

Spring 2022

# Our Joint Accessibility Plan



The Municipality of the County of Kings, and the Villages of Aylesford, Canning, Cornwallis Square, Greenwood, Kingston, New Minas and Port Williams







## Accessibility Plan

Spring 2022

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Intelligent Futures and Level Playing Field.

### Prepared for:

The Municipality of the County of Kings, and the Villages of Aylesford, Canning, Cornwallis Square, Greenwood, Kingston, New Minas and Port Williams.





# Executive Summary

With the introduction of this Accessibility Plan, the Municipality of the County of Kings [The Municipality], and the Villages of Aylesford, Canning, Cornwallis Square, Greenwood, Kingston, New Minas and Port Williams [the Villages], commit to ensuring everyone has meaningful access, regardless of ability. As the first Accessibility Plan for the Municipality and the Villages, this document provides the strategic vision and detailed direction necessary to guide these communities towards an accessible future.

To do this, the Accessibility Plan provides a long-term vision, clear goals for each focus area, as well as measurable indicators. It also includes a detailed approach to implementation in the first three years, proposing 17 short-term actions to move the Municipality and the Villages forward.

## Vision

The Municipality and the Villages are dedicated to providing an inclusive, accessible community for all.

These communities strive to be welcoming and inclusionary to everyone, regardless of ability. Everyone is treated with dignity, with equal opportunities and meaningful access to make their own choices.

## 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 seven key focus areas to help guide action by all eight parties towards the vision:

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

Each of the seven 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 17 short-term actions for the Municipality and the Villages.



## Short Term Actions

Multiple actions were proposed by the public, literature, site assessments and staff feedback through the development of this plan. The initial 17 actions were selected using a series of criteria, found in section 4.1 of this plan, to establish a foundation for new accessibility actions. The following actions were identified as necessary to start in 2022, as their development will influence the development of other actions:

- Investigate and create a designated Accessibility Coordinator Position in the Municipality of the County of Kings.
  - Each party shall conduct individual accessibility audits of Municipal and Village buildings, parks, pathways, beaches, playgrounds and any other public area.
  - Each party will develop and administer new training offerings for staff, Municipal Council and Village Commissions specific to accessibility and disability issues.
- Other short-term actions for both the Municipality of the County of Kings and the Villages include:
- Review maintenance procedures in places with sidewalks and bus shelters (owned by one of the 8 parties).

- Complete a review of communications policies, procedures and practices to remove barriers. Include accessible design in strategies and brand guidelines.
- Review and modify hiring, funding evaluation, and procurement policies and procedures to prioritize accessibility and equitable opportunities for persons with disabilities.
- Review provincial customer service policy and further adopt an Accessible Customer Service Policy for the Municipality and the Villages.
- Deliver public-facing accessibility workshops in partnership with private entities committed to employment and awareness building.
- Each party shall, within their jurisdiction, review all transit stops, signage and pedestrian access elements to determine roles and responsibilities.
- Update Council and Village Commission procedures and engagement policies to provide accessible resources.
- Each party reviews current recreational programming and funding to programming to identify and propose accessible recreational programming options.
- Create a plan to help non-profits (particularly those responsible for playgrounds and public spaces, such as community halls) reach the agreed-upon plan goals.
- Review and amend all by-laws to include accessibility. An example could include the Municipal Vendor's by-law #90.
- Each party creates a priority upgrade matrix for Municipal and Village projects, including capital project spending, physical infrastructure, communications and information, awareness building, and more.
- Update existing websites to be accessible.
- Create an online and physical accessibility information resource to help people with disabilities access information for the Municipality and the Villages.
- Each party shall standardize their signage to include braille and design elements for those with invisible or cognitive disabilities.



# Welcome Message

On behalf of the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee [JAAC] for The Municipality of the County of Kings and the Villages of Aylesford, Canning, Cornwallis Square, Greenwood, Kingston, New Minas and Port Williams, I welcome you to read our first ever Joint Accessibility Plan. The JAAC, the Municipality and the Village have created this plan to ensure that all residents have fair and appropriate access to services and resources.

In 2017, The Province of Nova Scotia passed *The Accessibility Act*, the third provincial accessibility act in Canada. In accordance with this Act, The Municipality and the Villages created this plan, a stepping stone on the way to becoming a fully accessible province by 2030. The first part of creating this Accessibility Plan was the formation of the JAAC.

On March 19, 2021 the Municipality of the County of Kings and the Villages of Aylesford, Canning, Cornwallis Square, Greenwood, Kingston, New Minas and Port Williams came together to form the JAAC. In addition to Municipal and Village representatives, half of the JAAC is comprised of persons with disabilities or representatives from organizations representing persons with disabilities. The purpose of this committee is to provide advice to Municipal Council and the Village Commissions on identifying, eliminating and preventing barriers to access to municipal programs, services, initiatives and facilities by people living with disabilities. To start this process, we have played a pivotal role in developing this Accessibility Plan, and thank all of those who helped in its creation, including staff, stakeholders, and local community members.

In this Accessibility Plan creation process the Municipality and the Villages have heard from hundreds of local residents, business owners, stakeholders, and visitors. We've conducted assessments for dozens of physical locations, investigated print and online communications materials, and recorded best practices and policies necessary to making our communities as accessible as possible by 2030. All of these components are summarized in this document and its appendices.





The guiding vision for our Accessibility Plan is:

*The Municipality and the Villages are dedicated to providing an inclusive, accessible community for all.*

*Our communities are welcoming and include everyone, regardless of ability. Everyone is treated with dignity, with equal opportunities and meaningful access to make their own choices.*

To ensure this vision is met by 2030, this plan identifies a series of goal areas for improvement in our community, including: the built environment, recreation, awareness, goods and services, information and communication, employment, and transportation. This document is intended to be updated every 3 years, to ensure it is consistent with updated Provincial legislation as the JAAC, the Municipality, and the Villages work together to make an accessible Nova Scotia. I encourage you to read this plan as a 'living document,' which is subject to change as new opportunities and challenges come to light within our communities and the province.

To ensure that we are able to start improving access in our communities immediately, we have prioritized 17 actions for the first three years after approval. Actions were selected if they were achievable in the next three years, or will they make a sizable difference for future actions necessary to make the area accessible by 2030.

Thank you to everyone who helped to make this Accessibility Plan possible. I am particularly grateful to my fellow JAAC members, our community members and to our public stakeholders who helped make this plan possible. We are proud of this Accessibility Plan, and look forward to continuing its development, as we strive to become fully accessible by 2030.

**Mary Fox, Chair of the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee**

*on behalf of the Municipality, the Villages and the citizen members of the JAAC: Alex Leblanc, Charlene Park, Crystal McCormack, Dino Wamboldt, Doug Ralph, Kathleen Purdy, and Patricia Norris*





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# 1.0 Introduction

## 1.1 Statement of Commitment

The Municipality of the County of Kings [Municipality] and the Villages of Aylesford, Canning, Cornwallis Square, Greenwood, Kingston, New Minas and Port Williams [the Villages] commit to providing meaningful access to everyone regardless of ability. These parties commit to ensuring residents, workers and visitors have equal opportunities and can experience a high quality of life.

The Municipality and the Villages commit to ensuring their processes, policies, information, services, infrastructure, transportation, buildings and recreational programming support the following values:

- **Dignity:** Everyone is treated with respect and dignity
- **Meaningful Access:** Everyone's unique access needs are accommodated
- **Inclusion:** Communities include and welcome everyone
- **Equitable opportunity:** Providing support to ensure everyone can fully participate in society

By encouraging each other to explore and solve accessibility barriers, these communities aim to meet and exceed *Nova Scotia's Accessibility Act [Act]* requirements for 2030 and beyond.

