach, no changes to roadways in decades, pictures)
- Winter 2023 - Video roundtable on the the benefits of accessibility on roads, including road widening (shared with local TV and other communications channels)
- Ongoing - Review standards for road/sidewalk development

Estimated Resources Required

Staff resourcing: Multiple staff members, part-time effort

Additional funding: \$75,000+

Departmental Responsibilities

Lead Department: Accessibility Coordinator & AAC

Contributing department(s):

- Engineering & Public Works
- Council

Government Roles

- Broker: The Municipality acts as a facilitator and connector to bring together organizations and individuals
- Storyteller: The Municipality shares stories that build an inclusive narrative

Potential Community Partners

- Provincial government (Nova Scotia Public Works)
- Bus driver union
- Cycling groups for advocacy
- Seniors Take Action Coalition
- Residents and local drivers

- Emergency responders
- MLA
- Department of Highways district supervisor

Measures of Success

- Provincial government creates a standard to include walking space into road development



Action 4.

Partner with the Village to create a business survey to understand and create a record of which businesses are accessible

Ask businesses to provide a status update on how close they are to meeting provincial accessibility standards by 2030. The Municipality can take on the role of advocating and providing non-financial support to ensure that businesses are aware of the benefits of being accessible and begin to implement accessibility improvements. Opportunity to partner with the Village of St. Peter's on this action to ensure all of Richmond County is included.

Why This Action Matters

Richmond County has a vibrant commercial sector, however, many businesses are located in older buildings that will require physical upgrades to ensure that they can be accessed by people of all abilities, including those with disabilities. The ways in which businesses communicate with their employees and customers is also a consideration. There are many long term benefits for businesses to implement these improvements and remove existing barriers.

Accessibility Plan Focus Areas that this Action Contributes to

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

- Awareness

Key steps in the Process & Timeline

- Fall 2022 - Apply for funding to hire a student to conduct study
- Spring 2023 - Hire a student to develop messaging and resources for business accessibility; priority should be given to a student with lived experience.
- Spring 2023 - Develop a survey and distribute to businesses
- Summer 2023 - Assemble survey results
- Summer 2023 - Provide report back to all business participants on survey results and recommendations/ resources to help them become more accessible

Estimated Resources Required

Staff resourcing:

1 staff member, part-time effort

Additional funding: \$0-\$25,000

Departmental Responsibilities

Lead Department: Cape Breton Partnership

Contributing department(s): Eastern District Planning Commission

Government Roles

Role of the Municipality:

- Broker: The Municipality acts as a facilitator and connector to bring together organizations and individuals.
- Supporter: The Municipality assists and builds capacity for other organizations.
- Storyteller: The Municipality shares stories that build an inclusive narrative.

Role of The Village:

- Storyteller: The Village shares stories that build an inclusive narrative.

Potential Community Partners

- Strait Area Chamber of Commerce
- Development Isle Madame Association
- Isle Madame Tourism & Trade Association
- St. Peter's Economics Development Organization

Measures of Success

- Business survey conducted
- All participating businesses receive a report
- Inventory of accessible businesses



Action 5.

Update Committee and Council communications policies and procedures to provide accessible resources for meetings and engagements, removing accessibility and technology barriers

To provide accessible resources for meetings and engagements and remove accessibility and technology barriers by ensuring documents are accessible to all residents who want to receive them. This could be done by creating accessible documents (i.e. agendas, meeting minutes, etc.) that are viewable by all residents, or by modifying policies and/or procedures to provide accessible opportunities for all residents to participate in public meetings.

Why This Action Matters

It is important that each resident, regardless of ability, can follow or participate in public municipal meetings. This will ensure that each point of view is taken into consideration when decisions are to be made at the Council table.

Accessibility Plan Focus Areas that this Action Contributes to

- Goods & Services
- Information & Communications

Key steps in the Process & Timeline

- Spring 2022 - Review current practices, procedures, and policies
- Spring/Summer 2022 - Research best practices for accessibility in these type of documents and procedures

- Fall 2022 - Modify existing practices, procedures, and policies or create new ones if need be
- Winter 2023 - Review practices, procedures, and policies and other documents yearly to ensure that they are up to date

Estimated Resources Required

Staff resourcing: 1 staff member, part-time effort

Additional funding: None

Departmental Responsibilities

Lead Department: Administration

Contributing department(s):

- Public Works
- Recreation

Government Roles

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

Potential Community Partners

- Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Seniors Take Action Coalition

Measures of Success

- Creation or modification of procedures, practices, and policies that are approved internally
- New or updated procedures, practices, and policies on a regular basis

Action 6.

Partner with the Village to review current accessibility standards at key facilities and conduct Rick Hansen Certifications (or alternative certification) for Municipal Buildings, particularly for entrances

Ensuring that each publicly accessed, Municipality-owned facility is completely accessible to all individuals. This would include the entrance, interior circulation, participation in activities within facilities, washrooms, and beyond. Opportunity to partner with the Village of St. Peter's on this action to make efficiencies in the evaluation process and ensure all buildings in Richmond County are accessible.

Why This Action Matters

Every resident or visitor in Richmond County should have access to facilities. They should not have to worry about entering these facilities, moving freely throughout the facility, or participating in any activities or programs that are taking place in those facilities.

Accessibility Plan Focus Areas that this Action Contributes to

- Goods & Services
- Built Environment

Key steps in the Process & Timeline

- Spring 2022 - Identify facilities that should be included in the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification process
- Spring 2022 - Approve funding for Rick Hansen Foundation Certification for facilities (budget deliberations)
- Summer 2022 - Create tender document with the intent of hiring a Rick Hansen Foundation professional to assess Richmond County facilities
- Fall 2022 - Hire Rick Hansen Professional to conduct assessments
- Fall 2022 / Winter 2023 - Have the list of buildings assessed by the Rick Hansen Foundation professional and receive a report with specific action items
- Annual Spring - Bring action items to Council for budget deliberations

in subsequent years (March-April-May of each year)

Estimated Resources Required

Staff resourcing: 1 staff member, part-time effort

Additional funding: \$25,001-\$75,000 (spread over multiple years, dependent on RHFAC report)

Departmental Responsibilities

Lead Department: Recreation

Contributing department(s):

- Public Works
- Finance
- Administration

Government Roles

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

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

Potential Community Partners

- Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Strait Richmond Minor Hockey (Arena)
- Eastern Counties Regional Library (Library in Petit-de-Grat) and St. Peter's library

Measures of Success

- All publicly accessed facilities will be assessed by a Rick Hansen Foundation professional. The Municipality will then work toward having each facility receive a passing grade, with the goal of reaching gold certification.



Action 7.

Update the Municipal website to an accessible standard

The Municipality of the County of Richmond will look to improve its current website to ensure that people with any physical or cognitive disability are able to easily navigate the website.

Why This Action Matters

The Municipality of the County of Richmond wants to be open, transparent, and informative. To achieve this, all residents, regardless of ability, must be able to find and receive all important and relevant information located on the website.

Accessibility Plan Focus Areas that this Action Contributes to

- Information & Communications

Key steps in the Process & Timeline

- Summer 2022 - Review current website and compare it to current accessibility standards
- Fall 2022 - Either use internal resources or hire and outside source to review/modify current website
- Winter 2023/Ongoing - Ensure that employees who add items to the municipal website are sufficiently trained in doing so, keeping accessibility in mind (ongoing)
- Ongoing - Review accessibility standards annually

Estimated Resources Required

Staff resourcing:

- Multiple staff members, part-time effort
- Other: outside contractor

Additional funding: \$0-\$25,000

Departmental Responsibilities

Lead Department: Administration

Contributing department(s):

- Public Works
- Recreation

Government Roles

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

Potential Community Partners

- Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Seniors Take Action Coalition

Measures of Success

- Publish a fully accessible website that passes all accessibility standards

Action 8.

Update and standardize all County signage with Braille, tactile and other design elements

Standardize all Municipal signage to include braille and design elements for those with visual, cognitive, and hidden disabilities. Opportunity to partner with the Village of St. Peter's to ensure continuity in the County.

Why This Action Matters

Signage is a key communication tool between the County and Village, and our residents and visitors. All information that we put on signage is only useful if it can be understood by people.

Accessibility Plan Focus Areas that this Action Contributes to

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

Key steps in the Process & Timeline

- Spring 2023 - Research provincial accessibility requirements for signage, as well as best practices
- Summer 2023 - Create a standardization document for all County and Village signage to follow
- Winter 2024 - Change over existing County and Village signage to meet the standard

Estimated Resources Required

Staff resourcing: 1 staff member, part-time effort

Additional funding: \$0-\$25,000

Departmental Responsibilities

Lead Department: Administration

Contributing department(s): Public Works

Government Roles

Role of the Municipality:

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

Potential Community Partners

- Accessibility Advisory Committee

Measures of Success

- Documented signage standards
- Accessible signage installed in County and Village facilities

Action 9.

Review recreational programming to identify and propose accessible recreational programming

The Municipality of the County of Richmond wants to review the current recreational and physical activity programming to ensure that each program is available and accessible for all residents in Richmond County. Look at recreation programming currently offered in the Municipality and work to improve options to ensure everyone can participate.

Why This Action Matters

The importance of physical activity on overall well-being is well documented. We want to ensure that those individuals that may not have had the same opportunities in the past will now be able to participate - improving social, emotional, and physical well-being.

Accessibility Plan Focus Areas that this Action Contributes to

- Goods & Services

Key steps in the Process & Timeline

- Spring 2022 - Develop a Standard Operation Procedure that includes:
 - Regular review current programs for accessibility/inclusion
 - Visit and assess locations used for programming, to ensure they are up to accessibility standards
 - Research and find fully accessible facilities in Richmond County that can be used for recreation programming

- Partner with provincial sport organizations and community sport organizations to offer accessible sport opportunities
- Create other accessible recreation programs/workshops (annually)

Estimated Resources Required

Staff resourcing: Multiple staff members, part-time effort

Additional funding: \$0-\$25,000 (dependent on location)

Departmental Responsibilities

Lead Department: Recreation

Government Roles

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

Potential Community Partners

- Recreation Advisory Committee
- Community Sport Organizations
- Community Halls
- Schools
- Recreation program instructors

Measures of Success

- Fully accessible programs and workshops are listed in Reflections of Richmond

Action 10.

Review the pedestrian road crossing locations and advocate for well-painted locations with visual/audible cues

Review all pedestrian road crossings to determine optimal locations for markings and signals, and to advocate for well painted crossings with visual and audible signals.

Why This Action Matters

Safety measures are important to ensure people can cross streets and intersections safely. Added signals and well marked road crossings can provide visual and audible cues to those with vision or hearing impairments, and notify vehicles to be on watch for people in the road.

Accessibility Plan Focus Areas that this Action Contributes to

- Built Environment
- Transportation

Key steps in the Process & Timeline

- Spring 2022 - Create a reporting form for constituents to report important and high traffic (vehicle & pedestrian) intersection locations (inventory for use by Council)
- Summer 2023 - Hire a summer student each year whose duties will include documenting and photographing each intersection for accessibility issues/improvements
- Summer 2023 - Student provides

a report of suggested upgrades for each intersection to Council

Estimated Resources Required

Staff resourcing:

- 1 staff member, part-time effort. (until report is compiled)
- Multiple staff members, part-time effort. (when upgrades begin)

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

Departmental Responsibilities

Lead Department: Council & AAC

Contributing department(s):

- Transportation
- Department of Highways
- Planning & Development

Government Roles

- Provider: The Municipality directly delivers programs, services and facilities. (possible partnership)
- Broker: The Municipality acts as a facilitator and connector to bring together organizations and individuals.

Potential Community Partners

- Provincial government - Department of Highways & Transportation
- AAC
- Seniors Take Action Coalition
- MLA's

Measures of Success

- All major pedestrian crossings are well painted and have appropriate colour-contrasting signage, flashing crossing lights with activation buttons.
- All major crossings have audible signals and proper curb ramps with TWSIs.



Action 11.

Partner with the Village to offer training and professional development for staff, Council and local businesses for accessibility.

Ensure that Richmond County has trained human resources to ensure that high-quality service is provided to citizens of all abilities, including those with disabilities. Council and staff members of the municipality will be provided with training to build awareness of accessibility issues and on customer service strategies that can be used to reduce barriers to service. This training will also be open to business community members and to partner organizations such as Strait Area Transit, Eastern District Planning Commission, and Cape Breton Partnership.

Develop accessible customer service standards in policy/procedures that ensure timely, clear (plain language), and helpful information for citizens.

Building inspectors will be trained to become Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification™ (RHFAC) Professionals or other accessible design standard certifications.

Why This Action Matters

Appropriate training will build confidence and capacity for those delivering service to people with disabilities. Making reasonable accommodations and adjustments to how we deliver services will ensure that we provide those services equitably and compassionately in Richmond County.

Enshrining our accessibility standards in a customer service policy/procedure will ensure that Council and staff have an awareness and guidance when working with people of varying abilities. Having building inspectors trained as RHFAC Professionals will be a first step toward preventing physical barriers from continuing to be built. It will raise accessibility awareness with our inspectors and create a culture of “doing better” when designing and building fully accessible spaces in the future.

Accessibility Plan Focus Areas that this Action Contributes to

- All focus areas

Key steps in the Process & Timeline

- Spring/Summer 2022 - Research Accessible Customer Service training for municipal and village staff
- Fall 2022 - Request EDPC have building inspectors trained as Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification™ (RHFAC) Professionals
- Spring 2023 - Building Inspectors trained as Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification™ (RHFAC) Professionals
- Spring 2023 - Council adopts accessibility standards in a customer service policy/procedure

- Annually - Budget for staff training
- Ongoing - Conduct accessibility service training

Estimated Resources Required

Staff resourcing: 1 staff member, part-time effort

Additional funding: \$0-\$25,000

Departmental Responsibilities

Lead Department: CAO, ByLaw & Policy Committee

Contributing department(s):

- Finance
- Recreation
- Public Works

Government Roles

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

- Supporter: The Municipality assists and builds capacity for other organizations.
- Storyteller: The Municipality shares stories that build an inclusive narrative.

Potential Community Partners

- Eastern District Planning Commission
- Strait Area Chamber of Commerce
- Cape Breton Partnership
- Strait Area Transit
- Local Businesses

Measures of Success

- Number of Building Inspectors trained as Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification™ (RHFAC) Professionals
- Number of training programs delivered and participation
- Survey results of participants on impact
- Removal of government-implemented barriers to employment in documentation for persons with disabilities

Action 12.

Attract more people with lived experience to the AAC

Encouraging people of all abilities, including those with disabilities, to participate in the AAC, through marketing and information sharing efforts, and accessibility improvements. Creating a compensation policy for volunteers to participate on Committees of Council.

Why This Action Matters

This will provide greater understanding and the opportunity to learn from first hand experiences. Increasing discussions surrounding accessibility and the build environment can lead to reducing biases that may be prevalent. This can lead to better and more equal employment opportunities and valuable conversations to increase awareness and understanding of the range of experiences faced by community members.

Accessibility Plan Focus Areas that this Action Contributes to

- Information and Communications
- Employment
- Awareness

Key steps in the Process & Timeline

- Quarterly - Inform public and community about the role of the AAC through Richmond Reflection, website and other communications channels
- Quarterly/As Needed - Market availability

of space on the committee and the need for members with lived experience

- Spring 2022 - Develop a standard for a minimum number or percentage of AAC members to be people with lived experience
- Summer 2022 - Develop supports for AAC members with disabilities to ensure their full participation and comfort with the process
- Fall 2022 - Creating a compensation policy for volunteers to participate on Committees of Council

Estimated Resources Required

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

Additional funding: \$0-\$25,000

Departmental Responsibilities

Lead Department:

- Accessibility Coordinator, or
- Marketing Department

Contributing department(s): Human Resources

Government Roles

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

Potential Community Partners

- AAC
- Seniors Take Action Coalition
- Council

Measures of Success

- High percentage or majority of representation on AAC comes from people experiencing barriers to accessibility



Action 13.

Advocate for and support accessible trail development to ensure the network is safe and accessible for all users

Work with local groups and the provincial government to create a strategy for a fully accessible trails network in Richmond County for users of all abilities and types, including those with disabilities.

Why This Action Matters

Trails can provide communities with a whole host of benefits, including recreation, social inclusion, public health, economic and transportation, and even affect our community pride and identity.

As part of our post-COVID recovery, Cape Breton Island has the potential to transform itself into a 4 season destination. Our low population density and abundance of outdoor space during the pandemic contributed to us being one of the safest places in the world. Both residents and visitors will benefit both economically, recreationally and socially from a robust trail system that will accommodate a variety of users from pedestrians to cyclists to ATV users. Building on the incredible success and positive community impacts of the Celtic Shores Coastal Trail in Inverness, Richmond County can become part of an Island-wide destination of fully accessible trails.

Leveraging the goodwill and passion of local groups with granting authority and investment from the province, the municipality could create a big impact with minimal investment.

Accessibility Plan Focus Areas that this Action Contributes to

- Goods and Services
- Built Environment
- Transportation

Key steps in the Process & Timeline

- Spring 2022 - Complete Trails Strategy
- Ongoing - Advocate with the Provincial Government to provide Letters of Authority to local user groups with the capacity and desire to develop provincial corridors that would make suitable accessible trails
- Ongoing - Work with other regional groups to become part of an Island-wide strategy
- Annually - Continue investing in accessible trail developments
- Spring 2023 - Create an “accessible trails” designation and include signage and marketing materials (easily discernable criteria developed by an accessibility expert)

Estimated Resources Required

Staff resourcing: 1 staff member, part-time effort

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

Departmental Responsibilities

Lead Department: Recreation & Council

Contributing department(s): Finance

Government Roles

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

Potential Community Partners

- Local ATV/Trails Groups
- NS Department of Lands & Forests
- ATVANS
- Private landowners
- Nova Scotia trails federation
- Local Development Groups (DIMA, SPEDO, IMTTA, Strait Area Chamber of Commerce)
- Hike Nova Scotia
- Recreation NS
- CB Partnership

Measures of Success

- Trails Strategy Complete
- Number of accessible trails
- Amount of investment in accessible trails

Action 14.

Review and revise emergency management planning to include accessibility.

Ensure that Richmond County has a comprehensive and inclusive emergency management plan that includes accessibility. This will ensure the safety of residents of all abilities, including those with disabilities

Why This Action Matters

Emergency management planning for people with disabilities may require more specific planning depending on the needs of the individual. A comprehensive and inclusive emergency management plan will ensure all residents are considered in its implementation.

Opportunity is available to partner with the Village of St. Peter's on this action to ensure that everyone in Richmond County has access to this plan and information.

Accessibility Plan Focus Areas that this Action Contributes to

- Built Environment
- Transportation
- Awareness
- Information & Communication

Key steps in the Process & Timeline

- Winter 2023 - AAC invited to review the Emergency Management Plan for suggestions and feedback

- Winter 2023 - Review and approve the County's Emergency Management Plan for accessibility and inclusivity issues
- Spring 2023 - Review the Nova Scotia Emergency Management Act and flag accessibility-related issues for future advocacy
- Spring 2023 - Launch a campaign to build awareness of the emergency management plan
- Ongoing - Brief / train appropriate personnel in implementation of the plan
- Annually - Review of the plan to ensure it is always meeting the needs of all users

Estimated Resources Required

Staff resourcing:

- 1 staff member, full-time effort
- Multiple staff members, full-time effort. (in the event of an emergency)

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

Departmental Responsibilities

Lead Department: Council & AAC

Contributing department(s):

- Finance

- Planning & Development

Government Roles

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

Potential Community Partners

- AAC

- Seniors Take Action Committee

- Council
- Emergency Management Consultants

Measures of Success

- A comprehensive and inclusive emergency management plan has been created, and staff are trained in implementing it. All residents? are aware of its existence and purpose, and all relevant material has been distributed and is readily available.





Appendix B

Richmond

Accessibility

Plan

SPRING 2022

DRY
COPY

ACCESSIBILITY &
UNIVERSAL DESIGN AUDIT
OF

SITE ASSESSMENT ANALYSIS

PREPARED FOR:
RICHMOND COUNTY & VILLAGE OF ST. PETERS

level
PLAYING FIELD
an accessibility agency



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HEALTHCARE + EMERGENCY SERVICES

PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

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4.0 CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

INTRODUCTION

WHAT WE DID



Level Playing Field (LPF) reviewed the current accessibility of the Municipality of Richmond County and the Village of St. Peters. The work began with a desktop exercise to determine what locations to visit and experience virtually. We viewed potential locations on Google Street View, reviewed the County and Village websites and reviewed Parks Canada information. We assessed the accessibility of accessing relevant information on the above mentioned websites. We reviewed new Provincial legislation on accessibility, and other Nova Scotia communities accessibility strategies.

