



# Accessible Cumberland

## Plain Language Summary: Joint Accessibility Plan

Accessibility Advisory Committee for the Municipality of the County of  
Cumberland, Village of Pugwash, and Village of River Hebert

April 2025

# Accessible Cumberland



Joggins Fossil Institute, UNESCO World Heritage Site and surrounding area, courtesy of Explore Cumberland.

The Municipality of the County of Cumberland, Village of Pugwash and Village of River Hebert made this Plan to make Cumberland accessible for all. “Accessible” means that something is easy for anyone to use. People with and without disabilities can use or participate in it fully (e.g. flat sidewalks, job benefits<sup>1</sup>, and documents that anyone can read).

The Plan was made with [Nova Scotia’s Accessibility Act](#) in mind.

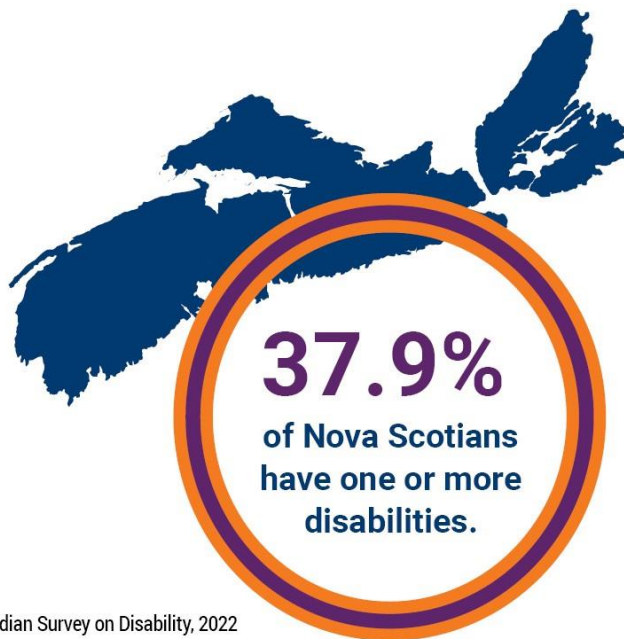
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<sup>1</sup> “Extras” with a job, like a dental plan or retirement savings plan.

# Plain Language Summary

This summary is meant to make the Plan easier to understand, but it is not the official document. The full Joint Accessibility Plan can be read here: [Accessible Cumberland - Municipality of Cumberland](#).

## Disability Rate in Nova Scotia



Canadian Survey on Disability, 2022

Nova Scotia has the highest rate of disability in Canada. Almost 2 in 5 people in Nova Scotia have at least one disability.

Because of the [Human Rights Remedy](#), people with disabilities who live in institutions like [The Sunset Community](#) are moving out into community. The Municipality has a lot of work to do to get ready for this exciting, but challenging shift. Since every person has different interests and needs, this change will affect every part of our communities. Stores, libraries, governments, theatres, rinks, and more must all work together to prepare.

# Goods and Services

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Accessing beaches is an important part of mental and physical wellness. At Heather Beach, a hippocampe and mobi mats<sup>2</sup> are available to enjoy. Photo from Nova Scotia Parks website.

## Vision

Residents and visitors of all abilities will have equal access to Municipal goods and services.

## Actions

### Ongoing

	Action Item
GS1	Train staff in how to help people with disabilities, including mental health awareness.
GS2	Write in plain language.

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<sup>2</sup> Hippocampe: beach wheelchair, like in the picture. Mobi mats: mats that stay on the beach so people using wheelchairs can roll over the sandy area.

GS3	Make spaces accessible, like seating, sensory sensitive spaces <sup>3</sup> , and washrooms.
GS4	Report to council about accessibility.
GS5	Use provincial standards (when they come out) <sup>4</sup> to guide the Plan.

## Now

	Action Item
GS6 ✓	Hire an Accessibility Coordinator.
GS7 ✓	Welcome service animals and support persons <sup>5</sup> , including staff training.
GS8	Install devices (like pocket-talkers) to help staff talk to people who are hard of hearing or D/deaf.
GS9	Share and organize recreation equipment, like adapted bicycles.
GS10	Organize lists and plans for staff to help people with disabilities in case of an emergency.
GS11	Make a policy for services like American Sign Language (ASL).

## Next

	Action Item
GS12	Review policies with accessibility in mind and consider it when making new policies.
GS13	Learn how to better support seniors.
GS14	Explore accessible and cheap transportation options to some municipal programs and events.

<sup>3</sup> Some people have a hard time with things like bright lights and loud noises. Many events book a separate room from the main space as a sensory-friendly quiet space.

<sup>4</sup> The province is making guidelines for accessibility. For more information: [Accessibility Directorate: Creating Accessibility Standards](#)

<sup>5</sup> Some people need a helper for things like finding their way around or using the washroom.