## 1.2 About the Accessibility Plan

The Municipality and the Villages recognize that accessibility is a human right. The Act has been mandated to these organizations to make their built environment and services accessible to everyone by 2030. This requires avoiding and removing barriers that restrict people from fully participating in society.

This Accessibility Plan provides a long-term vision for the Municipality and the Villages moving forward. This approach is highlighted through clear goals for each focus area, measurable indicators, and 17 short-term actions to be implemented over the next three years.

### 1.2.1 About the Municipality and the Villages

The Municipality, including the Villages, has a population of 47,918 residents, making it the third largest municipal unit in Nova Scotia. The Municipality includes the seven Villages, and large rural and coastal areas. The region is supported by robust agricultural, seafood and manufacturing sectors. It is further enhanced by Acadia University, a campus of the Nova Scotia Community College, and Canadian Forces Base 14-Wing Greenwood.

The seven Villages within the Municipality include Aylesford, Canning, Cornwallis Square, Greenwood, Kingston, New Minas and Port Williams. These Villages





each have their own Village Commissions and may own infrastructure. Their assets are recorded in the overviews found in section 3.0.

The Kings Transit Authority [KTA] serves the Municipality and the Villages, providing fixed transit services along the Valley corridor (primarily following the No. 1 Highway). As the Municipality is a major funder for this service, the Plan also includes references to transit. Fixed route service is provided by the KTA which is a municipal corporate owned by the Towns of Wolfville, Kentville, Berwick and the Municipality. Also, both the Municipality and some of the Villages do own some transit shelters, in addition to Atcom Outdoor. The transit stops also abut roads and/or sidewalks that are owned by other entities and require coordination with the road authority to improve.

### 1.2.2 The Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee

This plan was created with the involvement of the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee [JAAC]. The first meeting of this citizen, Council and Commissioner committee was June 2, 2021. It has 16 voting members and includes:

- One member of Municipal Council (who currently serves as a KTA Board member)
- One member from each of the seven Village Commissions

- Eight members of the public who either live with disabilities, or who work or volunteer with organizations that work with people living with disabilities

The JAAC's purpose is to provide advice to the Municipal Council, the Village Commissions and the Kings Transit Authority. They also identify, help prevent and work to eliminate barriers to access in Municipal and Village programs, services, initiatives and facilities for people living with disabilities.

### 1.2.3 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 Kings and the Villages of Aylesford, Canning, Cornwallis Square, Greenwood, Kingston, New Minas and Port Williams.



### 1.3 Plan Methodology

This plan was developed through a series of research, engagement, staff and committee workshops, and site assessments. Some of the Plan’s inputs include:

**Site assessments:** A sample of site assessments were conducted by the project’s Accessibility Consultant, Level Playing Field. Site visits included: site access, including accessible parking spaces and curb cuts to entrances, sidewalks, trails, parks, public transit, libraries, recreation and community centres, and some Municipal and Village buildings. Assessments utilized visual inspection, walking, and using a mobilized scooter to traverse the various locations. Findings from this assessment can be found in Appendix B, Site Assessment Report.

**Public Engagement:** From October 11 to November 12, 2021, public engagement was undertaken which asked stakeholders and residents about current barriers, achievements, and ideas for accessibility. Throughout the course of the project, 348 public, stakeholder, staff, committee, and commission participants shared their feedback. To share questions, comments and insights, members of the public were encouraged to: attend a JAAC meeting, provide feedback at one of the three pop-up engagements, provide feedback online via the project website, fill out two online or paper surveys, and/or have a user experience interview with us to share their lived experiences. More information, and engagement findings can be found in Appendix D: Internal Research and Engagement Report.

**Policy Direction:** Provincial policies were investigated to understand what the Municipality and the Villages are required to do from a provincial standpoint. More information about the findings and recommendations can be found in this plan’s policy sections, as well as in Appendix D: Internal Research and Engagement Report.

**Case Study Research:** Through this project, 6 case studies were documented from across Canada to help inform this plan. These case studies are documented in Appendix D: Internal Research and Engagement Report.

**Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee:** The JAAC has provided feedback throughout the development of this plan. Many of the components of this plan, including: the vision, statement of commitment, focus area commitments, and proposed short-term actions were either informed directly, or revised by the JAAC. More information can be found on the JAAC webpage, and in the JAAC’s minutes.

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





## 1.4 Glossary of Terms

The following definitions are provided for clarification. Accessibility-specific definitions are directly from or are adapted from definitions in the *Accessible Canada Act*, or the Canadian Standards Association CSA B651HB-18.

**Accessibility Coordinator**- A staff member of the Municipality who provides support services to the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee and oversees the implementation of the plan.

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

**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** – Anything physical, architectural, technological or attitudinal, based on information or communications or 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.

**Blended transition** – 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** – The contrast between colours of 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 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 participation in society.

**Glare** – excessive reflection of light from a surface.



**Goods and Services** – All tangible and in-tangible items or amenities that consumers purchase or receive independently or receive through the government. For the purpose of this document, goods and services will refer to government-owned or contracted services.

**Illumination** – the intensity of light on a surface or in a space, measured in lux (lx). 1 lux = 1 Lumen / m<sup>2</sup>

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

**Municipality** – a governmental body established under the *Municipal Government Act* that provides local government for rural areas outside the three incorporated towns. Municipality in this document refers to the Municipality of the County of Kings.

**Ramp** – 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 local level government that has a commission established under the *Municipal Government Act* for the purpose of providing municipal services to a defined area within the 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 Municipality and the Villages are dedicated to providing an inclusive, accessible community for all.

Their communities are welcoming and inclusive of everyone, regardless of ability. Everyone is treated with dignity, and has equal opportunity and meaningful access to make their own choices.

## 2.2 Governance Structure

Through the implementation of this plan, the Municipality and the Villages will all ensure they each take steps to improve local accessibility. Change will occur as more information becomes available and more accessibility actions are undertaken. Three required actions for the continued improvement of overall accessibility within the Municipality and the Villages include:

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

## 2.3 Forces For and Against Accessibility

In a series of Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee sessions, the project team asked committee members to brainstorm about the forces working for and against accessibility. These forces are aspects of the community that will influence the development and uptake of this plan.

### Forces working for accessibility

- An aging population that considers future barriers for themselves
- Provincial mandate to improve accessibility with potential for future funding
- Changing attitudes in the Municipality and the Villages to support aging well and leading a healthy lifestyle



- A caring and helpful community with a desire to be inclusive and a belief that everyone is important
- Opportunities to further build better standards and facilities for people with disabilities or the aging population
- Parallel focuses on broader diversity and inclusion initiatives and accessibility plans at the regional level, to make the Municipality and the Villages more accessible and comfortable for everyone
- Provincial, Federal and other grants and funding opportunities
- The Municipality has an opportunity to work closely with the Villages
- Access to Acadia University, which may be a resource for accessibility studies
- Accessibility is receiving more attention, and there is an opportunity to build on that
- The contribution of the JAAC and the plan itself
- There is physical space to make necessary changes like adding ramps
- The variety of community advocacy groups
- Community pride in being leaders in accessibility

#### **Forces working against accessibility**

- Lack of funding to implement accessibility retrofits and changes
- Specialized companies are needed for building modifications
- Limited empathy, education and understanding of accessibility barriers, issues and accessible design
- The Municipality and the Villages must abide by Legislation that may not reflect evolving accessibility standards
- Lack of available training for staff to feel confident meeting the needs of the diverse disability community
- Inconsistent accessibility requirements and specifications among by-laws
- Lack of powerful allies to champion cause
- Physical retrofit restraints in historical buildings
- Limited understanding from the communities that accessibility is a priority
- Lack of motivation to act
- The dispersed geography of the County

*Forces for and against accessibility speak to large-scale issues that affect accessibility in the Municipality and the Villages, and control the 'sandbox' that the actions in this plan are able to work within.*

## 2.4 Our Communities' Priorities

This section is an overall summary of input received across themes, primarily from community engagement. In our phase one online and print survey, the project team asked participants to indicate how accessible different elements in their community were. The results are summarized in the proportional graph on the following page.

