



NOTICE

MEETING: St Mary's Municipal Council
Committee of the Whole

DATE: Wednesday, October 16th, 2024

TIME: 4:00 pm

PLACE: St. Mary's Municipality
Council Chambers, Sherbrooke, NS

Please advise if unable to attend



Municipality of the District of St. Mary's

Committee of the Whole Meeting Agenda
Wednesday, October 16th, 2024, at 4:00pm

We acknowledge that we are gathering in Mi'kmaqi the traditional unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people.

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Additions to the Agenda
4. Approval of the Agenda
5. Approval of Minutes: COTW held October 2nd, 2024
6. Business Arising from Minutes
7. Correspondence: N/A
8. Presentation: Simply Blue Group – Megan Harris, Stakeholder Engagement Lead
9. Other Matters of Business
 - a. November 11 Council Date reschedule
 - b. Snow Removal Contract Award
 - c. Update on Accessibility and Anti-Racism
 - d. Ecum Secum Fire Hall Project Planning
 - e. Fire Services Capital Needs: Council Discussion

Adjournment



Municipality of the District of St. Mary's

Committee of The Whole (COTW) Meeting

Wednesday, October 2nd, 2024

We acknowledge that we are gathering in Mi'kma'ki the traditional unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people.

1. Meeting, Date & Time:

Warden Wier called the COTW Meeting of the St. Mary's Municipal Council to order on Wednesday, October 2nd, 2024, at 4:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, Sherbrooke, N.S.

2. Attending:

Warden Greg Wier

Deputy Warden James Fuller

Councillor Everett Baker

Councillor Courtney Mailman

Councillor Beulah Malloy

Councillor Charlene Zinck

Absent with Regrets:

Councillor James Harpell

Also Attending:

Doug Patterson, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)

Jadzia Rudolph, Municipal Clerk

3. Additions to the Agenda:

- Addition of #9. Other Matters of Business item E. Fright Night Support.

4. Approval of the Agenda:

On the motion of Councillor Malloy and seconded by Councillor Baker the Council approved the agenda with the addition.

Motion approved.

5. Approval of Minutes:

On the motion of Councillor Baker and seconded by Councillor Mailman, Council approved the minutes of the COTW Meeting held September 18th, 2024 with the correction of Jadzia Graham, Interim Municipal Clerk, be stated Jadzia Rudolph, Municipal Clerk.

Motion approved.

6. Business Arising from the Minutes:

- There was no business arising from the minutes.

7. Correspondence:

a. Queen's Lodge #34

- Council has been made aware that the Queens Lodge #34 would like support from Council for the Breakfast Program, Council can not spend anymore money until the new council is elected.
- This item has been tables until the new council become effective.

8. Presentation: N/A

9. Other Matters of Business:

- a. Recplex – Ice Plant Contract Service Award
 - See the Agenda/Package for the report.

On recommendation of Councillor Malloy and seconded by Councillor Baker, Council approve the bid from Cimco Refrigeration for the maintenance contract of the St. Mary's Recplex ice plant in the amount of \$7,002.91 plus HST per year for the 3 year contract from 2024/2025 to 2026/27 totalling \$21,008.74 plus HST.

Recommendation adopted.

- b. Winter Overnight Parking Ban at 16 Main St
 - There is a need to make winter snow clearing of the parking lot at 16 Main Street work more effective. Staff have recommended a wintertime December to March overnight parking ban.
 - Council decided to put up "no Parking" signs to deter anyone looking to park overnight.

On recommendation of Councillor Baker and seconded by Councillor Zinck Council approve the overnight parking ban on 16 Main Street from December 1st, 2024. to March 31st, 2025 from 10:00 pm to 7:00 am.

Recommendation adopted.

- c. The St. Mary's River (Napu'saqnuk) Ecologically Significant Area (ESA) Case Study – Update Discussion
 - See Agenda/package for the presentation.

On recommendation of Deputy Warden Fuller and seconded by Councillor Mailman, Council values and supports the ongoing work of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (the department) in their efforts to plan and evaluate the ST Mary's River for an Ecologically Significant Area (ESA) due to many possible benefits this designation could provide.

Further, that council would like to explore ways for municipal participation and input.

Recommendation adopted.