The virtual accessibility assessment included the communities found within Richmond County of:

Arichat

Louisdale

L'Arodisse

Evanston

Isle Madame

Village of St. Peters

WHAT WE DID - CONTINUED















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

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

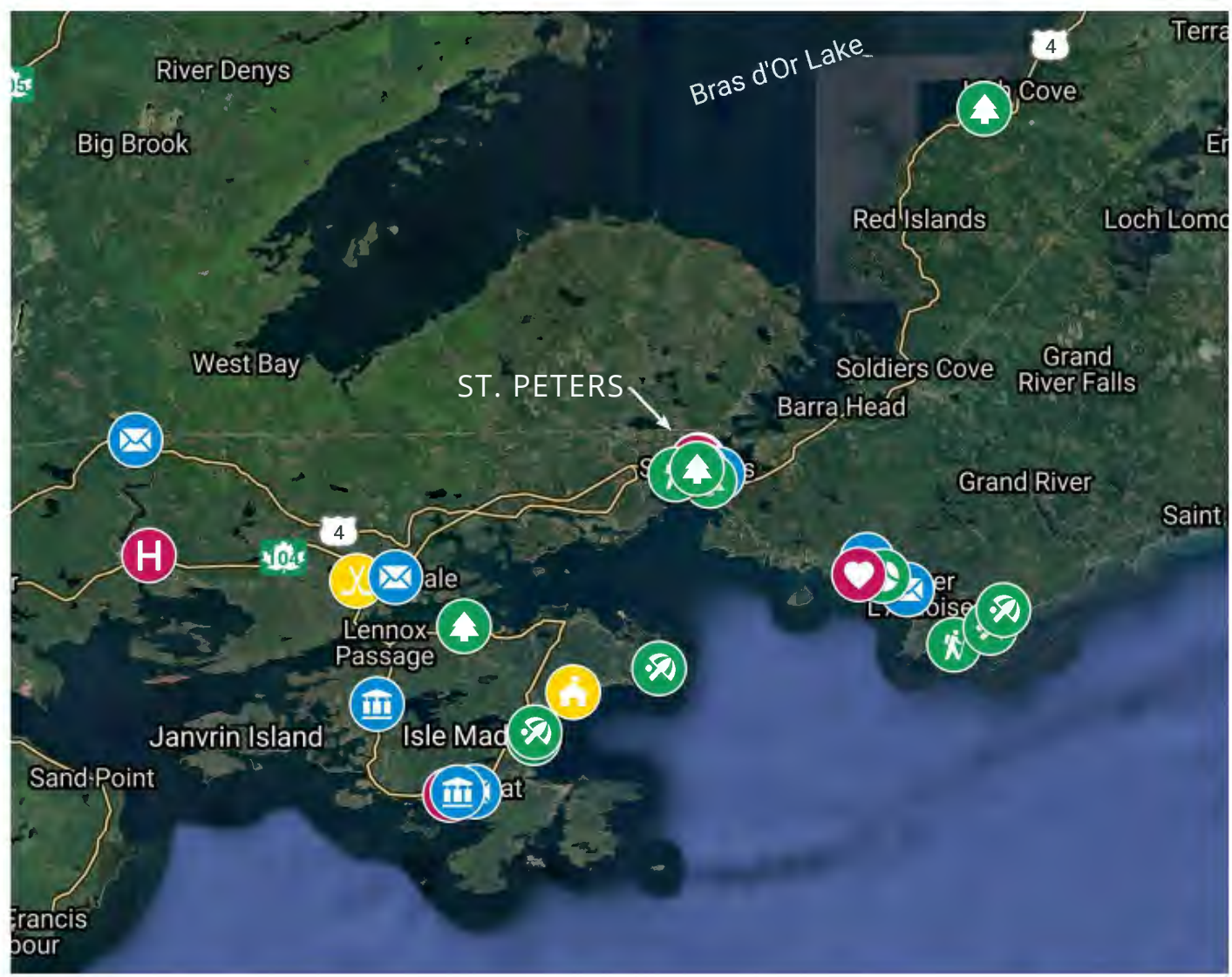
Assessments utilized visual inspection from virtual site visits along with in person image collection from municipal employees.



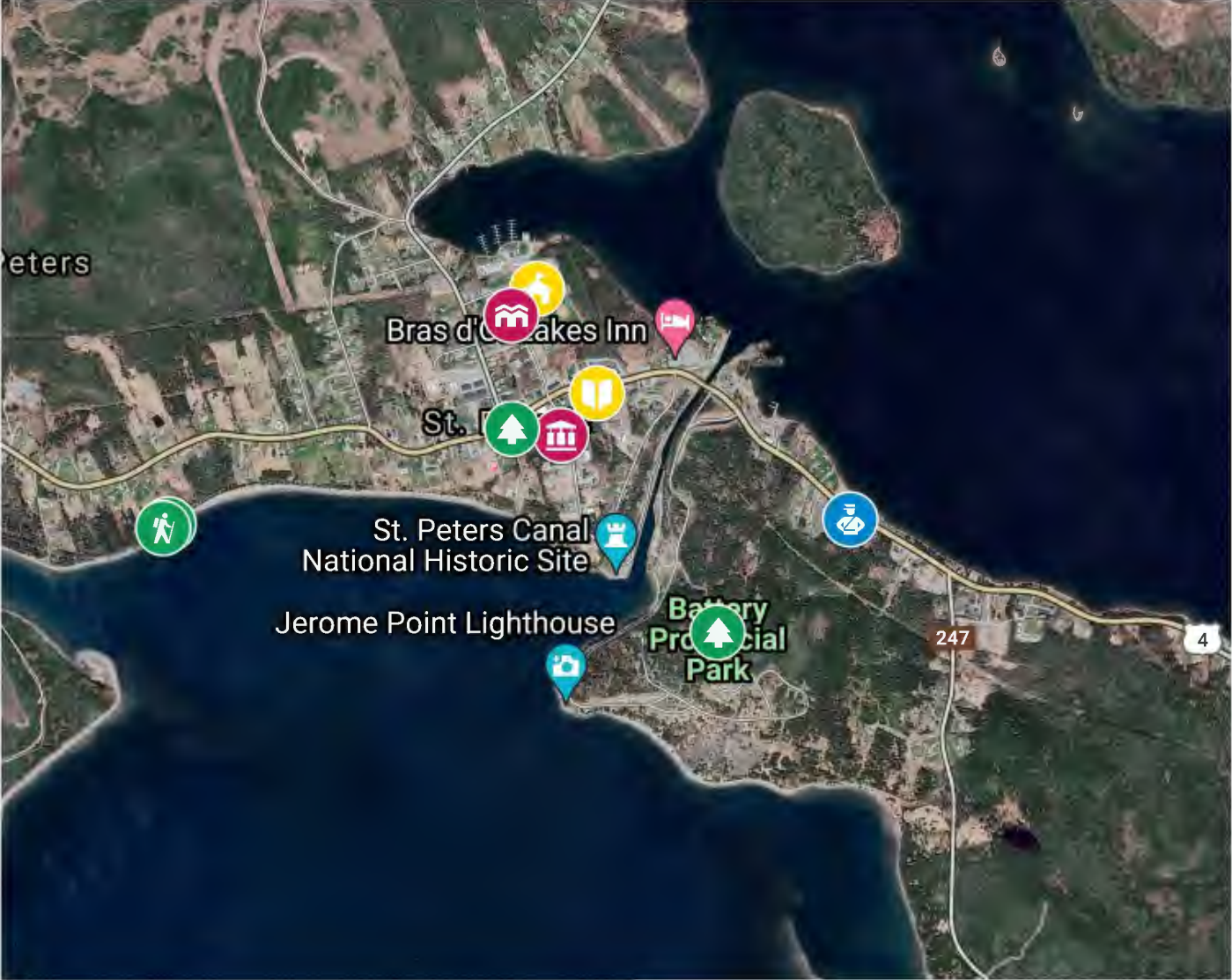
SITE VISIT ICON LIST & REPORT LOCATIONS

 Health Center	MAIN STREETS
 Arena	St. Peters Main Street
 Baseball Field	Louisdale Main Street
 Fire Hall	Arichat Main Street
 Postal Office	MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS
 Library	Richmond County Administration Building
 Beach	Richmond County Solid Waste Management
 Hospital	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
 Municipal Building	Canada Post - Arichat
 Community Hall	HEALTHCARE & EMERGENCY SERVICES
 Park	St Peters Fire Hall
 Retirement Home	Strait Richmond Hospital
 Royal Canadian Mounted Police	St. Anne's Nursing Centre
 Walking Trail	Richmond Villa
	PARKS & OPEN SPACES
	Irish Cove Provincial Park
	Point Michaud Beach Provincial Park
	Battery Provincial Park
	RECREATION CENTERS
	Richmond Arena

RICHMOND COUNTY SITE VISIT LOCATIONS



ST. PETERS SITE VISIT LOCATIONS MAP





MS 1 | TWSI at end of sidewalk along with a rest area for pedestrians



MS 2 | New streetlights for pathway



MS 3 | New TWSI at end of Arichat sidewalk

2.0 WHAT WE OBSERVED

2.1 MAIN STREETS OBSERVATIONS

Arichat Main Street

The main street in Arichat recently underwent an extensive pedestrian upgrade. The sidewalk expansion includes a separated sidewalk, tactile walking surface indicators (TWSI), and rest areas. TWSI's are present at both ends of the pathway, to warn users and indicate that the pathway is leading users into the road for traffic crossing. The concrete is also sloped to help any users transition over the curb from the sidewalk to the road.

In image MS2, the newly added street lights are highlighted. The street lights provide general light for users along the pathway. Lighting contributes greatly to a safe pedestrian commute by highlighting the ground surface and ensuring no dark or shadowed areas. The sidewalk surface is firm, level and slip-resistant. It is wide enough to permit two users in wheeled mobility devices to pass. Rest area benches are provided (as seen in MS1) and off of but adjacent to the path of travel.



MS 4 | Separated sidewalk in Louisdale,

2.1 MAIN STREETS

OBSERVATIONS

Louisdale Main Street

The main street in Louisdale has a separated pedestrian sidewalk that runs over 500 meters along main street . The newer sidewalk includes a separated path from the road, streetlamps , and pedestrian rest areas that include clear space for a wheeled mobility device. Curb ramps are provided to help any users transition from the road height to the sidewalk.



MS 5 | Rest area and crosswalk entrance on Louisdale main street

In image MS5, the added street lights are highlighted. These street lights provide light for users along the pathway the lights also reduce crossing difficulties at the nearby road entrance. The sidewalk is wider than an average path and would permit two users in wheeled mobility devices to pass. The sidewalk surface is smooth, level and slip-resistant.



MS 6 | Curb cut leading to crosswalk on the Louisdale main street

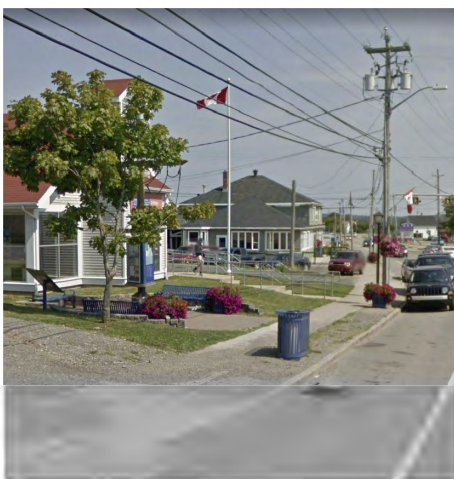
The crosswalk in the lower image is the only designated pedestrian crossing on the main street. The exterior lines are faded along with the crosswalk not having any colour contrasting interior stripes.



MS 7 | Level crosswalk entrance on St. Peters Main street



MS 8 | Dual curb cuts at crosswalk intersection



MS 9 | Gravel build up on St. Peters sidewalk

2.1 MAIN STREETS

OBSERVATIONS

St. Peters Main Street

The main street in St. Peters is well used and contains a single sidewalk that alternates between the north and south sides of the road. The sidewalk provides an additional buffer between the pedestrian pathway and the road. It has a surface level crosswalk and vertical, highly contrasted, vertical crossing signage. This crosswalk provides visual crossing lights to alert vehicles that a pedestrian is crossing. Image MS8 illustrates how the concrete is sloped to help any users transition from the road height to the sidewalk.

In image MS9, the added waste bins are within an accessible height, are colour-contrasted and do not require any opening to dispose of garbage. The pathway leads users across many parking lot entrances where gravel can be pulled into the walking path from traffic. Gravel on the concrete sidewalk may pose a risk to crossing at road entrances. The sidewalk is wide enough to permit two users in wheeled mobility devices to pass but narrows at points.



MB 1 | Richmond County Administration Building Upper Parking Lot



MB 2 | Front Entrance



MB 3 | Accessible Parking Stalls

2.2 MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS

OBSERVATIONS

Richmond County Administration Building

The County administration building was observed to provide many accessible features that contribute to its overall function. Some of the notable features were the gently sloped entrance from the parking lot, the accessible door hardware and the accessible parking spaces.

The entrance featured both a modest slope and accessible door. The front entrance contains an automatic opening button along with door hardware that does not require full dexterity. The automatic door control is provided in a location that is interrupted by the door swing.

The parking lot is adjacent to the building and contains designated accessible parking separated by a pedestrian access aisle. The accessible stalls have proper painted identification signage and a protected access aisle however there is no vertical signage on the stalls to indicate that it is for accessible permit holders only.



MB 4 | Path to Arichat main street from the Administration Building



MB 5 | Ramp with TWSI along with upper and cane detectable lower rails



MB 6 | Integrated accessible picnic tables on site

2.2 MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS

OBSERVATIONS

Richmond County Administration Building (cont'd)

The outdoor access to the administration building in Richmond County is very good. Access to the main entrance continues from a level pathway onto a well defined ramp. In addition, the front park has good sight lines and signage to inform users on how to access the entrance.

The image MB5 further shows the ramp to help users up the grade change from the road to the Administration Building. The ramp has an upper and lower rail that is cane detectable and has proper spacing between spindles.

In image MB6, picnic tables can be seen where accessible tables with proper knee space have been integrated into the final design. The entrance into the picnic table area is off the main pathway and the entire picnic area is set on a solid concrete pad with the necessary turning space required for a user in a wheeled mobility device.



MB 7 | Office Weigh Station



MB 8 | Office Entrance



MB 9 | Entrance Ramp

2.2 MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS

OBSERVATIONS

Richmond County Solid Waste Management

The solid waste management site provides many attempts at accessibility features. A ramp is provided to access the elevated entrance but the handrail is not graspable making it difficult to use for stability.

The office door appears to be just wide enough for a wheeled mobility device to enter but a wider door would be more suited. The door hardware is a rounded knob which limits its use to those with full dexterity. The door is easily identified with its colour contrast against the building.

In image MB9, the ramp entrance is visible along with the base concrete patio stone. The gravel ramp has eroded away and lead to an uneven surface. Users in wheeled mobility devices would have to use additional force to enter onto the ramp and doing so would increase the chances for an injury to occur when attempting to enter the office. Finally, there is loose gravel which creates a slip hazard.



MB 10 | Front Entrance

2.2 MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS

OBSERVATIONS

Royal Canadian Mounted Police - St. Peters

The updated RCMP building on the east side of St. Peters has been renovated to include many accessibility features. The signage on the front of the building is large and colour contrasted. The door is provided with accessible, lever style hardware and an automatic door opener.



MB 11 | Accessible Ramp

Image MB11 shows a new concrete ramp has been installed at the site. In addition to the ramp, there is railing provided for part of the ramp.

Image MB12 shows the accessible transition between the ramp and the parking surface. Protected space is provided at the start of the ramp to give users a safe area to stop before proceeding into traffic.



MB 12 | Accessible Ramp Landing



MB 13 | Library Entrance



MB 14 | Parking Lot



MB 15 | Parking Adjacent to Entrance

2.2 MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS OBSERVATIONS

St. Peters Library

St. Peters library is set back from Grenville street on a paved parking lot. The front entrance opens directly onto the parking lot with a small stepped transition. The primary signage on the building contains a large legible font on a colour contrasting background.

There is no designated accessible parking at the library although the parking lot is accessible. The entrance to the library is not accessible as the door hardware require full dexterity and no automatic door opener is provided.



MB 16 | Accessible Parking Directional Signage



MB 17 | Accessible Parking Stall



MB 18 | Accessible Parking - Back of Building

2.2 MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS

OBSERVATIONS

Canada Post - Arichat

The Canada post location in Arichat was observed due to it being a frequently visited location.

Residents of Arichat are guided by the signage on the main street to the back of the building when accessible parking is required. The signage is large in size and is colour contrasting.

The accessible parking stall at the back of the building has an access aisle along with painted signage on the parking surface. The stall also provides vertical signage to indicate that only permit holders are allowed to park in that stall. It appeared (at the time of audit) that the stall is sometimes used as a storage location for snow removal. Without this stall the site does not have a operating accessible parking stall.

The parking lot was noted to be a relatively flat and solid surface with little disturbances in the surface. There was no protected pathway for those moving from the accessible stall to the front entrance.



MB 19 | Accessible Walkway Threshold from Parking Lot



MB 20 | Walkway Leading to Front Entrance from Accessible Parking



MB 21 | Walkway Leading to Front Entrance



MB 22 | Entrance Door Hardware

2.2 MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS

OBSERVATIONS

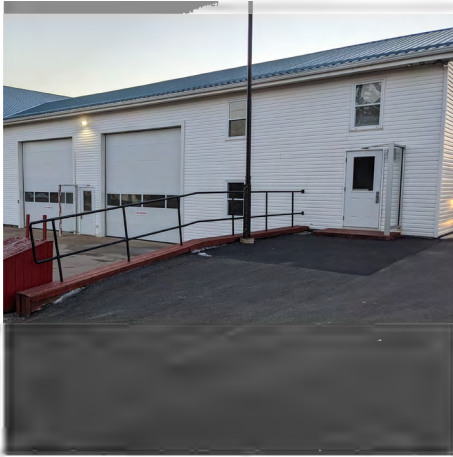
Canada Post - Arichat (continued)

Once a user crosses the parking lot, they access a separated pathway that leads them to the front entrance of the building. The pathway has a colour contrasting strip on the transition edge to warn of a change in surface. The ramp transition edge is higher than the parking lot and currently poses a risk for tripping.

The pathway runs along the edge of the Canada Post building toward the front entrance. The pathway is narrow and has no space to move out of the way onto a solid surface. If two users in wheeled mobility devices met in the path, one would have to back up or risk getting stuck in the gravel.

The front of the building has two entrances and the Canada Post location is the further location in the MB 21 image. This pathway is wider to allow another wheeled mobility device to pass. It was also noted that no TWSI was found at the top of the stairs to warn users.

Finally the door hardware into the post office was deemed inaccessible. Door hardware seen in image MB 22 requires a user to have full dexterity.



HE 1 | Front Entrance and Bay Doors



HE 2 | Side Access Ramp and Parking Sign



HE 3 | Fire Hall Rear Accessible Parking

2.3 HEALTHCARE & EMERGENCY SERVICES OBSERVATIONS

St. Peters Fire Hall

St. Peters Fire Hall is found on the west side of the canal on Toulouse street. The paved roadway leads users right to the buildings bay doors. The pedestrian entrance on the north side of the building requires users to take a step up and then open the door. The hardware on the door is not accessible and the door does not have an automatic opening option.

There is a dedicated, accessible parking stall adjacent to the entrance as seen in image HE2. The accessible parking is adjacent to a new access ramp. The ramp is on a moderate incline and follows the building contour with a 90 degree turn half way. The railing is a 2x4 top with a 2x6 edging that reduces user ability to grip. The transition between the pavement and the ramp is seamless.

There is additional accessible parking at the back of the building but it requires users to traverse a gravel parking lot. No accessible spaces have surface painted stalls or access aisles.



HE 4 | Accessible Parking Front of Building- Metered



HE 5 | Vertical Signage for Accessible Parking



HE 6 | Walkway Leading from Parking to Front Entrance



HE 7 | Main Entrance Door

2.3 HEALTHCARE & EMERGENCY SERVICES OBSERVATIONS

Strait Richmond Hospital

The Strait Richmond Hospital is the only major hospital in Richmond County. The service area of this particular hospital reaches outside of Richmond county lines due to its western location. Accessible parking at the hospital is present, has correct signage and access aisles. Pavement signage is faded and pavement is uneven in locations. The metered parking machine seen in image HE4 is located within the snow bank. There is no way for a user in a wheeled mobility device to access the payment system.

The pathway leading to the entrance is protected and on stable, slip resistant ground. The transition between the pavement and concrete has a slight lip.. The width of the path would not allow two users in wheeled mobility devices to pass each other.

The front entrance of the hospital has an automated door opener along with accessible door hardware. The signage on the door however is difficult to read due to glare and because of the glass not being frosted where the lettering is.



HE 8 | Accessible Stalls in Parking Lot



HE 9 | Curb Ramp from Parking to Walkway



HE 10 | Walkway in Front of Building



HE 11 | Entrance Door Hardware

2.3 HEALTHCARE & EMERGENCY SERVICES OBSERVATIONS

St. Anne's Community Nursing Care Centre

St. Anne's community Nursing Care Centre is located in the community of Arichat. The Care Centre is located at the end of the newly introduced main street sidewalk. The centre has designated accessible parking, but each stall does not have any vertical signage about requiring a permit.

Access from the parking lot is not a protected pathway but a newer curb cut allows users to access the on-site sidewalk system. The transition is seamless and would be easy to use if operating a wheeled mobility device.

The on-site pathway system goes around the Care Centre and creates more places where access is encouraged. The drop off and pick up zone in the front is protected and has a curb ramp nearby.

The access to the building itself is also accessible with push to open hardware. The door hardware is lever style and accessible. Finally, the signage on the building is good for colour contrasting lettering.



HE 12 | Richmond Villa main entrance



HE 13 | Access isle adjacent to accessible parking lot at Richmond Villa



HE 14 | Accessible parking near front entrance



HE 15 | Richmond Villa in the summertime

2.3 HEALTHCARE & EMERGENCY SERVICES OBSERVATIONS

Richmond Villa

The Richmond Villa nursing home is a site in St. Peters that houses many community members that are not fully able bodied. The site has a large drop off and pick up zone that is adjacent to the front entrance. The entrance doorways are automatic sliding doors and are fully accessible.

The front parking lot has accessible parking with a designed access isle. The parking does not however have vertical signage indicting that a permit is required for parking within the stall.

There is not dedicated walking path from the accessible parking toward the front entrance. The parking lot is flat and made up of a slip resistant surface.

Richmond Villa has good access to public sidewalks for anyone wishing to access other nearby services while not using a vehicle. The site is adjacent to a elementary school, playground and the local community hall.



PA 1 | Parking Lot



PA 2 | Sloped Walkway to Seating Area



PA 3 | Ramp to Washrooms



PA 4 | Accessible Washroom

2.4 PARKS & OPEN SPACES

OBSERVATIONS

Irish Cove Provincial Park

Irish Cove Provincial Park is located near the north east border of Richmond County. Park access is directly off of highway 4 and requires users to arrive by a car. The parking lot for the provincial park does not have lines to organize vehicle parking. There is no designated accessibility parking at the site.

The access method across the park utilizes an elevated boardwalk system. The wooden structure has a transition to the gravel parking lot and allows users in wheeled mobility devices access to other parts of the park.

Due to the seasonality of the park, the washrooms are not accessible in the winter. Both the wooden ramps leading to the bathrooms and change buildings were barricaded. The accessible outdoor washrooms have inaccessible door hardware and do not have automatic push buttons to assist users. The accessible signage is proper in location on the washroom stall wall and not on the door but is very small in size and difficult to read.



PA 5 | Parking Lot



PA 6 | Walkway



PA 7 | Sloped Walkway to Washroom and Change room Buildings



PA 8 | Change House

2.4 PARKS & OPEN SPACES

OBSERVATIONS

Point Michaud Beach Provincial Park

Point Michaud Beach Provincial Park is another provincial park located in Richmond County.

Access is similar to Irish Cove in that it is only by car. The parking lot is a gravel base with no lines for organization. There is no protected accessible parking for access to the beach.