Please note that “Not Applicable” indicates that the specific survey element was not relevant, was not appropriate, or did not apply to the particular respondent.

Elements that were reported as being the least accessible in the Municipality, the Villages which includes the Kings Transit Authority were:

- Finding local accessibility resources
- Moving along roads and sidewalks
- Accessing and reading local government documents
- Local transit service stop locations and access

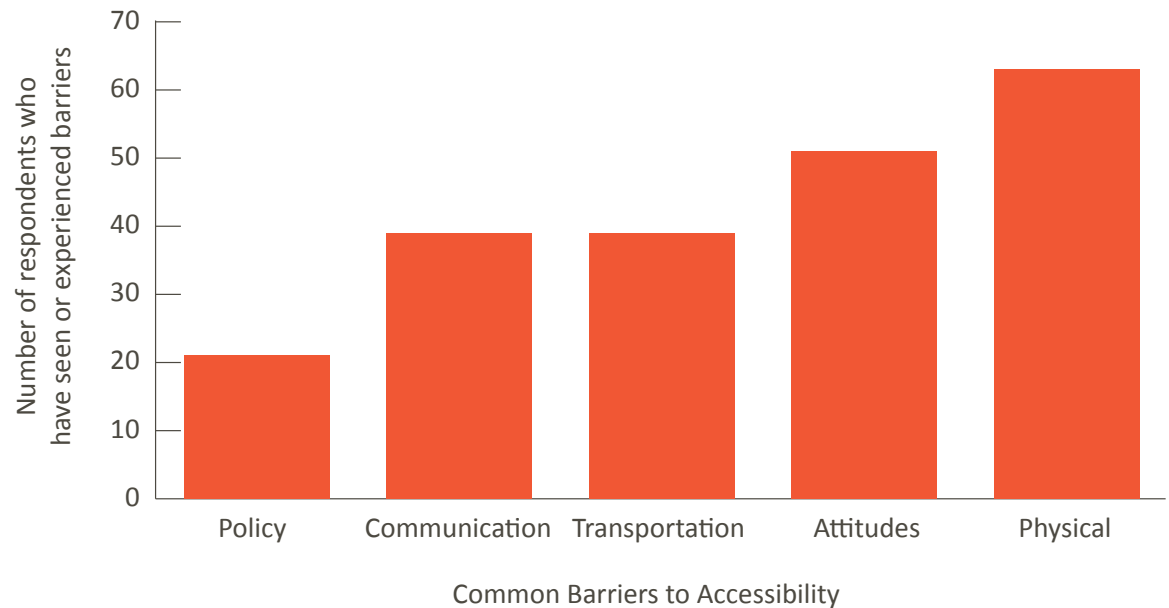
The elements reported as the most accessible include:

- Parking at Municipal and Village Facilities (for example, parks, trails, and open spaces)
- Public facilities (for example, community centres)
- Parks, trails and open spaces
- Public events

Survey participants were also asked to select all of the accessibility barriers they have seen or experienced in the Municipality, the Villages or the Kings Transit Authority. Results for this question can be seen below.

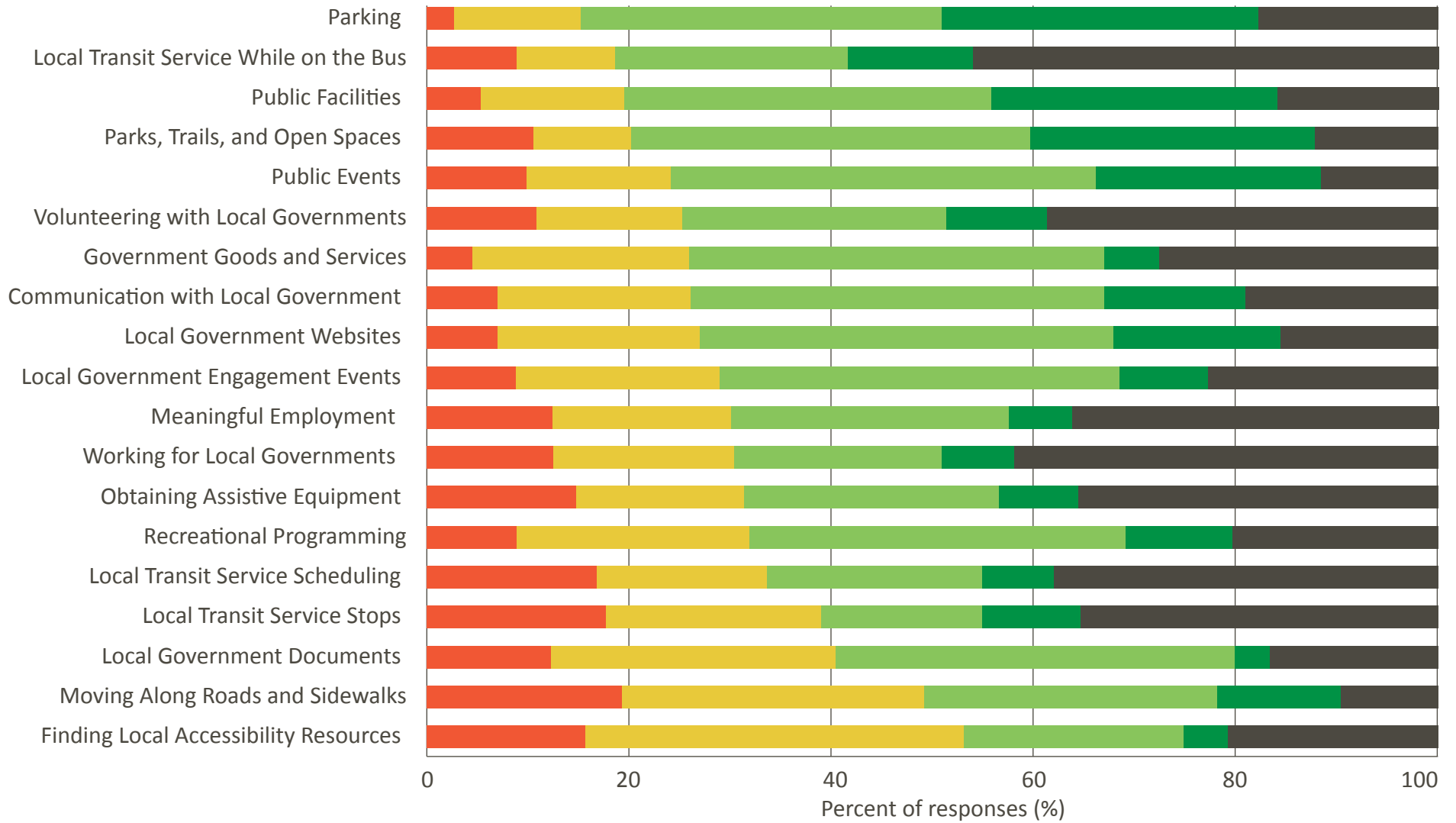
Physical barriers were the most frequently identified among survey participants, followed by attitudes, communication, and transportation. It was anticipated that fewer survey participants would have interacted directly with policy documents compared to other barrier areas.

