

WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting Agenda **AMENDED**
March 27, 2025, 6:00 p.m.

Council Chambers, 76 Morison Drive, Windsor, NS

Agenda is subject to changes up to and including during the meeting

This meeting is open to the public. It will not be livestreamed on YouTube



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1. Call to Order
 2. Announcements
 3. Approval of the Agenda, including additions or deletions
 4. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes – February 6, 2025
 5. Unfinished Business
 - a) Equity, Anti-Racism and Accessibility Strategy Plan Update – Kevin Waters
 6. New Business
 - a) 2025 Accessibility Advisory Committee Work Plan – Michel Bourgeois
 - b) Provincial Built Environment Accessibility Standard Approved – Michel Bourgeois
AMENDED to add Built Environment Presentation
 - c) Community Accessibility Assessments Discussion – Jordan Stephens
 7. Next Meeting Date / Meeting Adjournment

WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting Agenda – AMENDED (2)
February 6, 2025, 6:00 p.m.
Council Chambers, 76 Morison Drive, Windsor, NS

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1. Call to Order / Introductions
 2. Approval of the Agenda, including additions or deletions
 3. Announcements
 4. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes – April 25, 2024
(Notes from unofficial/no quorum meetings on June 20, 2024 and October 30, 2024 have been included for review, no approval required.)
 5. New Business
 - a) Draft Accessibility Plan Review (formerly 5. b))
 - b) Committee Terms of Reference / Election of Chair and Vice-Chair (Appendix D, page 32 of the Meeting and Committee Procedural Policy, attached) (formerly 5. a))
 6. Next Meeting Date / Meeting Adjournment

WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
February 6, 2025, 6:00 p.m.
Council Chambers, 76 Morison Drive, Windsor, NS

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Present:

Michel Bourgeois, Resident Member
Denise Long, Resident Member
Councillor Chrystal Remme
Pegah Memarpour, Davis Pier
Tina McKay, Building & Fire Official
Amie Deleavey, Resident Member
Jennifer Davison, Resident Member
Carmen Dewar-Miller, Admin Assistant

Roseanna Boyd, Resident Member
Kevin Waters, Active Living Coordinator
Jordan Stephens, Resident Member
Troy Burgess, Public Works Operations Manager
Mark Phillips, CAO
Melissa MacAskill, Resident Member
Deanna Snair, Municipal Clerk

1. Call to Order / Introductions – Staff Member Waters called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. He acknowledged that we are in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people. West Hants further acknowledges the 50 African Nova Scotian communities whose 400-year history has contributed to the provinces culture, history and legacies. We are all Treaty People. Based on conversation with our community partners at Glooscap, Staff Member Waters expanded on this statement, as it is not just the land, but acknowledgement of all of the pieces that come from and beyond the land.

As this was the first meeting of the Accessibility Committee since the new council was elected, there were round table introductions. Regrets were received from Resident Member, Amie Deleavey. Staff Member Waters introduced the evening's presenter, Pegah Mermarpour from Davis Pier.

2. Approval of the Agenda, including additions or deletions
Staff Member Waters requested a friendly amendment to the agenda to review the draft plan before the Committee TOR and Election of Chair and Vice-Chair. There were no objections.
Moved by Resident Members Davison and Bourgeois that the amended agenda be approved.
Motion Carried
3. Announcements – No announcements
4. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes – April 25, 2024
(Notes from unofficial/no quorum meetings on June 20, 2024 and October 30, 2024 have been included for review, no approval required.)

Moved by Resident Members Davison and Bourgeois that the April 25, 2024 meeting minutes be approved.

Motion Carried.

5. New Business

a) **Draft Accessibility Plan Review with Pegah Mermarpour from Davis Piers (moved from item b to item a)**

Staff Member Waters provided some background on this draft **Equity, Anti-Racism, and Accessibility Strategy Plan**. Consultants at Davis Piers were brought in to assist with the plan in October 2024. They had previously helped with the Municipality's current Accessibility Plan. This consolidated plan will include the Anti-Racism and Hate Plan and will be used by our committee and also the Diverse, Equitable and Inclusive (DEI) Communities Committee. Although the province requires three-year updates, this plan has been created to span ten years, including both immediate and extended priorities. Staff Member Waters acknowledged Resident Members Bourgeois, Stephens and Boyd, who were part of the working group that helped create this draft plan with consultation from the community at large.

Pegah Memarpour, a consultant from Davis Piers, joined the meeting via Zoom to walk the committee through this early version of the draft plan. Consultant Memarpour will provide rationale and insight into the approach taken. There are over 100 actions in this ten-year strategy, with consolidation of accessibility and anti-racism plans. There was consultation with the community at large and current Accessibility and DEI committee members. This will be a high level recap and overview of the work done and efforts put in.

Consultant Memarpour will give committee members approximately a week to go through the plan and provide feedback via email, phone or by reaching out to Staff Member Waters.

