

**ACCESSIBILITY  
PLAN  
2022-2025**

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## Welcome Message

In 2020, The Municipality of Barrington formed an Accessibility Advisory Committee to carry out requirements of the Accessibility Act of Nova Scotia (2017). The committee advises the Municipal Council on identifying, preventing and eliminating accessibility barriers to municipal programs, services and infrastructure. The mandate of the Committee is to assist in the development of our first Accessibility Plan and to help us become an accessible community for all to enjoy.

This plan is the result of the collaboration of the Municipality of Barrington, the Accessibility Advisory Committee, the Nova Scotia Accessibility Directorate and members of the public. Members of the public provided input byway of a survey and during an open house held in October 2021.

The plan prepared reflects the goals of the Municipality to be responsive to the needs of people with various abilities.

The plan will be updated every three years. Comments and suggestions from the public are welcome at any time.

George El-Jakl  
Chair, Accessibility Advisory Committee

## Statement of Commitment

The Municipality of the District of Barrington acknowledges that there are accessibility barriers and is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for all residents and visitors to our municipality, regardless of their abilities.

An Accessibility Advisory Committee has been formed to prepare an Accessibility Plan and will focus on identifying, preventing and eliminating accessibility barriers to municipal programs, services and infrastructure. During the development of the plan, citizens will be informed of the progress and will be invited to provide input.

The Municipality supports the goals of the Nova Scotia Accessibility Act and will strive to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following core principles to create an inclusive environment that is considerate and accommodating to all.

**Dignity** – Goods and services are provided in a manner that is respectful to persons with a disability and does not diminish the person’s importance.

**Independence** – Accommodating a person’s disability means respecting their right to do for themselves and to choose the way they wish to receive goods and services.

**Integration** – Wherever possible, services will be provided in a manner that enables people with disabilities to fully benefit from the same services, in the same place and in the same or similar way as other customers. This may require alternative formats and flexible approaches. It means inclusiveness and full participation. This is a fundamental human right.

**Equal Opportunity** – Service is provided to persons with disabilities in a way that their opportunity to access goods and services is equal to that given to others.

## Definitions:

### **Accessibility Act of Nova Scotia (2017):**

The provincial law enacted to achieve accessibility by preventing and removing barriers for people with disabilities. The law defines the role and responsibilities of the Accessibility Directorate and the Accessibility Advisory Board and addresses standards, compliance and enforcement.

### **Accessibility Advisory Board:**

A 12-member provincial board appointed by the provincial government to advise the Minister of Justice on accessibility and make recommendations on accessibility standards. The majority of board members are people with disabilities.

### **Accessibility Advisory Committee:**

A volunteer committee established by a municipality to advise municipal council about identifying, preventing and eliminating barriers to people with disabilities in municipal programs, services, initiatives and facilities. The committee plays a pivotal role in helping the municipality become a barrier-free community that complies with the Accessibility Act of Nova Scotia (2017). At least one half of the members of the advisory committee has a disability or represent an organization that represents people with disabilities.

### **Accessibility Co-ordinator:**

A person appointed by municipal staff to support the work of the Accessibility Advisory Committee in developing and implementing the Municipal Accessibility Plan. The Accessibility Co-ordinator also liaises with the Municipality's senior management and provides consultation services to staff, from frontline workers to website developers.

### **Accessibility Directorate:**

The provincial body that is responsible for implementing and administering the Accessibility Act, supporting accessibility initiatives and advancing broader disability related issues.

### **Barrier:**

The Accessibility Act of Nova Scotia defines a barrier as “anything that hinders or challenges the full and effective participation in society of persons with disabilities, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice.

### **Braille:**

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

**Disability:**

As defined by the Accessibility Act of Nova Scotia: “A physical, mental, intellectual, learning or sensory impairment, including an episodic disability that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders an individual’s full and effective participation in society.”

**Tactile:**

Designed to be perceived by touch.

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### **Community Consultation:**

The Accessibility Advisory Committee carried out public consultation through efforts of a public survey and an open house held in October, 2021. Outcomes have been incorporated into the Accessibility Plan.

The plan will be reviewed every three years and public input is welcome at any time.