Survey Results: Prevalence of Accessibility Barriers Locally





## Survey Results: Accessibility Ratings



■ Very Inaccessible   
 ■ Somewhat Inaccessible   
 ■ Somewhat Accessible   
 ■ Very Accessible   
 ■ Not Applicable

## 3.0 Areas of Focus

The Accessibility Plan is supported by seven key focus areas:

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

Each of these areas is informed by stakeholder input, site assessments and supporting research. Each area of focus also comprises a commitment, local starting points, policies and indicators:

**The Commitment:** An ideal state for the focus area by 2030. Each commitment interprets the high-level vision through each focus area to provide an ideal, specific state.

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

- **Overview:** A discussion of the current assets, systems and services that are provided by the Municipality, the Villages and the KTA
- **Achievements:** Positive moves now being made towards greater accessibility
- **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 across the Municipality, and the Villages. For instance, Council or Commission reports may arrive with an evaluation as to how the policy statements are supported by an item before Council or a Village Commission.

**Indicators:** A measure of accessibility performance that can be tracked over time. These indicators will be gathered and monitored by each Village and the Municipality as actions are implemented and reported to the JAAC as updates. Targets can be set once the Municipality and the Villages are aware of an indicator's current status.



# Goods and Services



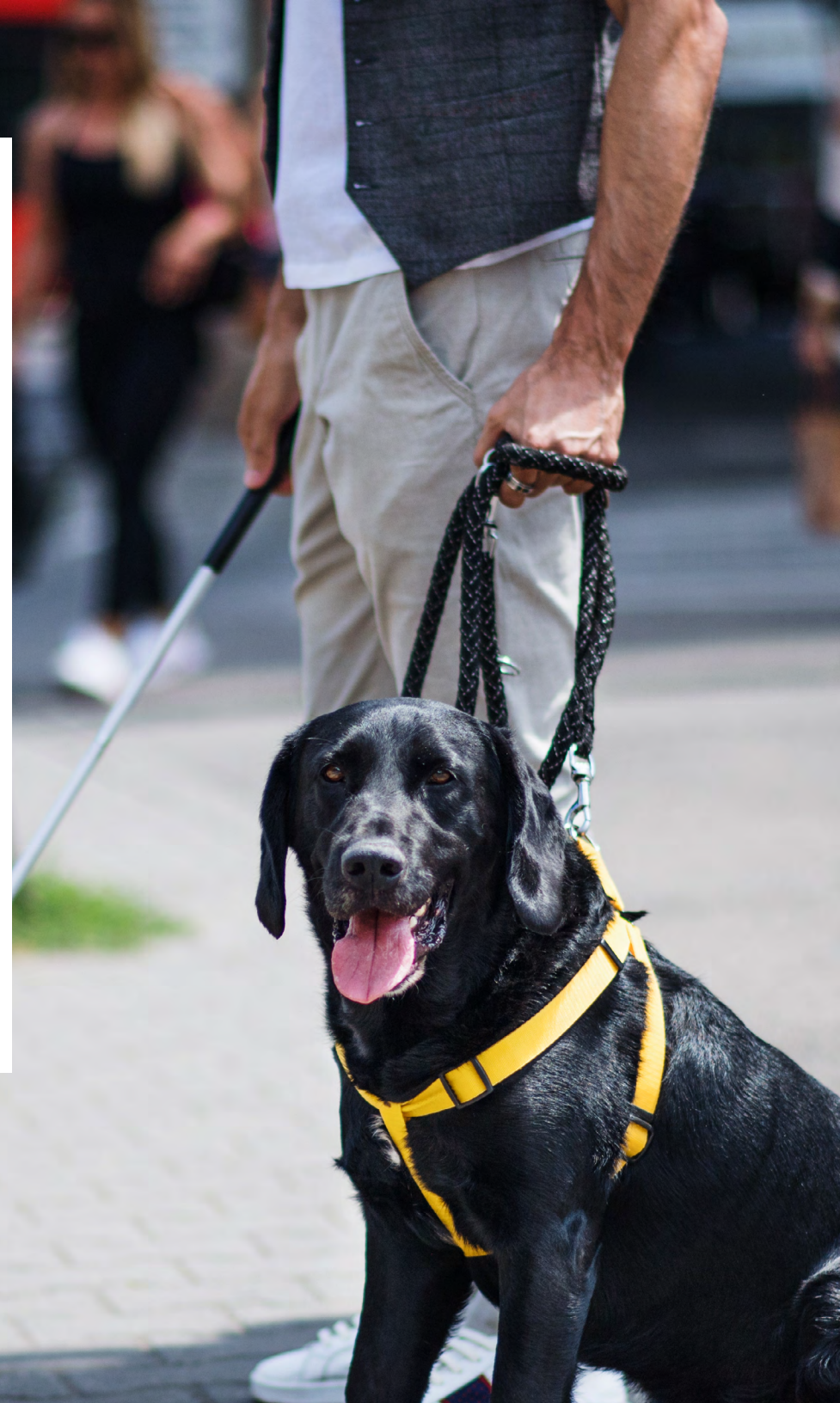
This section discusses how goods and service providers interact with and are trained to serve persons with disabilities. It also speaks to how persons with disabilities access goods and services, including committees and council, and other services listed in section in 3.1.2.

## 3.1.1. The Commitment

People with all abilities have meaningful access to the goods and services provided by the Municipality and the Villages.

### Supporting Elements:

- Council and Village Commission meetings
- Municipal and Village services





## 3.1.2. The Starting Point: Goods and Services

### 3.1.2.1. Overview

The goods and services provision varies from Municipality to Village to KTA.

The Municipality provides services including:

- Road maintenance on Municipal roads
- Sidewalk maintenance for locations outside of Village boundaries
- Parks and recreation services
- Animal control services
- Sewer and water utilities
- Building and Enforcement services
- Civic addressing
- Fire and emergency services
- Community grants and funding
- Planning and Development services
- Police services
- Waste management
- Kings Transit Authority

Village responsibilities vary, but often include:

- Sidewalk maintenance within their borders
- Elections and voting for their respective Village Commissions

Accessibility Plan

- Recreation program provision and bookings
- Care of respective recreational areas
- Water and/or sewer central services
- Fire department, fire hall or community space
- Sidewalk ownership and maintenance

The KTA is responsible for the maintenance of their fleet, communications and the distribution of transit service, including the bus stops.