- d. Election Update
 - Verbal Update
 - Doug Patterson, Chief Administration Officer (CAO) informed Council that the Municipal elections take place October 9th to 19th, 2024.
 - Information for the benefit of residents including the news that all voters would receive a voter letter including voters in acclaimed districts due to the French Acadian School board ballot.
- e. Fright Night Support
 - Deputy Warden James Fuller Informed Council of the support needed for Fright Night.
 - Council discussed that they can not spend their district funds but would still like to support the event. Council unanimously decided to give \$700.00 (\$450 for pumpkins and \$250 for carving kits).

On recommendation of Councillor Malloy and seconded by Councillor Zinck, Council agree to provide \$700.00 for funding for pumpkins and carving kits for Fright Night.

Recommendation adopted.

10. In-Camera: Legal

On motion of Deputy Warden Fuller and seconded by Councillor Baker Council agreed to move In-Camera for Legal Matters.

Motion approved.

On Motion of Councillor Baker and seconded by Councillor Malloy Council agreed to reconvene to regular session at 5:05 pm.

Motion approved.

Adjournment

On motion of Deputy Warden Fuller and seconded by Councillor Baker there being no further matters of business, Council adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

Motion approved.

Recorded By
Jadzia Rudolph, Municipal Clerk

Approved By
Warden Wier

SUSTAINABLE FUELS PROJECT OVERVIEW

• October 2024

Who we are

Simply Blue Group is a leading renewable energy developer headquartered in Ireland, with offices worldwide.

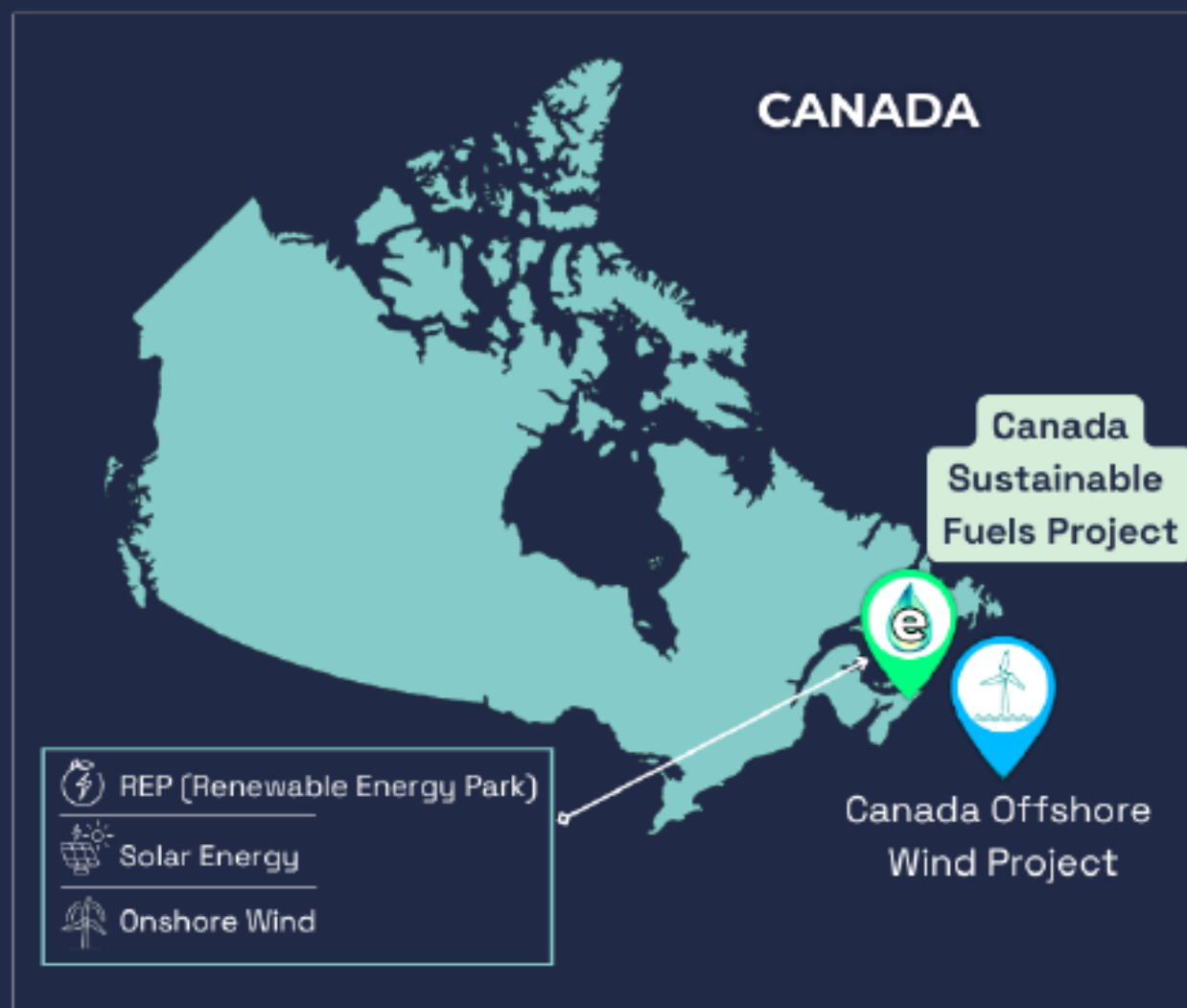
We are a part of a global movement to replace fossil fuels with clean energy. Our dedicated Hydrogen and Sustainable Fuels Team is focused on the development of competitive sustainable fuels projects, which will use green energy to produce sustainable fuels targeted at aviation and marine transport.



