



**Town of Torbay
Accessibility Plan
2024 - 2026**

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Welcome Message / Introduction



Proud residents and surrounding community,

I am proud to present you the Town of Torbay Accessibility Plan for 2024 - 2026. We have made great strides in recent years to increase accessibility and inclusion within our community. Examples of this include an accessible design approach to the Torbay Common Community Centre, upgrades to our Town Hall building and installations of sidewalks with warning tiles at intersections. We are continuously assessing how we can improve our community for all residents and we understand that there is more work that can be done.

This accessibility plan will highlight the background and need for an accessibility plan, explain our requirements, outcomes and goals within each of our focus areas while highlighting the barriers of accessibility we have heard from residents and what we are doing or have already done to address these barriers.

This accessibility plan will help us find opportunities and solutions so that we can continue to make the Town of Torbay a great place for everyone!

I wish you all nothing but the best,

Craig Scott, Mayor of the Town of Torbay

Glossary of Terms

To ensure understanding of the content within this document, the following terms align with the Provincial Accessibility Act and are specific to the Town of Torbay.

Accessibility Plan or the plan: A document that addresses how to prevent, identify, and remove barriers in policy, programs, practices, and services.

Accessibility Standard: The necessary accessibility requirements established under the Accessibility Act.

Accommodation: Any action taken to reduce or remove a barrier preventing or limiting access.

Barrier: Anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in society, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communication barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, or a barrier established by an Act, regulations, a policy, or a practice.

Built Environment: Buildings, parks, trails, playgrounds, streets, sidewalks, sport fields, built and/or maintained by the Town of Torbay.

Disability: A physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment or a functional limitation that is permanent, temporary, or episodic in nature that, in interaction with a barrier, prevents a person from fully participating in society.

Focus Areas: Areas of operation within an organization that services the public.

Programs: An activity or set of activities offered by the Town that improves the wellbeing of residents, visitors, businesses, and newcomers.

Public Body: An organization that delivers public services including municipalities.

Town: The Town of Torbay

Act: The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's Accessibility Act

Services: Work done by the Town of Torbay that benefits others.

Accessibility Advancements to Date

The Town of Torbay has taken several steps over the last few terms of Council to ensure the Town is improving accessibility and offering services to meet all residents' needs and abilities.

Some highlights of the advancements to date include:

Torbay Common Community Centre which opened in 2018 is built using an accessible design approach and is fully accessible including:

- Accessible parking and drop off.
- Accessible gender-neutral washrooms and change spaces.
- Automated entrance
- Adult size change table
- Child size change tables
- Lower service counter
- Private customer service area available upon request
- Signage with braille
- Accessible Community Garden
- Accessible Splash Pad
- Playground with accessible features

Town Hall was recently upgraded and incorporated the following items:

- Wheelchair access entrance in the rear of the building
- Accessible parking area paved by accessible entrance area.
- Wheelchair lift

Parks, playgrounds, and sports fields are now designed with universal accessibility design principles in mind and include:

- Upper Three Corner Pond Park buildings are wheelchair accessible.
- Most parks and playgrounds have accessible parking options.
- Most playgrounds include accessible features.
- Upgrades to include accessible trail at Whiteway's Pond.
- Upgrades to include accessible trail at the Amherst Monument.

Other highlights:

- Town Depot was constructed to meet accessible standards at the time.
- History House had renovations to add accessible entrance.
- Accessible area at the newly installed Beach stage.
- Sidewalks were installed recently with warning tiles at intersections.

About the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

The Town of Torbay's Accessibility Plan is an important step in the process of becoming a more accessible and inclusive community. It shows a continued commitment to improving and offering fully accessible access to the programs, services, public spaces, and other services offered by the Town. It will also be incorporated into future planning and municipal planning.



The Accessibility Plan will evolve based on the changing needs of Torbay residents and the development of the Provincial Accessibility Legislation. As accessibility standards develop, the plan will be updated to reflect the responsibilities of municipalities. The plan creates awareness about current efforts to ensure accessibility in Town operated programs, services, and spaces. It will also include areas of focus and actions that support equitable access to programs and services, the built environment including buildings, public spaces, information and communication and goods and services received through procurement.