### 3.1.2.2. Achievements

- Municipal Hearing Loop installation located in the Council Chambers of the Municipal administration complex
- Front-line staff at the Municipality have a base sense of accessibility awareness in customer service
- Municipality provides inspections (building and fire) that ensure the base level of mandated accessibility is being met as per the Nova Scotia Building Code Regulations and Fire Code Act
- The 2021 Active Transportation Master Plan identifies a winter maintenance strategy to be created as an overall network improvement area, including accessibility considerations



*There are accessible components to the front entrance to the Canning Fire Hall.*



- The KTA is initiating the mail-out of passes and tickets for those unable to purchase tickets at physical locations

### 3.1.2.3. Barriers

- Parking, entrances and wayfinding were noted as barriers to goods and services- Examples include a lack of accessible stalls adjacent to a building entrance, or a lack of accessible door hardware in entrances
- Signage font type, font size, branding and inclusion of tactile characters and Braille is not standardized; some building and street signage is not always large enough to be read from a distance
- Lack of provisions for American Sign Language [ASL] support to ensure all people have equal access to goods and services
- Lack of understanding and clarity on

accessibility among staff, council and the commissions when providing accessible services and programming

- Inconsistent access to high-speed internet through the community
- Some services are dependent on the internet within the Municipality
- Struggles with funding, specifically for those with physical disabilities

### 3.1.3. Policies

The Municipality and the Villages will:

- Develop policies and procedures for snow removal and snow storage (see Active Transportation Plan)
- Deliver all goods and services without any ability-based bias

### 3.1.4. Indicators

- The Municipality and the Villages will monitor the following items related to Goods and Service provision:
- Number of investigations and complaints due to accessibility concerns
- Percentage of meetings that are recorded with closed captioning online, and which have screen reader compatible documentation
- Accessibility rating of goods and services provided by the Municipality and the Villages- Consider monitoring through a citizen satisfaction survey, or an online poll

*For more information on specific aspects of Goods and Services please see the project's site plan assessment in Appendix B, and public feedback in Appendix D.*



*Village of Greenwood office  
with inaccessible entry*



# Information and Communications



This section discusses how the Municipality and the Villages distribute information and communications to everyone, including to persons with disabilities.

## 3.2.1. The Commitment

Everyone can meaningfully access, understand and share the information provided by the Municipality and the Villages. Each of the parties in the plan continue to take steps to expand outreach and connections in order to further advocate for accessibility awareness.

### Supporting Elements:

- Public policies and reports
- Websites and communications materials
- Engagement methods and locations





## 3.2.2. The Starting Point: Information & Communications

### 3.2.2.1. Overview

The Municipality and the Villages have differing levels of information and communication materials available. For the Municipality, there is a brand strategy in development, and a two-page overview is available which does not currently include accessibility considerations. A municipal engagement strategy was developed in 2017, and lists inclusivity and accessibility as its first core values.

The Municipality and the Villages of Aylesford, Kingston, Canning, Greenwood, New Minas, Cornwallis Square and Port Williams each have their own websites for information and communications. The most commonly used platform by these groups is Facebook, with five parties having their own Facebook pages.

The Villages and the Municipality use many local communications channels, including:

- Valley Journal-Advertiser
- Annapolis Valley Register
- The Valley Wire
- The Chronicle Herald
- 14 Wing Greenwood's Aurora newspaper
- Magic 94.9/ AVR 97.7
- Rewind 89.3
- The Canning Gazette
- Grapevine Publishing

### 3.2.2.2. Achievements

- A variety of communications channels are currently used, including radio, social media and websites
- Microphone system is used in Council Chambers, at the Municipal administration Complex, for all meetings
- Some videos, public meetings and presentations are uploaded to YouTube, and include closed captioning
- The Municipality has a bi-annual print newsletter delivered to all taxpayers to ensure residents are informed
- Party district meetings are held in accessible halls
- Ongoing incentives are reported in real time to social media
- Funding grants are provided to non-profit organizations to support programming (for example, playgrounds)
- The Municipality offers hybrid meetings as an in-person alternative
- Committee materials include increased font size for minutes and emails



*Example of a high-contrast sign found in New Minas' Jones Park*

- Ongoing communication between the Municipality and Village parties to ensure awareness and transparency for the goals and objectives of the JAAC and the Accessibility Plan

**3.2.2.3. Barriers**

- Currently there are no publicly available American Sign Language [ASL] supports for public meetings
- There is inconsistency across the Municipality and the Villages for audio and visual recordings of committees, Council, and Village Commission meetings

**3.2.3. Policies**

The Municipality and the Villages will each:

- Provide information in an accessible, customized format or with communication

support (ASL interpreters, oral translators and real-time captioning)

- Ensure all digital materials are made accessible for all ages and abilities
- Hold all in-person public meetings in barrier-free spaces, when possible, given community centres are not owned by the Municipality or the Villages

**3.2.4. Indicators**

The Municipality and the Villages will monitor the following items related to Information and Communications:

- Percentage of public communications that are accessible
- Number of websites that have links to accessible resources

- Percentage of web pages that meet accessibility standards
- Accessible space/database website traffic

*For more information on specific aspects of Information and Communications please see the project’s site plan assessment in Appendix B, and public feedback in Appendix D.*



*Engagement for the Accessibility Plan held in a low-barrier public space*



# Transportation



This section discusses transportation accessibility. Much of this section speaks to the Kings Transit Authority (KTA), which is a municipal corporation. The Municipality provides funding to the KTA and serves on the corporation's Board of Directors.

## 3.3.1. The Commitment

Everyone is able to move throughout the Municipality and the Villages to get where they need to go, when they need to get there.

### Supporting Elements:

- Public transportation buses, stops, network and scheduling
- Alternative modes of transportation (for example, taxi, rideshare, active transportation)
- Maintenance and snow removal (for example, snow removal from sidewalks, bus stops)
- Transit communications, stop location and information





### 3.3.2. The Starting Point: Transportation

#### 3.3.2.1. Overview

The Kings Transit Authority (KTA) is a municipal corporation that supplies fixed transit services along the Valley corridor (primarily following the No. 1 Highway). Service is based out of a facility located in New Minas. The fleet consists of 12 buses, including four which run in the Municipality's core area. There are approximately 250 bus stops in total.

Bus shelters for the KTA are primarily owned by an external advertising agency, Atcom Outdoor Advertising Inc. (12 are reported on their website for Kings County). Other bus shelter ownership will be clarified when pursuing Action 9, which is described in detail in Appendix A.

The KTA is expected to undergo a multi-year transportation study to inform their future transit service delivery. It is understood that future rebranding efforts, along with other guiding documentation, will be updated in alignment with this transportation study.

Kings Point to Point [KPPT] is a community-based, non-profit charitable organization offering accessible transportation services to all residents of Kings County who are in need of transportation. Priority is placed on seniors and those with accessibility challenges. The

Municipality of the County of Kings is one of five sponsors for this service, and the KTA is a supporter.

Active and car-oriented transportation infrastructure and objectives are documented in the built environment section below.

#### 3.3.2.2. Achievements

- Some accessible transit stops provide covered rest areas and benches
- Buses are equipped with appropriate ramps, tie-downs and kneeling capabilities to accommodate all users
- Current communication channels (website, email lists, social media) update users on all buses with service news, including cancellations and delays
- Kings' Point-to-Point service's availability and accessibility

#### 3.3.2.3. Barriers

- The KTA does not provide transit stop coverage for all of the villages within Kings County
- Buses are not approachable for individuals with sensory issues due to noise levels and often a lack of personal support

*Kings Transit Authority Low floor buses  
Source: Kings Transit Authority, 2020*





- The lack of accessible pathways and sidewalks with appropriate curb cuts and tactile indicators makes some transit stops inaccessible. Some stops require a culvert to be installed over the existing ditch on Provincial roads in order for improved accessibility
- Inflexible transit schedule with limited bus service frequency
- Lack of transit stop signage
- The cost and reliability of using Kings' Point-to-Point
- Costs for everyday transit services are high
- Lack of rural transportation access

### 3.3.3. Policies

The Municipality and the Villages will work with the KTA to:

- Ensure that no person is denied access to a transit service due to a disability
- Ensure that no person is charged any additional fees for bus service due to a disability
- Ensure that, whenever possible, any event held by the Municipality or the Villages will be conducted at times that allow anyone with a disability to arrange alternate transportation methods, if needed

### 3.3.4. Indicators

The Municipality and the Villages will work with KTA, to work toward the ability to monitor the following items related to Transportation provision:

- Number of accessible bus stops
- Number of bus drivers who have taken a diversity and inclusion workshop

*For more information on specific aspects of Transportation please see the project's site plan assessment in Appendix B, and public feedback in Appendix D.*



# Employment



This section discusses employment practices, policies, and procedures for the Municipality and the Villages. Some external achievements and barriers were highlighted as well.