Wooden boardwalks line the parking lot, which provide a base for universal access to the beach. Currently the boardwalk only extends to the change rooms and the path along the parking lot. The sloped entrance to the boardwalk had slight pooling and ice built up due to the time of year the site visit was conducted.

An accessible change room is provided on site. The signage on the change is present in an appropriate location. The door to the accessible change room is not accessible due to the hand hardware and the lack of automation for opening.



PA 9 | Access to beach



PA 10 | Outdoor accessible washrooms



PA 11 | Battery Park in the summer time



PA 12 | Access ramp at the Battery Park campground office

2.4 PARKS & OPEN SPACES

OBSERVATIONS

Battery Provincial Park

Battery Provincial Park is located within the Village of St. Peters. The park is accessible by a newly updated pathway that connects to the Canal. The park is also accessible by car and multiple parking lots are provided. Beach access is not accessible as it requires users to use a flight of stairs and traverse uneven ground.

There are seasonal washrooms within the park, including ones that are accessible. The ramp to the accessible washrooms is a wooden boardwalk system that provides access to users in wheeled mobility devices, however uneven ground is present up to the ramp. The gravel parking lot had ice build and pooling throughout.

Battery Provincial park is also a campground within the summer months. The campground office seen in image PA12 has an access ramp. The entire public road within the park is paved and a relatively even and slip free surface.



AR 1 | Accessible Parking Spaces Adjacent to Entrance



AR 2 | Front Entrance Ramp



AR 3 | Front Entrance



AR 4 | Entrance Door Hardware

2.5 RECREATION CENTERS

OBSERVATIONS

Richmond Arena

Richmond Arena is a major gathering space for the community of Richmond County and St. Peters. The arena hosts hockey tournaments, public skating and private bookings. The arena has designated accessible parking with signage mounted to the building face. There is no pavement signage to indicate that the stalls are for accessible access only. There is also no protected pathway from the parking area to the front entrance.

The transition between the parking lot and entrance is moderately accessible. There is a organized entry and exit to the arena to coordinate pedestrian movement. The door hardware on the arena is accessible and there is an automatic door opener available. The location of the push button is not ideal as it is within the swing of the door and would require the user to get out of the way of the door as it opens.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 MAIN STREETS RECOMMENDATIONS

Arichat Main Street

Tactile walking surface indicators should span the width of the curb ramp and be painted yellow for high visibility. They should be set back 300-350mm from the curb and be 600-650 mm deep. A level turning space of at least the full width of the ramp x 1350mm should be provided at the top of the slope. It is recommended that a colour-contrasted, tactile warning strip be provided in locations where the sidewalk ends and a driveway starts. Ensure the pedestrian pathways are maintained and kept clear of snow. The rest area benches should provide some options without arms on one side to allow for a side transfer from a wheeled-mobility device. On waste bins that include signage, ensure raised characters and braille are also provided.

Louisdale Main Street

Provide tactile walking surface indicators on curb ramps to warn pedestrians of an upcoming vehicular crossing. Although painted lines are provided for pedestrian crossings, they are faded. It is recommended that lines are re-painted and maintained to ensure full visibility. Pedestrian crossings would also benefit greatly from both visual (flashing lights) and audible crossing signals.

St. Peters Main Street

Curb ramps are provided but they are not always wide enough and have an inaccessible slope. It is recommend that proper, accessible curb ramps are provided to meet CSA B651-18 guidelines. Ensure a minimum accessible sidewalk width of 1600mm . This is especially important where a person is required to manouever 90°. Finally, at points where the sidewalk crosses a driveway, there is a large amount of loose gravel. This causes a danger for some users. Ensure this is maintained.

3.2 MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS

RECOMMENDATIONS

Richmond Administration Building

Accessible parking should be modified to include a minimum 2000mm wide painted access aisle between accessible stalls. Vertical signage should also be provided to ensure space is only used by permit holders. Provide a TWSI at the curb ramp where it enters into the parking lot from the pathway. Entrance doors should be colour contrasted with their backgrounds. In addition, the automatic door button should be out of the door swing, but not more than 1500mm from the door opening. Provide a colour-contrasted strip, the width of the ramp, at all locations where a slope change occurs. Ramp railing should also be a contrasting colour to the ramp surface.

Richmond County Solid Waste Management

Ramp handrail should be replaced with one that is circular or elliptical in shape and 30 to 40mm diameter. Handrail should be uninterrupted along its length, free of abrasive elements and colour contrasted with the ramp. Ensure that the ramp remains clear of gravel, slope the ramp threshold and ensure it remains under 13mm.

Royal Canadian Mounted Police - St. Peters

Provide colour contrasted strips on the ramp at all locations where a level change occurs. Provide a handrail that runs the full length of the ramp. Ensure a lower rail is provided. Repaint pavement lines where they are currently fading.

3.2 MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS - CONTINUED

RECOMMENDATIONS

St. Peters Library

Replace door hardware with a D-style or lever type that does not require full dexterity.

Provide an automatic door opener to further increase the accessibility for all users.

Entrance door should be painted a contrasting colour to the adjacent building for full visibility. Ensure smooth (or beveled and not exceeding 6mm) transitions between surfaces and at entrance.

Canada Post - Arichat

Replace door hardware with a D-style or lever type that does not require full dexterity.

Provide an automatic door opener to further increase the accessibility for all users.

Provide a tactile walking surface indicator at the top landing of the stairs to warn users of the upcoming step down.

Parking stall pavement signage should be repainted with a minimum 2000mm access aisle. Ensure snow is removed and placed out of the accessible stall so that width is not reduced.

3.3 HEALTHCARE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES RECOMMENDATIONS

St. Peters Fire Hall

Ensure ramp handrail is circular or elliptical in shape and between 30 and 40mm in diameter. Ensure it is painted a contrasting colour to the ramp surface. A colour contrasted, tactile strip should be provided on the ramp surface at all locations where a level change occurs. Accessible parking should have painted pavement signage and an adjacent access aisle. Provide signage to locate entrance from the parking lot. Door hardware should be accessible, not require full dexterity and provide an automatic opener if possible.

Strait Richmond Hospital, St. Anne's Nursing Centre and Richmond Villa

Accessible pavement signage and painted lines in parking should be repainted as it is fading and difficult to see. Different pay options should be provided on a level, clear ground surface and within accessible reach range. Payment should be both audible and visual. Accessible path width should be a minimum of 1600mm. Locate the automatic door opener so that is clear of the door opening but adjacent to it. Ensure signage is provided with tactile character and braille and that the area in front of the phone is free of objects.

TWSI's should be provided at all curb cuts from the sidewalk to the road/ parking surface. Ensure vertical signage is provided at all accessible parking locations and provide diagonal surface paint at all drop-off locations to increase the safety of users.

3.4 PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

RECOMMENDATIONS

Irish Cove, Point Michaud Beach and Battery Provincial Parks

It is recommended that a directory to include information on path accessibility, washroom locations and wayfinding be provided at all park entrances. This should accompany an accessible website with the same information that is frequently updated. Signage should provide good colour-contrast, consider audible options and contain raised characters and braille in addition to typical characters. Users would benefit greatly from a continuous handrail along the paths and rest areas at intervals of no more than 30 meters. Park should be maintained to ensure proper drainage and to prevent water pooling and ice build up along the accessible pathways. All doors should be colour contrasted with their backgrounds and provide accessible hardware that does not require full dexterity to open. There should be dedicated accessible parking (vertical signage) adjacent to park entrances. Finally, provide consistent lighting to increase the safety of all users

3.5 RECREATION CENTERS

RECOMMENDATIONS

Richmond Arena

Accessible parking should provide surface painted signage as well as vertical signage to dedicate parking to permit holders only. All accessible parking space should be adjacent to a 2000mm wide access aisle. It is understood that many provincial park parking lots are gravel. In this case, it is alright if the pavement signage is not provided but it is important to provide the vertical signage. Entrance doors and hardware should be accessible and colour contrast their backgrounds. The entry and exit signage that exists above the doors currently blends in with the background and is difficult to read from a distance. It is recommended that the signage size is increased and it is painted a contrasting colour to the building. Finally, it is recommended that the push button be relocated so that it is not within the door swing but no more than 1500mm from the door swing.

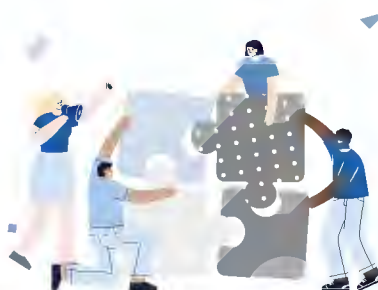
4.0 CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

OVERVIEW



The communities within Richmond County along with the Village of St. Peters have many accessible components. The communities also have areas where improvements would be beneficial for everyone in the community regardless of age, ability, mobility or circumstance. With physical, audible and visual accessibility enhancements and a meaningful accessibility strategy, Richmond County and St. Peters can become leaders in accessibility.

Improved accessibility can be created through refined access to key facilities, enhanced signage/wayfinding, increasing the prominence of accessible parking stalls, and ensuring a consistent accessible path of travel. Richmond County and St. Peters have a good foundation to become a leader in accessibility across Cape Breton. With a strong action plan, they can provide safe, inclusive communities for all of their residents.





Appendix C

Richmond

Accessibility

Plan

SPRING 2022

DRY
COPY

Municipality of the County of Richmond and the Village of St. Peter's Accessibility Plan

Current State Review

Prepared by: Intelligent Futures & Level Playing Field

Submitted to: The Municipality of the County of Richmond and the Village of St. Peter's

Submitted on: February 4th, 2022



intelligent
futures



1.0 Executive Summary

This Current State Working Document is a central location for all information gathered to date to inform the development of the Accessibility Plan for the Municipality of the County of Richmond and the Village of St. Peter's.

The information outlined in this working document was gathered during Phase One of developing the Municipality of the County of Richmond and the Village of St. Peter's Accessibility Plans. There have been four key sources of information that have led to the development of this working document:

- **Community Engagement** - Two virtual workshops and an online and print questionnaire gathered community insights.
- **Virtual Site Visits** - Key locations and services across the Municipality and Village were examined using accessibility audits.
- **Existing Practice Review** - A series of pertinent case studies were examined and reviewed to inform the development of the forthcoming plans.
- **Policy Review** - A comprehensive policy review of all local and provincial documents was conducted to understand the current state of the policy framework and how this plan will fit within it.

These four sources of information are overviewed throughout this report, and together, they will inform the development of the Accessibility Plans. Information that has been gathered has been organized under five prominent focus areas; goods and services, information and communication, transportation, employment and the built environment. Each focus area has been organized to present an overview of the current state, identified achievements and barriers, what local and provincial policies pertain to it, and any potential improvements from site visits or community conversations. These five focus areas provide the organizing framework for data gathered to date and will influence the goals and actions in the plans to follow.

This report is designed to be a living document and be updated with new information. During the week of February 14, the project team will be conducting a Strategy Workshop to initiate Phase Two of the project. The information gained during that Strategy Workshop will also be incorporated into this document to ensure that this working document is reflective of all information gained.

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2.0 Introduction / Purpose

The Current State Working Document is a gathering location for all information pertinent to the development of the Accessibility Plan for the Municipality of the County of Richmond and the Village of St. Peter's collected to date. Using the 'Definition of Success' as a guide, the overarching guiding definition of success that the forthcoming accessibility plans will aim to achieve is:

The Accessibility Plans will be a success if it provides a framework to build awareness, remove barriers and create equitable and accessible spaces for all residents and visitors regardless of ability or age.

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

- a) **Local Context (50%):** *What are the barriers to access in the Municipality? Where are the opportunities for improvement? What are the current success stories? What does a day in the life of various persons with disabilities look like in this context? How can everyone access key services? What goods or services are not accessible?*
- b) **Provincial and national trends (30%):** *What policies does this plan need to align with? What are the provincial, federal, and local accessibility goals? What does the literature suggest for creating a more accessible community?*
- c) **Existing practice review (20%):** *What are other local municipalities doing for accessibility practices? What practices are municipalities doing elsewhere that would work for the context of the Municipality of the County of Richmond and the Village of St. Peter's?*

The Current State Working document aims to:

- Document the barriers, achievements, opportunities and ideas of residents within the Municipality and the Village have for accessibility
- Understand the policy context that the Accessibility Plan sits within
- Document what local or similar communities are doing for accessibility
- Provide a basis of understanding for the development of the forthcoming Accessibility Plans

2.1 Deliverable Purpose

The details for this deliverable are described in the November 19, 2021 Proposal, which states:

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

Rather than isolate community feedback from what was learned in the background and current situation analysis (Phase 1.2), we would develop a ‘current state review’ report. This working document would integrate the learnings from the analysis and integrate these findings with community feedback, resulting in a more robust understanding of the current state of accessibility in the Municipality’s of the County of Richmond and St. Peter’s. This report would be presented to the Municipality team, acting as a close of Phase 1 and obtaining Municipal insights as the project moves to the second phase.”

This Current State Working Document was developed to inform the final Accessibility Plan. Components of this working document may change over time, as additional information becomes available through discussions with the project team, the strategy workshop process, Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) feedback, and further administrative research. As such, this document is not presented as a final report but rather as a gathering location for information as it arises.

3.0 Methodology

This Current State Working Document was developed using four main sources of information:

1. **Accessibility Audits:** in-depth investigations into site-specific accessibility concerns and public spaces
2. **Community Engagement:** community conversations with the general public between January 17 and January 30, 2022
3. **Existing Practice Review:** an investigation into existing Accessibility Plan documents from across Canada
4. **Policy Review:** an in-depth investigation into National Provincial and local policies that either provide direction for accessibility or affect accessibility locally

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

3.1 Accessibility Audits

Level Playing Field (LPF) reviewed the current accessibility of the Municipality of the County of Richmond and the Village of St. Peters. The work began with a desktop exercise to determine what locations to visit and experience virtually. We viewed potential locations on Google Street View, reviewed the County and Village websites and reviewed Parks Canada information. We assessed the accessibility of accessing relevant information on the above mentioned websites. We reviewed new Provincial legislation on accessibility, and other Nova Scotia communities accessibility strategies.

The virtual accessibility assessment included the communities found within Richmond County of:

- Arichat
- Louisdale
- L'Arodisse
- Evanston
- Isle Madame

- Village of St. Peters

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

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

Assessments utilized visual inspection from virtual site visits along with in person image collection from municipal employees.

More information on the Site Assessment Process can be found in Appendix C.

3.2 Community Engagement

To share questions, comments and insights, the project team conducted the following engagement activities:

Online + Print Survey

To provide as many access points to the conversation as possible, this approach to engagement allowed residents to share their insights for action in a way that allowed for 24/7 access with a relatively minimal investment in time. This enabled the project team to gain a wider variety of insights into accessibility in the Municipality of the County of Richmond and the Village of St. Peter's. We asked questions about barriers, achievements, and potential actions to improve accessibility in the area. The survey was available online through the project website and in print copies located at key locations throughout the County.

The survey has received 128 responses (61 complete responses, and 67 partial responses).

Digital Workshops

A total of two, two-hour virtual workshops were conducted with stakeholders and the public with the intention of gaining a greater level of insight about accessibility. Hosting these community conversations in a workshop style allowed the project team to learn a greater level of detail and nuance about the opportunities and barriers present in the County of Richmond and Village of St. Peters.

A total of 11 non-staff participants shared their feedback during and after workshops.

Call-in Accessibility Line

For the duration of the engagement process, a call-in line was live where respondents could call-in and provide their insights about accessibility. This was to ensure that as many entrances to the engagement process as possible were provided. The call-in line allowed anyone, regardless of geography or internet connection, to call-in and provide insights into what the barriers and opportunities are surrounding accessibility in the County and Village.

Committee Meeting

A digital meeting was held with the AAC where a series of questions were asked about the big picture of accessibility in the Municipality of the County of Richmond and the Village of St. Peter's and diving deeper into the subject's nuance. Using a dynamic mix of data, visual precedents, and real-time visualization, the committee sessions aimed to gain a deeper understanding of what forces work for and against accessibility in the Municipality of the County of Richmond and the Village of St. Peter's.

Website

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

Engagement Communication

Engagement opportunities were communicated using the following:

- Four social media posts made on the Municipality of the County of Richmond and Village of St. Peter’s Facebook Pages
- A mail-out explaining the engagement process that went to every household in the County of Richmond
- The development of the project landing page, accessible through the Municipal of the County of Richmond website

3.3 Existing Practice Review

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

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

Existing Practices that were selected include:

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

Each resource was summarized with key project takeaways to refer back to when developing the Accessibility Plan. Throughout this research report, these case

studies can be found within sections that best reflect the case study's subject matter.

3.4 Policy Review

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

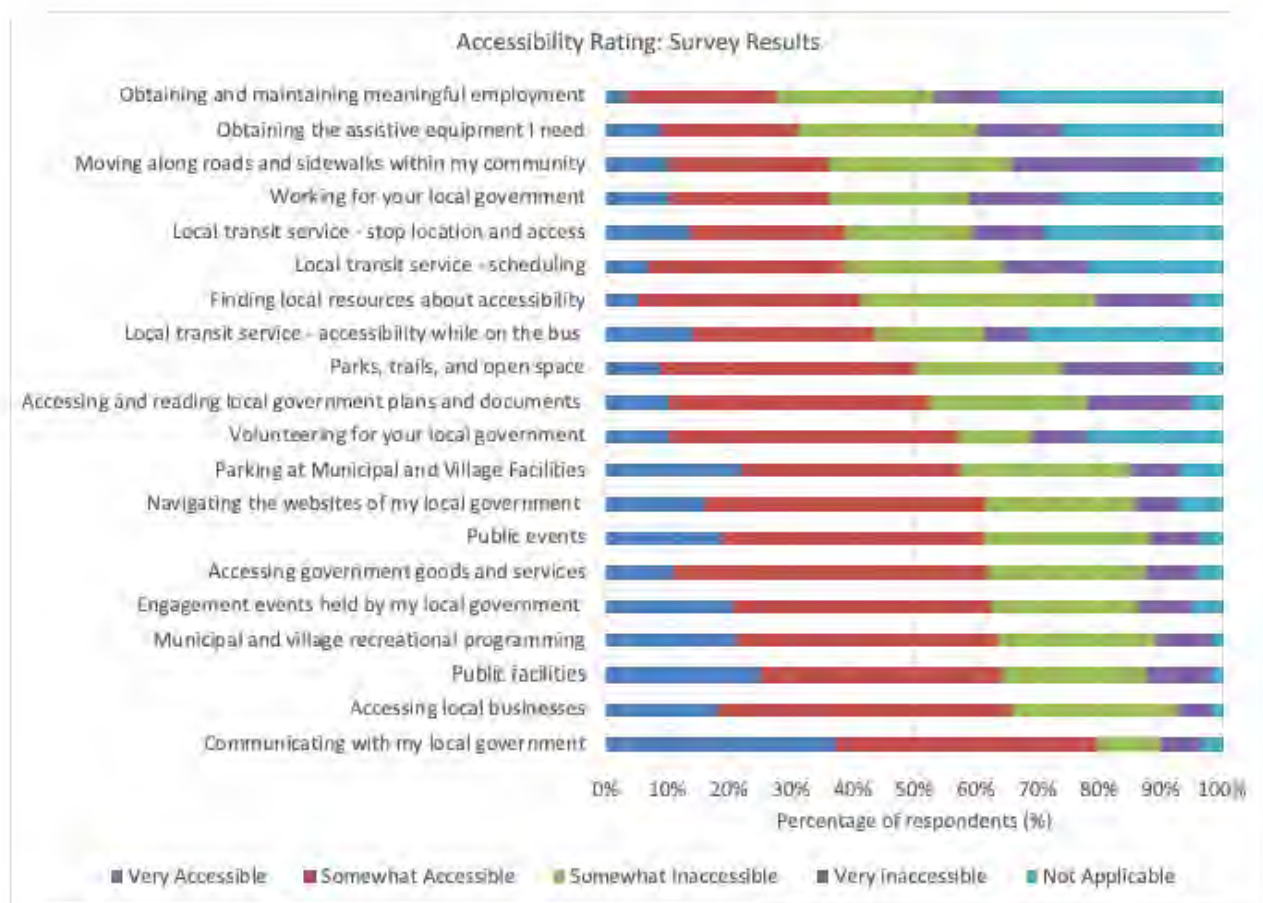
- CSA B651-18, Accessible Design for the Built Environment
- Accessibility Act. 2017, c. 2, s. 1
- Municipal Government Act 1998, c. 18, s. 1
- The Accessibility Directorate website
- Access by Design 2030
- The Accessibility Planning Toolkit for Municipalities
- Government of Nova Scotia Accessibility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

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

4.0 Overarching Results

Survey Feedback

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



Elements that were reported as being the least accessible in the Municipality and the Village were;

- Obtaining and maintaining meaningful employment
- Obtaining the assistive equipment they need
- Moving along roads and sidewalks within my community

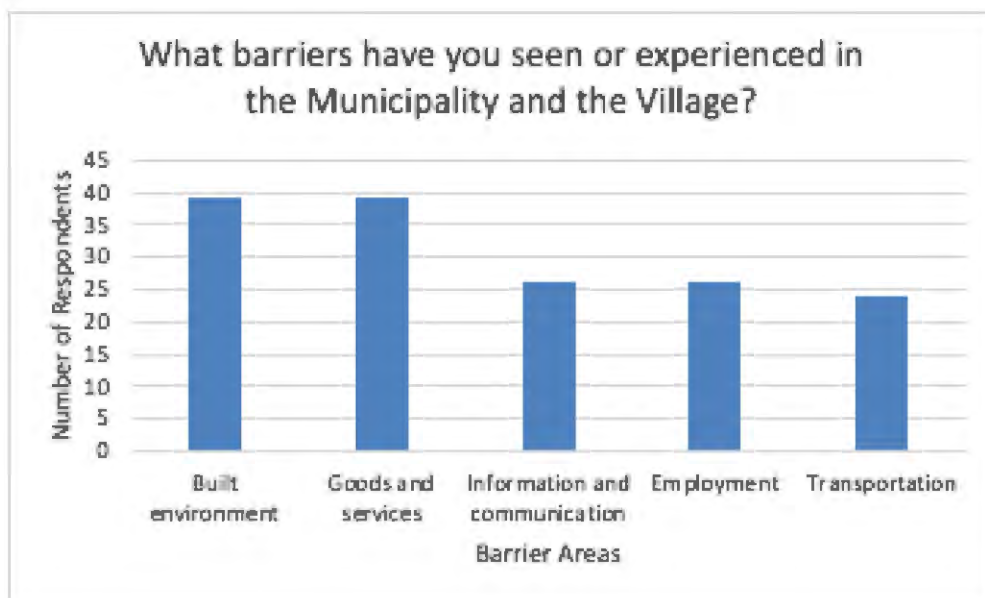
Please note that two of the least accessible elements above have high ‘not applicable’ response rates. If we remove ‘not applicable’ responses, the least accessible elements can be read as:

- Moving along roads and sidewalks within my community
- Finding local Resources about accessibility
- Parks, trails, and open space

Among those reported as the most accessible include:

- Communicating with their local government
- Accessing local businesses
- Public facilities

We also asked survey participants to select all of the accessibility barriers they’ve seen or experienced in the Municipality of the County of Richmond and the Village of St. Peter’s. The results from this question can be seen in the bar graph below.