## **Later**

	<b>Action Item</b>
GS15	Make accessible online content.
GS16	Make clear signage to help people find their way.
GS17	When hiring companies (e.g. construction), look at their accessibility practices.
GS18	When planning public meetings and events, look at <a href="#">‘Guide to Planning Accessible Meetings and Events’</a> and <a href="#">‘Guide to Planning Accessible Online Meetings and Events’</a>

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# Built Environment

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The office of the Glooscap Campground just outside of Parrsboro.

## Vision

Municipal buildings and spaces will be as accessible as possible. The Municipality will also encourage people and businesses to make their spaces accessible.

## Actions

### *Ongoing*

	Action Item
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BE1	New buildings and outdoor spaces (including sidewalks) will use the Accessibility Act's Built Environment Standard to guide the Plan.
BE2	Review building exit/emergency plans with people with disabilities in mind.

## **Next**

	<b>Action Item</b>
BE3	Audit <sup>6</sup> municipal buildings, sidewalks, etc. to check what they need.
BE4	Make Municipally owned libraries more accessible.
BE5	Talk to Public Works staff to find ways to improve snow clearing and make changes where possible.

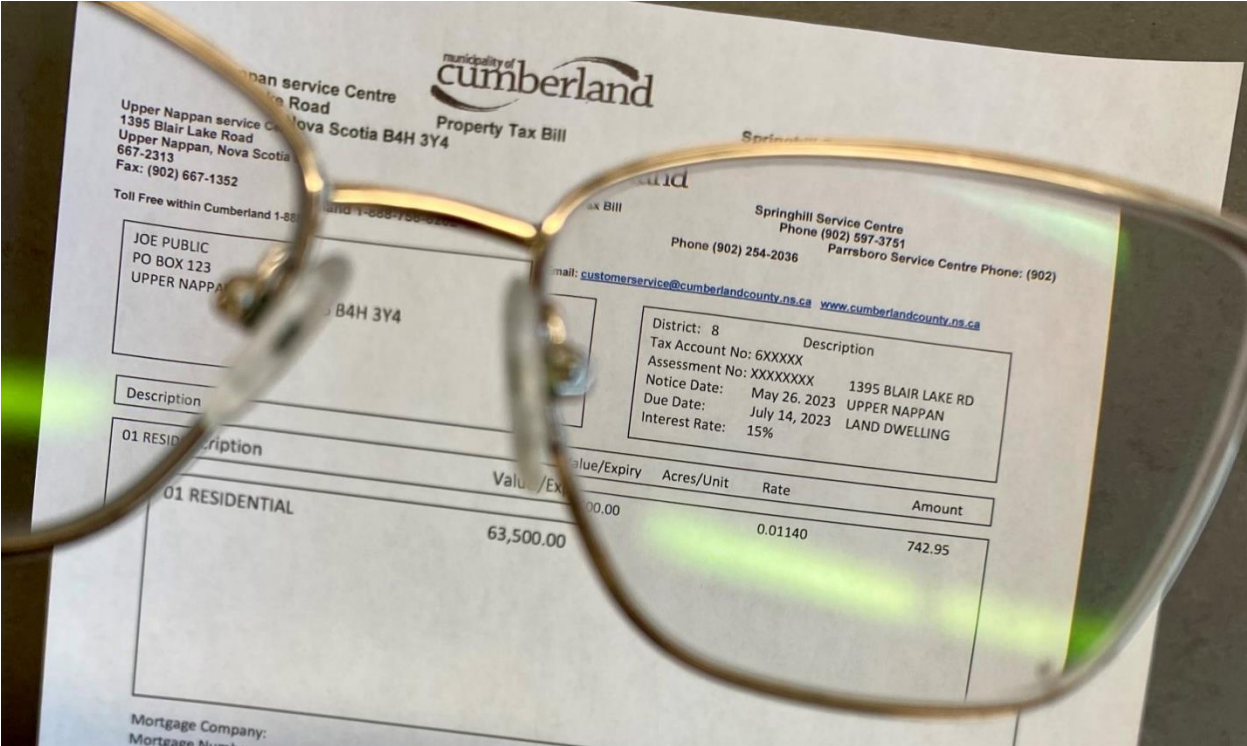
## **Later**

	<b>Action Item</b>
BE6	Find out where sidewalks, crosswalks, and streetlights are missing and needed.
BE7	When closing sidewalks for construction, make an accessible route around.

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<sup>6</sup> Audit: looking closely at something and making an official report about it.

# Information and Communications



## Vision

Information from the Municipality will be easy to understand. The Municipality will help staff understand better communication, barriers, and people’s accessibility rights.

## Actions

### Ongoing

	Action Item
IC1	Make the Municipality’s website accessible with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).
IC2	Share different versions of documents (e.g. the rink schedule in large print).

IC3	Use provincial standards (when they come out) to guide the Plan.
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## **Now**

	<b>Action Item</b>
IC4	All public communications should be in plain language.
IC5	All new bylaws and policies should have a plain language summary.
IC6	Change water and tax bills to large print.