## 3.4.1. The Commitment

The Municipality and the Villages are accessible workplaces and actively support meaningful access in their employment policies and practices.

### Supporting Elements:

- Municipal and Village workspaces
- Municipal and Village hiring, and diversity and inclusion training
- Community employment partnerships and connections





## 3.4.2. The Starting Point: Employment

### 3.4.2.1. Overview

Employee numbers and responsibilities vary between each Village and the Municipality. Each body has its own Human Resource Policies. Many have an Equal Opportunity Employment Policy that addresses those living with a physical or a mental disability. These policies are often available publicly on Municipal and Village websites. However, some employment policies and the equity available to applicants are not transparently posted and require further internal investigation.

In the section below, summer students are included in seasonal staff member counts. Staff numbers for each of the Villages and the Municipality include:

- Municipality of the County of Kings: 77 Full time County staff, 18 seasonal staff, and nine pool staff
- Village of New Minas: 17 full-time staff, nine part-time staff and 10 seasonal staff
- Village of Port Williams: five full-time staff, one part-time staff and three seasonal staff
- The Village of Kingston employs: six full-time staff, one contract staff and six seasonal staff
- The Village of Canning: four full-time staff, five part-time staff, and six seasonal staff

- The Village of Greenwood: three full-time staff
- The Village of Cornwallis Square: One part-time staff member
- The Village of Aylesford: No paid staff

### 3.4.2.2. Achievements

- Public buildings incorporate elements of accessible design, parking and entrances, increasing access to employment within the Municipality

### 3.4.2.3. Barriers

- Private buildings and businesses do not fully incorporate accessible design (including accessible entrances, parking and washrooms) beyond what the Nova Scotia Building Code Regulations requires
- The Municipality and the Villages do not currently offer ease of accessibility for hiring processes (braille, read-outs, etc.)
- Lack of appropriate supports to accommodate different needs in various working environments and situations
- Negative perceptions and attitudes towards individuals with disabilities can exist during the hiring and procurement process



*Image of the JAAC using the Municipality of the County of Kings' Council chamber with microphone system*

- Lack of an accessible employment and procurement process that includes reader-friendly and closed-caption options

### 3.4.3. Policies

The Municipality and the Villages will each:

- Ensure that training and hiring materials for positions include information about recruiting and hiring people with disabilities
- The Accessibility Coordinator will work to educate and build an understanding of the value of accessibility and inclusion in the workforce
- Consider what accommodations could be offered during their own recruitment and employment retention efforts that expand available accommodations

### 3.4.4. Indicators

The Municipality and the Villages will each monitor the following items related to Employment:

- Number of workspaces that are fully accessible
- Percentage of hiring documents that are accessible
- Number of employees that self-identify as having a disability
- Employee-identified support rating for those employed with a disability in Municipal and the Village workspaces (administered through staff survey)

*For more information on specific aspects of Employment please see the project’s site plan assessment in Appendix B, and public feedback in Appendix D.*

*Below: Example of a public job description with screen reader compatibility barriers.*

## JOB DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1. Processing Planning Applications, Land Use By-Law Amendments and Development Agreements (70%)**
  - 1.1. Evaluate planning applications and draft staff reports for presentation to Municipal Council and Committees
  - 1.2. Organize and host Public Information Meetings
    - 1.2.1. Coordinate, with area Councillor, the date and location of public information meetings in communities within the Municipality;
    - 1.2.2. Ensure that necessary advertising requirements are met, such as providing notification to neighbouring property owners within 500 feet and advertising in local newspaper and on municipal website;
    - 1.2.3. Prepare power point presentation explaining planning application/project, outline policy goals, objectives, and evaluative criteria, highlight other key considerations such as ensuring that other applicable regulatory bodies are consulted and provide necessary approvals (e.g. DTIR), highlight key steps in process;
    - 1.2.4. Answer questions from public concerning nature of application, potential impacts on



# Built Environment



This section discusses the physical assets of the Municipality, and the Villages. Some barriers and achievements are representative of larger barriers in the community that extend beyond Municipal and Village assets alone.

## 3.5.1. The Commitment

The Municipality and the Villages commit to upgrading and building new and existing buildings, streets, sidewalks and shared spaces that they own and/or operate, to provide meaningful access for everyone.

### Supporting Elements:

- Public infrastructure and parking spaces
- Public buildings and washrooms
- By-laws and funding policies
- Open spaces, parks and playgrounds





## 3.5.2. The Starting Point: Built Environment

### 3.5.2.1. Overview

The built environment includes physical infrastructure owned and operated by the Municipality and the Villages. There are a series of Municipal and Village by-laws and policies that regulate the built environment, which are updated regularly with new provincial legislation.

Public assets within the Municipality, the Villages (and the KTA) varies depending on location. Some of the built environment infrastructure (not including recreation), as referenced in Appendix C of the Request for Proposals 21-11 document, includes:

- The Municipality of the County of Kings has a series of public assets, including 26.83 kilometres of roads, 18.16 kilometres of sidewalks, 93 intersections, 51 access roads/trails, and 63 public buildings
- The Village of Canning has seven buildings, 2.2 kilometres of trails, one parking lot, and more than 2,000 metres of sidewalk
- The Village of Greenwood has one building, 7 kilometres of trails, 10 kilometres of sidewalks, and leases one parking lot and one pedestrian bridge

- The Village of Kingston has eight public buildings, three parking lots, 5.8 kilometres of trails, and 9.67 kilometres of sidewalks
- The Village of New Minas has more than 15,000 metres of sidewalk, 17 public buildings, three outdoor washrooms, six parking lots and three pathways or trails
- The Village of Port Williams has 11 public buildings, two pathways, three outdoor washrooms, five parking lots, and more than 4,000 metres of sidewalk.
- The Village of Cornwallis Square has 13km of sidewalk, 4 bus shelters (with included civic numbers), the Waterville Fire Department, the Waterville and District Fire Department Station 2 in Woodville, a Satellite Station, Water Supply Building and War Memorial Cenotaph
- The Village of Aylesford has 3.7 kms of sidewalk, Aylesford Village Office and Fire Department

The KTA is responsible for its facility in New Minas, 12 public transit buses and approximately 250 bus stops.