The largest barriers were identified to be the built environment and goods and services. All sections had relatively high rankings of barriers, and thus are all important factors to consider throughout this accessibility planning process.

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

Forces For and Against

During an Accessibility Advisory Committee [AAC] session, we asked committee members to brainstorm some of the forces working for and against accessibility. These forces are aspects of the community that will influence the development and uptake of this plan as the Municipality and the village continue to work together to improve accessibility.

Forces working for accessibility

- Richmond County has an engaged, tight knit community
- There are many opportunities to collaborate with local organisations to move forward on accessibility goals
- Information sharing through social media such as Facebook
- Telile service which provides vital information to people without an internet connection
- Great potential for improving the trail system to be more accessible
- Richmond Literacy Network and other programs are helping to close the skills gap
- General positive attitudes about moving towards a more accessible community
- Municipal facilities are leading by example by ensuring accessibility wherever possible
- Strait Area Transit provides an option for accessible transportation

Forces working against accessibility

- Poorly maintained and poorly designed roads and sidewalks
- Aging infrastructure that prevents accessibility upgrades
- Limited awareness of accessibility needs
- Limited accessible work opportunities
- Language barriers for French speaking residents trying to access municipal information
- Complicated funding applications for accessibility grants
- Internet accessibility and the digital divide
- Public transportation is difficult to access and navigating it can be intimidating for many people with disabilities

- Accessible parking spots are very limited
- Transportation options are very limited
- Many outdoor public spaces are inaccessible for people with mobility issues

5.0 Topic Results

5.1. Goods and Services

5.1.1. The Starting Point

5.1.1.1. Overview

The Municipality of the County of Richmond and the Village of St. Peter's offers a range of services to the local population. The Municipality offers services including, but not limited to: administering building permits, dog licensing, emergency management, public works, recreation services, and tax services. Some services included on the eServices portion of the County website allows residents to apply for permits, register a heritage building, and change their address using the virtual format. The Municipality is also responsible for the maintenance of 1.7 kilometers of their roads, with the remaining nearly 30 kilometers of J-class roads being maintained by the Nova Scotia Department of Public Works.

The local area also hosts a robust accommodation sector to service the growing tourism base. The community health centre in L'Ardoise is a good example of a centre with a range of health services provided to the community. Richmond county is also home to community halls such as; The Lions Community Hall, the Rocky Bay Irish Club, and the Bras d'Or Lakes Inn that host local events.

Some local events hosted in the area include the Richmond County Winter Festival to the St. Peters canal swim in the beginning of August.

The Village of St. Peter's is governed by a Village Commission and has one additional committee, The Accessibility Advisory Committee. This committee is shared with the County, and is comprised of staff, elected officials, and community members who make the County of Richmond more accessible by providing advice that identifies, prevents, and eliminates barriers for residents with disabilities in the County, through various services, activities, and facilities.

The Municipality of the County of Richmond is governed by a County Council, of which has 6 committees (including the shared Accessibility Advisory Committee with St.Peter's).

5.1.1.2. Achievements

Site Assessment:

- Events are being held around the community
- Services are found throughout the county

Public Engagement

- Partnerships
 - Dr. Kingston Community Health Centre does outreach to residents
 - Partnership with Autism NS to create a Sensory Friendly skate at Richmond Arena
 - Richmond County Literacy Network (RCLN) has general literacy and computer literacy programs
 - Pan Cape Breton Food Hub
 - Volunteer community to build off of. e.g. community gardens
- Trails + Recreation
 - Improving the trail system to meet multi-use standards
 - Partnerships with ATV groups - funding to make an accessible multi-use trail
 - There is a good suite of accessible recreation leisure activities offered by the municipality

5.1.1.3. Barriers

Site Assessment:

- The low density of population makes services very spread-out
- Not all events are promoted in the same manor
- Not all events are held in accessible locations

Public Engagement:

- Snow Removal
 - Provincial snow removal timing is slow, and leaves those unable to plow stranded for up to 24 hours after a snowfall
 - Snow plowing puts street snow into private driveways limiting opportunities to leave home
- Programs

- Some literacy courses require students to be in person but travel is not always an option for people who need the service
- The local volunteer base is dwindling down, recruitment is needed
- Many programs require being physically present, which is difficult for rural communities
- A lack of transportation options to access services, programming and volunteer opportunities
- Municipal Services
 - There is no reliable well water testing in the County
 - Limited Internet access in many areas prevents people from connecting to services and opportunities
 - Parking at local amenities is varied
 - There is a need for more roadside and sidewalk maintenance
 - Limited access to affordable and accessible service options throughout the county, including affordable housing
- Events
 - Difficult to access event spaces such as concerts by the sea hosted by Richmond Recreation
- Food Security
 - Richmond river market garden society is difficult to get students or staff to take on the roles for the gardening society

5.1.2. Policies

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

Takeaway(s):

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

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

Takeaway(s):

- We will ensure people with disabilities have equitable access to goods and services delivered by the Government of Nova Scotia. This includes ensuring

there are policies, procedures, and tools in place to promote accessibility in customer service.

- Develop a government-wide Accessible Customer Service Policy with the aim of ensuring consistency in accessible customer service across the Government of Nova Scotia.
- Ensure our public enquiries operators are equipped with information on services related to accessibility and disability.
- Embed inclusion and accessibility into digital service design processes and ensure an inclusive and accessible by design approach.
- Promote accessibility in procurement processes undertaken by the Government of Nova Scotia. This will include developing resource materials for Departments to assist in identifying and including accessibility requirements in tenders for goods and services purchased by the Government of Nova Scotia.
- Explore the establishment of accessibility navigators to assist persons with disabilities in accessing information and services.

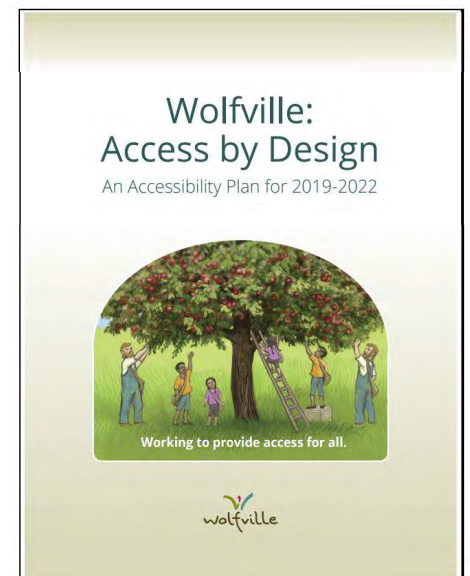
5.1.3. Case Study Example

Wolfville - Access by Design

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

Key takeaways and best practices

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



5.1.4. Potential Improvements

Site Assessment:

- A community program called timebank used to exist and seemed to have the potential for moderate take-up in the community. The service had a set amount of grant money for those with limited access to hire able-bodied residents to complete projects around their house. The program was set up to generate work opportunities while also providing a discounted service for residents.
- Due to event locations many services and events are not guaranteed to be accessible. Users might be able to access the event facilities at the event but cannot get to the site due to lack of transit and taxi service. This could be improved with the addition of a chartered service set up by the county on certain event days.
- During engagement one note was the lack of programming that targeted a partnership between age demographics. The addition of events that specifically encouraged different age groups to interact would be beneficial to the community.

Public Engagement

- Service provision
 - Develop services that matches people that need accessibility supports with skilled workers to assist them
 - Conduct a health equity impact assessment and plan using an age friendly lens
 - More affordable services
- Trails and Recreation
 - Trailheads should be clearly marked with destinations and list any services available (such as accessible washrooms). They should also include a number to call if you see something and need to report it.
 - Ensure that there are a range of programs and opportunities available for everyone to enjoy - new programming is needed
- Support
 - Better engagement with people with service animals
 - Engage and support caregivers of people with disabilities

- Services
 - Winter program to help with residential snow removal (flag system)
 - Due to low internet connectivity - Telile community television is an alternative to get information out to residents
 - Consider adding a closed captioning option on Telile community television
- Partnerships
 - Continued partnerships with the community to become more accessible
- Food
 - Student and senior partnerships for gardening and socializing
 - Partner with Richmond River and Cape Breton Food Club to encourage food security
 - Designate an accessible pick up and drop off location for local food suppliers/ products
- Events
 - Locating events and programs in accessible venues - rethink the location of programming
 - Everything that is sponsored by the County should be accessible

5.2. Information and Communications

5.2.1. The Starting Point

5.2.1.1. Overview

Richmond county spans across a vast area of Cape Breton, meaning there are many unique communities within the county. The communities boast many outdoor activities that local residents enjoy along with the indoor spaces to gather and hold events. The events and activities highlighted are promoted through many internal groups and networks. Information about events is posted on the festivals and events calendar for Richmond County and on the St. Peters Facebook page. Tourism has been established in the region as Cape Breton has invested in promoting the island. The County website has limited information about accessibility within the county and for the events it hosts.

The Village of St. Peter's is currently in the process of acquiring a public website, which will be developed in future years. The Municipality of the County of Richmond currently has one website, www.richmondcounty.ca, which is where this Accessibility Plan's information is located.

Currently, the Village and the County rely on Facebook, and Telile Community TV to share County and Village information publicly, along with other digital and in person information sharing, such as community mail-outs, phone in lines, and website posting.

5.2.1.2. Achievements

Site Assessment:

- The county has a functioning website that provides information about the County
- There is a Facebook page that also provides information

Public Engagement

- Social Media
 - The county Facebook pages have over 2300 followers
 - Information sharing online is effective (example Facebook)
- Council Meetings
 - Council sessions are live streamed or recorded and they are available online
 - Call in line available for questions
- Local Media
 - The Reflections of Richmond online newsletter is a great way to learn about local events
 - Telile and St. Peter's Cable 10 provide a wealth of information
- Website
 - Community and municipal websites are user friendly
- Partnerships
 - The Seniors Safety Coordinator is a wonderful resource that does a lot of work with seniors across the county
 - RCLN (Richmond County Literacy Network) programs are a dependable resource
- County Initiatives

- County attempts to communicate through a wide range of informal media sources
- Strong collaborative spirit within the county through various groups, agencies and the Accessibility Advisory Committee

5.2.1.3. Barriers

Site Assessment:

- Lack of accessible information both online and in person
- Users don't have a single source or hub for information
- Wayfinding is lacking in parks, beaches

Public Engagement

- Broadband connection
 - Information sharing online excludes people with limited access to broadband services
 - There is limited broadband internet service available in parts of the county, many seniors are not connected to the internet
- Wayfinding
 - There is a lack of in person wayfinding signage
- Website
 - County website needs improvement to address accessibility concerns
 - Access to information regarding accessibility is hard to find, and there are limited opportunities for residents to provide feedback
- Inconsistency of Communication
 - Most times, we only hear about things by chance. I can't imagine seniors or anyone without access to facebook would find out about things
 - Facebook is used most frequently, but not everyone has a facebook account. It would be helpful if the municipal website was used more frequently for information sharing
 - Telile and SP Cable can be used more effectively
- Awareness
 - Getting people realize that accessibility goes beyond mobility, we also need to consider sensitivities, vision and hearing impaired
 - ASL supports are not always available at local events
 - Literacy supports are needed

- Bilingual
 - The County is bilingual, but there is limited promotion of materials in French
- Government
 - There is a need to improve access to Council information. Policies and Bylaws should use plain language

5.2.2. Policies

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

Takeaway(s):

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

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

Takeaway(s):

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

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

Takeaway(s):

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

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

Takeaway(s):

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

booking the service should be consulted on their preferences and involved in booking service providers.

5.2.4. Potential Improvements

Site Assessment:

- The county website should become fully accessible for all abilities to ensure that any public information can be viewed. The website along with the county Facebook page should be both closely monitored as both web pages are viewed by different demographics. Finally, the local TV station should be utilized to promote events in the area and methods of gaining more information. The county is also home to two radio stations where ads can be placed to inform the community.
- Another improvement the county should pursue is the standardization of wayfinding on the many trails throughout the county. Wayfinding signage should be easily found at the trailhead and provide key information about features of the trail. Information provided should include if the trail is accessible, where rest areas are, and what type of traffic is permitted on the trail. The county website should be updated with all trail information to allow users to plan ahead and to know what paths they can use.

Public Engagement:

- Broadband
 - Add more fiber optic services for improved internet access county-wide
- Communication
 - Improve and/or develop a local communications plan
 - Improve offline communications
 - Options to increase fonts or get a recorded version of materials if they are unable to see or read the materials
 - Vetting material for literacy level requirements
 - Ensure the County website is screen reader accessible
- Wayfinding
 - Trailheads should be clearly marked with destinations and the accessible services that are available. Information about where to call if you see something and need to report it should also be listed
 - Improved wayfinding signage County wide

- Interpretive signage
- County + Village Initiatives
 - Promotion of accessible areas in the County
 - Share the stories of public spaces through multimedia methods
 - There is a need to apply a plain language lens to the policies and bylaws
 - Information and introductions for newcomers to the area should be available
 - Celebrate the cultural mix to help newcomers feel welcome
- Alternative communication methods
 - Telile Community television is a resource in Richmond County that can really be used more
 - When items are posted on the Richmond County Facebook page, they should also post to Telile Scroll, Instagram, and Twitter
 - Really build on the community television network, as many can not access the internet. It is underutilized for accessibility purposes.
- Other
 - Pet teaching service for people who need service eye dogs
 - The local Seniors Take Action Coalition has a quarterly newsletter release

5.3 Transportation

5.3.1. The Starting Point

5.3.1.1. Overview

Transportation in the Municipality and the Village of St. Peter's is primarily handled by external agencies and the Provincial Government. In terms of built infrastructure relevant to accessibility, The Village of St. Peter's does not own any roads, or trails, but does own approximately five kilometers of sidewalks. The Municipality owns approximately 1.7 kilometers of municipal roads with the majority maintained by the Municipality. There are also 29.88 kilometers of local roads (J-class), that are technically owned by the Municipality, which are maintained by the Province. Lastly, The Municipality owns and maintains approximately 2.6 Kms of sidewalks (1.3 Kms in Louisdale, 0.8 Kms in Arichat and 0.5 Kms in Petit De Grat). The Province owns and/or maintains many of the

roadways in the County of Richmond and The Village of St. Peter's. Look to the Built Environment to learn more about built transportation infrastructure.

The Municipality of the County of Richmond is serviced by Strait Area Transit, a non-profit transit service. Strait Area Transit is a community-based transit system which delivers door-door accessible transportation within Cape Breton Island and beyond. This service relies on a pre-booked rider system, where riders are required to request a ride directly from their home to their destination the day before their trip. Service extends between Port Hawkesbury to Inverness. Richmond County is a partner funder in this transit initiative.¹

There are no taxi services available directly in Richmond County, but there are two taxi companies in the neighbouring Villages of Port Hawkesbury and Port Hastings. Similarly there are no VIA rail train lines in Richmond County, or rideshare platforms.

5.3.1.2. Achievements

Site Assessment:

- Main roads are paved and contain a shoulder
- Multi use trails are being promoted for ATV riders and bicycles

Public Engagement:

- Strait Area Transit is a great resource that provides accessible transportation (kneeling buses) and an appointment program Victorian Order of Nurses (VON)
- "Quiet days" for ATV multi-use trail use help people with accessibility needs use the trails more easily

5.3.1.3. Barriers

Site Assessment

- The fixed transit service does not go through Richmond County or St. Peters
- The cost of Dial a Ride has been brought up as inconvenient

¹ <https://www.satbus.ca>

- Some roads do not have a wide enough shoulder or are not appropriate for users to be walking along such as the highways.
- ATVs, pedestrians, and bicycle users are in conflict when using trail systems

Public Engagement:

- Available Options
 - VON has been unsuccessful in trying to get a volunteer driver program running
 - Transportation is a general barrier. More options need to be available to suit a range of needs
 - There is no local taxi service
- Strait Area Transit
 - Transit comes from Port Hawks Berry which works well in that area, but it is challenging
 - It is difficult to understand the information provided on the website
 - Transit is not utilized to the potential that it could be
 - Need to call in advance to book transit service and scheduling can become a barrier
 - Transit is not a required line item in municipal budgets and could be subject to potential cuts.
- ATV
 - ATV Riders can cause conflict on trails and public spaces such as the beach
- Cycling
 - Biking on the road is unsafe. Cycling infrastructure in the County needs improvement
- Snow
 - Snow plows often block driveways - which can pose a challenge for people with mobility issues
- Isolation
 - People experience isolation, due to lack of transit and how intimidating it can be to use the transit systems available
- Road Condition
 - The state of the shoulders of the road are in need of attention in many areas

- The state of the roads is the largest area for improvement better infrastructure is required
- Large drops and ditches next to the shoulder of the highway creates dangerous active transportation scenarios
- Hospitals
 - In St. Peter's both hospitals are located far from commercial centres. If there is a wait, there aren't nearby services or stores to patronize
 - Hospital access is an issue. The road/ street network makes it difficult to find a direct route to the hospital

5.3.2. Policies

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

Takeaway(s): Goal set to ensure that travel in both rural and urban Nova Scotia is easy and accessible.

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

Takeaway(s):

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

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

Takeaway(s):

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

5.3.3. Case Study Example

Guelph - Multi Year Accessibility Plan Now to 2022



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

Key takeaways and best practices:

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

5.3.4. Potential Improvements

Site Assessment:

- The charter service promoted on the Strait Area Transit website could be used to bring more users that cannot drive to events. With proper promotion the service could be covered by a larger group of people and therefore be a more affordable service.
- New roads should be constructed with a separated sidewalk or trail. When that is not possible a shoulder wide enough should be built. A wide shoulder should be the minimum standard whereas the separated path should be what is strived for.
- Multi Use trails provide a unique opportunity for the county to continue to provide access for locals and for the growing tourism sector. Creating trails for ATV users will ensure that users on non motorized devices can move along the trail without worry of being in the way. If creating separated trails is not possible then time slots should be established on the shared trail. Utilizing the updated trailhead information system users can know when and what trails are designated for different traffic types.

Public Engagement:

- Volunteers
 - VON has been trying to get a volunteer driver program going. The municipality helps to fund this agency
- Events

- Events could have a sign up requirement, that helps with ridesharing
- Develop a shuttle service together for County events
- Create opportunities for people to meet in public spaces
- Local Transit
 - Transportation, consider micro-mobility for further access along roadways
 - A free transit pilot program to exemplify the demand for public transit services
- Road Conditions
 - Widening the shoulder of the road for safety v
- Partnerships
 - Encourage partnerships with the recreation department and the transit system
- Wayfinding
 - Promote or map destinations that have accessibility features
- Other Transportation
 - Develop a taxi or local delivery service
 - Utilize the partnership with ATV groups to create more accessible trails
 - Work with local municipality, government and other advocates, so that rural community needs are championed
- Hospitals
 - Opportunity to work with NSH and EMS to see how transit agencies can connect residents with hospital services
 - Support people getting transportation into St. Peter's hub through a municipal service

5.4 Employment

5.4.1. The Starting Point

5.4.1.1. Overview

Employment opportunities in the Municipality vary by industry. The top 6 industries in the Municipality are: 1) agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, 2)

mining and oil and gas extraction, 3) manufacturing, 4) utilities, 5) construction, and 6) wholesale trade.²

According to the 2016 County Profile, the local labour participation rate is 53.52% in the County, with an employment rate of 43.1%, and an unemployment rate of 19.48%.³ According to the same report, the largest employers in the County include: Port Hawkesbury Paper, NuStar Energy, Premium Seafoods Group, Lobsters R Us, Clearwater Seafoods Acadia Drywall/Cabot Gypsum, NSPower, Samson Enterprises Ltd. & Samson Industrial Ltd., and Strait Supplies.

The local Municipality and Village employ staff as well. The Municipality of the County of Richmond employs 26 staff, including full time and seasonal workers. The Village of St. Peter's employs 4 full-time employees, 2 part-time employees, and one contractor.

5.4.1.2. Achievements

Public Engagement:

- County Initiatives
 - The County is ready to be more innovative with accessibility related issues
 - The Richmond County time bank is a great way to connect skilled workers with opportunities
- Partnerships
 - Richmond literacy network has programs for older adults which help to prepare people for employment
 - The YMCA Cape Breton employment office (Nova Scotia Works) is a great resource for residents who need employment support
 - NS Works is a key resource for the unemployed
 - Canada Summer jobs initiative - now looks to hire groups with disabilities, inclusiveness, and visible minorities - 15-30 age despite their academic status
- Municipal and Village Hiring

²

<https://www.richmondcounty.ca/business-tourism-documents/688-richmond-county-profile-2016/file.html>

³ibid.