We believe that building strong relationships is crucial to having successful projects.

SBG Global Project Portfolio

-  Sustainable Fuels
-  Offshore Wind





The Project

We want to build a renewable energy park (REP) on the Eastern Shore of Nova Scotia.

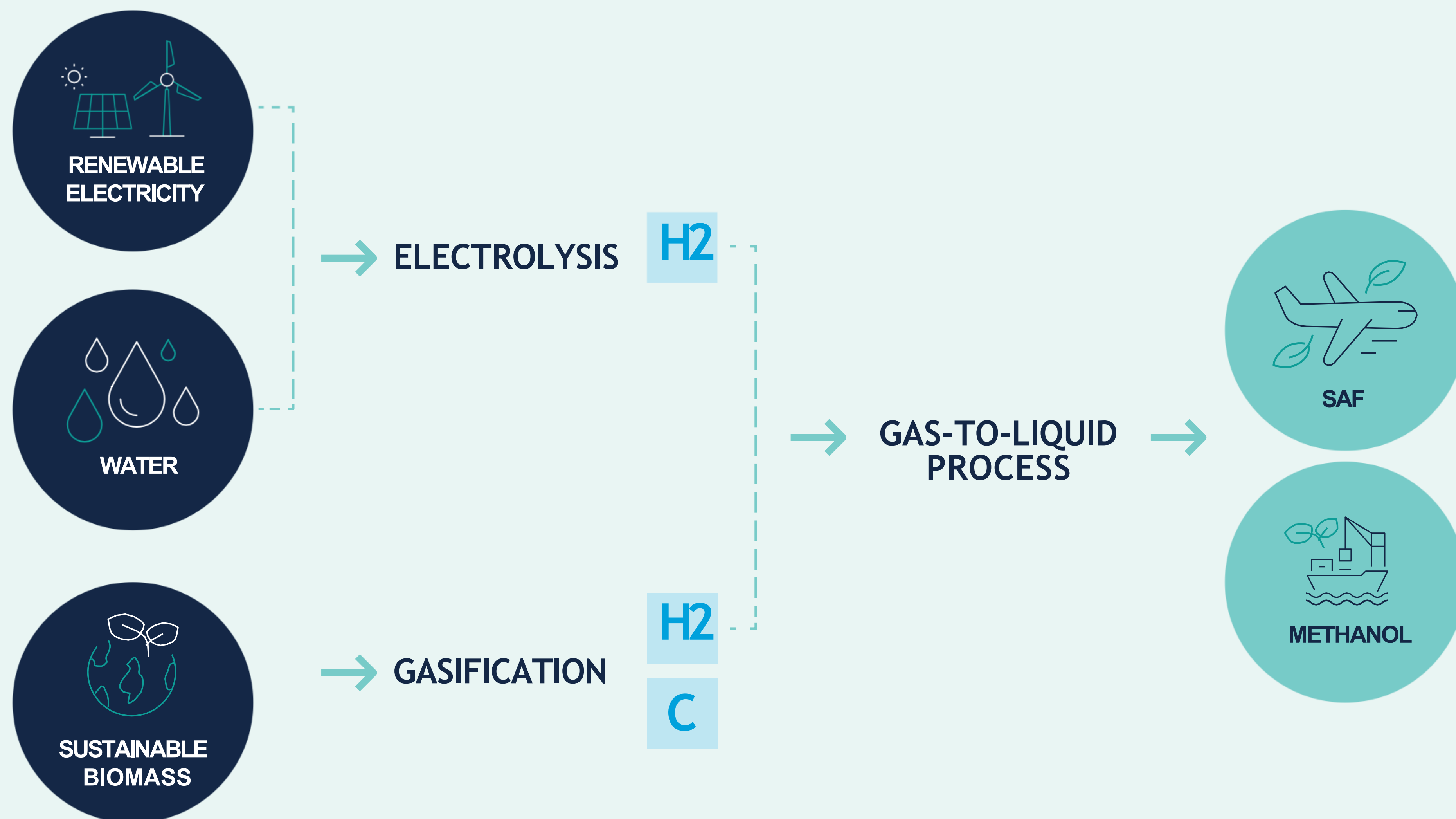
The REP will be powered with renewable electricity generated from our solar and wind farms. This self-produced power will be used along with sustainable biomass and water to produce sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) and renewable methanol.