The Town of Torbay understands the importance of learning from and working with those most impacted by accessibility, so consultation was done with persons with disabilities, caregivers, and family of persons with disabilities, advocates for persons with disabilities, seniors' groups, disability agencies and organizations, Council, and Town department Directors and staff. Based on review and feedback from these groups we were able to identify key focus areas as well as highlight achievements to date.

Overview of the Accessibility Act

The provincial Accessibility Act is known as Bill 38: An Act Respecting Accessibility in the Province (The Act). This enabling legislation was passed on December 3rd, 2021. It outlines the principles and goals that will improve accessibility in the province and identifies key focus areas, where barriers often exist that prevent individuals with disabilities from participating in society.

The key focus areas specific to municipalities include:

- The design, and delivery of programs, services and goods that ensures equitable access.
- Built environment that ensures buildings, shared spaces, public transportation and transportation infrastructure are accessible.
- Information and communication that ensures everyone can receive, understand, and share the information provided.
- Accommodations that ensures accessible and inclusive options are available for equitable access.
- Procurement processes that ensure equitable access to goods and services that are sourced and purchased.
- Employment that ensures an accessible workplace and support for persons with disabilities to find and maintain meaningful employment.

The Act requires that Public Bodies create an accessibility plan within two years of the Act coming into force and every three years after that. Accessibility Plans must address prevention, identification, and removal of barriers in public body operations and be publicly available. Public bodies must consult with persons with disabilities or representatives of organizations representing persons with disabilities in preparing a plan. The Act allows Provincial Government to develop accessibility standards and provide inspection and enforcement power to ensure accessibility standards are met. The first accessibility standard approved to be developed is the Accessible Customer Service Standard.



Background

The Town of Torbay celebrates its growing and diverse population as a source of strength, vitality, and economic opportunity, and is committed to improving opportunities for people with disabilities. The development of the Town's Accessibility Plan illustrates how the Town will implement the legislative requirements of the Accessibility Act by identifying, removing, and preventing barriers for residents, employees, and visitors. Over the next three years, the Town will undertake several initiatives aimed at ensuring that the municipality remains inclusive and barrier-free by following the plans guiding principles and guidelines in the Act itself.



These include:

- Continued effective collaboration and engagement with an Accessibility Advisory Committee, residents, staff, and other community members to ensure that the Town makes informed decisions that shape our community.
- Be proactive and timely to meet the provincial compliance deadlines.
- Ensure fiscal responsibility that provides quality public services while maintaining a sustainable budget.
- Enhance training and leadership knowledge to ensure compliance with Town policies and provincial legislations.
- Create barrier-free public spaces using the standards and requirements of the Government of NL's Building Accessibility Act and design public spaces to build a universally designed community for residents, employees, and visitors.
- Innovate and improve modern technologies, solutions, and approaches to accessibility.
- Support and respect all community members who use Town goods, services, and facilities, and provide alternative options if necessary to enable people with disabilities.

Structure and Governance

Implementation of the Accessibility Plan falls within the Town's Department of Recreation and Community Services with the Director being designated lead on the plan. The lead will be responsible for ensuring the following:

- Confirm the resources required to establish the Accessibility Advisory Committee, to engage stakeholders, and to develop the plan.
- Recruit committee members for the advisory committee and working group.
- Provide information to all involved on the Accessibility Act, obligations under the Act, and the mandate of the Town's plan.
- Work with an Accessibility Advisory Committee to lead and implement the plan.
- Work with the committee to identify accessibility needs and provide advice on removing barriers when new policies and programs are introduced.
- Ensure that accessibility awareness is included in employee training and orientation.
- Monitor progress of implementing the plan and ensure the plan's priorities and actions are on target.
- Receive and respond to stakeholder suggestions and issues about the plan.

In addition to the lead, a working group of other employees will also play a vital role in being responsible for ensuring their respective departments are implementing focus areas in the plan. Accountability is a shared responsibility with various departments, stakeholders, members of Council, residents, and others involved.