As part of this plan review, it is critical to identify the immediate top priorities including low hanging fruit or long-term project type actions. If there are pieces that members do not understand, they should be flagged or highlighted. Consultant Memarpour reminded the committee that she is sharing a very early draft. There are still missing pieces, to be filled in through collaboration and iteration during this review and through the requested feedback.

The document's welcome page offers a high level introduction to the plan and supporting work. There follows a land acknowledgement, words of appreciation, and a thank you to all contributors.

Pictures from the engagement sessions are included. Statistics, survey data and demographics have been provided from the Municipality. There is acknowledgement of the diversity within the region, including a breakdown, which provides context. Shared responsibility is addressed, setting the stage for how this document should be read. The work and related actions of the two committees are highlighted. They will play a role in accountability and moving the work forward. This plan is the responsibility of all, not just the Municipality – a community effort.

Staff Member Waters feels there is a need for working group representation in this section. He would like to see the participants' names included when thanking contributors. There was consensus that including the names would add value and reinforce that this plan was a cooperative effort between the Municipality and its citizens.

Consultant Memarpour reviewed the process for creating this document, including the following steps:

- **Set Up**, by establishing a working group
- **Learn**, by connecting with community leaders and organizations to capture a broad set of voices (pre-engagement). This resulted in some great advice. Reviewed and utilized pre-existing information (Rad Report, current accessibility plan) as a jumping off point to leverage and build from.
- **Invite**, community conversations through a survey, pamphlets, posters, social media and community events and activities. Attendance at community events was key to raising awareness and receiving feedback.
- **Listen**, to more than 200 people share their experiences, perspectives and ideas to help identify actions and initiatives.
- **Summarize**, in real time while being intentionally straight to the point and easy to read.
- **Validate**, through sharing the draft plan with the two committees and Glooscap Council, allowing for folks to weigh in.

At this point it was noted that the community name of Three Mile Plains needed to be corrected from Three Miles Plains in the draft plan.

The next section addressed *What We Wish Could Have Been Different*.

This document won't change everything but it is a step in the right direction and an ongoing effort that everyone is excited about. Glooscap Council was approached late in the year to share the work that was happening. Due to the holidays and events in January, the group was unable to have a meaningful engagement at Glooscap and these voices were not captured in this draft plan. There is an action item within the plan to address this going forward.

There is recognition that some of this work had to happen over the holidays, which is challenging. This led to less voices being heard from, but a significant number were still captured. Additionally, some of the survey information came in at both ends of the spectrum from respondents that shared. Caveats were added where relevant.

The next section of the draft plan addressed *Actions*, with five key areas of focus:

1. Creating More Welcoming Community Spaces

This section is related to public, municipal and business spaces in the community. There are some spaces viewed as doing things right, being inclusive, showcasing and celebrating diversity, and safe for people. With these identified spaces as examples, how do we continue to create spaces that are accessible and inclusive and welcoming for everyone across the board. One way is to ensure that standards are created with spaces where can navigate the community and the space of West Hants (sidewalks for example). This is a topic that spans accessibility, equity anti-racism and diversity. Actions are the most important part. The West Hants Sports Complex was cited a space where great things are happening. Still work to be done. Survey results that highlighted differences between respondents were included. Colour coding was used to group actions together. Some actions need to happen sequentially. There are 22 actions under this category. They are open to feedback on prioritization, language, etc.

There was a question regarding the original plan that included targets set to cover specific items. One example was to have Rick Hansen certification as part of building design plans. This is not referenced here. If we don't identify these

things specifically, how will they be budgeted for and achieved? This plan seems more aspirational than specific.

Consultant Memarpour offered that if there is a specific action that you think is missing, send her a note and it can be looked at. She requested clarification on targets. Would these be metrics or key performance indicators (KPIs)?

In the original plan, there were more tangible, measurable targets. If going before Council to request funding, you need more specific information.

If there are actions in the original plan that have not been completed and might need to get moved forward, they can be identified and prioritized as a three-year priority. We can get more granular and highlight these items. Some will require a post-strategy work plan and implementation, with an idea of what success will look like. There was agreement on this go forward.

Staff Member Waters noted that work related to built environment pieces may have to be elevated to a different timeline based on the 2030 deadline.

Per Consultant Memarpour, this could be separated out as its own action. She references a table in the appendices that will outline responsibility and timeline for this work. This table could be one of the spaces where those pieces live, broken out into the two separate timelines.

The provincial built environment standards should be released soon. They will not be Rick Hansen level, but they are robust, based on the last draft presented. This is an opportunity to decide which standards are referenced in our draft plan. There was agreement that the provincial built environment standards would be a good baseline for referencing in this plan.

2. Increasing Access to Information, Spaces and Programs

There is a need to ensure all spaces are accessible to people, as currently they are not. Examples would include local businesses, sidewalks, street or ramps. This needs to be improved and changed with actions around it and also around the maintenance on the work that has already been done. The province has a goal to be accessible by 2030.

There was feedback received regarding the need for public education and awareness training for local businesses. Opportunities to build awareness and share information where possible were highlighted. Items of focus include safe, accessible streetscapes (lighting, sidewalks, ramps), and ensuring that any barriers (physical and financial) that do exist to things like municipal programs and transportation are targeted.