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**Areas of Focus:**

Our Plan includes the following five areas of focus:

Goods and Services  
Information and Communications  
Transportation  
Employment  
Built Environment

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## Goods and Services

### Our Commitment

We will ensure that residents and visitors of all ages and abilities have equal access to goods and services delivered by the Municipality of Barrington and we will strive to ensure that there are policies, procedures and tools to promote the accessible delivery of goods and services.

### Our Starting Point

#### Overview

The following are some of the many services the municipality delivers to the public:

- emergency services, such as policing, fire and EMO.
- public wastewater.
- solid waste collection and disposal
- recreational programming and facilities.
- the use of public infrastructure such as building, sidewalks, boardwalks and parks.
- snow removal and maintenance of municipal parking lots and roadways.
- Animal control

#### Achievements to Date:

- Sidewalks in Barrington Passage and Woods Harbour areas are accessible.
- Boardwalks at Island View Park, Barrington Passage and McGray Avenue, North East Point are accessible.
- Accessible equipment is available on loan through the Recreation Department, such as sledges and hippocamps.
- Customer Service counter provided in renovations to the Administrative Centre will be at a height that is wheelchair accessible.

#### Barriers:

- Municipal website is not fully accessible.
- Playgrounds and parks are not fully accessible.
- No staff members are trained in alternative communication methods, such as American Sign Language.
- No resources or funds are designated to offer alternative communications to people who need them, such as a sign language interpreter.

**Policy:**

The Municipality of Barrington will:

- ensure no individual is denied service due to a disability because of individual abilities.
- commit to make municipal goods and services accessible to all.

**Actions:**

- Identify and remove or circumvent barriers.
- Record progress and evaluate successes and problems.
- Consult associations responsible for trail development and maintenance to ensure trails are accessible.
- Consult with the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, Society of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Nova Scotians and other organizations who represent persons with disabilities to determine actions to be taken to make our municipality more accessible.
- Continue to develop/access entryways to beaches and parks.
- Purchase more accessible recreational equipment for loan.

**Top Priorities:**

- Promote disability-related programs and supports to the community. Provide general updates to the community and provide specific information upon request.
- Take steps to ensure that public parks can be enjoyed by people of all ages and abilities.

## Information and Communications

### Our Commitment

We will ensure that all information and communications delivered by the municipality will be timely, clear and accessible for people of all ages and abilities.

### Our Starting Point:

#### Overview

The municipality delivers information to the public in several ways, which include:

- by mail, social media, website, phone, in-person, at the office, public meetings and presentations (virtual and in-person).
- Information is also provided by way of radio, newsletters, 211, etc.
- Council and committee meetings are open to the public.

#### Achievements to Date:

- Community can view agendas and minutes of meetings on the municipal website.
- Council meetings are recorded and aired on Eastlink Cable and posted on the municipal website.
- All forms on social media are easily navigated.
- Provide information in large print or braille, upon request.
- Advertisements and notices are all posted on social media and in some circumstances also placed in a local newspaper and on government websites. Some advertising is also done by way of radio.
- A municipal newsletter is prepared, semi-annually and posted on the municipal website and circulated by way of Canada Post. Copies are also made available at the Municipal Office.

#### Barriers:

- No resources or funds are designated to offer alternative communications to people in need of them.
- Staff are not trained in American Sign Language.
- Currently no process in place for hearing impaired individuals to participate in public meetings.
- Municipal website is not fully accessible.
- Municipal employees are not trained to promote inclusion in communication.
- Technology does not always work as intended/no access to technology/limited skills with technology.

**Policy:**

The Municipality of Barrington will:

- provide information in an accessible format or with communication supports that consider a person's specific needs, upon request.
- hold all in person public meetings in barrier free locations, if possible.
- use plain language.
- ensure the Municipality's digital presence and information technology systems are designed for people of all ages and abilities.

**Actions:**

- Research various types of communication aids.
- Reach out to Canadian National Institute for the Blind and Society of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Nova Scotians, etc. for their expertise.
- Create a Public Awareness Brochure to encourage and build more awareness around barriers to accessibility.
- Identify other organizations who can provide services and supports relating to accessibility for municipal staff and the public.
- Attempt to have an American Sign Language Interpreter at public municipal meetings, when requested.
- Have signs in braille at the Administrative Centre identifying washrooms.