- The Village is developing an employment onboarding process that is more accessibility

5.4.1.3. Barriers

Site Assessment:

- High Speed Internet is not found throughout the county and is lacking enough to be a concern for remote workers and business owners
- Private businesses are not required to retrofit for accessible access
- There was limited feedback on barriers to employment from the online survey

Public Engagement:

- Opportunities
 - There is an issue with chronic underemployment of people with disabilities
 - It is difficult to find mentors to try different initiatives
 - Richmond County is struggling with job retention. There is an influx in people taking remote job opportunities
 - Create more job resources for youth and young adults.
 - Low retention for freelance and contracted jobs
- Information
 - Limited information sharing about accessible work sites/ accessible jobs available in Richmond
- Broadband
 - Limited internet services create difficulties with work from home opportunities
- Physical Barriers
 - Many businesses are located in older buildings that are not accessible for employees or customers with mobility restrictions
- Awareness
 - Promote awareness and education for businesses, organizations and the general public
- Promotion
 - Develop improved methods for advertising available positions by ensuring that postings reach residents with a range of needs

- Skills and needs should be attached to employment opportunities - explore the local supports
- Mentorship program to nurture skill development promoting growth into senior level position

5.4.2. Policies

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

Takeaway(s):

- We will remove barriers to employment for persons with disabilities seeking a career within the Government of Nova Scotia. This includes ensuring our workforce reflects the province's diverse population and that we are making our employment practices and workplaces more accessible for new and existing employees with disabilities.
 - Investigate establishment of a centralized system within the Government of Nova Scotia to better support managers and employees across the public service with respect to accessibility and disability. This will also include analysis of re-establishing a centralized accommodations fund within the Government of Nova Scotia
 - Review recruitment and selection training materials for hiring managers and ensure that content reflects topics specific to the recruitment, selection and hiring of persons with disabilities into the public service of Nova Scotia.
 - Work with the Nova Scotia Works employment services system to develop a Diversity and Inclusion Plan that will incorporate accessibility into the provision of employment programs and service delivery. In addition, build the capacity of Employer Engagement Specialists to provide support to employers in developing inclusive and accessible workplaces.
 - Support the development of an Accommodations Application for employers, developed by Saint Mary's University's Inclusion by Design partnership.

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

Takeaway(s):

- Goal to ensure equal access to meaningful employment for persons with disabilities

- Ensure government training materials for hiring managers include information about recruiting and hiring persons with disabilities into Nova Scotia's public service

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

Takeaway(s):

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

5.4.3. Potential Improvements

Site Assessment:

- The continued addition of business to Richmond County and St. Peters will create more paid work opportunities for locals. New municipal buildings have been designed with accessibility in mind and set up a standard for users to look to when constructing a new building for their business.
- A grant system to retrofit an existing business to become accessible would increase the number of owners that have businesses that are fully accessible.

Public Engagement:

- Awareness
 - Promote awareness for education opportunities to promote skills matching
 - Create an increased level of awareness and education (businesses, general community, and school age children) regarding inclusion for people with disabilities
 - Help people with accessibility needs to feel/be accepted through community building
- Employment Needs
 - Conduct a survey to get more information about accessible employment opportunities in the county
 - Business survey to understand who is employment-ready
 - Develop an inventory of skill sets county-wide (not just for those with disabilities)

- Use the Cape Breton Job Board to identify skill sets and gaps
- Employee Supports
 - Develop social housing that generates community building and networking
 - Start a meal plan team to increase local food security
 - Financial support to promote learning opportunities and local entrepreneurship
- Virtual
 - Building the online skill set and access through targeted programming
- Mentorship
 - Implement a buddy system initiative, connecting the older population with the youth for sharing skills and knowledge
 - Paid education opportunities similar to apprenticeships in the trades
- Policy
 - Policy development at the county and community level for improving employment opportunities for people with disabilities
 - Creating ways to improve employment accessibility within the Municipality and Village
 - Language used in "accessibility" can refer to equity, disability and other groups that are not represented (LGBTQ+, other diverse groups)
 - Create and strengthen an inclusion policy for the County
- Partnerships
 - Personal care support and private workers should be promoted and matched to those with the need
 - Find meaningful work locally. The province has funding programs to assist other groups (personal care workers, nurses, etc)
 - More collaboration between businesses and the government to increase awareness and accessibility in community

5.5 Built Environment

5.5.1. The Starting Point

5.5.1.1. Overview

The Built Environment in the Municipality of the County of Richmond and the Village of St. Peter's is composed of sidewalks, roadways, buildings, and placemaking furniture, and their components.

In terms of transportation built environment, The Village of St. Peter's does not own any roads, or trails, but does own approximately five kilometers of sidewalks. The Municipality owns approximately 1.7 kilometers of municipal roads with the majority maintained by the Municipality. There are also 29.88 kilometers of local roads (J-class), that are technically owned by the Municipality, which are maintained by the Province. Lastly, The Municipality owns and maintains approximately 2.6 Kms of sidewalks (1.3 Kms in Louisdale, 0.8 Kms in Arichat and 0.5 Kms in Petit De Grat). The Province owns and/or maintains many of the roadways in the County of Richmond and The Village of St. Peter's.

For publicly-owned and accessed buildings, The Village owns two public buildings, including the Village office and the local Community Hub. The Municipality owns four buildings where the public have access: Richmond County Administration Building, Richmond County Solid Waste Management Facility Scale House, Richmond Arena and the library in Petit de Grat. In addition, while the Municipality does not own or operate parks, The Village of St. Peter's owns one kiosk with benches and flower pots.

There are a series of community, non-profit, and provincially owned elements in the built environment in the Municipality and the Village, including community halls such as; The Lions Community Hall, the Rocky Bay Irish Club, and the Bras d'Or Lakes Inn. Although these are not owned or operated by the Municipality, they are important elements to the community, as indicated in site assessments and engagement feedback.

5.5.1.2. Achievements

Site Assessment:

- Very few sidewalks
- New County buildings are access friendly

Public Engagement

- Sidewalks
 - Some sidewalks have been improved including Arichat and St. Peters, and Louisedale.
- Recreation
 - The recreation department has worked on getting some built at the Richmond arena, the new accessible viewing platform is an example of those efforts
 - Improvements to the trail system. There are some that share trails with ATV riders
 - The Coastal Trail along St. Peters Bay is accessible and safe due to limited motorized activity in the area.
- Local Buildings / Businesses
 - The majority of local buildings have accessible built features
 - Richmond has amazing halls where events could be hosted
 - Entrances to buildings are typically good, for example doors with buttons, ramps built, automatic sliding doors, and side doors
 - Municipal buildings offer services in locations that are accessible
- Location
 - Within St. Peter's most businesses are in one location and not scattered making them easier to get to
- Partnerships
 - There are many partnerships with other organizations such as the Seniors Safety Coordinator
 - Resources throughout the community are available to support accessible goals. The Age Friendly Plan was approved and there are many special interest groups to collaborate with
- Funding

- Successes with getting grant funding for ramps and accessibility measures at community halls

5.5.1.3. Barriers

Site Assessment:

- There are very few rest areas for users along the new and existing sidewalks
- Not many private businesses are fully accessible
- Users have to know where services are and which are accessible, wayfinding is not established.
- Not all parks are accessible especially beaches

Public Engagement:

- Awareness
 - A general sense of awareness is lacking, for example many businesses are hard to enter, and some may not be aware of how much of a barrier their entryways are
 - Some events sponsored by Richmond County Recreation are dangerous for persons with disabilities due to their locations
 - Getting to people understand accessibility in a more holistic manner, looking beyond mobility and thinking about sensitivities, vision and hearing impaired populations as well
- Locations
 - The beach is not an accessible space
 - Wharfs - more industrial, but there is room to create opportunities for leisure as well
 -
- Sidewalks, Roads and Trails
 - Sidewalks are available in many areas, but they are not well maintained or safe for people with mobility issues
 - Maintenance of roads restricts mobility and plays a role in the isolation of people with disabilities
 - There are many dirt, gravel roads & highways. The municipality needs to advocate for more provincial support.
 - Roads without shoulders or with steep drop offs are unsafe

- Some roads / crosswalks feel dangerous due to inadequate infrastructure for pedestrians
- Lack of sidewalks and accessible trails
- ATV use on trails can be unsafe for others using the trail system
- Funding
 - The accessibility grant funding requires a difficult application process that is inaccessible
 - When nonprofits want make a community hall accessible, the accessibility grant applications usually require expensive consultant work
- Snow
 - Plowing the sidewalks during the winter months is a concern for mobility
 - It is important to consider the weather and seasonal implications
- Buildings
 - Aging buildings prevents accessible measure from being implemented
 - Aging infrastructure is a serious barrier, retrofits are required
 - There is a need for more accessible entrances, including ramps, rails, clearance, parking, automatic sliding doors, etc.
 - Lack of adequate accessible parking throughout the county
 - Some businesses and private buildings are inaccessible to those with mobility issues
- Other
 - Limited affordable and accessible housing options

5.5.2. Policies

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

Takeaway(s):

- We will ensure persons with disabilities can equitably receive and understand information and communications delivered by the Government of Nova Scotia.
 - Conduct a review of existing occupied spaces to determine accessibility issues and priorities and develop an action plan to achieve accessibility in Government of Nova Scotia owned and leased premises by 2030.

- Incorporate clauses into new Government of Nova Scotia leases for occupied spaces that stipulate that landlords must meet the current Nova Scotia Building Code accessibility requirements.
- Initiate standards development processes and develop initial accessibility standards for Nova Scotia (built environment)
- Make improvements to provincial parks, beaches, and campgrounds to ensure that more services are accessible.
- Increase the number of barrier-free sport-fishing sites across the province, and advertise sites to the public. This includes expanding support under the Nova Scotia Sportfish Habitat Fund for projects that improve public access to sport-fishing areas, including barrier-free access to fishing sites.

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

Takeaway(s):

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

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

Takeaway(s):

- Built Environment Standards Development Committee has submitted a recommendation to the Minister of Justice addressing gaps in the current regulations for:

- Exteriors
- Interiors
- Emergency systems
- Site selections
- Housing and residence
- Wayfinding and signage
- Parks and recreation

Resource Name: Accessible Design for the Built Environment, CSA Group, 2018

Takeaway(s):

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

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

Takeaway(s):

- Whole journey approach—all parts of a journey are interlinked and equally important. A single obstacle can make it impossible to complete the journey, even if the rest of the way is accessible.
- Universal design—any environment should be designed to meet the needs of anybody wishing to use it, regardless of their age, size, ability, or disability.
- Seasonal maintenance—seasonal conditions, such as snow and ice, can create barriers to accessibility; seasonal maintenance can help to ensure that public spaces are accessible at all times.
- The minimum standards for a ramp slope according to the CSA is 1:12 (8.3%) or less, but the recommended slope is 1:20 (5%).
- The minimum standard for turning radius of a manual wheelchair is 1.5 metres

- Playgrounds should be connected to at least one accessible route, providing adequate space for all children and their caregivers to move through, and quiet areas to support children with invisible disabilities.

Resource Name: Guide to Planning Accessible Meetings and Events

Takeaway(s):

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

5.5.3. Case Study Example

Lethbridge - Accessibility Master Plan

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



Key takeaways and best practices

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

5.5.4. Potential Improvements

Site Assessment:

- The county should continue to create new pathways along roads. The new paths have increased the number of homes and businesses that are accessible by means other than driving. With the addition of new pathways, the county should also invest in the creation of more resting spaces. Creating new spaces for a bench will allow those who need a break to rest in a designated space. The benches can also serve as a meeting location between family and friends.
- A long-term goal should be the creation of a regional pathway system that connects communities throughout Cape Breton. With St. Peters and Richmond County both striving for more tourism this would be a fun new addition that could attract many users wishing to visit and explore the county in an interesting and personal way.

Public Engagement:

- Events
 - Host events (such concerts) in accessible community halls
 - Ensure that public events are held in places that are accessible
- Trails
 - Try to find a solution for multi-use trails so that ATV use does not dominate the space
- Locations
 - Make basic services such as grocery stores, the beach and trails easier to access
 - Beach improvements are required, look to case studies and existing practices
 - Create wharfs to be more secure and accessible, combining industry and leisure
 - Provide more accessible public washrooms are available
- Awareness
 - Designated strategic areas for accessible use can be promoted so that people know exactly which places are purpose built for accessibility.

- There is potential for the Municipality and the Village to act as advocates for accessible changes to the built environment (including private businesses and dwellings)
- Partnerships
 - Build on community assets, there are resources within the county that can help accomplish the accessible priorities
 - Encourage walking groups or other social groups to use the built environment features that are accessible such as community halls
- Monitoring
 - Develop a monitoring system to track conditions and issues, resolving problems quickly
- Housing
 - Looking at accessible housing policy case studies and applying best practices in Richmond County
- Policy
 - Looking into policies and bylaws that promote the development of accessible buildings moving forward
- Age
 - Approach changes with age-friendly and an equity and inclusion lenses
 - Promote universal accessibility standards

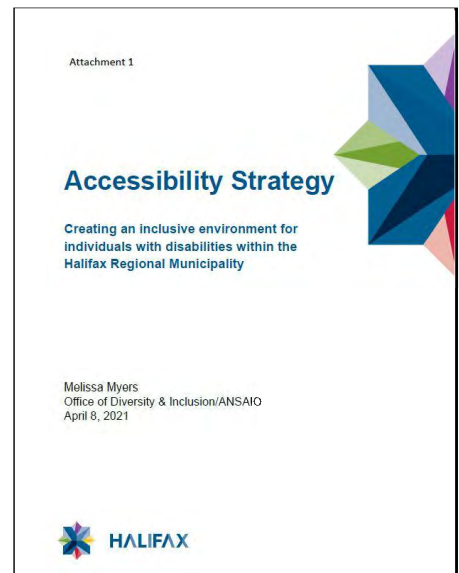
5.6.3. Case Study Example

Halifax - Accessibility Strategy

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

Key takeaways and best practices

- Remove barriers: Systemic, attitudinal and Structural



- Partnerships with private and not for profit organizations
- Continued awareness toward improving accessibility

6.0 Other findings from Site Audits

A complete site audit assessment report can be found in Appendix C.

7.0 Next Steps

Using recommendations from policy, case studies, accessibility audits, and engagement (as outlined in this report), initial actions will be selected based on the following framework:

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

Using this framework, a series of actions will be identified and revised in more detail during the Strategy Workshop. During the forthcoming Strategy Workshop, the team will develop the vision and goals for the plans and then decide upon the actions using the framework established above. Actions will be analyzed in detail in the strategy workshop and modified depending on staff feasibility identification. Longer-term actions will be listed in an appendix of the final document and based on what we continue to learn throughout the plan's development process.

Appendix A: Policy Recording Tables

Government of Nova Scotia Accessibility Plan	
Year	2018
Author	Government of Nova Scotia
Jurisdiction	Provincial
Key Takeaways & Best Practices (summary of trends and best practices)	<p>Government of Nova Scotia Statement of Commitment:</p> <p>The Government of Nova Scotia is committed to being accessible in the way we work, do business, and provide services to Nova Scotians.</p> <p>Under the Accessibility Act, public sector bodies, like the government, are required to develop multi-year accessibility plans to help make Nova Scotia accessible by 2030. The Government of Nova Scotia plan will help us meet the needs of people who face barriers and will treat persons with disabilities in ways that demonstrate respect for difference, dignity, independence and autonomy, equitable access and opportunity, and non-discrimination. We will ensure equitable access and demonstrate leadership in developing accessible policies, programs, and services.</p>
Goods and Services Policies	<p>We will ensure people with disabilities have equitable access to goods and services delivered by the Government of Nova Scotia. This includes ensuring there are policies, procedures, and tools in place to promote accessibility in customer service.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a government-wide Accessible Customer Service Policy with the aim of ensuring consistency in accessible customer service across the Government of Nova Scotia.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure our public enquiries operators are equipped with information on services related to accessibility and disability. ● Embed inclusion and accessibility into digital service design processes and ensure an inclusive and accessible by design approach. ● Promote accessibility in procurement processes undertaken by the Government of Nova Scotia. This will include developing resource materials for Departments to assist in identifying and including accessibility requirements in tenders for goods and services purchased by the Government of Nova Scotia. ● Explore the establishment of accessibility navigators to assist persons with disabilities in accessing information and services.
<p>Information and Communication Policies</p>	<p>We will ensure persons with disabilities can equitably receive and understand information and communications delivered by the Government of Nova Scotia.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Complete a review of communications policies, procedures and practices to improve accessibility and ensure they are not creating barriers to accessibility. This will include: Government of Nova Scotia Communications Policy and supporting guidelines; Government of Nova Scotia brand standards; communications platforms including print, electronic and digital (i.e. video). ● Implement a phased launch of a more user-centric government website, beginning in 2018-2019. The website will be accessible in line with the international standards (WCAG 2.0 AA), and augmented with user experience best practices. Future phases will include transactions (e.g., Adobe PDF forms) documents and other web assets that were produced separate from the new website (e.g., video, live webcasts).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conduct a review of industry standards for ICT services, policies, practices and procedures and leverage this information to promote accessibility in the design, development and implementation of new ICT services, products and systems. An example of this, ICT Services will consider accessibility requirements in the upcoming tender for laptop and desktops devices used by Government of Nova Scotia employees.
<p>Transportation Policies</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Employment Policies</p>	<p>We will remove barriers to employment for persons with disabilities seeking a career within the Government of Nova Scotia. This includes ensuring our workforce reflects the province’s diverse population and that we are making our employment practices and workplaces more accessible for new and existing employees with disabilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Investigate establishment of a centralized system within the Government of Nova Scotia to better support managers and employees across the public service with respect to accessibility and disability. This will also include analysis of re-establishing a centralized accommodations fund within the Government of Nova Scotia ● Review recruitment and selection training materials for hiring managers and ensure that content reflects topics specific to the recruitment, selection and hiring of persons with disabilities into the public service of Nova Scotia. ● Work with the Nova Scotia Works employment services system to develop a Diversity and Inclusion Plan that will incorporate accessibility into the provision of employment programs and service delivery. In addition, build the capacity of Employer

	<p>Engagement Specialists to provide support to employers in developing inclusive and accessible workplaces.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the development of an Accommodations Application for employers, developed by Saint Mary’s University’s Inclusion by Design partnership.
<p>Built Environment Policies</p>	<p>We will ensure persons with disabilities can equitably receive and understand information and communications delivered by the Government of Nova Scotia.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a review of existing occupied spaces to determine accessibility issues and priorities and develop an action plan to achieve accessibility in Government of Nova Scotia owned and leased premises by 2030. • Incorporate clauses into new Government of Nova Scotia leases for occupied spaces that stipulate that landlords must meet the current Nova Scotia Building Code accessibility requirements. • Initiate standards development processes and develop initial accessibility standards for Nova Scotia (built environment) • Make improvements to provincial parks, beaches, and campgrounds to ensure that more services are accessible. • Increase the number of barrier-free sport-fishing sites across the province, and advertise sites to the public. This includes expanding support under the Nova Scotia Sportfish Habitat Fund for projects that improve public access to sport- fishing areas, including barrier-free access to fishing sites.
<p>Awareness Policies</p>	<p>We will create a culture of accessibility across our organization. This includes increasing awareness of the Accessibility Act and building capacity for government staff to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to equitable participation.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strengthen capacity within Departments to champion diversity and inclusion, including accessibility and disability issues across government. This work will align with development and implementation of the Public Service Commission’s new diversity and inclusion strategy. ● Develop new training offerings within the Public Service Commission Learning Environment specific to accessibility and disability issues. Make training compulsory for managers and staff across the provincial public service. ● Continue to enhance policy analysis and program development, including building an accessibility framework for assessment of policy/program development initiatives. ● Build capacity among Communications Nova Scotia staff to ensure they can support Departmental clients to build accessibility into their communications products and deliverables. ● Develop and implement public awareness programs (internal and external), to build awareness around the Accessibility Act, barriers to accessibility and what an accessible Nova Scotia means. ● Work with (support) public sector organizations prescribed under the Accessibility Act, to develop and implement accessibility plans and accessibility advisory committees
<p>Implications for The Municipality of the County of Richmond Accessibility Plan</p>	<p>No direct implications to The Municipality of the County of Richmond, however, it demonstrates the level of detail, actions and statement of commitment pledged by the Nova Scotia government. Therefore, it provides a template for, and information surrounding the level of detail and actions that should be included in the final accessibility plan.</p>

Questions	N/A
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Accessible by Design 2030	
Year	2018
Author	Department of Justice
Jurisdiction	Government of Nova Scotia
Key Takeaways & Best Practices (summary of trends and best practices)	<p>Purpose of the document is to provide a strategy to implement the changes incited by the adoption of the Accessibility Act passed in 2017.</p> <p>Trends</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19 percent of Nova Scotians age 15 and older identify as having a disability (approximately 144,000 people) • Rates of disability are higher in older adults, the number of Nova Scotians with disabilities will rise as the population ages <p>“An Accessibility Advisory Board makes recommendations to the government on accessibility and advises on the development of accessibility standards. The majority of board members are persons with disabilities.”</p> <p>Principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Rights and Social Justice • Engagement and Collaboration • Coordination and Harmonization • Innovation and Modernization
Goods and Services Policies	<p>Goal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To understand how people with disabilities access goods and services, in addition to the current standards for delivering these services. <p>Government Actions</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a government-wide accessible customer service policy to ensure service delivery is consistent across government
<p>Information and Communication Policies</p>	<p>Goal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that all information shared and received by Nova Scotians is provided through accessible formats including accessible websites and technologies. <p>Government Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch a new Government of Nova Scotia website that is focused on the users’ needs and meets international accessibility standards. • Develop new training resources for staff about accessibility and disability issues. • Promote accessibility in government procurement processes. • Explore the possibility of establishing accessibility navigators to help persons with disabilities access information and services.
<p>Transportation Policies</p>	<p>Goal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that travel in both rural and urban Nova Scotia is easy and accessible
<p>Employment Policies</p>	<p>Goal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure equal access to meaningful employment for persons with disabilities <p>Government Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure government training materials for hiring managers include information about recruiting and hiring persons with disabilities into Nova Scotia’s public service

<p>Built Environment Policies</p>	<p>Goal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To address gaps in current regulations when it comes to making buildings, streets, sidewalks, and shared spaces accessible to all. <p>Government Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a review of spaces owned and leased by government to determine their accessibility issues and priorities, and develop an action plan to make them accessible by 2030. Incorporate clauses into new government leases for occupied spaces to ensure landlords meet the current Nova Scotia Building Code accessibility requirements. Improve the accessibility of Nova Scotia courts, including the Amherst Supreme Court, Digby Justice Centre, Halifax Law Courts, and Annapolis Royal Court House. Improve accessibility for persons with disabilities at provincial parks, beaches, campgrounds, and sportfishing sites. Provide barrier-free access to at least one provincial beach in every region by 2021.
<p>Awareness Policies</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Implications for The Municipality of the County of Richmond Accessibility Plan</p>	<p>Overarching guideline to creating an accessible Nova Scotia by 2030. Should be used as a starting point when developing accessible policy.</p>

<p>Accessibility Act</p>	
<p>Year</p>	<p>2017</p>
<p>Author</p>	<p></p>
<p>Jurisdiction</p>	<p>Government of Nova Scotia</p>