There are a significant number of actions here, with some being pulled from the current accessibility plan where the work had not been completed.

Staff Member Waters added that they have been discussing expanding this section and identifying the responsible person/persons (Municipality, staff, community partners, etc.) for each action. He referenced the Active Transportation (AT) Plan as there are sections related to that and existing in both plans concurrently. The AT Committee could be assigned responsibility on items where plans are in alignment.

3. Combating Racism and Discrimination

This page and this space acknowledges and shares the information that there were divergent opinions on racism in the community. Some feedback was received in the survey responses that racism isn't a thing and we should stop talking about it. There were also many examples and emotional conversations where people shared that they have experienced or witnessed some type of hate, racism or discrimination in the community. There is a desire for better awareness and training for all.

4. Authentic Partnership and Community Building

This important piece involved looking at other municipalities that are also doing this work across Canada. What are their key priorities and focus areas? The importance of relationship-building stood out, and continuing these meaningful relationships with advocacy groups, residents and community organizations. So many positive examples to see, with a desire for shared spaces, opportunity to celebrate cultures and promote diversity. How can we utilize community halls, kitchen spaces and community events and find opportunities to move different initiatives forward.

5. Municipal Leadership, Programs and Services

What can the Municipality do? What are some critical pieces there when it comes to actions. While intended as a community strategy, the Municipality can provide leadership in creating welcoming and accessible spaces. Municipal staff and leadership are critical. Actions for staff would be related to ensuring the right training and onboarding processes. That the committee work has clear terms of reference and continues to increase representation from diverse groups.

Within these five areas of focus there are a total of 106 action items.

Staff Member Waters acknowledged that as this work was only completed 24 hours ago, committee members did not have much time to formulate questions. Questions that arise after this meeting can be sent to Consultant Mermarpour or to him. It is important to think of some items to immediately prioritize. Now would be the time to bring ideas forward for inclusion.

A question arose as to whether there was time to get anything into the coming year's budget.

Staff Member Waters and Clerk Snair are looking at this. There may be a line item already set up in the budget for accessibility.

The final section of the plan involves **Commitment and Next Steps**. What does implementation look like? Supporting the work planning and moving it forward. This early draft is being shared on purpose. It has been a collaborative effort that they want to continue and to be implemented, not just sit on a desk. Give people have the opportunity to weigh in, with feedback on language, action changes, overall look and feel, and top priority action items.

This ended the presentation of the draft plan.

Resident Member Bourgeois extended thanks to Consultant Mermarpour and Staff Member Waters and all involved in getting the plan to this point.

Consultant Mermarpour left the meeting.

- b) **Committee Terms of Reference / Election of Chair and Vice-Chair (moved from item a to item b)** (Appendix D, page 32 of the Meeting and Committee Procedural Policy, attached)
Resident Member Bourgeois was acclaimed as Committee Chair and Resident Member Davison was acclaimed as Vice-Chair.

6. Next Meeting Date / Meeting Adjournment

The next meeting will be held on March 27, with the goal going forward to meet on the last Thursday of every other month

Moved by Resident Members Davison and Long that the meeting be adjourned.

Motion Carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

X

Committee Chair



WHRM Accessibility Advisory Committee

2025 Work Plan discussion

Accessibility Advisory Committee Goals

To provide advice to Council on identifying, preventing and elimination of barriers to people with disabilities in municipal programs, services, initiatives and facilities.

The Committee aims to play a pivotal role in helping the Municipality become a barrier-free community and ensuring obligations under the Accessibility Act are met.

Deliverables

- The Committee will deliver the following:
- a) Advise Council in the preparation, implementation and effectiveness of its accessibility plan. In accordance with the Act, the plan must include:
 - A report on measures the Municipality has taken and intends to take to identify, remove and prevent barriers;
 - Information on procedures the Municipality has in place to assess the following for their effect on accessibility for persons with disabilities:
 - i. Any of its proposed policies, programs, practices and services, and
 - ii. Any proposed enactments or bylaws it will be administering
 - iii. Any other prescribed information

Deliverables

- b) Advise Council on the impact of the Municipality's policies, programs and services on persons with disabilities;
- c) Review and monitor existing and proposed Municipal by-laws to promote full participation of persons with disabilities, in accordance with the Act;
- d) Identify and advise on the accessibility of existing and proposed municipal services and facilities;
- e) Advise and make recommendations about strategies designed to achieve the objectives of the Municipality's Accessibility Plan;
- f) Receive and review information directed to it by Council and its committees, and to make recommendations as requested;
- g) Assist in monitoring Federal and Provincial government directives and regulations
- h) Host community consultations related to accessibility in the Municipality.

WHY HAVE A WORK PLAN ?

Allows Accessibility Advisory Committee to provide Council a measurable pathway to meeting goals of the Accessibility Plan.

Does NOT replace the Anti-Racism- Accessibility-Inclusion Plan.

Regular updates based on the Work Plan can enhance awareness and encourage action.

Activates and engages members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee

Inform discussions around “Accessibility” resource requirements to address immediate items.