## **Next**

	<b>Action Item</b>
IC7	Make signs in Municipal buildings accessible.
IC8	Make documents screen readable <sup>7</sup> .
IC9	Train staff in accessible documents, plain language, and how to communicate with different types of people.
IC10	Work with the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM) to include accessibility in the Municipal Government Act.

## **Later**

	<b>Action Item</b>
IC11	Plan meetings with enough time to prepare for people's accommodation <sup>8</sup> needs.

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<sup>7</sup> Some people use a program that reads the text on the screen out loud. For a document to be screen-readable, you must be able to select/highlight the text.

<sup>8</sup> Accommodations are changes people can make to help people with disabilities (e.g. brightest lighting for someone with low vision, or lowest lighting for someone with a concussion).

# Employment

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Accommodations for employees can look a variety of ways. Here, a Municipal employee enjoys using a sit-stand desk.

## Vision

The Municipality will support employees by removing workplace barriers as much as possible. The Municipality will also welcome people with disabilities when hiring new staff.

## Actions

### Ongoing

	Action Item
EM1	Help all staff understand inclusive <sup>9</sup> workplace practices.

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<sup>9</sup> An inclusive workplace is where people feel comfortable to be themselves. They do not feel like they have to hide their disability or push through pain to be included.

EM2	Use provincial standards (when they come out) to guide the Plan.
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## Now

	Action Item
EM3 ✓	Make a statement about equity <sup>10</sup> for staff.
EM4 ✓	Job postings should say that they are open to people with disabilities with accommodations available.
EM5 ✓	Improve support at work with accommodations, like technology that can support people to succeed.
EM6	Act on employees' accommodation requests when possible (e.g. assistive devices). Job postings should clearly say that this is available.

## Next

	Action Item
EM7	Find out how to reach people with disabilities for job postings.
EM8	Plan accessible meetings and events for staff and council with these helpful guides: <a href="#">'Guide to Planning Accessible Meetings and Events'</a> and <a href="#">'Guide to Planning Accessible Online Meetings and Events'</a> .

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<sup>10</sup> Making things equal for all.

# Transportation



Cumberland County Transportation Services (CCTS) has accessible vehicles to get you where you need to go, when you need to get there.

## Vision

The Municipality and Cumberland County Transportation Services (CCTS) will work together to make accessible transportation more available and affordable.

## Actions

### Ongoing

	Action Item
TR1	Use provincial standards (when they come out) to guide the Plan.

### Now

	Action Item
TR2 ✓	Promote CCTS on the Municipality's ' <a href="#">Accessible Cumberland</a> ' webpage.
TR3 ✓	Learn about snow removal problems at municipal parking lots and ramps.
TR4	Report to Council about the importance of transportation.

## **Next**

	<b>Action Item</b>
TR5	Work with partners (the province, Sunset Communities, CCTS) to improve transportation access for all, including people with disabilities in rural <sup>11</sup> areas.
TR6	Make a plan for bike lanes and better sidewalks (active transportation).

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<sup>11</sup> In the country (outside of communities that are built closer together).

# Acting on the Plan

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Image from Nova Scotia Accessibility Directorate.

## Responsibilities

- Municipal Council is responsible for
  - Adopting and overseeing the Joint Accessibility Plan.
- The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) is responsible for
  - Making Plan actions happen.
  - Choosing a staff member to be Accessibility Coordinator.
- The Accessibility Advisory Committee is responsible for
  - Updating the Plan.
  - Watching to see if the Plan is successful.
  - Feedback to Council.
- The Accessibility Coordinator is responsible for
  - Leading the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

- Making Plan actions happen.
- Making suggestions for budgets and processes.
- Improving awareness of accessibility.
- Helping staff who need accessibility accommodations.
- Responding to public concerns, complaints, and suggestions.
- The Villages of Pugwash and River Hebert are responsible for:
  - Plan actions for their own buildings, staff, and programs.

## Schedule

Each Plan action has a timeline. They are:

- Now: these actions should be started in 2025 and done by 2027.
- Next: these actions should be started in 2026 and done by 2028.
- Later: these actions should be done by 2030.
- Ongoing: these items should always be happening. There can always be progress, but they will never be fully “done”.

The Committee will make a Report Card for council by March 31 of each year. This report card will measure the actions’ success. The Committee may also suggest how to improve the Plan.

The Plan will be updated every 3 years or more often as needed.

The Report Card will be available to the public, posted on the Municipality’s website.

## Evaluating

The Municipality will review the Plan by 2027 with the public. The Coordinator will use the public's thoughts when editing the Plan. The province needs an edit of the Plan by 2028.

The Accessibility Coordinator will also report on the Plan's progress every year. The report will go to Council and will be public on the Municipality's website. Read the first report (March 2024) here: [2024 Report: Accessible Cumberland](#).

## Responding to Questions and Complaints

- Anyone can make a complaint or ask a question to the Municipality. These should go to [customer service](#). Customer service will share the complaint with the right department (e.g. snow removal to Public Works) with the Coordinator as a filter for their knowledge on accessibility.
- The Coordinator will update the Committee regularly. These updates may result in changes to the Plan.