*An example of varied parking signage and markings, from the Woodville Community Centre (not an asset of the Village of Cornwallis Square)*



### 3.5.2.2. Achievements

- Some parks, pathways and playgrounds are well maintained and were made with wheelchair-compatible materials
- New and maintained roadways and crosswalks with appropriate curb cuts
- Most public buildings and infrastructure are updated and maintained including appropriate entrances, ramps and technologies

### 3.5.2.3. Barriers

- Many park pathways are made of loose gravel and lack railings in areas with steep grades
- Bridge crossings are in disrepair and often lack necessary safety features like guardrails, tactical warnings, ramps/ curb cuts and walkways that are wide enough for multiple users

- An inadequate number of appropriately labeled accessible parking stalls on public properties to go above building code standards
- Parking lots do not delineate crossing spaces for pedestrians and mobility device users
- Lack of sidewalks and crosswalks along busy streets
- Unmaintained sidewalks and crosswalks (potholes, cracked pavement, etc.)
- Sidewalks lack accessible infrastructure including being wide enough, appropriate lighting, tactical coverings, railing and curb cuts
- Crosswalks lack accessibility features including tactile coverings, audio cues and ample street crossing time for those with mobility issues
- Private residences typically need to be heavily

- renovated to accommodate wheelchair users who want to be independent
- Private and public buildings with inaccessible entryways (rotating doors, narrow entrances, no ramps or open door buttons)
- Inaccessible Community Halls
- Furniture orientation and height that often is not compatible with mobility devices
- Some existing buildings do not meet the most recent building code requirements for accessibility due to no mandated updates unless triggered by a renovation
- Building code requirements and enforcement differ between the municipalities within the region, which can impact affordability



*Harvest Moon Trail Bollards*

### 3.5.3. Policies

The Municipality and the Villages each will:

- Conduct a review of spaces owned and leased by the Municipality and the Villages and ensure that all facilities meet or exceed the accessibility requirements of the Nova Scotia Building Code Regulations- An action plan will be developed for any spaces that do not meet the code or regulations
- Ensure the provision of accessible parking locations, signage and associated curb cuts at all Municipal and Village owned or leased spaces
- Ensure when the provision of crosswalks and curb cuts in areas with regular pedestrian activity, such as spaces near schools and parks
- Educate private developers and business owners on the benefit of having their facilities meet the Accessibility requirements of the Nova Scotia Building Code Regulations even if not legally required to do so (at this time)

### 3.5.4. Indicators

The Municipality and the Villages will monitor the following items related to the Built Environment on properties they own:

- Number of parking spaces that meet Nova Scotia Building Code Regulations standards
- Number of properties with proper wayfinding and meaningful access
- Distance of accessible sidewalk
- Number of Municipal and Village buildings with washroom facilities that meet Nova Scotia Building Code Regulations standards

*For more information on specific aspects of Built Environment please see the project's site plan assessment in Appendix B, and public feedback in Appendix D.*



*Accessible sidewalk in the Village of Canning*



## 3.6. Awareness



This section discusses the training, and information sharing throughout the Municipality, and the Villages to build knowledge of accessibility. Many awareness barriers are systemic and extend beyond assets, to the lived experiences of those with disabilities.

### 3.6.1. The Commitment

Municipal and Village staff, the Council and Commission elected officials are mindful of the barriers to meaningful access and actively promote awareness about the importance of accessibility.

#### Supporting Elements:

- Staff, Village Commissions, Council, and Kings Transit Authority awareness
- Community awareness
- Business awareness





## 3.6.2. The Starting Point: Awareness

### 3.6.2.1. Overview

The Municipality and the Villages report a growing understanding of inequalities as well as increased emphasis on diversity and inclusion. In November 2012, the development of an Action Plan for Ending Racism and Discrimination in the Municipality included strategic focus areas and actions. These approaches aimed “to create a safe and welcoming community that meets the social, cultural and economic needs of all residents regardless of age, ability, race, ethnicity, religion, gender, language, sexual orientation or socio-economic status.” The Municipality has a Diversity Specialist within the Community Development department to enact actions proposed in this action plan.

There is still much work to be done with accessibility awareness, as the second most referenced barrier to the built environment was personal attitudes. This observation was repeated throughout interviews, survey results and pop-up engagement events alike.

### 3.6.2.2. Achievements

- Increased awareness of what the universal design principles are
- Accessibility upgrades are becoming more prevalent in public areas

### 3.6.2.3. Barriers

- Limited partnerships and access to information on goods and services between people with disabilities, supporting organizations the Municipality and the Villages
- Lack of awareness within the community on different types of disabilities (visible and invisible)
- Lack of support and training within the community and among the Municipal and Village staff in how to accommodate various needs including mental health supports
- Lack of resources for seniors to access information, connect with financial and government services and inability to arrange transportation

### 3.6.3. Policies

The Municipality and the Villages will each:

- Train front-line staff in communicating with people of all ages and abilities, providing information in an accessible format
- Better inform residents with education, training and awareness programs around the Accessibility Act, barriers to accessibility and what accessibility looks like through the work of the JAAC

### 3.6.4. Indicators

The Municipality and the Villages will each monitor the following items related to Awareness:

- Number of workshops provided to improve the knowledge about accessibility
- Number of partners with a public comment or complaint portal
- Number of Municipal and Village staff who have taken accessibility workshops

*For more information on specific aspects of Awareness please see the project’s site plan assessment in Appendix B, and public feedback in Appendix D.*



## 3.7. Recreation



This section discusses the physical and programmatic aspects of recreation in the Municipality and the Villages, including parks, playgrounds, trails, and programming.

### 3.7.1. The Commitment

The Municipality and the Villages work to ensure there are many recreational activity and facility options accessible to people of all abilities.

#### Supporting Elements:

- Recreation facilities
- Parks, playgrounds and open space
- Recreational programming
- Public events
- Public trails and walkways





## 3.7.2. The Starting Point: Recreation

### 3.7.2.1. Overview

The number of recreation facilities varies across the Municipality and the Villages. When it comes to the number of indoor and outdoor recreation facilities, partnering governments are responsible for the following:

- Municipality of the County of Kings: 54 outdoor recreational spaces with at least one building at Aylesford Lake Beach
- Village of Canning: Three recreational spaces (gazebo, park, and playground)
- Village of Greenwood: Six outdoor recreational spaces
- Village of Kingston: 13 recreational spaces
- Village of New Minas: Three recreational buildings, 29 outdoor recreation spaces, and 54 pieces of supporting recreational furniture
- Village of Port Williams: 13 outdoor recreational spaces
- Village of Cornwallis Square: does not own any recreational areas or trails. However, over 7km of the Harvest Moon Trail runs through the Village boundaries, in addition to recreational programs and facilities run by their respective communities (Cambridge, Waterville, Grafton and Woodville)

- The Village of Aylesford: Aylesford Park and Picnic Area, 2 baseball diamonds and a trail

Most playgrounds are on land owned by the Municipality and leased by a Village, non-governmental or community group who own the playground equipment.

### 3.7.2.2. Achievements

- Some parks and some trails are easily traversable
- Some accessible playgrounds and an accessible spray park with a level entrance
- Recreation facilities have accessible parking and entrances with some accessible facilities inside
- Some programming specifically targeted to persons with disabilities is available (wheelchair tennis and basketball)
- The 2021 Active Transportation Master Plan identifies an increased number of access points to the Harvest Moon Trail as an overall network improvement area priority

### 3.7.2.3. Barriers

- Most playgrounds are inaccessible to persons with disabilities due to curb perimeters, incompatible surfaces and



*Ramp leading onto an accessible playground structure in Centreville*



distance to other park elements (parking, washrooms, and benches, etc.)