Option to form work groups with specific focus



Subcategories/Action	Alignment with Terms of Reference	Resources required, other service providers, Government, Funds, etc.	Time Frame	Desired Outcome	Performance Indicators: Progress Tracking
Planning and Executing Annual Town Hall	Section 8	<p>Expertise and support of staff members of HRM (Accessibility Advisor, Office of Diversity & Inclusion/ANSAIO, Parks & Recreation, Halifax Public Libraries, Customer Contact Centres, Government Relations & External Affairs, and Municipal Clerk's Office), Committee members, and external partners in the planning and execution of the Annual Town Hall.</p> <p>Annual Town Hall Budget Line of \$10,000</p>	2023	<p>Committee members will work with HRM staff and external partners to plan and execute The Annual Town Hall.</p> <p>The Annual Town Hall will serve as an opportunity for Business Units of the HRM to provide information to the community on programs, services, and strategies relating to accessibility, and for the community to provide feedback to the HRM on the impact of these programs, services, and strategies.</p>	Committee members will work with HRM staff in the planning and hosting of the 2023 Annual Town Hall and forward the report to Executive Standing Committee.
Priority 1: Built Form – Accessibility standards of current and future HRM infrastructure projects, accessibility of sidewalks, and accessibility of HRM-owned infrastructure	Sections 8 (a)-(c)	<p>Expertise of staff members of HRM (Planning & Development, Property, Fleet & Environment, Public Works, Parks and Recreation) with knowledge about programs, services, strategies, and by-laws relating to accessibility standards for HRM infrastructure projects, accessibility of sidewalks, and accessibility of HRM-owned infrastructure.</p>	2023	<p>Committee members will receive information about programs, services, strategies, and by-laws relating to accessibility standards for HRM infrastructure projects, accessibility of sidewalks, and accessibility of HRM-owned infrastructure through presentations and consultations at Committee meetings with emphasis on the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scope and application of accessibility standards in HRM construction projects - Spring Garden Road recapitalization project 	<p>Committee members will receive presentations from Business Units regarding this priority area.</p> <p>Where data regarding these issues is lacking within the scope of the Halifax Regional Municipality, the Committee will forward motions to the Executive Standing Committee regarding collection of data for evidence-based decision making.</p>

Next Steps ?



MEMBERS OF THE AAC HAVE AN INITIAL BRAINSTORMING SESSION TO IDENTIFY PRIORITY THEMES FOR THE YEAR. EACH MEMBER WILL OUTLINE TOPICS THEY ARE INTERESTED IN PRIORITIZING FOR THE YEAR AND IDENTIFY GOALS AND DESIRED OUTCOMES FOR EACH TOPIC THEY BRING FORWARD.



ITEMS ALIGNED WITH THE COMMITTEE'S TERMS OF REFERENCE, ARE ORGANIZED INTO THE FORM OF A DRAFT WORK PLAN. IN THIS DRAFT WORK PLAN, ITEMS IDENTIFIED AS PRIORITIES WILL BE HIGHLIGHTED WITH POTENTIAL ACTIONS IDENTIFIED BY THE COMMITTEE AT THE BRAINSTORMING SESSION. (INCLUDE AN OVERVIEW OF PRIORITIES THAT MAY NOT BE IN SCOPE FOR THE COMMITTEE BASED ON THE TERMS OF REFERENCE.)



THE COMMITTEE WILL REVIEW THE DRAFT WORK PLAN, AND VOTE ON PRIORITY ITEMS FOR INCLUSION IN THE WORK PLAN. THE COMMITTEE WILL ALSO FINALIZE GOALS AND DESIRED OUTCOMES, WITH THE HOPE OF APPROVING THE WORK PLAN AT THIS MEETING.



THE WORK PLAN WILL BE SENT TO COUNCIL FOR DISCUSSION/APPROVAL.



Built Environment Accessibility Standard

Overview

The Built Environment Accessibility Standard is now law in Nova Scotia.

The Built Environment Accessibility Standard is the first accessibility standard to become law in Nova Scotia.

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

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

Making our province accessible means making sure everyone is included in all aspects of everyday life.

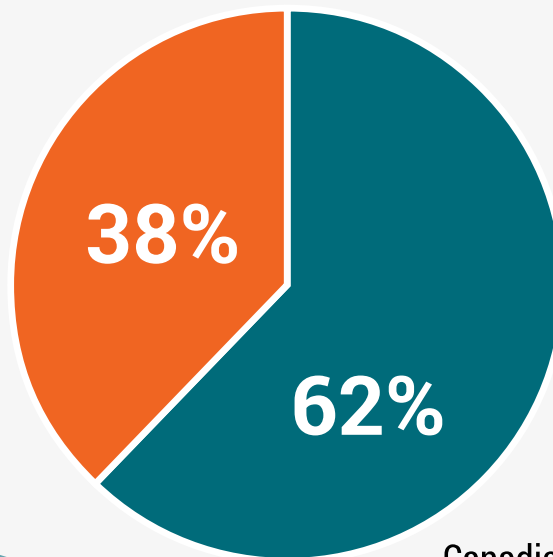
**This document is for information purposes only.
This is not legal advice and should be read
together with the regulations under the
Nova Scotia Accessibility Act.**



In Nova Scotia, the built environment is on the traditional territory of the Mi'kmaq people. We are all treaty people.