Accessibility Advisory Committee

The objective of the Accessibility Advisory Committee is to provide focus on Town initiatives ensuring that goods, services, and facilities will be offered in a manner that respects the inherent dignity, diversity, and abilities of all individuals. The Accessibility Advisory Committee will be responsible for providing advice to the Town on a wide range of processes to ensure public services and facilities are accessible to everyone.

Statement of Commitment

The Town of Torbay is committed to creating an accessible community that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities who benefit from the use of Town programs, services, and facilities. We strive to meet the diverse needs of our community by identifying, preventing, and removing barriers so that all people can equitably live, work, play and learn here. The Town will continue its work to identify and remove accessibility barriers and maintains its commitment to meet the requirements of the Accessibility Act legislation and will monitor future guidelines to ensure the Town is following the required plan.

Focus Area

The Town will focus on some of the areas outlined by the Accessibility Act including program and services, build environment, information and communication, goods and services, and employment. The other focus areas outlined in the act such as transportation, health care, accommodations, and education will also be discussed with those stakeholders that hold those roles in the Town to see if the Town can play a role in improving these areas as well.



2024 - 2026 Focus Areas

The Town of Torbay's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2024 - 2026 includes new and continuing initiatives and outcomes that will help the Town meet its commitment to become an accessible community. The Town is committed to improving opportunities and eliminating barriers to provide equal access for all residents, employees, and visitors.

General Requirements

The general requirements of the Act require the Town to have a statement of commitment and a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. In addition to the requirements, the Town is working to increase accessibility for residents, employees, and visitors by creating non-legislated initiatives that ensure barriers to accessibility are identified and addressed across the organization.



General Requirements Outcomes

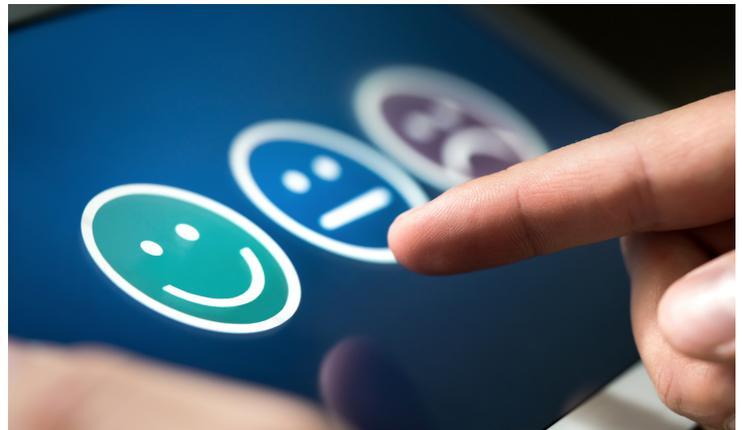
- Continue updating the Town's bylaws, policies, procedures, and guidelines to incorporate the requirements of the Accessibility Act.
- Continue updating the multi-year accessibility plan to identify, remove, and prevent barriers for people with disabilities.
- Continue to show the progress being made in accomplishing goals of the Town's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.
- Continue to complete training appropriate to the person's role in a timely manner and in a variety of formats.
- Continue to educate and train staff to consider accessibility impacts of all new planning, projects, policies, and initiatives.
- Continue to record and track employee learning and development activities specifically related to the Act and accessibility requirements.
- Continue to ensure that all training, activities, course materials and learning approaches are created and delivered in accessible formats where possible.
- Continue to engage and consult with the Accessibility Advisory Committee to advance accessibility.
- Continue to host employee meetings and public events in facilities and public spaces that are accessible.

2024 - 2026 General Requirements Goals

- Establish Town employee resource groups to advance accessibility and inclusion. Employee resource groups will be created for one-time consultation on a specific topic or established for ongoing engagement within a specific area.
- Enhance accessibility awareness within the organization and the community through education and awareness campaigns.
- Establish annual departmental implementation plans which will include detailed deliverables and timelines.
- Enhance leadership knowledge and skills to ensure compliance with Town policies, Human Rights legislation, the Act, and other related legislation.

Customer Service Requirements

The Town of Torbay is committed to providing excellent customer service for all residents, employees, and visitors with disabilities. The Customer Service Standard under the Act requires the Town to provide accessible public services for people with disabilities and to ensure that policies and procedures are in place to support this requirement.