- Lack of public playgrounds that can accommodate adults with disabilities for family playground usage
- Not all internal facilities in recreation centres are accessible, such as washrooms or doorways
- There is a limited amount of affordable accessible programming
- While not operated by the Municipality or the Villages, many large events such as the Apple Blossom or Gala Days are too far away for residents who rely on transit

### 3.7.3. Policies

The Municipality and the Villages will each:

- Work toward ensuring adequate recreation programming for all ages and abilities
- Work towards ensuring all recreation owned, leased and managed facilities are accessible to all ages and abilities
- Include American Sign Language [ASL] support to ensure all people have equal access to recreation programs

### 3.7.4. Indicators

The Municipality and the Villages will each monitor the following items related to Recreation:

- Number of playgrounds that meet accessibility standards
- Kilometres of Harvest Moon Trail that are accessible to all
- Number of fully accessible programs per year

*For more information on specific aspects of Recreation please see the project's site plan assessment in Appendix B, and public feedback in Appendix D.*



*This playground in New Minas shows the current state of many of the playgrounds in Kings County. With a wooden curb and pea gravel, the playground is not accessible. There is also no accessible playground equipment.*

# 4.0 Implementing the Plan

## 4.1 About The Actions

Initial actions were selected for this plan using recommendations from policy, case studies, accessibility audits and engagement. These actions are based on the following framework:

Is the action in line with Provincial policies and requirements?

Is the action within the control of the Municipality or the Villages?

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 survey respondents noted as being least accessible, or one of the biggest barriers?

## 4.2 Actions

Using the framework above, 17 key actions were identified for the first three years of implementation for the Municipality, the Villages and the KTA. Of these 17 areas, three key actions were highlighted as priority actions due to support from the JAAC and Municipal and Village staff. They are seen as the most urgent actions, requiring work to begin in 2022.















The remaining short-term actions are identified below. The remainder of these actions have been organized in chronological order, based on the expected dates of completion.

These actions are described in detail, with actionable key steps in Appendix A.

PRIORITY ACTIONS		2022	2023	2024
1	Investigate and create a designated Accessibility Coordinator Position in the Municipality of County of Kings.	█		
2	Each party shall conduct individual accessibility audits of Municipal and Village buildings, parks, pathways, beaches, playgrounds and any other public area.	█	█	
3	Develop and administer new training offerings for staff, Municipal Council and Village Commissions specific to accessibility and disability issues.	█	█	





OTHER SHORT TERM ACTIONS		2022	2023	2024
4	Review maintenance procedures in places with sidewalks and bus shelters.			
5	Complete a review of communications policies, procedures and practices to remove barriers. Include accessible design in strategies and brand guidelines.			
6	Review and modify hiring, funding evaluation, and procurement policies and procedures to prioritize accessibility and equitable opportunities for persons with disabilities.			
7	Review provincial customer service policy and further adopt an Accessible Customer Service Policy for the Municipality and the Villages.			
8	Deliver public-facing accessibility workshops in partnership with private entities committed to employment and awareness building.			
9	Each party shall, within their jurisdiction, review all transit stops, signage and pedestrian access elements to determine roles and responsibilities.			
10	Update Council and Village Commission procedures and engagement policies to provide accessible resources.			
11	Each party reviews current recreational programming and funding to programming to identify and propose accessible recreational programming options.			
12	Create a plan to help non-profits (particularly those responsible for playgrounds and public spaces, such as community halls) reach the agreed-upon plan goals.			
13	Review and amend all by-laws to include accessibility.			
14	Each party creates a priority upgrade matrix for Municipal and Village projects.			
15	Update existing websites to be accessible.			
16	Create an online and physical accessibility information resource to help people with disabilities access information for the Municipality and the Villages.			
17	Each party shall standardize their signage to include Braille and design elements for those with invisible or cognitive disabilities.			

## 4.2 Monitoring and Evaluation

### 4.2.1 Indicator Tracking

Indicators are used to track accessibility performance over time. While measures of success record the completion status of what is being done, indicators identify if the actions being completed are making the Municipality and the Villages more accessible overall. Indicators are a way of telling the story of how accessibility areas may be improving or worsening as a result of the actions being pursued.

These indicators will be gathered as part of the JAAC work and monitored by the Accessibility Coordinator on a quarterly basis, as actions begin to be carried out. Targets can be set once the Municipality and the Villages are aware of an indicator's current status.

Recognizing that resources might be limited for indicator tracking, this report recommends that the Accessibility Coordinator create a framework to track indicators. If there is a need to further prioritize and refine indicators, this report recommends tracking the following indicators at minimum:

- Percentage of committee meetings or council meetings that are recorded with closed captioning online, and which have screen-reader-compatible documents
- Percentage of fully accessible bus stops (including surrounding pathway access)
- Percentage of crosswalks that have

curb cuts, and tactile surfaces

- Percentage of staff who have taken an accessibility workshop or training course
- Number of fully accessible public facilities, to comply with the government of Nova Scotia's Building Code and Regulations

### 4.2.2 Monitoring

The status of the Accessibility Plan's actions and indicators will be evaluated using a report card structure. These reviews will be completed on a quarterly basis, by the conclusion of each fiscal year. Indicator numbers and action completion status will be reported in a clear and consistent manner.

### 4.2.3 Schedule and Evaluation

Short-term actions recorded in section 4.2 above are to be completed between 2022 and 2024. Future actions planning will include a process to revisit community priorities and the assessment suggestions found in Appendices B and D. Additional community considerations and provincial legislative changes will be taken into account during the next evaluation period.

In 2025, the Municipality and the Villages will conduct a comprehensive review and update to this plan and its proposed actions. This review will identify another series of actions to be executed between 2025 and 2027, based on the factors listed above.



### 4.3 Responding to Questions and Complaints

Accessibility needs in the Municipality and the Villages are continuously changing and evolving. To ensure the parties continue to address and improve accessibility barriers in the long term, the Municipality's Accessibility Coordinator will respond to any public questions or complaints around accessibility and ensure that the correct owner of the built environment responds. Suggestions for principles and processes to guide these responses are outlined below.

Any accessibility issues or complaints will be forwarded to the Joint Accessibility Coordinator at the Municipality. The Accessibility Coordinator will respond to the question or complaint in a timely and respectful manner, but acknowledges that assets are not all under the jurisdiction of the Municipality. Depending on the needs of the individual, the question or complaint will be answered in one of the following ways:

The Accessibility Coordinator will answer or forward any questions to the appropriate staff member(s) responsible for the Municipal or Village service in question. If staff member requires assistance in obtaining an answer, the JAAC will be utilized as a resource at the earliest possible meeting.

Complaints about physical infrastructure as mandated by the *Act* will be assessed by the Accessibility Coordinator and other departments as necessary.

Complaints that can be addressed operationally will be forwarded to the responsible department. Complaints that require new capital spending will be filtered through the priority upgrade matrix in Action 14.

If a complaint about Municipal or Village staff, goods and services, information, communication or any other category unrelated to the built environment is received, the Accessibility Coordinator will evaluate if actions are already being addressed in an ongoing action. Complaints not addressed in an ongoing action will be brought forward to the JAAC for discussion for suggestions on reaching a potential resolution. Solutions may be proposed immediately, or may be suggested in the updated action plan in 2025.

Anyone can ask to be heard at a meeting of the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee or Council if they are not satisfied with the response received by the Accessibility Coordinator.

# Appendices

## Appendix A: Action Details

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

**[Click here to read Appendix A.](#)**

## Appendix B: Site Assessment Report

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

**[Click here to read Appendix B.](#)**

## Appendix C: Stakeholder List

A list of stakeholders that were communicated with, and that should be considered in future action outreach and planning.

**[Click here to read Appendix C.](#)**

## Appendix D: Internal Research and Engagement Report

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

**[Click here to read Appendix D.](#)**