What is a REP?

A REP is a facility that produces clean fuels using proven, mature technologies.

The Process



Why Is This Project Needed?

Renewable energy is the future.

As the world moves away from fossil fuels to combat climate change, the need for increased renewable energy production becomes crucial.

Globally, governments and industries are focused on decarbonizing the transportation sector. The development and adoption of sustainable fuels is key to advancing this effort.



The transportation sector is responsible for approximately one-fifth of all greenhouse gas emissions.



Products

Our REP will produce sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) and renewable methanol.

SAF is produced from renewable materials. It is used to power aircraft and can match the performance of conventional jet fuel (derived from fossil fuels) while significantly reducing carbon emissions. It will be used as a “drop in” fuel, meaning it can drop straight into existing fuel infrastructure on aircraft.

Renewable methanol will be used to power ships and create other products.



Our SAF will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by approximately 90 per cent compared to conventional jet fuel.



Biomass

Biomass is renewable organic material that comes from plants. It contains carbon and hydrogen - both required to make sustainable fuels.

The biomass we will be using is a co-product of tree harvesting, sawmill operations and modern forest management practices. These woodchips will be trucked or barged to the REP.

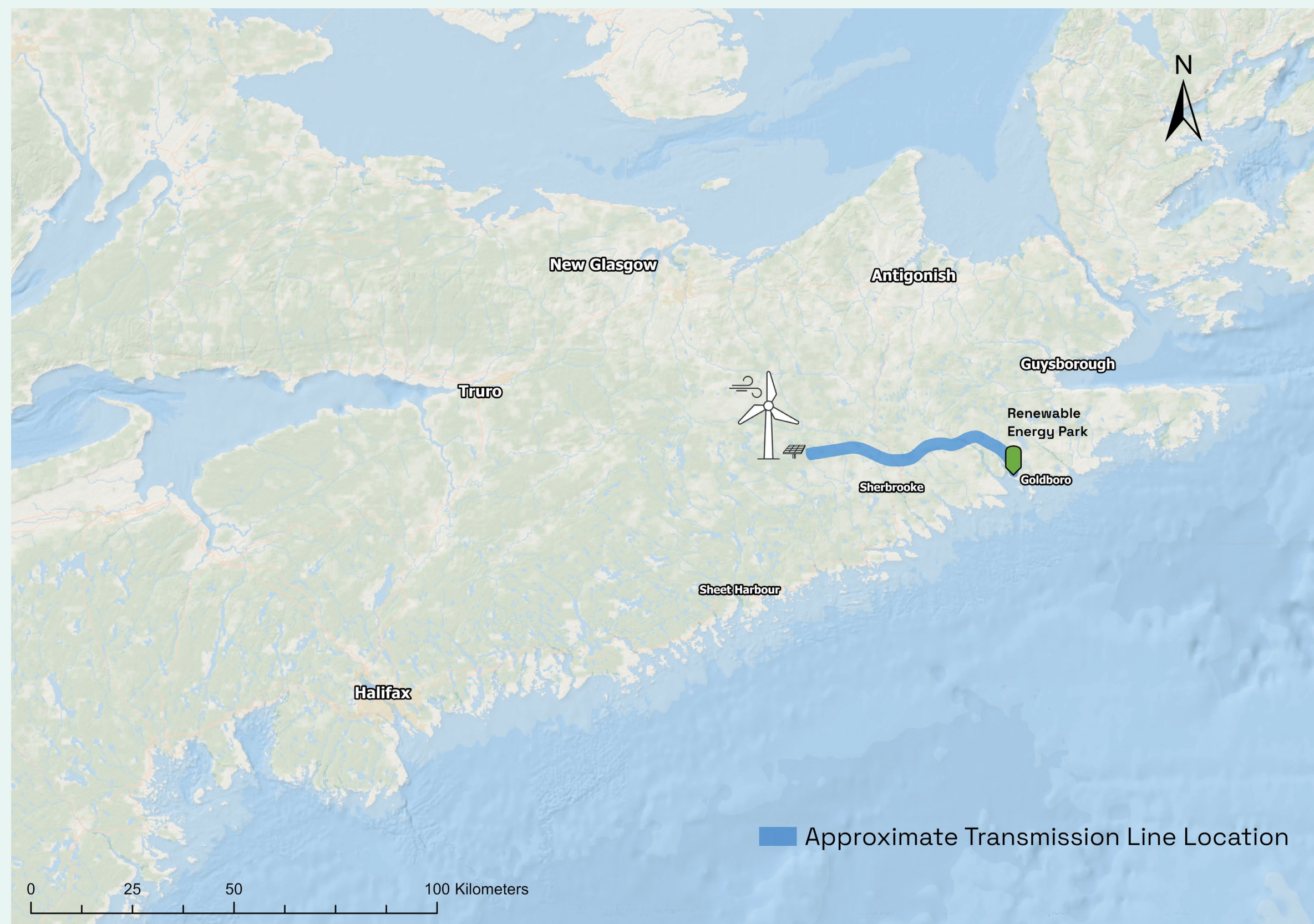


Why are you using biomass?

Nova Scotia is over 75% forested and thus has an abundance of sustainably-harvested biomass. By using biomass, we will benefit the local economy by utilizing this feedstock in Nova Scotia, rather than it being exported as a low value woodchip.

Location

The map below shows approximate locations for the project's infrastructure. The REP will be located in Goldboro and a transmission line will connect the facility to both our solar and wind farms in the district of Saint Mary's.