Customer Service Outcomes

- Continue to complete mandatory training, including customer service training for staff, volunteers and third parties to gain resources and tools on how to better assist a customer with a disability.
- Receive and respond to feedback about in which goods, programs, services, and facilities are provided to persons with disabilities.
- Continue providing accessible processes for receiving feedback.
- Continue to ensure that people with disabilities receive goods and services of the same quality and within the same timeline as others and benefit equally from customer service initiatives.

2024 - 2026 Customer Service Goals

- Establish a comprehensive accessibility plan for municipal elections.
- Evaluate Town programs and services through Town employee resource groups to ensure inclusion and equitable participation of residents, employees, and visitors with disabilities in Town operated programs.
- Planning and development of all programs, events, and services
- Programs, events, and services should be planned and delivered with accessibility in mind. This helps to ensure that all community members can access and participate in an equitable manner.

Information and Communications Requirements

The Town should communicate and provide information in ways that are accessible to all people with disabilities.

Information and Communications Outcomes

- Ensuring that Town processes for receiving and responding to feedback are accessible to people with disabilities by providing or arranging for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports.
- Continue to arrange for accessible formats and communication supports by consulting with the person making the request to determine suitable accessible formats or communication supports in a timely manner at no additional cost.
- Continue to inform the public of the availability of accessible materials and provide accessible formats and communication support upon request.
- Continue to evaluate and remediate the Town's website and web content to conform to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1. where possible
- Continue to ensure that the Town's website and web content incorporate the Information and Communications Standard Policy.
- Continue conducting reviews of the Town's Information and Communications Standard Policy and update to reflect current best practices in digital accessibility.



2024 - 2026 Information and Communications Goals

- Research and develop a streamlined process for Town employees to access American Sign Language (ASL), and other accessibility services and supports to provide equitable access to residents, employees, and visitors with disabilities.
- Ensure that employees and members of Council have the tools and resources to develop and provide information in an accessible format through various platforms.

Employment Requirements

The Town is committed to creating an inclusive environment with equality for all who work, live, and play here. The Town must develop policies to support the recruitment and accommodation of employees with disabilities.

Employment Outcomes

- Continue to ensure all employees and successful applicants with disabilities are informed of available support and accommodations.
- Continue to ensure all applicants are informed of available accommodations during the recruitment, assessment, and the selection processes.
- Continue to consult with employees to provide and arrange for accessible formats and communication support upon request.
- Continue to maintain a return-to-work process and provide individual documented accommodation plans for employees with disabilities as required.
- Continue to ensure the needs of employees with disabilities considered for the purposes of performance management, career development, advancement, and redeployment.
- Continue preparing individualized accommodation and emergency response plans for Town employees with disabilities.
- Continue to conduct employee equity surveys to inform workforce planning priorities through data-informed decision making.

2024 - 2026 Employment Goals

- Establish an outreach strategy and partner with local community groups to provide accessibility co-op positions and opportunities for persons with disabilities.
- Research best practices for job postings, interview processes, and hiring to ensure persons with disabilities are being included.
- Foster a culture of employee engagement and inclusion through analysis of the Employee Engagement Survey and the development of action plans in partnership with the employee working group and the Accessibility Committee.

Programs and Services Requirements

The Town must ensure that all town programs, events, and services are accessible to all residents.

Equitable Programs and Service Outcomes

- Continue to offer Inclusion training for program staff where required and ensure hiring practices aimed at trained and experienced employees.
- Improve the accessibility of all programs and services so that all community members can enjoy and participate.
- Offer a wide range of programming for persons with disabilities.
- Ensure registration processes incorporate accessibility features and include access for all.
- Continue to evaluate the Attendant Pass Program.
- Continue to provide access to adaptive equipment to residents.

2024 - 2026 Equitable Programs and Service Goals

- Develop registration processes that accommodate persons with disabilities.
- Develop an attendant pass program for all programs and events.
- Purchase more adaptive equipment for use in programs and events.
- Research best practices in offering inclusive recreational programming.
- Offer more program options for persons with disabilities.

Design of Public Spaces Requirements

The Town must comply with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's Building Accessibility Act requirements for accessibility in the built environment and will develop a Town specific Accessibility Design Standards.