To learn more about the Mi'kmaq and our treaty relationship visit NovaScotia.ca/Treaty-Education

Quick fact: Nova Scotia has the highest rate of disability in Canada with 38% of Nova Scotians ages 15 and older identifying as having one or more disability.



Canadian Survey on Disability (2022)



Learn more about disabilities and barriers. Visit Accessible.NovaScotia.ca/disabilities-and-barriers

Nova Scotia Accessibility Act

Nova Scotia's [Accessibility Act](#) sets a goal of an accessible Nova Scotia by 2030.

The Act outlines that accessibility will be achieved by preventing and removing barriers that disable people with respect to the following areas:



- built environment



- education



- employment



- goods and services



- information and communications



- public transportation



Accessibility standards are an important tool to help create an accessible province.

About the Standard

An accessibility standard is a set of regulations under the Accessibility Act with the purpose of preventing and removing barriers that people with disabilities face. The regulations outline rights and create duties, obligations, and responsibilities for organizations.

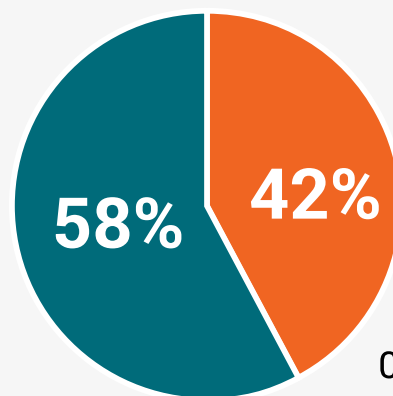
The Built Environment Accessibility Standard introduces two new types of requirements for organizations:

- 1. technical design requirements**
where and how infrastructure is built
- 2. accessibility planning**
plans that must be created about accessibility in the built environment



The full Built Environment Accessibility Standard regulations are available at NovaScotia.ca/accessibility/built-environment

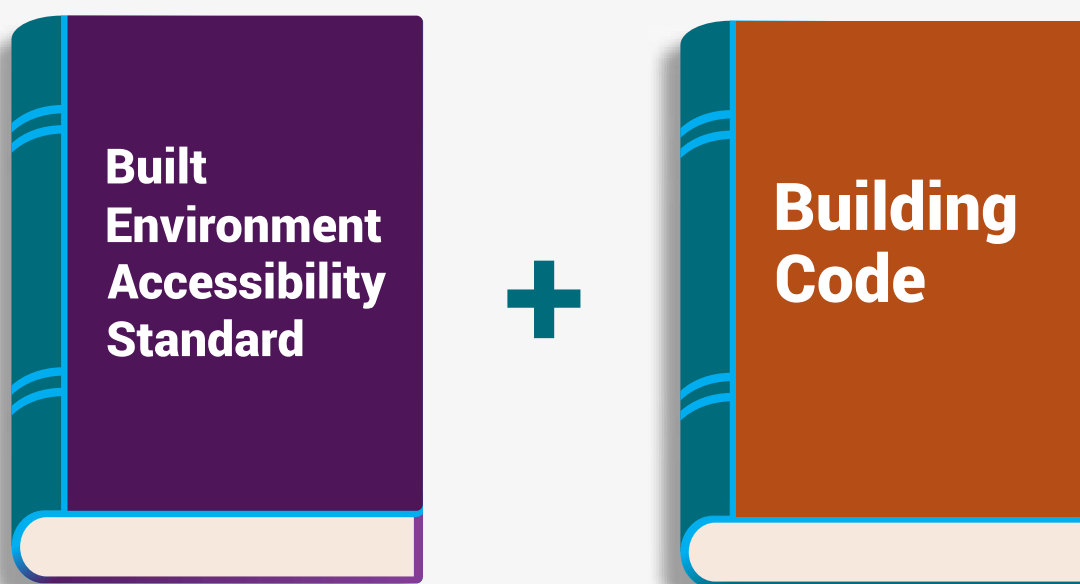
Quick fact: more than 58% of Nova Scotians with disabilities report experiencing barriers to the built environment.



Canadian Survey on Disability (2022)

Is the standard different from the Building Code?

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



Together, the Nova Scotia Building Code and the Built Environment Accessibility Standard will make a more accessible built environment in Nova Scotia.

The accessibility of most parts of buildings is covered by the [Nova Scotia Building Code Regulations](#).

How was the standard made?

The standard was developed by the Nova Scotia Accessibility Directorate (Department of Justice) in collaboration with other government departments using the recommendations of the Accessibility Advisory Board. The recommendations were prepared by a group of people including persons with disabilities, representatives from impacted sectors (e.g., municipalities), and subject matter experts using best practices in accessible design for the built environment. The proposed standard was shared with the public for comment before being finalized and enacted.