<p>Key Takeaways & Best Practices (summary of trends and best practices)</p>	<p>The purpose of this Act is to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) achieve accessibility by preventing and removing barriers that disable people with respect to (i) the delivery and receipt of goods and services, (ii) information and communication, (iii) public transportation and transportation infrastructure, (iv) employment, (v) the built environment, (vi) education, and (vii) a prescribed activity or undertaking; b) provide for the involvement of persons with disabilities, the public sector and other stakeholders in the development of accessibility standards; c) facilitate the timely implementation of accessibility standards with a goal of achieving an accessible Nova Scotia by 2030; d) monitor, review and enforce compliance with accessibility standards; and e) establish an Accessibility Directorate that is responsible for supporting accessibility initiatives and advancing broader disability-related issues
<p>Implications for The Municipality of the County of Richmond Accessibility Plan</p>	<p>This Act is the overarching legislative document for all things accessibility within the province of Nova Scotia, therefore all policies, bylaws, programs, and standards must comply with the Act.</p>
<p>Questions</p>	

<p>Municipal Government Act</p>	
<p>Year</p>	<p>1998</p>
<p>Author</p>	
<p>Jurisdiction</p>	<p>Government of Nova Scotia</p>

<p>Key Takeaways & Best Practices (summary of trends and best practices)</p>	<p>The purpose of this Act is to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) give broad authority to councils, including broad authority to pass by-laws, and to respect their right to govern municipalities in whatever ways the councils consider appropriate within the jurisdiction given to them; b) enhance the ability of councils to respond to present and future issues in their municipalities; and c) recognize the purposes of a municipality set out in Section 9A. 1998, c. 18, s. 2; 2019, c. 19, s. 1.
<p>Implications for The Municipality of the County of Richmond Accessibility Plan</p>	<p>The word “accessibility” is referenced twice within the whole Act which is over 300 pages long</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the general exercise of its powers, the council shall consider the principle of accessibility for its citizens with disabilities • a municipality may provide direct financial assistance to a business for the purpose of improving accessibility for people with disabilities. 1998, c. 18, s. 57; 2021, c. 12, s. 1. <p>This Act provides legislation surrounding by-laws which can be important for the Municipality of the County of Richmond when creating policy surrounding accessibility. However, the current legislation is lacking with respect to the accessibility standards.</p>
<p>Questions</p>	

<p>The Accessibility Directorate Website</p>	
<p>Year</p>	<p>Accessed in 2021</p>
<p>Author</p>	
<p>Jurisdiction</p>	<p>Government of Nova Scotia</p>

<p>Key Takeaways & Best Practices (summary of trends and best practices)</p>	<p>The Accessibility Directorate is responsible for administering the Accessibility Act and advancing disability issues within government.</p> <p>Accessibility resources include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● An Accessible Province by 2030 webinar ● Guide to Planning Accessible Meetings and Events ● Interim Accessibility Guidelines for Indoor and Outdoor Spaces ● Accessibility Act Essentials webinar for Prescribed Public Sector Bodies ● The Accessibility Planning Toolkit for Prescribed Public Sector Bodies ● The Accessibility Planning Toolkit for municipalities <p>Accessibility Advisory Board Committees are established to help make recommendations for accessibility standards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Education Standard Development Committee helps make recommendations on the content and implementation of an accessibility standard in education ● Employment Standard Development Committee helps make recommendations on the content and implementation of an accessibility standard for employment ● Built Environment Standards Development Committee helps make recommendations on the content and implementation of accessibility standards in the built environment.
<p>Employment Policies</p>	<p>The Employment Standard Development Committee will be announced in the fall of 2021 – no real work or recommendations appear to have occurred in this area yet. However, the goal is to make sure that persons with disabilities have equitable access to employment.</p>

<p>Built Environment Policies</p>	<p>Built Environment Standards Development Committee has submitted a recommendation to the Minister of Justice addressing gaps in the current regulations for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Exteriors ● Interiors ● Emergency systems ● Site selections ● Housing and residence ● Wayfinding and signage ● Parks and recreation
<p>Implications for The Municipality of the County of Richmond Accessibility Plan</p>	<p>This body directly provides a voice to persons with disabilities as it further advances disability issues to the government and is responsible for the admiration of the Accessibility Act within the province. Furthermore, the committees mentioned on this website consist, in majority, of members with disabilities.</p>

<p>Accessible Design for the Built Environment</p>	
<p>Year</p>	<p>2018 – revised 2020</p>
<p>Author</p>	<p>CSA Group</p>
<p>Jurisdiction</p>	
<p>Key Takeaways & Best Practices (summary of trends and best practices)</p>	<p>This is a standard that contains up to date requirements for making the built environment accessible to a wide range of people who experience disability from a technical standpoint.</p>

Built Environment Policies	<p>This document provides tactile instruction on how to design spaces for people with varying physical, sensory, or cognitive abilities. The document provides general instruction on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● General requirements ● Interior circulation ● Interior facilities ● Residential accommodations ● Exterior Circulation, spaces, and amenities ● Vehicular access ● Passenger pick-up areas <p>The document provides figures and tables to help visualize accessibility requirements in the built environment.</p>
Awareness Policies	N/A
Implications for The Municipality of the County of Richmond Accessibility Plan	This document is a great tool that the municipality can leverage moving forward when developing accessible by-laws and policies. Additionally, it provides a strong foundation for building accessible spaces within the County moving forwards.
Questions	

Interim Accessibility Guidelines for Indoor and Outdoor Spaces	
Year	2020
Author	Nova Scotia Accessibility Directorate
Jurisdiction	Provincial

<p>Key Takeaways & Best Practices (summary of trends and best practices)</p>	<p>The guidelines are a way to identify barriers to accessibility in the built environment. They are “interim” because they will be replaced by a provincial accessibility standard for the built environment, which is now under development.</p> <p>The guidelines can help public sector bodies begin their accessibility planning and be better prepared to meet the provincial standard when it is enacted.</p> <p>Three core principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Whole journey approach—all parts of a journey are interlinked and equally important. A single obstacle can make it impossible to complete the journey, even if the rest of the way is accessible.• Universal design—any environment should be designed to meet the needs of anybody wishing to use it, regardless of their age, size, ability, or disability.• Seasonal maintenance—seasonal conditions, such as snow and ice, can create barriers to accessibility; seasonal maintenance can help to ensure that public spaces are accessible at all times. <p>The minimum standards for a ramp slope according to the CSA is 1:12 (8.3%) or less, but the recommended slope is 1:20 (5%).</p> <p>The minimum standard for turning radius of a manual wheelchair is 1.5 metres</p> <p>The guidelines also provide the information and worksheets required to conduct an accessibility audit of an indoor or outdoor space.</p> <p>Areas of interest when conducting accessibility audits are:</p>
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	<p>For indoor and outdoor spaces</p> <p>Signage and wayfinding</p> <p>Ramps</p> <p>Stairs</p> <p>Handrails</p> <p>For outdoor public spaces</p> <p>Sidewalks and walkways</p> <p>Curb ramps</p> <p>Crosswalks</p> <p>Transit stops</p> <p>Parking</p> <p>Trails</p> <p>Parks and playgrounds</p> <p>Waste receptacles</p> <p>Picnic tables</p> <p>Seating</p> <p>For indoor public spaces</p> <p>Entrances and approach</p> <p>Interior doors and doorways</p> <p>Circulation</p> <p>Public Washrooms</p> <p>Interior wayfinding</p> <p>Reception area/service counters</p> <p>Emergency systems</p> <p>Assistive listening devices</p>
<p>Goods and Services Policies</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Information and Communication Policies</p>	<p>Assistive listening systems should be used in areas where people assemble. This includes—but is not limited to—classrooms, auditoriums, meeting rooms, and theatres with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an area of 100 square metres; or

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 75 or more fixed seats; and/or • installed speakers
Transportation Policies	<p>Seating should be provided at regular intervals along pedestrian routes and before level changes or decision points. Links to transportation should be accessible to all members of the community. An accessible transit stop will have a paved or concrete level surface connecting the transit stop to an accessible pedestrian route. Adequate snow clearing to the ramp of transit vehicles is essential.</p>
Employment Policies	N/A
Built Environment Policies	<p>Playgrounds should be connected to at least one accessible route, providing adequate space for all children and their caregivers to move through, and quiet areas to support children with invisible disabilities.</p>
Awareness Policies	<p>Parallel parking can be dangerous for people with limited mobility or a disability because oncoming traffic is likely traveling faster than in a parking lot. Accessible parking spaces should be designed to make room for service dogs, companions, and mobility aids.</p>
Implications for The Municipality of the County of Richmond Accessibility Plan	<p>Depending on public attitudes toward the guidelines, this may make it easier to implement an accessibility plan. Showing companies how easy it can be to make their spaces more accessible can influence attitude shifts towards more inclusive options.</p>
Questions	<p>If these guidelines are not mandatory, are there any financial incentives for business owners to implement these changes?</p>

Guide to Planning Accessible Meetings and Events

Year	2018
Author	Nova Scotia Accessibility Directorate, Department of Justice
Jurisdiction	Provincial

Key Takeaways & Best Practices
(summary of trends and best practices)

Two main areas of accessibility to consider when planning an event are:

- Access to the physical event space – parking, washrooms, entrances, meeting space
- Access to the event materials and presentations – accessible materials such as electronic and audio versions, large print, braille, and American Sign Language (ASL)/ English interpretation, and real-time captioning (CART).

People with disabilities all have different needs, so be sure to communicate with participants ahead of time to clarify their accessibility requests.

Timing - Where possible, ensure that the timing of your event does not conflict with another event that many people with disabilities and service providers may be attending.

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

Disability supports and accessibility communication - Disability support and service agencies (ASL/ English interpreters, oral translators, and real-time captioning professionals) are in great demand and short supply, so must be booked weeks in advance. Be sure to schedule your event far enough in advance to accommodate this required time.

Venue selection - A facility that is accessible also minimizes the number of additional arrangements to be made to accommodate participants with disabilities. Conducting a site visit before booking the location is the best way to determine how accessible a venue is.

Promo & registration - Asking for and using information regarding participants' accessibility needs is the essence of a person-centered and respectful approach to planning an inclusive event. Be sure to invite participants to identify any accommodation needs early in the planning process.

Communications and accommodations - Planning may involve providing large print or braille documents, electronic and audio versions of documents, ASL/ English interpretation, real-time captioning (CART), and sighted guides. The person(s) for whom

	<p>you are booking the service should be consulted on their preferences and involved in booking service providers. Bookings must be made well in advance, and meeting materials must be provided to service providers prior to the meeting (generally, at least 3 business days).</p> <p>Room set up - The size of the space, positioning of service providers such as ASL/ English interpreters and CART providers, lighting, audio systems, and assignment and positioning of seating all must be considered in relation to the needs of participants, and the content and objective of the event.</p> <p>Chairing or Moderating Events - You will be responsible for identifying available disability support services to participants, and reminding them about event logistics related to accessibility.</p> <p>Effective & respectful communication - some key guidelines for communicating with participants with disabilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Treat the person with a disability with the same respect that you extend to every person. ● Focus on the person as an individual, not their disability. ● Ask each person what will make them most comfortable during the event. ● Always ask the person if they need assistance and how you can assist; do not make decisions for the person or assume they need help. ● Address the person directly rather than the service provider.
<p>Transportation Policies</p>	<p>People with disabilities may need extra time to arrange transportation and prepare for an event. Additionally, be aware that, due to transportation arrangements, disabled participants may arrive early, and if the event runs over the scheduled time, people with disabilities may be unable to stay.</p>
<p>Built Environment Policies</p>	<p>A facility that is accessible also minimizes the number of additional arrangements to be made to accommodate participants with disabilities. Conducting a site visit before booking the location is the best way to determine how accessible a venue is.</p>

<p>Awareness Policies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Treat the person with a disability with the same respect that you extend to every person. ● Focus on the person as an individual, not their disability. ● Ask each person what will make them most comfortable during the event. ● Always ask the person if they need assistance and how you can assist; do not make decisions for the person or assume they need help. ● Address the person directly rather than the service provider.
<p>Implications for The Municipality of the County of Richmond Accessibility Plan</p>	<p>Reviewing procedures for public events and adjust as needed to ensure all accessibility considerations have been made.</p>

<p>Accessibility Advisory Committee - Terms of Reference</p>	
<p>Year</p>	<p>2021</p>
<p>Author</p>	<p>Accessibility Advisory Committee</p>
<p>Jurisdiction</p>	<p>Municipality of the County of Richmond</p>

<p>Key Takeaways & Best Practices (summary of trends and best practices)</p>	<p>Purpose:</p> <p>To make the County of Richmond more accessible by providing advice that identifies, prevents, and eliminates barriers for residents with disabilities in the County, through various services, activities, and facilities.</p> <p>Key Goals & Objectives</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Advise Council and the Village Commission on the preparation, implementation, and effectiveness of its Accessibility Plan, in accordance with the Act.2. Complete and submit for approval the first Accessibility Plan in accordance with the Accessibility Act which requires a municipality to prepare and make publicly available an Accessibility Plan within one year of being prescribed as a Public Sector Body;3. Review and update the Accessibility Plan at least every three years, in accordance with the Act;4. Consult with the community and stakeholders on accessibility in the Municipality and the Village;5. Advise Council and the Village Commission on the impact of their existing programs, services, and facilities;6. Receive and review information from staff and senior leadership, and make recommendations, as requested;7. Identify and advise on the accessibility of existing and proposed Municipal and Village services and facilities;8. Provide advice as necessary to municipal staff to assist in monitoring compliance with federal and provincial directives and regulations.9. Advise and make recommendations about strategies designed to achieve the objectives of the Accessibility Plan, including:
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnering with businesses and organizations to improve the accessibility of public transit, provincial roads, and commercial and non municipal spaces. • Partnering with businesses and organizations to develop educational resources related to inclusion and accessibility • Working with the Seniors take Action Coalition, ensuring an age-friendly community lens is considered.
Awareness Policies	<p>Authority and Accountability of the AAC</p> <p>The Accessibility Advisory Committee is a committee formally approved by council and is provided with the authority to make recommendations to council. Final decisions related to the work of the committee rests with Municipal Council.</p>
Implications for The Municipality of the County of Richmond Accessibility Plan	<p>The committee will review the plan to ensure it follows the provincial and federal regulations. The committee has the power to prevent the plan's approval so ensure that the committee is happy with the result.</p>
Questions	<p>How long can a member serve on the committee & how is it enforced? How will the committee ensure that its meetings are accessible to all members regardless of ability?</p>

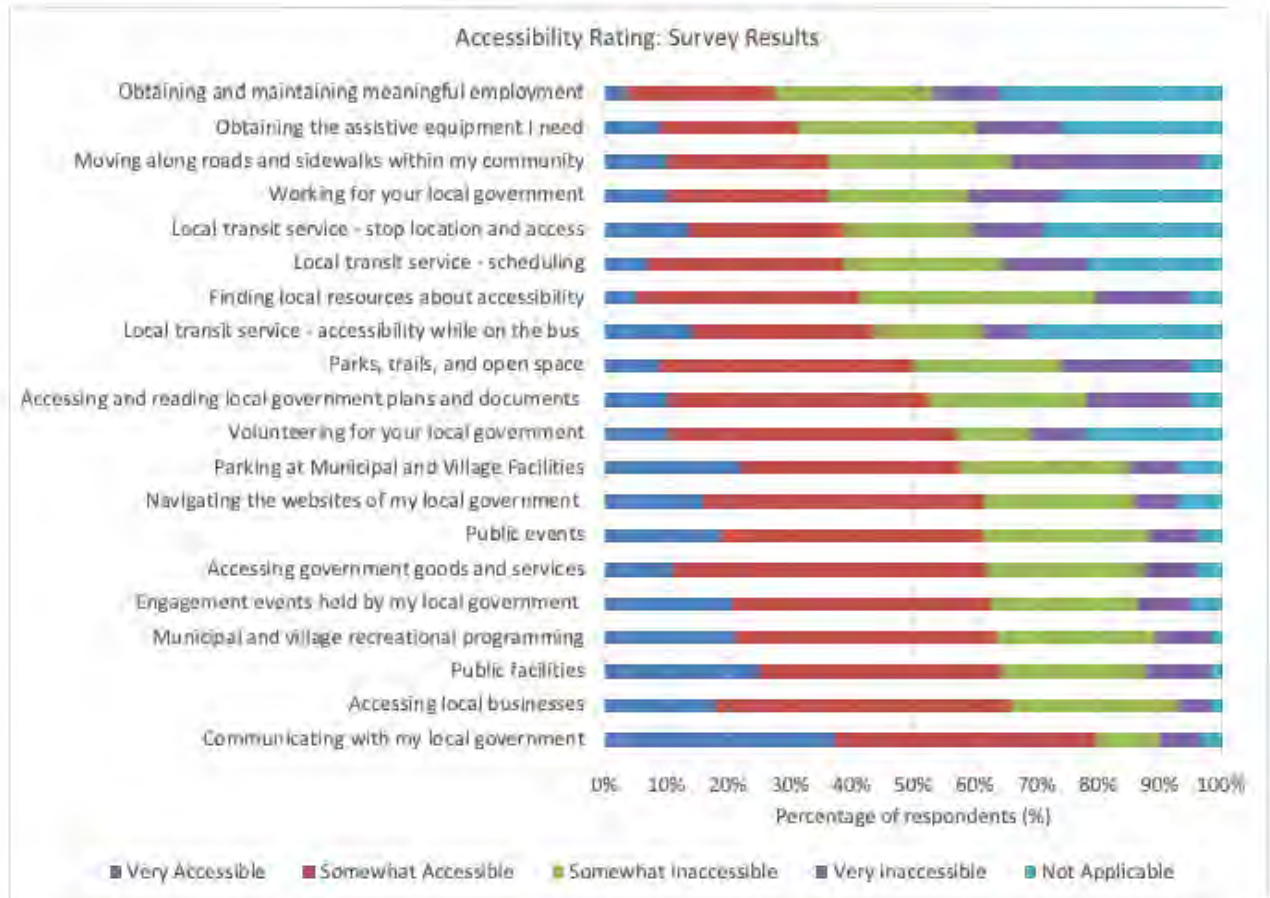
Accessibility Framework in Richmond County	
Year	2021
Author	Accessibility Advisory Committee
Jurisdiction	Municipality of the County of Richmond

<p>Key Takeaways & Best Practices (summary of trends and best practices)</p>	<p>This framework acts as the foundation of the Accessibility Plan for the Municipality and Village, by highlighting and validating the following key focus areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Built Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Indoor and Outdoor spaces ○ Public transit ○ Trails ○ Businesses ○ Community spaces ● Employment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Education for employers ○ Integrated supports ● Services/ Programing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Inclusive programing and core services ● Information and Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Municipal communication ○ Broadband partnerships and leadership ● Provincial Assets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Roadways, shoulders, intersections, and crosswalks ○ Signage ○ Beaches and beach access
<p>Implications for The Municipality of the County of Richmond Accessibility Plan</p>	<p>The Framework identifies what accessibility in Richmond County is centered around, by identifying short and long term goals through direct action items, and advocacy/ recommendation iems.</p>
<p>Questions</p>	<p>Why was the Provincial Assets focus area changed to transportation?</p>

Appendix B: Quantitative Survey Analysis

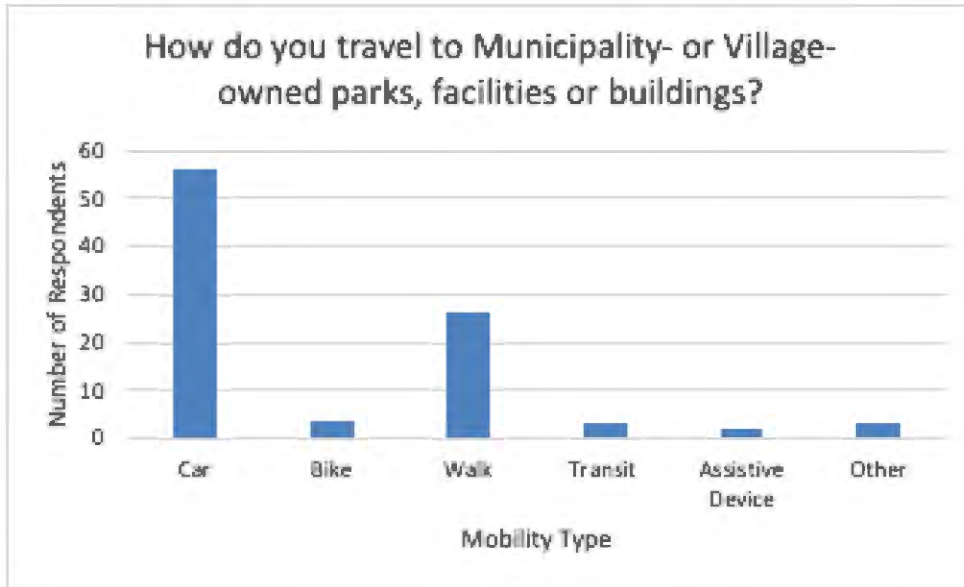
Accessibility of Key Community Elements

Each survey respondent was asked to rate each of the following elements of their community from Very Accessible to Very Inaccessible. The following are the resulting accessibility ratings.



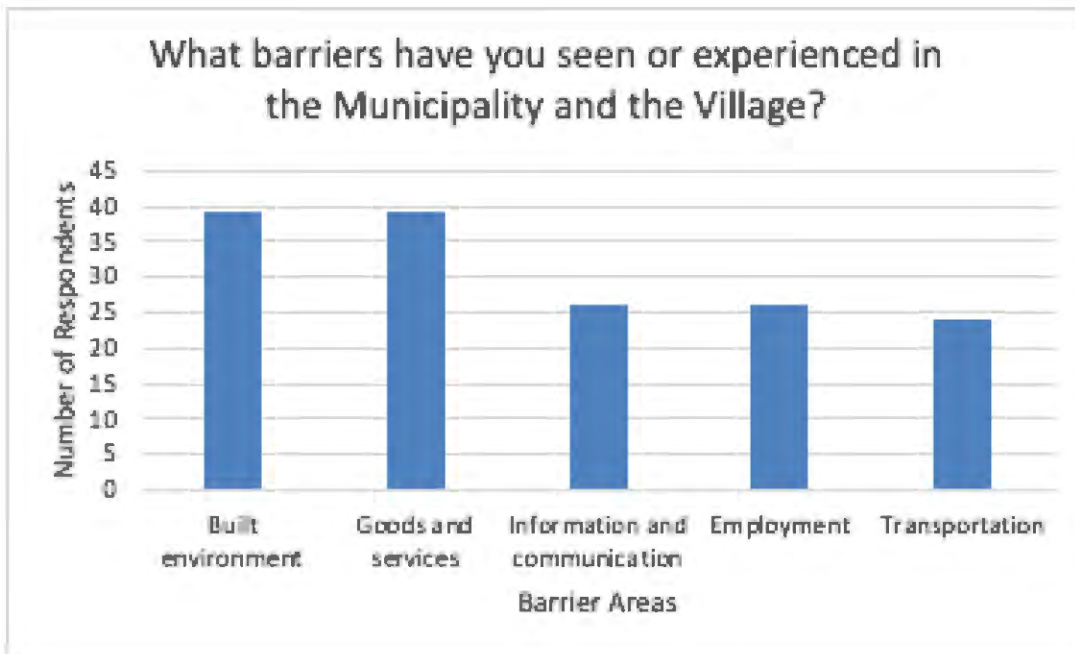
Transportation

Each survey respondent was asked to identify how they move throughout the community. Respondents were able to check multiple modes of transportation.