**Top Priorities:**

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**Accessibility Advisory Committee can identify top priorities**

## Transportation

### Our Commitment

We will work with local organizations to ensure accessible transportation services are provided to people of all ages and abilities.

### Our Starting Point

#### Overview

The Municipality of Barrington does not currently have a municipal transit system. A local organization currently provides this service to our residents.

#### Achievements

- financial support to the Sou'West Nova Transit Association to assist with the cost of providing affordable and accessible transportation to residents of the municipality.
- the municipality has provided financial support towards operational costs and fare reduction for municipal riders
- the same base fare is charged for all vehicles
- the municipality has a Snow and Ice Clearing and Maintenance By-law

#### Barriers

- Sou'West Nova Transit is not equipped or capable of providing rides to everyone in need and they require 24 hours advanced notice.
- Many persons with disabilities who require daily travel to school (adult education or post-secondary) or work, still struggle as SWNT does not have the capacity to provide transportation every day.
- No taxi service available in the Municipality.
- Areas other than Barrington Passage and Woods Harbour do not have sidewalks for safe travelling by foot, wheelchair or scooter.

#### Policy

The Municipality of Barrington will:

- continue to work with Sou'West Nova Transit and other community groups to address transportation issues for persons with disabilities.

## **Actions**

- Explore taxi services if this is suggested by a potential new business owner.
- Continue to provide funding to SWNT for operating costs and fare reduction rates for municipal residents.
- Continued timeliness with removing snow from sidewalks, parking lots and other municipal spaces.
- Provide adequate accessible parking spaces at municipal facilities.
- Explore partnerships with employers in the community to ensure employees accessible transportation to and from work which could be extended to low income earners and others who do not have adequate access to transportation.

## **Top Priorities:**

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**Accessibility Advisory Committee can identify top priorities**

## Employment

### Our Commitment

We will remove barriers to employment for people of all ages and abilities who seek a career with the Municipality. We will make our employment practices and workplaces more accessible for new and existing employees of all ages and abilities.

### Our Starting Point

#### Overview

The Municipality currently employs 21 permanent employees. There are 5 elected representatives on Municipal Council. Elected representatives must be Canadian citizens, at least 18 years old and live in the Municipality. Council may appoint members of the public to serve on committees.

#### Achievements

- Accessible building space for meetings on main level of Administrative Centre.
- Documents can be provided in various formats (large font, etc.), upon request.
- Members of council have purchased digital devices for reading agendas and municipal documents. This makes reading more accessible because users can zoom in on text and change font size.
- Municipal offices in the Administrative Centre are barrier free.
- Our meeting rooms have tables which are wheelchair accessible.

#### Barriers

- Some workspaces are non-accessible.
- Job postings do not currently state that we can accommodate persons with disabilities.
- Staff are generally not trained to recognize barriers that may limit job opportunities for qualified individuals.
- Some employers may not be aware of available wage subsidies.
- Information is not always shared between various groups who can help job seekers find employment (Department of Community Services, TCRCE, NSCC, NS Works/Southwest Employment Services, municipal units, employers).
- Many job postings are now online which require the creation of an online profile to apply, complete assessments, etc. This is not accessible for everyone who may not have the technology or knowledge required to apply in this manner.

## **Policies**

The Municipality of Barrington will:

- take every effort, that is fair and reasonable, to offer barrier free workstations.
- provide necessary tools and materials to employees with disabilities to successfully do their job.
- promote all municipal jobs in a variety of formats (online, printed, etc.)
- add aids to allow those with disabilities to be able to overcome obstacles.

## **Actions**

- Initiate plans to remove barriers that might hinder an otherwise capable employee to be an effective employee.
- Discuss special accommodations with all job applicants.
- Offer assistive technology and special accommodations to all employees in need.
  
- Identify organizations and funding sources that may assist people with disabilities to find and maintain employment.
- Take steps to inform persons with disabilities about non-financial supports, such as Job Coaching and disability supports for post-secondary training, such as student loans.
- Take steps to inform the Barrington and Area Chamber of Commerce of possible wage subsidies.
- Take steps to encourage various groups, such as Department of Community Services, Tri-County Regional Centre for Education, Nova Scotia Community College, NS Works/Southwest Employment Services, municipal units, etc. to share information amongst themselves to help job seekers find employment.