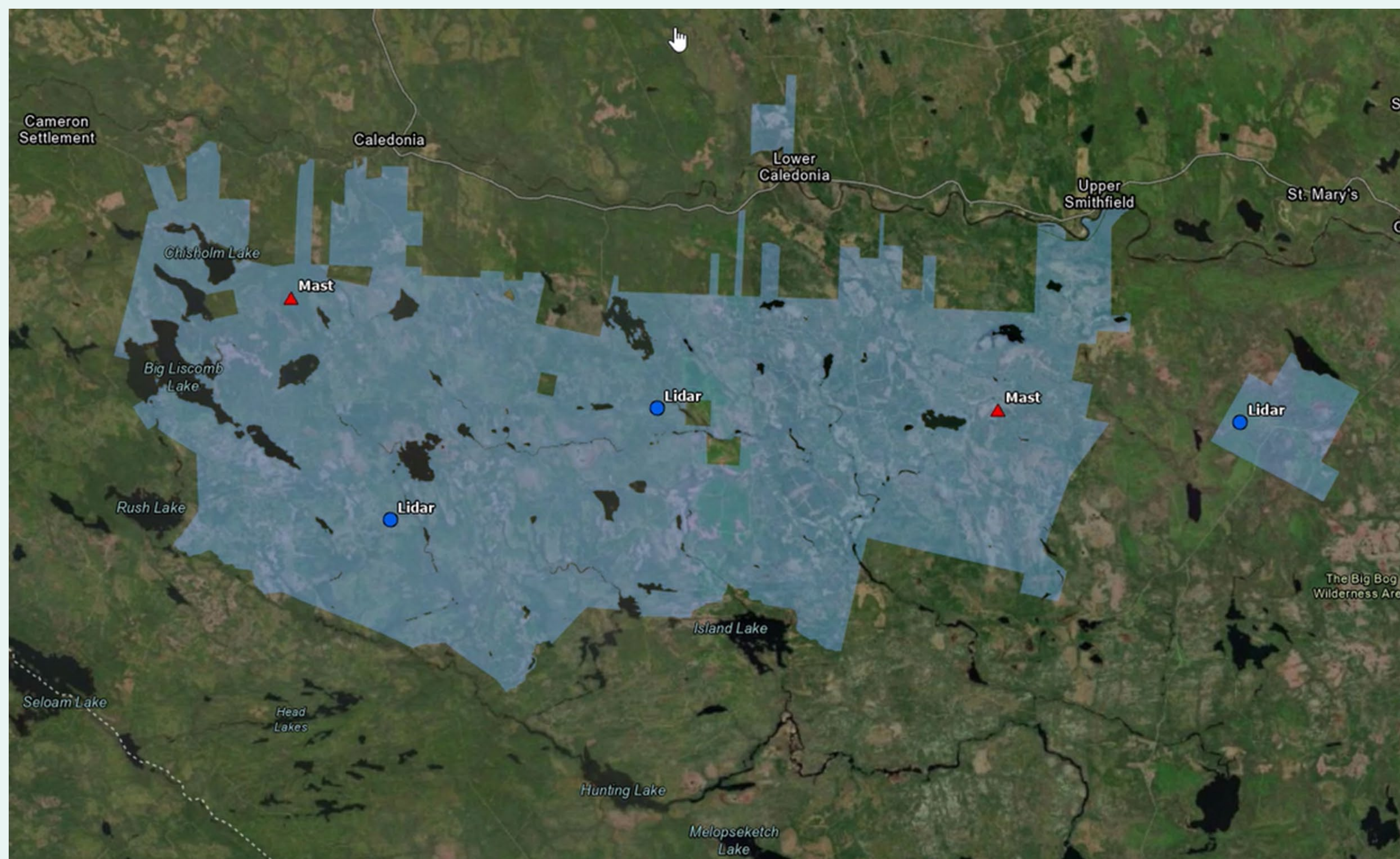
All drawings are purely indicative and do not represent the location of real infrastructure. All dimensions and locations are approximate and subject to change.



Why here in Nova Scotia?

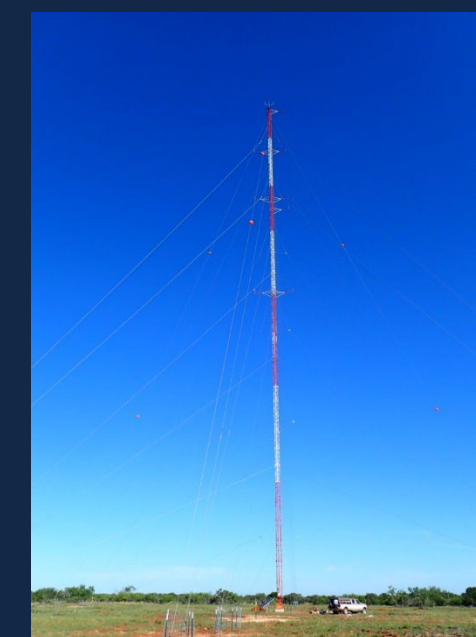
Nova Scotia has a rare convergence of critical project elements: ample world-class wind and solar generation opportunities, an abundant and underutilized sustainable biomass supply, and an excellent coastal site for deep-water marine facilities.