Nothing About Us Without Us means people with disabilities are involved throughout the standard development process.

Nova Scotia has committed to developing accessibility standards in six areas.

Learn more about other accessibility standards. Visit [Accessible.NovaScotia.ca/creating-accessibility-standards](https://accessible.novascotia.ca/creating-accessibility-standards)

Compliance

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



Who must follow the standard?

The Built Environment Accessibility Standard Regulations apply to:

- Government of Nova Scotia
- Prescribed Public Sector Bodies
- Organizations that own, operate, or maintain the built environment (including businesses and community organizations)

Prescribed public sector bodies are public sector entities that are prescribed by regulation under the Accessibility Act. This includes organizations such as municipalities and villages, post secondary institutions, regional centres for education, regional libraries, health authority, and more.

When do organizations need to comply with the standard?

The Built Environment Accessibility Standard Regulations are now law.

Government recognizes that organizations need time to learn about their responsibilities under the standard in order to comply. For this reason, compliance with the Built Environment Accessibility Standard Regulations will not be enforced until April 1, 2026.

Note: The Nova Scotia Building Code Regulations follow a separate enforcement process. All work requiring building permits under the Nova Scotia Building Code Regulations must meet the requirements of the Building Code.

How will compliance be enforced?

The standard is law. Not following the rules set out in the standard is called non-compliance. After April 1, 2026, people in Nova Scotia may make complaints about non-compliance.

The Accessibility Directorate will work with organizations to support them in understanding and complying with the standard. The Accessibility Act Compliance Framework outlines the steps to achieve compliance. To learn more, visit NovaScotia.ca/accessibility/compliance

Organizations may also request a proactive inspection to make sure they are meeting the requirements of the standard.

Updating Existing Infrastructure

The Built Environment Accessibility Standard mostly applies to new construction. There are some requirements for redeveloped infrastructure as specified in the regulations. The standard will prevent new barriers from being created.

The standard does not require all existing buildings and spaces to be retrofitted. Many organizations will choose to go beyond the minimum requirements of the accessibility standard.

Updating infrastructure is crucial to becoming an accessible province.





Addressing existing barriers in the built environment:

1. Accessibility Plans

Government and Prescribed Public Sector Bodies are required to develop accessibility plans to address accessibility for their organizations. Accessibility plans may identify barriers in the built environment and commit to removing them.

2. Guidelines

The Accessibility Directorate is releasing accessibility guidelines for the built environment in addition to what is required in the standard. Guidelines will include best practices that organizations are encouraged to follow. Guidelines are not mandatory.

Resources

Resources are being developed to support organizations to understand the standard. To learn more about the Built Environment Accessibility Standard, visit NovaScotia.ca/accessibility/built-environment



Your organization may be eligible to apply for a grant to help with the costs of becoming accessible.

[Accessibility grant opportunities for businesses](#)

[Accessibility grant opportunities for community organizations](#)