## **Top Priorities**

- Ensure municipal buildings and facilities have wheelchair accessible entrances, washrooms and corridors.
- Install tactile signs or railings for those with visual difficulties.
- Ensure all job advertisements indicate the municipality is an equal opportunity employer and that applicants are encouraged to specify in their job application if special accommodations are required.



## Built Environment

### Our Commitment

Our public buildings and public spaces will be accessible to people of all ages and abilities, whether we own, lease or operate the space. We will encourage citizens, the business community and schools to make their public and private spaces more accessible.

### Our Starting Point

#### Overview

The Municipality owns, leases and operates a number of public facilities, such as the Administrative Centre, Recreation Centre, Sandy Wickens Memorial Arena, parks, playgrounds, sidewalks, parking areas and other infrastructure.

#### Achievements

- Maintain the Sherose Nature Trail and provide funding to the Woodland Multi-Use Trails Association who is responsible for the trail along the former CNR Right-of-Way.
- Maintain municipal playgrounds, sports fields, parks and buildings.
- Provide improvements to beaches, ramps, etc.
- Successful in receiving provincial funding to provide accessible entrances and washrooms in the Administrative Centre.
- Plans for a new Recreation Centre to be built which will be fully accessible.
- Renovations in new municipal section of the Administrative Centre will have accessible customer counters and an accessible washroom in the entrance.

#### Barriers

- Budget Limitations
- Some sidewalks and walkways are uneven.
- All municipal buildings and facilities are not fully accessible.
- Accessible parking is limited.
- There are not enough signs for people with visual and hearing impairments.

#### Policies

The Municipality of Barrington will:

- gather information and form policies that will ensure accessibility for everyone.

## **Actions**

- Look for opportunities to construct and maintain more accessible public washrooms, where possible.
- Review emergency management and building evacuation plans with accessibility in mind.
- Examine the state of buildings and outdoor spaces with the objective of determining what upgrades are required to make them accessible.
- Assess existing crosswalks with the idea of making them more accessible to persons with disabilities.
- Assess each municipal parking lot to ensure an adequate number of accessible parking spaces are being provided.
- Explore the possibility of making the municipal swimming pool accessible.
- Commit a portion of the annual budget to improve accessibility in public buildings and spaces.
- When picnic tables and benches are placed in public areas, ensure they are accessible.
- Promote the province's Small Business ACCESS-Ability Grant Program to the Barrington and Area Chamber of Commerce.
- Ensure schools are made aware of the Accessibility Plan once it is completed.

## **Top Priorities**

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**Accessibility Advisory Committee can identify top priorities**

## Implementing the Plan

### Responsibilities

#### Accessibility Advisory Committee

- Review the Accessibility Plan at least every three years as required by the Accessibility Act of Nova Scotia.
- Committee to meet at least twice a year to review progress and commitments contained in the plan.

#### Accessibility Co-ordinator

- Guide the work of the Accessibility Advisory Committee.
- Book meetings, prepare and distribute agendas and minutes, assist Chair in leading the meetings, manage recruitment of members, when necessary.
- Accept complaints, questions and concerns submitted by the public.
- Provide a summary of questions, concerns and complaints to the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

#### Council

- Recognize the significant cost and value of implementing this plan and the municipal operational plans and seek adequate funding to allow the municipality to meet the requirements under the Accessibility Act of Nova Scotia.

#### CAO

- Ensure the commitments outlined in the Accessibility Plan are reflected and operationalized in municipal Accessibility Action Plans required as public sector bodies under the Accessibility Act of Nova Scotia.

## Accessibility Advisory Committee Members

- Councillor George El-Jakl - Chair
- Denise Nickerson, Resident - Representing Nova Scotia Works – Vice Chair
- Councillor Shaun Hatfield
- Warden Lindsay (Eddie) Nickerson
- Loretta Nickerson, Resident - Representing Shelburne Association Supporting Inclusion
- Boyd Scott – Resident

## Support Staff

- Chris Frotten, CAO
- Lesa Rossetti, Accessibility Co-ordinator
- Cameron Whiteway, Director of Property Services

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