Design of Public Spaces Outcomes

- Prioritize and retrofit existing built environment barriers at recreational trails, outdoor public use eating areas, outdoor play spaces, exterior paths of travel, accessible parking, and facilities.
- Improve the accessibility of public spaces and workplaces by incorporating accessible design during renovations and redevelopments of recreational trails, outdoor public use eating areas, outdoor play spaces, exterior paths of travel, accessible parking, and facilities.
- Continue to prevent and remove barriers within Town recreational trails, outdoor public use eating areas, outdoor play spaces, exterior paths of travel, accessible parking, and facilities.
- Maintain accessible elements in public spaces through monitoring and regularly planned preventative maintenance.
- Respond to temporary disruptions when accessible elements in public spaces are not in working order by notifying the public and prioritizing remediation.

2024 - 2026 Design of Public Spaces Goals

- Installation of Audible Pedestrian Signals to advise individuals who are visually impaired when they have the right-of-way to cross at a signalized intersection and in which direction, they may cross the intersection.
- Installation of Power Door Operators at all Town facilities lacking barrier-free entrances and providing accommodation for persons using mobility assistance devices.
- Develop universal design policy, encouraging developers to offer accessible features in homes and new builds.
- Procured a consulting firm to assist in the review of facilities to identify opportunities for improved accessibility design and features.
- Conduct a Building Code Assessment to determine where Town facilities are deficient regarding barrier-free access. Further capital projects to be developed based on the report and areas of non-compliance.
- Comprehensive review of park and trail systems to identify barriers to be removed.

What We Have Heard and Actions / Outcomes

Barrier: Program times, locations, and types, including sensory friendly programs, programs for people with autism, programs for youth and adults with disabilities and are limited.

Action(s):

- Work with stakeholders and community service providers to identify gaps in programming that benefit persons with disabilities.
- Investigate funding opportunities to improve accessibility in programs and services.
- Offer training for Town staff so they are empowered to plan and implement programs and events for persons with disabilities.

Barrier: Lack of staff knowledge and understanding about disability awareness and supporting accessibility.

Action(s):

- Develop options for disability awareness training opportunities and requirements for Town staff and make recommendations.

Barrier: Facilities without automated door openers on entrance/exits and washrooms.

Action(s):

- Improve communication regarding existing facility accessibility amenities.
- Continue to monitor automated door function during building inspections.
- Continue to resolve citizen service requests, where possible.
- Investigate standards for automated door opening and closing durations.
- Through regular asset management process and inspections, identify locations where automated door openers are necessary.
- Determine if automated door openers can be purchased and installed within existing budget.

Barrier: Automated hand dryers are not sensory friendly and therefore not accessible to all residents.

Action(s):

- Install hand towel options in all washrooms that also have automated hand dryers.

Barrier: Various accessible services are lacking in the Town school system.

Action(s):

- Meet with Government and school officials to see if there is anything the Town can do to support and lobby for improvements in this area.

Barrier: Facilities and services are not accessible for persons with visible limitations.

Action(s):

- Install sidewalks bump alerts at intersections, crosswalks, and entrances.
- Future cross walks can have audible alerts as well.

Barrier: Limited access to American Sign Language Interpreters for engagement and services.

Action(s):

- Communicate to Government of this challenge.
- Work with ASL contractors to ensure future planning can be incorporated and see what recommendations they have.

Barrier: Limited input from the community for this plan.

Action(s):

- Research different options to provide residents the opportunity to provide feedback in ways other than public consultation, surveys, and email.



Conclusions

The Town of Torbay has a strong sense of community and together we can work together to ensure that all residents are included in all aspects of community living. The work that has been done to build a community that is inclusive, diverse, and accessible for all so far, has played a vital role in building a healthy community. The Town of Torbay is committed to continued improvements ensuring everyone can participate fully in all Town programs, services, and public spaces. The Town will seek funding opportunities as well as opportunities in the Town's budget to support projects that will lead to a successful Accessibility Plan so that we can see progress as time goes on. The Town is committed to updating the plan every three years based on feedback from residents, working group, advisory committee, staff, and stakeholders.