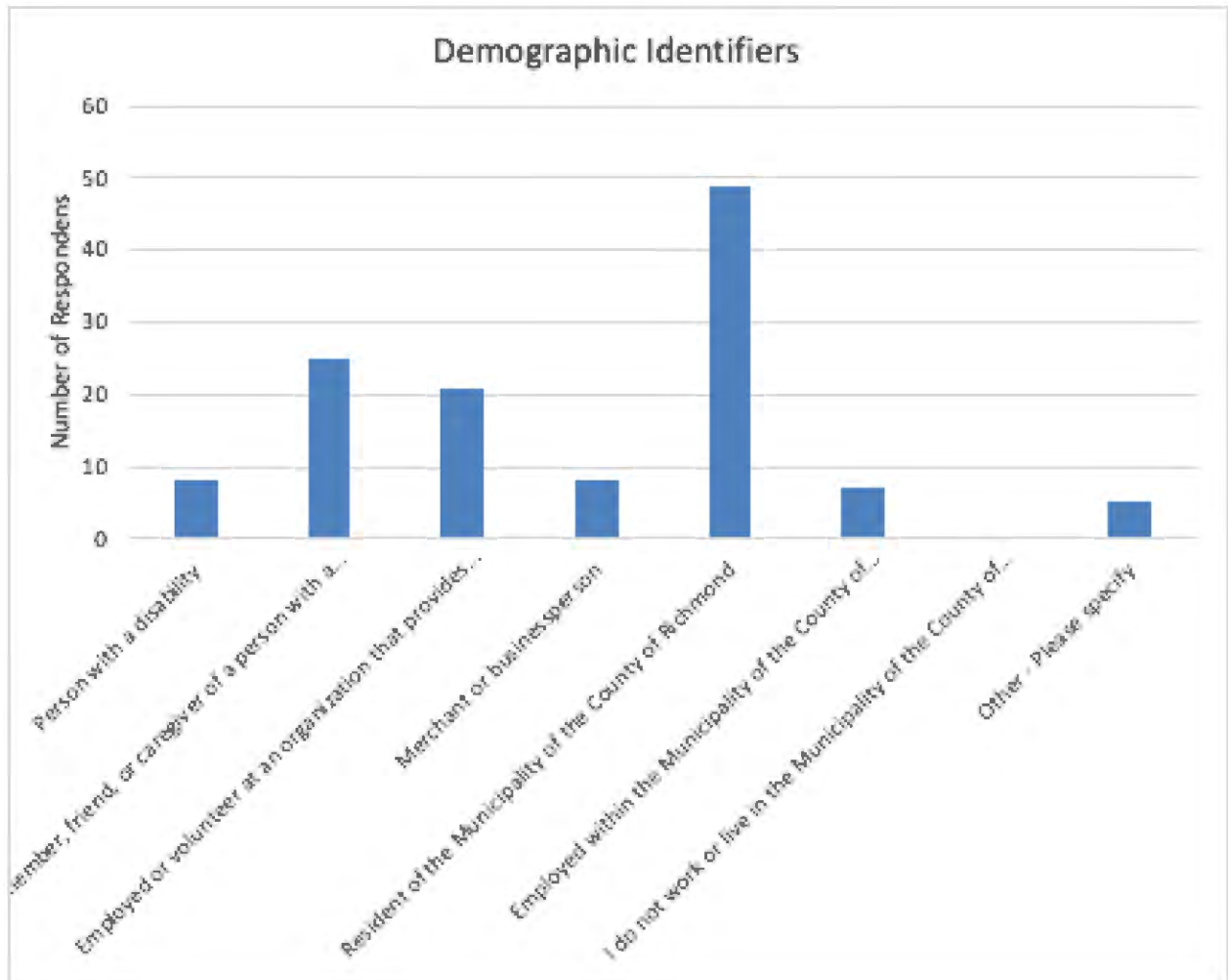
Accessibility Barriers

Survey respondents were asked what barriers they had seen or experienced in the Municipality and the Village. They were able to check all that applied to them.

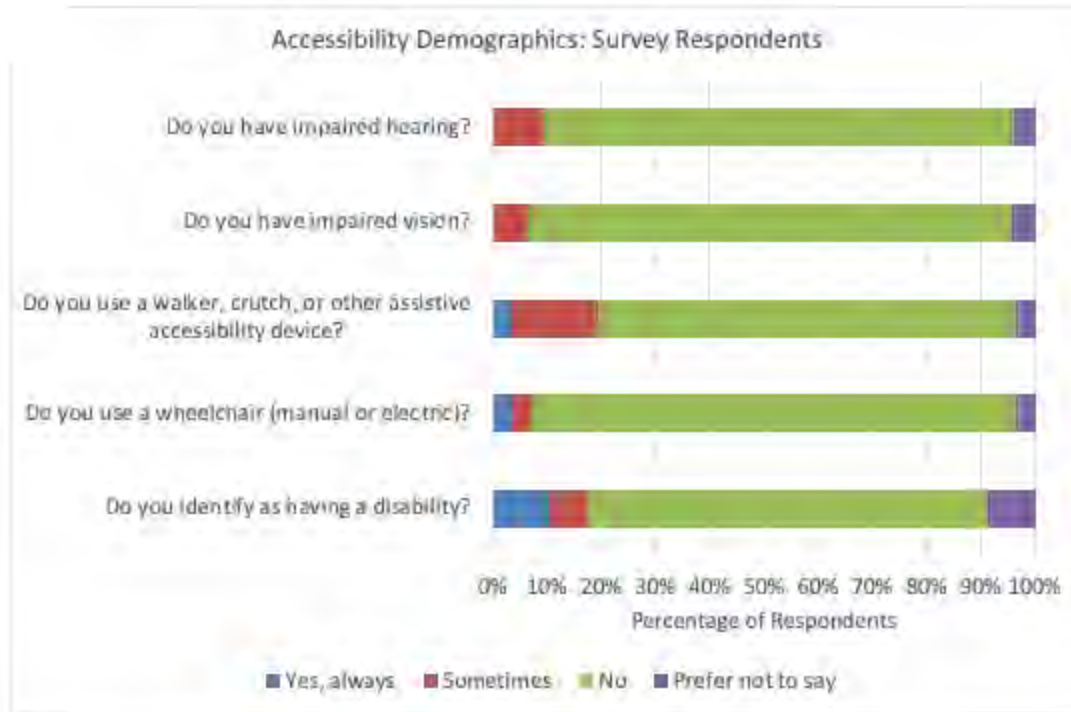


Demographics

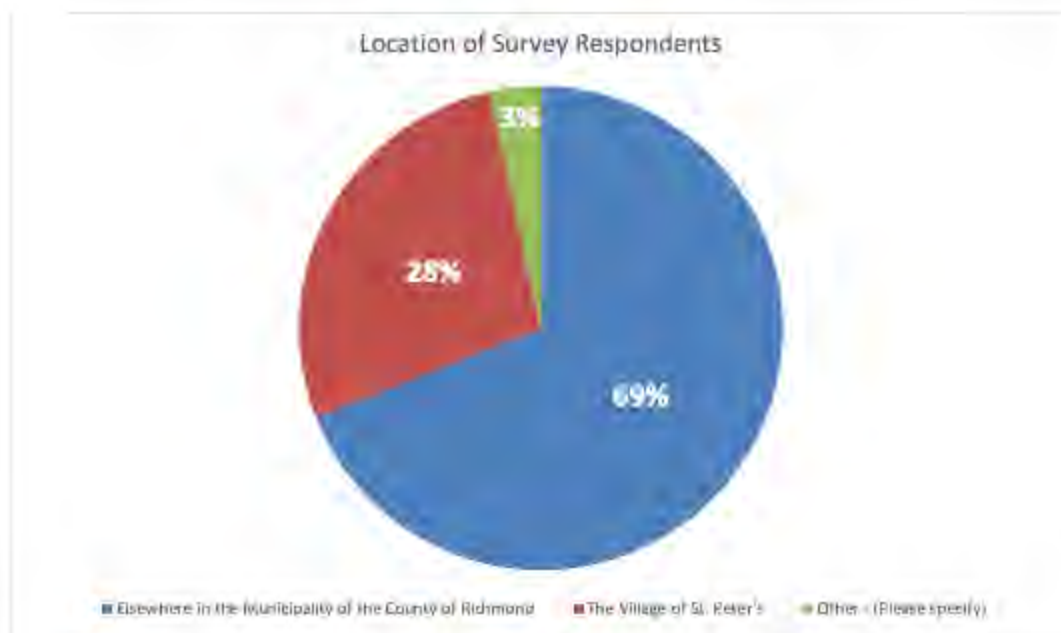
Respondents were asked to select all demographic indicators that apply to them.



Survey respondents were asked a series of demographic questions about their identity as a person with a disability and what assistive equipment they use.



We asked respondents where they live. Responses can be found below.



Appendix C: Accessibility Assessment Report

ACCESSIBILITY &
UNIVERSAL DESIGN AUDIT
OF

SITE ASSESSMENT ANALYSIS

PREPARED FOR:
RICHMOND COUNTY & VILLAGE OF ST. PETERS

level
PLAYING FIELD
an accessibility agency



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INTRODUCTION

WHAT WE DID



Level Playing Field (LPF) reviewed the current accessibility of the Municipality of Richmond County and the Village of St. Peters. The work began with a desktop exercise to determine what locations to visit and experience virtually. We viewed potential locations on Google Street View, reviewed the County and Village websites and reviewed Parks Canada information. We assessed the accessibility of accessing relevant information on the above mentioned websites. We reviewed new Provincial legislation on accessibility, and other Nova Scotia communities accessibility strategies.

The virtual accessibility assessment included the communities found within Richmond County of:

Arichat

Louisdale

L'Arodisse

Evanston

Isle Madame

Village of St. Peters

WHAT WE DID - CONTINUED















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

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

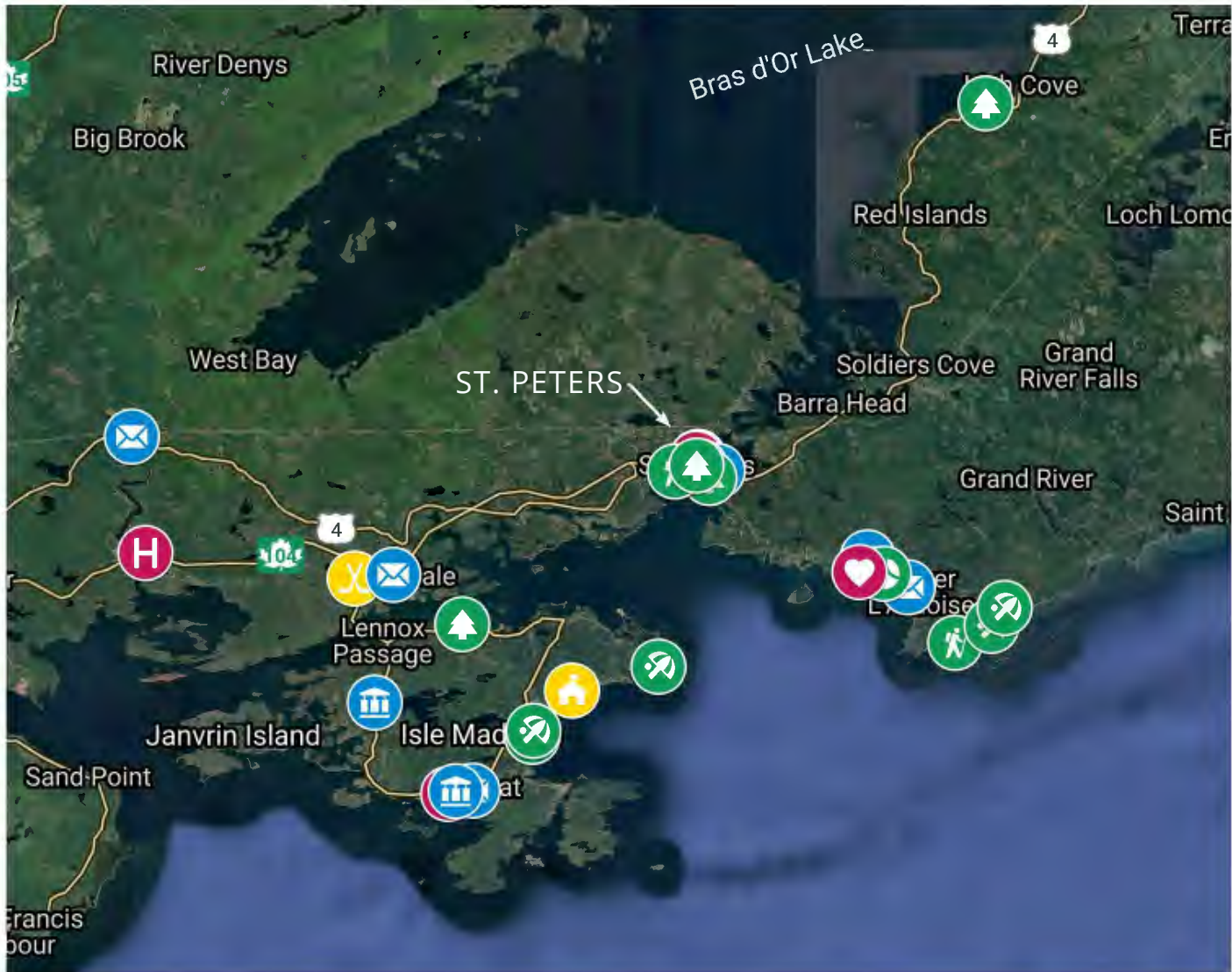
Assessments utilized visual inspection from virtual site visits along with in person image collection from municipal employees.



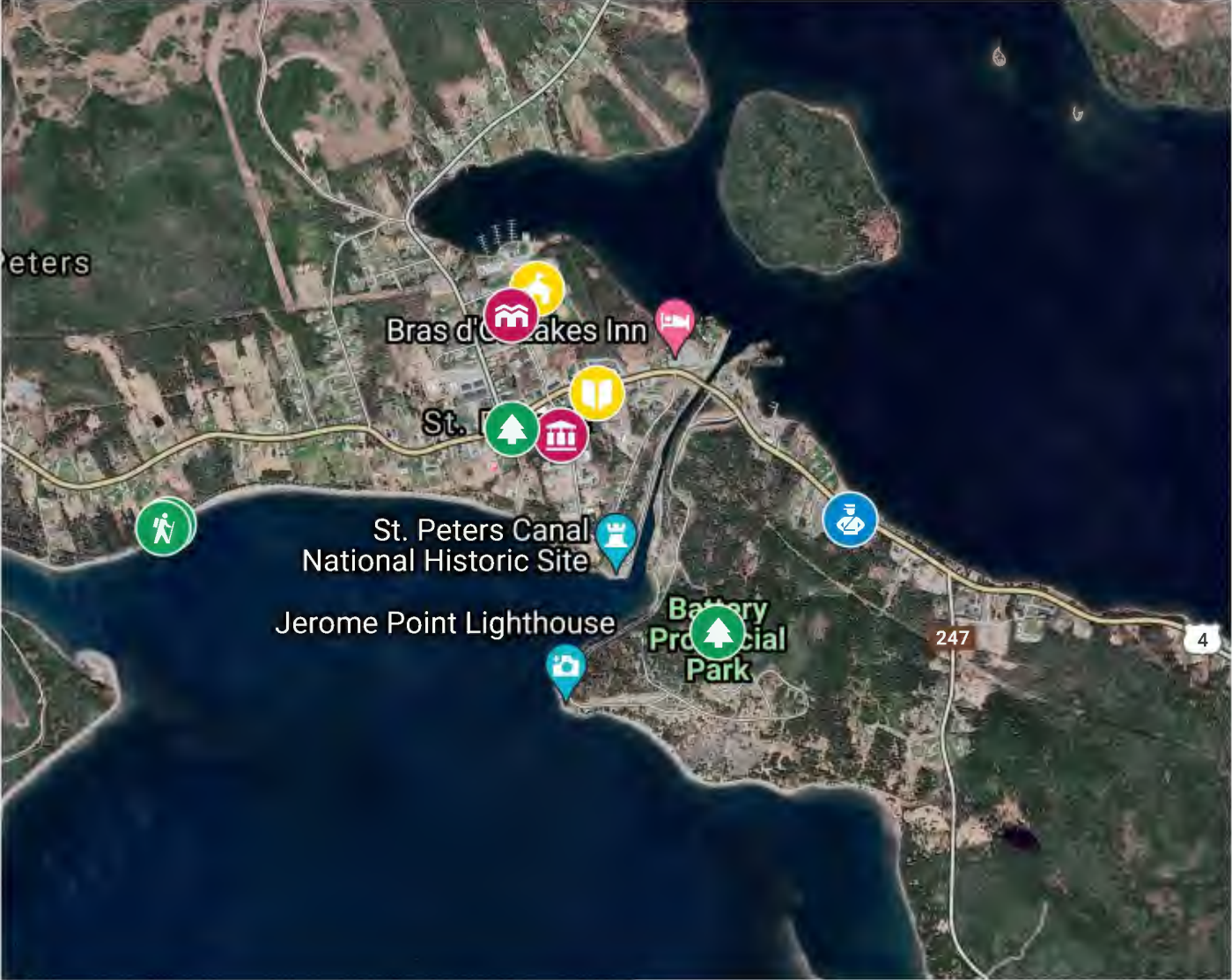
SITE VISIT ICON LIST & REPORT LOCATIONS

 Health Center	<p>MAIN STREETS</p> <p>St. Peters Main Street</p> <p>Louisdale Main Street</p> <p>Arichat Main Street</p> <p>MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS</p> <p>Richmond County Administration Building</p> <p>Richmond County Solid Waste Management</p> <p>Royal Canadian Mounted Police</p> <p>Canada Post - Arichat</p> <p>HEALTHCARE & EMERGENCY SERVICES</p> <p>St Peters Fire Hall</p> <p>Strait Richmond Hospital</p> <p>St. Anne's Nursing Centre</p> <p>Richmond Villa</p> <p>PARKS & OPEN SPACES</p> <p>Irish Cove Provincial Park</p> <p>Point Michaud Beach Provincial Park</p> <p>Battery Provincial Park</p> <p>RECREATION CENTERS</p> <p>Richmond Arena</p>
 Arena	
 Baseball Field	
 Fire Hall	
 Postal Office	
 Library	
 Beach	
 Hospital	
 Municipal Building	
 Community Hall	
 Park	
 Retirement Home	
 Royal Canadian Mounted Police	
 Walking Trail	

RICHMOND COUNTY SITE VISIT LOCATIONS



ST. PETERS SITE VISIT LOCATIONS MAP





MS 1 | TWSI at end of sidewalk along with a rest area for pedestrians



MS 2 | New streetlights for pathway



MS 3 | New TWSI at end of Arichat sidewalk

2.0 WHAT WE OBSERVED

2.1 MAIN STREETS OBSERVATIONS

Arichat Main Street

The main street in Arichat recently underwent an extensive pedestrian upgrade. The sidewalk expansion includes a separated sidewalk, tactile walking surface indicators (TWSI), and rest areas. TWSI's are present at both ends of the pathway, to warn users and indicate that the pathway is leading users into the road for traffic crossing. The concrete is also sloped to help any users transition over the curb from the sidewalk to the road.

In image MS2, the newly added street lights are highlighted. The street lights provide general light for users along the pathway. Lighting contributes greatly to a safe pedestrian commute by highlighting the ground surface and ensuring no dark or shadowed areas. The sidewalk surface is firm, level and slip-resistant. It is wide enough to permit two users in wheeled mobility devices to pass. Rest area benches are provided (as seen in MS1) and off of but adjacent to the path of travel.



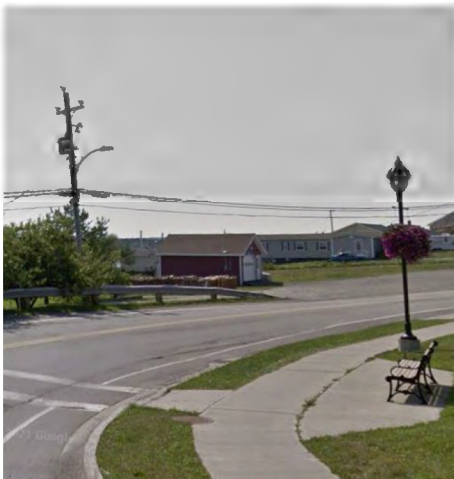
MS 4 | Separated sidewalk in Louisdale,

2.1 MAIN STREETS

OBSERVATIONS

Louisdale Main Street

The main street in Louisdale has a separated pedestrian sidewalk that runs over 500 meters along main street . The newer sidewalk includes a separated path from the road, streetlamps , and pedestrian rest areas that include clear space for a wheeled mobility device. Curb ramps are provided to help any users transition from the road height to the sidewalk.



MS 5 | Rest area and crosswalk entrance on Louisdale main street

In image MS5, the added street lights are highlighted. These street lights provide light for users along the pathway the lights also reduce crossing difficulties at the nearby road entrance. The sidewalk is wider than an average path and would permit two users in wheeled mobility devices to pass. The sidewalk surface is smooth, level and slip-resistant.