For general resources on accessibility, visit Accessible.NovaScotia.ca

Contact Us

Nova Scotia Accessibility Directorate

Department of Justice

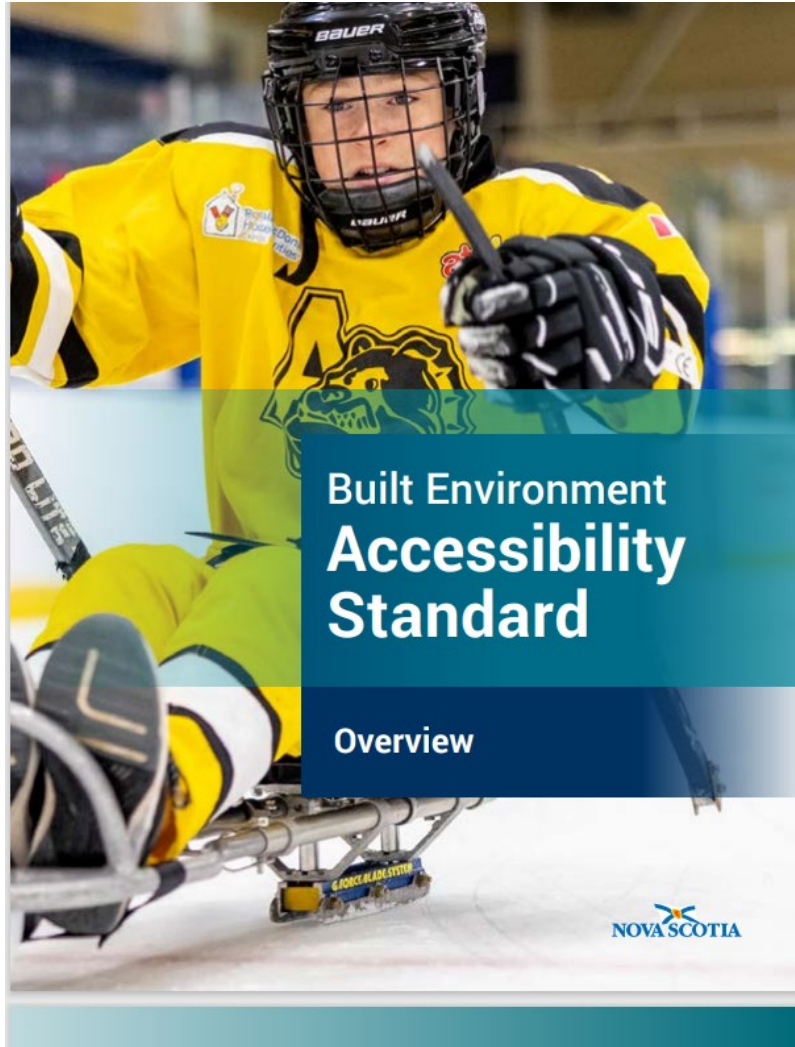
Phone: 902-424-8280

Website: <https://novascotia.ca/accessibility/>

Email: accessibility@novascotia.ca



Access includes everyone.



Built Environment Accessibility Standard

Overview

NOVA SCOTIA

Nova Scotia Accessibility Act

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The Act outlines that accessibility will be achieved by preventing and removing barriers that disable people with respect to the following areas:



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- education



- employment



- goods and services



- information and communications



- public transportation



Accessibility standards are an important tool to help create an accessible province.

Background

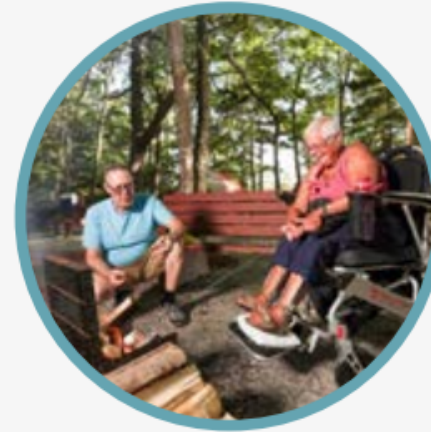
- The Built Environment Accessibility Standard is the first accessibility standard to become law in Nova Scotia.
- The built environment means human-made spaces in which people live, work, learn, and play. This includes inside and outside of buildings as well as outdoor spaces such as trails, parks, and beaches.
- Organizations in Nova Scotia have new requirements for designing, constructing, and managing their built environments in accessible ways.
- Making our province accessible means making sure everyone is included in all aspects of everyday life.

About the Standard

An accessibility standard is a set of regulations under the Accessibility Act with the purpose of preventing and removing barriers that people with disabilities face. The regulations outline rights and create duties, obligations, and responsibilities for organizations.

The Built Environment Accessibility Standard introduces two new types of requirements for organizations:

- 1. technical design requirements**
where and how infrastructure is built
- 2. accessibility planning**
plans that must be created about accessibility in the built environment



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How was the standard made?

The standard was developed by the Nova Scotia Accessibility Directorate (Department of Justice) in collaboration with other government departments using the recommendations of the Accessibility Advisory Board. The recommendations were prepared by a group of people including persons with disabilities, representatives from impacted sectors (e.g., municipalities), and subject matter experts using best practices in accessible design for the built environment. The proposed standard was shared with the public for comment before being finalized and enacted.

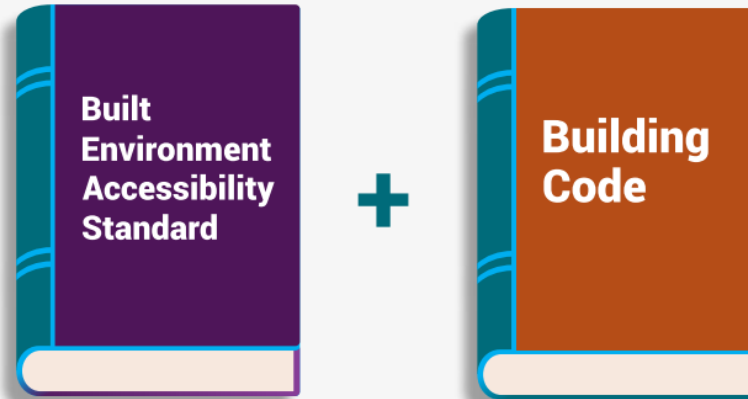
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Compliance

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



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When do organizations need to comply with the standard?

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How will compliance be enforced?

The standard is law. Not following the rules set out in the standard is called non-compliance. After April 1, 2026, people in Nova Scotia may make complaints about non-compliance.

The Accessibility Directorate will work with organizations to support them in understanding and complying with the standard. The Accessibility Act Compliance Framework outlines the steps to achieve compliance. To learn more, visit NovaScotia.ca/accessibility/compliance

Updating Existing Infrastructure

The Built Environment Accessibility Standard mostly applies to new construction. There are some requirements for redeveloped infrastructure as specified in the regulations. The standard will prevent new barriers from being created.

The standard does not require all existing buildings and spaces to be retrofitted. Many organizations will choose to go beyond the minimum requirements of the accessibility standard.

**Updating infrastructure
is crucial to becoming
an accessible province.**



Addressing existing barriers in the built environment:

1. Accessibility Plans

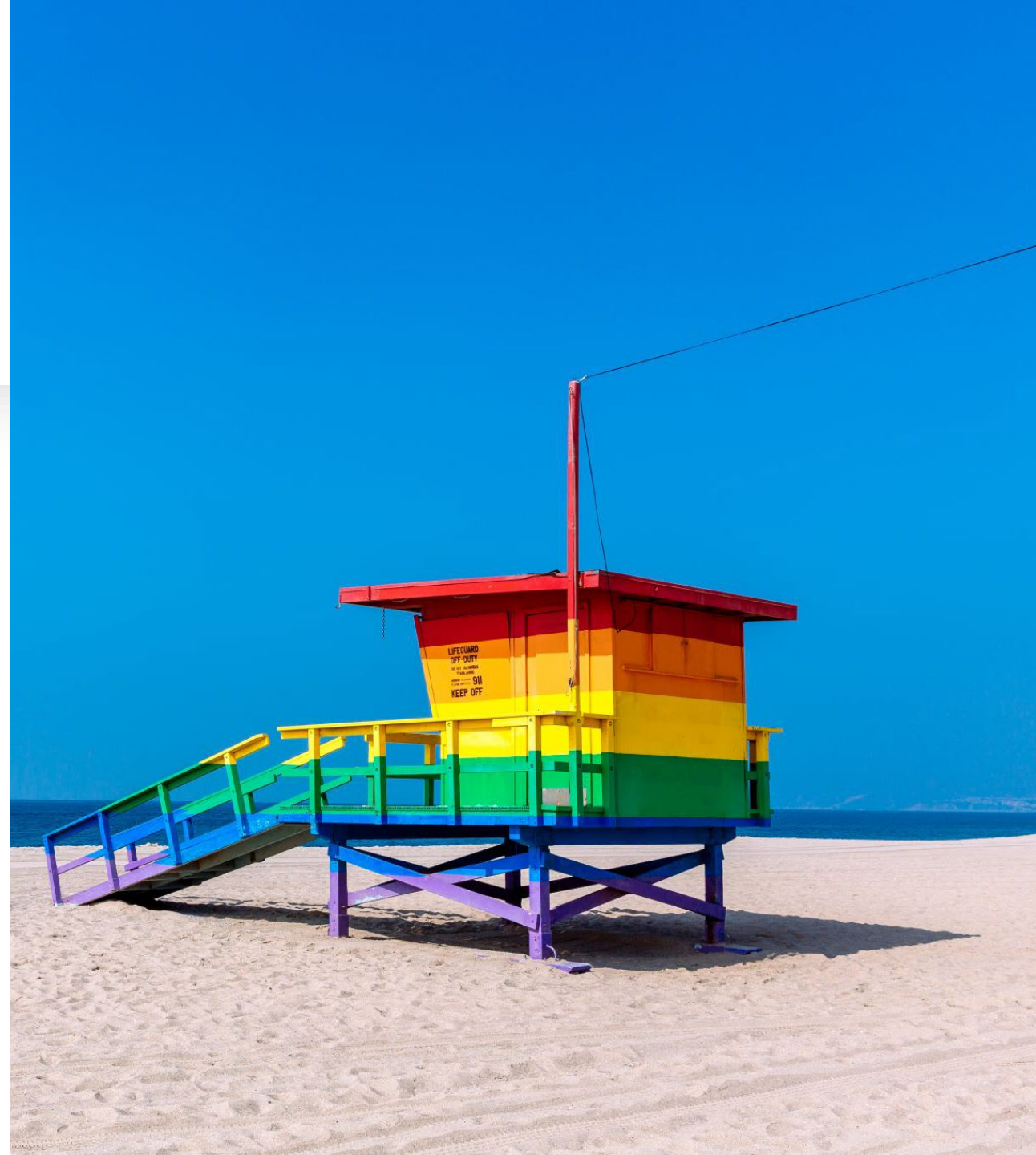
Government and Prescribed Public Sector Bodies are required to develop accessibility plans to address accessibility for their organizations. Accessibility plans may identify barriers in the built environment and commit to removing them.

2. Guidelines

The Accessibility Directorate is releasing accessibility guidelines for the built environment in addition to what is required in the standard. Guidelines will include best practices that organizations are encouraged to follow. Guidelines are not mandatory.

Examples of Built Environment Standards

- accessible parking space
- beach access route
- curb ramp
- campground or park
- outdoor classroom
- outdoor play space
- outdoor public eating area
- recreational trails
- barrier-free paths of travel
- sidewalks (including temporary pedestrian detour)



Working with Building Code

- Accessibility of buildings has been addressed through amendments to the Nova Scotia Building Code Regulations
 - Together, the Built Environment Accessibility Standard and the Nova Scotia Building Code will make a more accessible built environment in Nova Scotia
 - Guidelines for opportunities to go beyond code (pending release)
-
- Nova Scotia Fire Code continues to address fire safety as before
 - Built Environment as it relates to properties of the Government of Canada are not included in the Built Environment Standard. (National Parks etc.)