MS 6 | Curb cut leading to crosswalk on the Louisdale main street

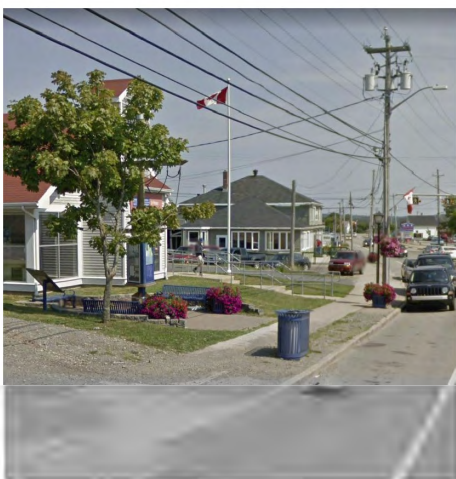
The crosswalk in the lower image is the only designated pedestrian crossing on the main street. The exterior lines are faded along with the crosswalk not having any colour contrasting interior stripes.



MS 7 | Level crosswalk entrance on St. Peters Main street



MS 8 | Dual curb cuts at crosswalk intersection



MS 9 | Gravel build up on St. Peters sidewalk

2.1 MAIN STREETS

OBSERVATIONS

St. Peters Main Street

The main street in St. Peters is well used and contains a single sidewalk that alternates between the north and south sides of the road. The sidewalk provides an additional buffer between the pedestrian pathway and the road. It has a surface level crosswalk and vertical, highly contrasted, vertical crossing signage. This crosswalk provides visual crossing lights to alert vehicles that a pedestrian is crossing. Image MS8 illustrates how the concrete is sloped to help any users transition from the road height to the sidewalk.

In image MS9, the added waste bins are within an accessible height, are colour-contrasted and do not require any opening to dispose of garbage. The pathway leads users across many parking lot entrances where gravel can be pulled into the walking path from traffic. Gravel on the concrete sidewalk may pose a risk to crossing at road entrances. The sidewalk is wide enough to permit two users in wheeled mobility devices to pass but narrows at points.



MB 1 | Richmond County Administration Building Upper Parking Lot



MB 2 | Front Entrance



MB 3 | Accessible Parking Stalls

2.2 MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS

OBSERVATIONS

Richmond County Administration Building

The County administration building was observed to provide many accessible features that contribute to its overall function. Some of the notable features were the gently sloped entrance from the parking lot, the accessible door hardware and the accessible parking spaces.

The entrance featured both a modest slope and accessible door. The front entrance contains an automatic opening button along with door hardware that does not require full dexterity. The automatic door control is provided in a location that is interrupted by the door swing.

The parking lot is adjacent to the building and contains designated accessible parking separated by a pedestrian access aisle. The accessible stalls have proper painted identification signage and a protected access aisle however there is no vertical signage on the stalls to indicate that it is for accessible permit holders only.



MB 4 | Path to Arichat main street from the Administration Building



MB 5 | Ramp with TWSI along with upper and cane detectable lower rails



MB 6 | Integrated accessible picnic tables on site

2.2 MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS

OBSERVATIONS

Richmond County Administration Building (cont'd)

The outdoor access to the administration building in Richmond County is very good. Access to the main entrance continues from a level pathway onto a well defined ramp. In addition, the front park has good sight lines and signage to inform users on how to access the entrance.

The image MB5 further shows the ramp to help users up the grade change from the road to the Administration Building. The ramp has an upper and lower rail that is cane detectable and has proper spacing between spindles.

In image MB6, picnic tables can be seen where accessible tables with proper knee space have been integrated into the final design. The entrance into the picnic table area is off the main pathway and the entire picnic area is set on a solid concrete pad with the necessary turning space required for a user in a wheeled mobility device.



MB 7 | Office Weigh Station



MB 8 | Office Entrance



MB 9 | Entrance Ramp

2.2 MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS

OBSERVATIONS

Richmond County Solid Waste Management

The solid waste management site provides many attempts at accessibility features. A ramp is provided to access the elevated entrance but the handrail is not graspable making it difficult to use for stability.

The office door appears to be just wide enough for a wheeled mobility device to enter but a wider door would be more suited. The door hardware is a rounded knob which limits its use to those with full dexterity. The door is easily identified with its colour contrast against the building.

In image MB9, the ramp entrance is visible along with the base concrete patio stone. The gravel ramp has eroded away and lead to an uneven surface. Users in wheeled mobility devices would have to use additional force to enter onto the ramp and doing so would increase the chances for an injury to occur when attempting to enter the office. Finally, there is loose gravel which creates a slip hazard.



MB 10 | Front Entrance

2.2 MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS

OBSERVATIONS

Royal Canadian Mounted Police - St. Peters

The updated RCMP building on the east side of St. Peters has been renovated to include many accessibility features. The signage on the front of the building is large and colour contrasted. The door is provided with accessible, lever style hardware and an automatic door opener.



MB 11 | Accessible Ramp

Image MB11 shows a new concrete ramp has been installed at the site. In addition to the ramp, there is railing provided for part of the ramp.

Image MB12 shows the accessible transition between the ramp and the parking surface. Protected space is provided at the start of the ramp to give users a safe area to stop before proceeding into traffic.



MB 12 | Accessible Ramp Landing



MB 13 | Library Entrance



MB 14 | Parking Lot



MB 15 | Parking Adjacent to Entrance

2.2 MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS OBSERVATIONS

St. Peters Library

St. Peters library is set back from Grenville street on a paved parking lot. The front entrance opens directly onto the parking lot with a small stepped transition. The primary signage on the building contains a large legible font on a colour contrasting background.

There is no designated accessible parking at the library although the parking lot is accessible. The entrance to the library is not accessible as the door hardware require full dexterity and no automatic door opener is provided.



MB 16 | Accessible Parking Directional Signage



MB 17 | Accessible Parking Stall



MB 18 | Accessible Parking - Back of Building

2.2 MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS

OBSERVATIONS

Canada Post - Arichat

The Canada post location in Arichat was observed due to it being a frequently visited location.

Residents of Arichat are guided by the signage on the main street to the back of the building when accessible parking is required. The signage is large in size and is colour contrasting.

The accessible parking stall at the back of the building has an access aisle along with painted signage on the parking surface. The stall also provides vertical signage to indicate that only permit holders are allowed to park in that stall. It appeared (at the time of audit) that the stall is sometimes used as a storage location for snow removal. Without this stall the site does not have a operating accessible parking stall.

The parking lot was noted to be a relatively flat and solid surface with little disturbances in the surface. There was no protected pathway for those moving from the accessible stall to the front entrance.



MB 19 | Accessible Walkway Threshold from Parking Lot



MB 20 | Walkway Leading to Front Entrance from Accessible Parking



MB 21 | Walkway Leading to Front Entrance



MB 22 | Entrance Door Hardware

2.2 MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS

OBSERVATIONS

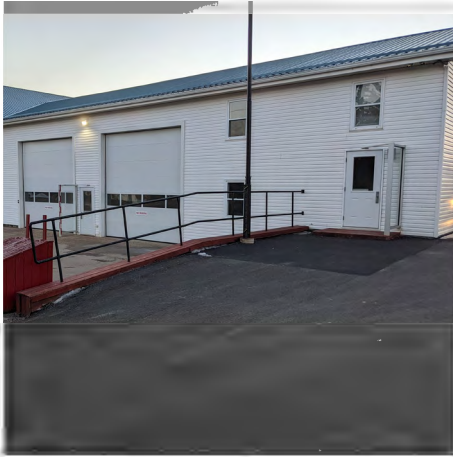
Canada Post - Arichat (continued)

Once a user crosses the parking lot, they access a separated pathway that leads them to the front entrance of the building. The pathway has a colour contrasting strip on the transition edge to warn of a change in surface. The ramp transition edge is higher than the parking lot and currently poses a risk for tripping.

The pathway runs along the edge of the Canada Post building toward the front entrance. The pathway is narrow and has no space to move out of the way onto a solid surface. If two users in wheeled mobility devices met in the path, one would have to back up or risk getting stuck in the gravel.

The front of the building has two entrances and the Canada Post location is the further location in the MB 21 image. This pathway is wider to allow another wheeled mobility device to pass. It was also noted that no TWSI was found at the top of the stairs to warn users.

Finally the door hardware into the post office was deemed inaccessible. Door hardware seen in image MB 22 requires a user to have full dexterity.



HE 1 | Front Entrance and Bay Doors



HE 2 | Side Access Ramp and Parking Sign



HE 3 | Fire Hall Rear Accessible Parking

2.3 HEALTHCARE & EMERGENCY SERVICES OBSERVATIONS

St. Peters Fire Hall

St. Peters Fire Hall is found on the west side of the canal on Toulouse street. The paved roadway leads users right to the buildings bay doors. The pedestrian entrance on the north side of the building requires users to take a step up and then open the door. The hardware on the door is not accessible and the door does not have an automatic opening option.

There is a dedicated, accessible parking stall adjacent to the entrance as seen in image HE2. The accessible parking is adjacent to a new access ramp. The ramp is on a moderate incline and follows the building contour with a 90 degree turn half way. The railing is a 2x4 top with a 2x6 edging that reduces user ability to grip. The transition between the pavement and the ramp is seamless.

There is additional accessible parking at the back of the building but it requires users to traverse a gravel parking lot. No accessible spaces have surface painted stalls or access aisles.



HE 4 | Accessible Parking Front of Building-Metered



HE 5 | Vertical Signage for Accessible Parking



HE 6 | Walkway Leading from Parking to Front Entrance



HE 7 | Main Entrance Door

2.3 HEALTHCARE & EMERGENCY SERVICES OBSERVATIONS

Strait Richmond Hospital

The Strait Richmond Hospital is the only major hospital in Richmond County. The service area of this particular hospital reaches outside of Richmond county lines due to its western location. Accessible parking at the hospital is present, has correct signage and access aisles. Pavement signage is faded and pavement is uneven in locations. The metered parking machine seen in image HE4 is located within the snow bank. There is no way for a user in a wheeled mobility device to access the payment system.

The pathway leading to the entrance is protected and on stable, slip resistant ground. The transition between the pavement and concrete has a slight lip.. The width of the path would not allow two users in wheeled mobility devices to pass each other.

The front entrance of the hospital has an automated door opener along with accessible door hardware. The signage on the door however is difficult to read due to glare and because of the glass not being frosted where the lettering is.



HE 8 | Accessible Stalls in Parking Lot



HE 9 | Curb Ramp from Parking to Walkway



HE 10 | Walkway in Front of Building



HE 11 | Entrance Door Hardware

2.3 HEALTHCARE & EMERGENCY SERVICES OBSERVATIONS

St. Anne's Community Nursing Care Centre

St. Anne's community Nursing Care Centre is located in the community of Arichat. The Care Centre is located at the end of the newly introduced main street sidewalk. The centre has designated accessible parking, but each stall does not have any vertical signage about requiring a permit.

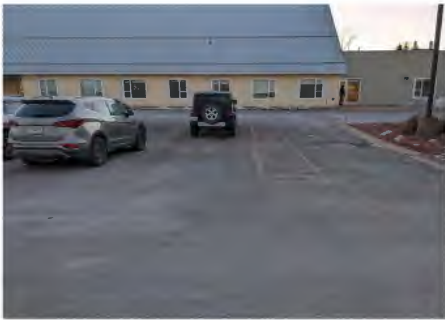
Access from the parking lot is not a protected pathway but a newer curb cut allows users to access the on-site sidewalk system. The transition is seamless and would be easy to use if operating a wheeled mobility device.

The on-site pathway system goes around the Care Centre and creates more places where access is encouraged. The drop off and pick up zone in the front is protected and has a curb ramp nearby.

The access to the building itself is also accessible with push to open hardware. The door hardware is lever style and accessible. Finally, the signage on the building is good for colour contrasting lettering.



HE 12 | Richmond Villa main entrance



HE 13 | Access isle adjacent to accessible parking lot at Richmond Villa



HE 14 | Accessible parking near front entrance



HE 15 | Richmond Villa in the summertime

2.3 HEALTHCARE & EMERGENCY SERVICES OBSERVATIONS

Richmond Villa

The Richmond Villa nursing home is a site in St. Peters that houses many community members that are not fully able bodied. The site has a large drop off and pick up zone that is adjacent to the front entrance. The entrance doorways are automatic sliding doors and are fully accessible.

The front parking lot has accessible parking with a designed access isle. The parking does not however have vertical signage indicting that a permit is required for parking within the stall.

There is not dedicated walking path from the accessible parking toward the front entrance. The parking lot is flat and made up of a slip resistant surface.

Richmond Villa has good access to public sidewalks for anyone wishing to access other nearby services while not using a vehicle. The site is adjacent to a elementary school, playground and the local community hall.



PA 1 | Parking Lot



PA 2 | Sloped Walkway to Seating Area



PA 3 | Ramp to Washrooms



PA 4 | Accessible Washroom

2.4 PARKS & OPEN SPACES

OBSERVATIONS

Irish Cove Provincial Park

Irish Cove Provincial Park is located near the north east border of Richmond County. Park access is directly off of highway 4 and requires users to arrive by a car. The parking lot for the provincial park does not have lines to organize vehicle parking. There is no designated accessibility parking at the site.

The access method across the park utilizes an elevated boardwalk system. The wooden structure has a transition to the gravel parking lot and allows users in wheeled mobility devices access to other parts of the park.

Due to the seasonality of the park, the washrooms are not accessible in the winter. Both the wooden ramps leading to the bathrooms and change buildings were barricaded. The accessible outdoor washrooms have inaccessible door hardware and do not have automatic push buttons to assist users. The accessible signage is proper in location on the washroom stall wall and not on the door but is very small in size and difficult to read.



PA 5 | Parking Lot



PA 6 | Walkway



PA 7 | Sloped Walkway to Washroom and Change room Buildings



PA 8 | Change House

2.4 PARKS & OPEN SPACES

OBSERVATIONS

Point Michaud Beach Provincial Park

Point Michaud Beach Provincial Park is another provincial park located in Richmond County.

Access is similar to Irish Cove in that it is only by car. The parking lot is a gravel base with no lines for organization. There is no protected accessible parking for access to the beach.

Wooden boardwalks line the parking lot, which provide a base for universal access to the beach. Currently the boardwalk only extends to the change rooms and the path along the parking lot. The sloped entrance to the boardwalk had slight pooling and ice built up due to the time of year the site visit was conducted.

An accessible change room is provided on site. The signage on the change is present in an appropriate location. The door to the accessible change room is not accessible due to the hand hardware and the lack of automation for opening.



PA 9 | Access to beach



PA 10 | Outdoor accessible washrooms



PA 11 | Battery Park in the summer time



PA 12 | Access ramp at the Battery Park campground office

2.4 PARKS & OPEN SPACES

OBSERVATIONS

Battery Provincial Park

Battery Provincial Park is located within the Village of St. Peters. The park is accessible by a newly updated pathway that connects to the Canal. The park is also accessible by car and multiple parking lots are provided. Beach access is not accessible as it requires users to use a flight of stairs and traverse uneven ground.

There are seasonal washrooms within the park, including ones that are accessible. The ramp to the accessible washrooms is a wooden boardwalk system that provides access to users in wheeled mobility devices, however uneven ground is present up to the ramp. The gravel parking lot had ice build and pooling throughout.

Battery Provincial park is also a campground within the summer months. The campground office seen in image PA12 has an access ramp. The entire public road within the park is paved and a relatively even and slip free surface.



AR 1 | Accessible Parking Spaces Adjacent to Entrance



AR 2 | Front Entrance Ramp



AR 3 | Front Entrance



AR 4 | Entrance Door Hardware

2.5 RECREATION CENTERS

OBSERVATIONS

Richmond Arena

Richmond Arena is a major gathering space for the community of Richmond County and St. Peters. The arena hosts hockey tournaments, public skating and private bookings. The arena has designated accessible parking with signage mounted to the building face. There is no pavement signage to indicate that the stalls are for accessible access only. There is also no protected pathway from the parking area to the front entrance.

The transition between the parking lot and entrance is moderately accessible. There is a organized entry and exit to the arena to coordinate pedestrian movement. The door hardware on the arena is accessible and there is an automatic door opener available. The location of the push button is not ideal as it is within the swing of the door and would require the user to get out of the way of the door as it opens.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 MAIN STREETS RECOMMENDATIONS

Arichat Main Street

Tactile walking surface indicators should span the width of the curb ramp and be painted yellow for high visibility. They should be set back 300-350mm from the curb and be 600-650 mm deep. A level turning space of at least the full width of the ramp x 1350mm should be provided at the top of the slope. It is recommended that a colour-contrasted, tactile warning strip be provided in locations where the sidewalk ends and a driveway starts. Ensure the pedestrian pathways are maintained and kept clear of snow. The rest area benches should provide some options without arms on one side to allow for a side transfer from a wheeled-mobility device. On waste bins that include signage, ensure raised characters and braille are also provided.

Louisdale Main Street

Provide tactile walking surface indicators on curb ramps to warn pedestrians of an upcoming vehicular crossing. Although painted lines are provided for pedestrian crossings, they are faded. It is recommended that lines are re-painted and maintained to ensure full visibility. Pedestrian crossings would also benefit greatly from both visual (flashing lights) and audible crossing signals.

St. Peters Main Street

Curb ramps are provided but they are not always wide enough and have an inaccessible slope. It is recommend that proper, accessible curb ramps are provided to meet CSA B651-18 guidelines. Ensure a minimum accessible sidewalk width of 1600mm . This is especially important where a person is required to manouever 90°. Finally, at points where the sidewalk crosses a driveway, there is a large amount of loose gravel. This causes a danger for some users. Ensure this is maintained.

3.2 MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS

RECOMMENDATIONS

Richmond Administration Building

Accessible parking should be modified to include a minimum 2000mm wide painted access aisle between accessible stalls. Vertical signage should also be provided to ensure space is only used by permit holders. Provide a TWSI at the curb ramp where it enters into the parking lot from the pathway. Entrance doors should be colour contrasted with their backgrounds. In addition, the automatic door button should be out of the door swing, but not more than 1500mm from the door opening. Provide a colour-contrasted strip, the width of the ramp, at all locations where a slope change occurs. Ramp railing should also be a contrasting colour to the ramp surface.

Richmond County Solid Waste Management

Ramp handrail should be replaced with one that is circular or elliptical in shape and 30 to 40mm diameter. Handrail should be uninterrupted along its length, free of abrasive elements and colour contrasted with the ramp. Ensure that the ramp remains clear of gravel, slope the ramp threshold and ensure it remains under 13mm.

Royal Canadian Mounted Police - St. Peters

Provide colour contrasted strips on the ramp at all locations where a level change occurs. Provide a handrail that runs the full length of the ramp. Ensure a lower rail is provided. Repaint pavement lines where they are currently fading.

3.2 MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS - CONTINUED

RECOMMENDATIONS

St. Peters Library

Replace door hardware with a D-style or lever type that does not require full dexterity.

Provide an automatic door opener to further increase the accessibility for all users.

Entrance door should be painted a contrasting colour to the adjacent building for full visibility. Ensure smooth (or beveled and not exceeding 6mm) transitions between surfaces and at entrance.

Canada Post - Arichat

Replace door hardware with a D-style or lever type that does not require full dexterity.

Provide an automatic door opener to further increase the accessibility for all users.

Provide a tactile walking surface indicator at the top landing of the stairs to warn users of the upcoming step down.

Parking stall pavement signage should be repainted with a minimum 2000mm access aisle. Ensure snow is removed and placed out of the accessible stall so that width is not reduced.

3.3 HEALTHCARE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES RECOMMENDATIONS

St. Peters Fire Hall

Ensure ramp handrail is circular or elliptical in shape and between 30 and 40mm in diameter. Ensure it is painted a contrasting colour to the ramp surface. A colour contrasted, tactile strip should be provided on the ramp surface at all locations where a level change occurs. Accessible parking should have painted pavement signage and an adjacent access aisle. Provide signage to locate entrance from the parking lot. Door hardware should be accessible, not require full dexterity and provide an automatic opener if possible.

Strait Richmond Hospital, St. Anne's Nursing Centre and Richmond Villa

Accessible pavement signage and painted lines in parking should be repainted as it is fading and difficult to see. Different pay options should be provided on a level, clear ground surface and within accessible reach range. Payment should be both audible and visual. Accessible path width should be a minimum of 1600mm. Locate the automatic door opener so that is clear of the door opening but adjacent to it. Ensure signage is provided with tactile character and braille and that the area in front of the phone is free of objects.

TWSI's should be provided at all curb cuts from the sidewalk to the road/ parking surface. Ensure vertical signage is provided at all accessible parking locations and provide diagonal surface paint at all drop-off locations to increase the safety of users.

3.4 PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

RECOMMENDATIONS

Irish Cove, Point Michaud Beach and Battery Provincial Parks

It is recommended that a directory to include information on path accessibility, washroom locations and wayfinding be provided at all park entrances. This should accompany an accessible website with the same information that is frequently updated. Signage should provide good colour-contrast, consider audible options and contain raised characters and braille in addition to typical characters. Users would benefit greatly from a continuous handrail along the paths and rest areas at intervals of no more than 30 meters. Park should be maintained to ensure proper drainage and to prevent water pooling and ice build up along the accessible pathways. All doors should be colour contrasted with their backgrounds and provide accessible hardware that does not require full dexterity to open. There should be dedicated accessible parking (vertical signage) adjacent to park entrances. Finally, provide consistent lighting to increase the safety of all users

3.5 RECREATION CENTERS

RECOMMENDATIONS

Richmond Arena

Accessible parking should provide surface painted signage as well as vertical signage to dedicate parking to permit holders only. All accessible parking space should be adjacent to a 2000mm wide access aisle. It is understood that many provincial park parking lots are gravel. In this case, it is alright if the pavement signage is not provided but it is important to provide the vertical signage. Entrance doors and hardware should be accessible and colour contrast their backgrounds. The entry and exit signage that exists above the doors currently blends in with the background and is difficult to read from a distance. It is recommended that the signage size is increased and it is painted a contrasting colour to the building. Finally, it is recommended that the push button be relocated so that it is not within the door swing but no more than 1500mm from the door swing.

4.0 CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

OVERVIEW



The communities within Richmond County along with the Village of St. Peters have many accessible components. The communities also have areas where improvements would be beneficial for everyone in the community regardless of age, ability, mobility or circumstance. With physical, audible and visual accessibility enhancements and a meaningful accessibility strategy, Richmond County and St. Peters can become leaders in accessibility.

Improved accessibility can be created through refined access to key facilities, enhanced signage/wayfinding, increasing the prominence of accessible parking stalls, and ensuring a consistent accessible path of travel . Richmond County and St. Peters have a good foundation to become a leader in accessibility across Cape Breton. With a strong action plan, they can provide safe, inclusive communities for all of their residents.