Wind Measurement Campaign – Late 2024



2 x 120m Meteorological Towers

- 24-month campaign

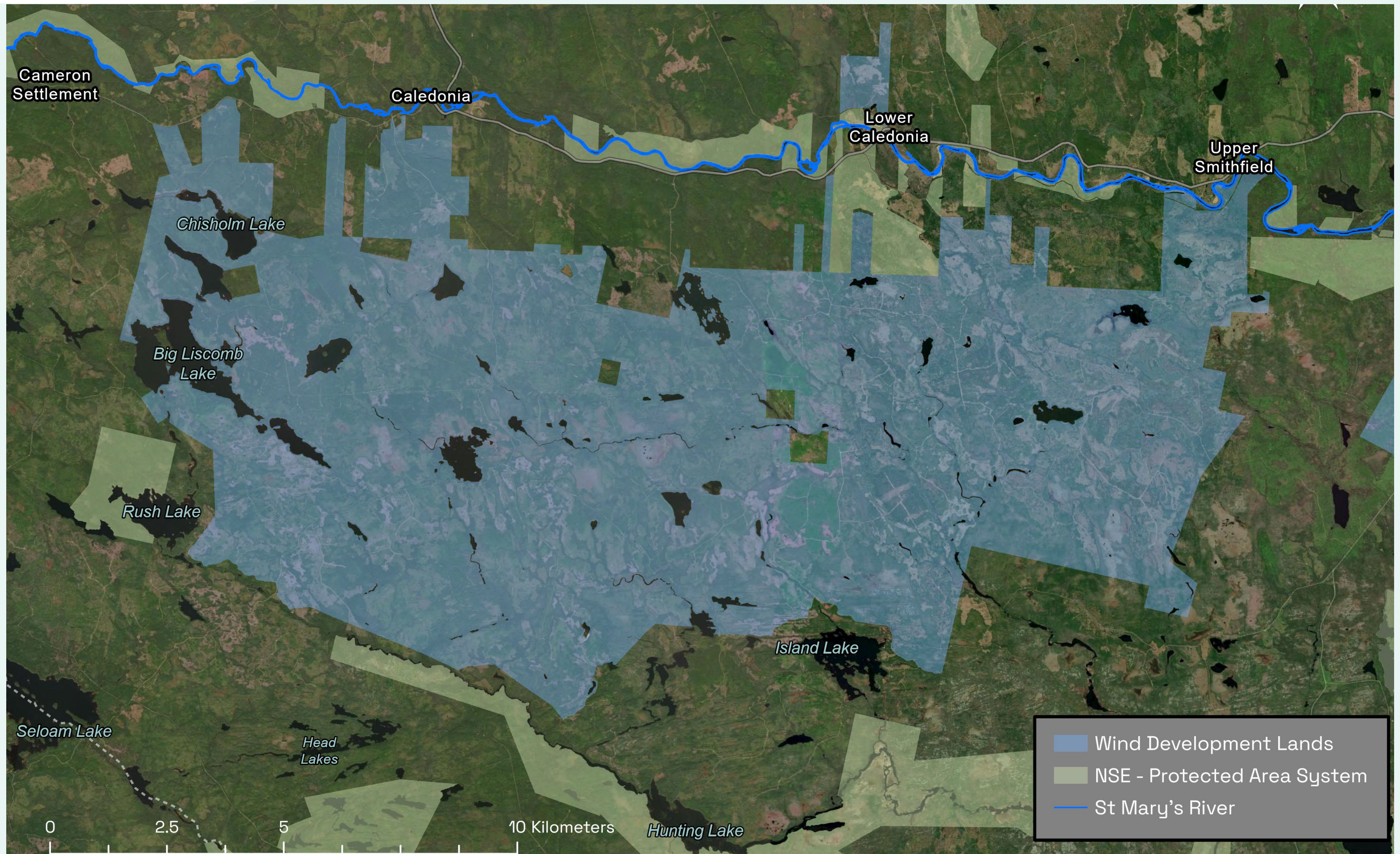


3 x Vertical Profiling Lidar

- Light detection and ranging
- 15-month campaign



Target commissioning: Late November 2024









Project Timeline

Construction is expected to commence in 2026 and the project is expected to be operational in 2029.

We are in the very early stages of project development.

To limit the impact to the environment and community, the team is conducting detailed studies to determine the exact number and location of the wind turbines and are also investigating various routing options for the transmission line.

We plan to construct approximately 100-130 wind turbines. Following further studies and consultation with stakeholders, possible locations and routes will be identified. As soon as this information becomes available, you will be informed.



Environment

Simply Blue Group is committed to following all federal, provincial and municipal standards and regulations.

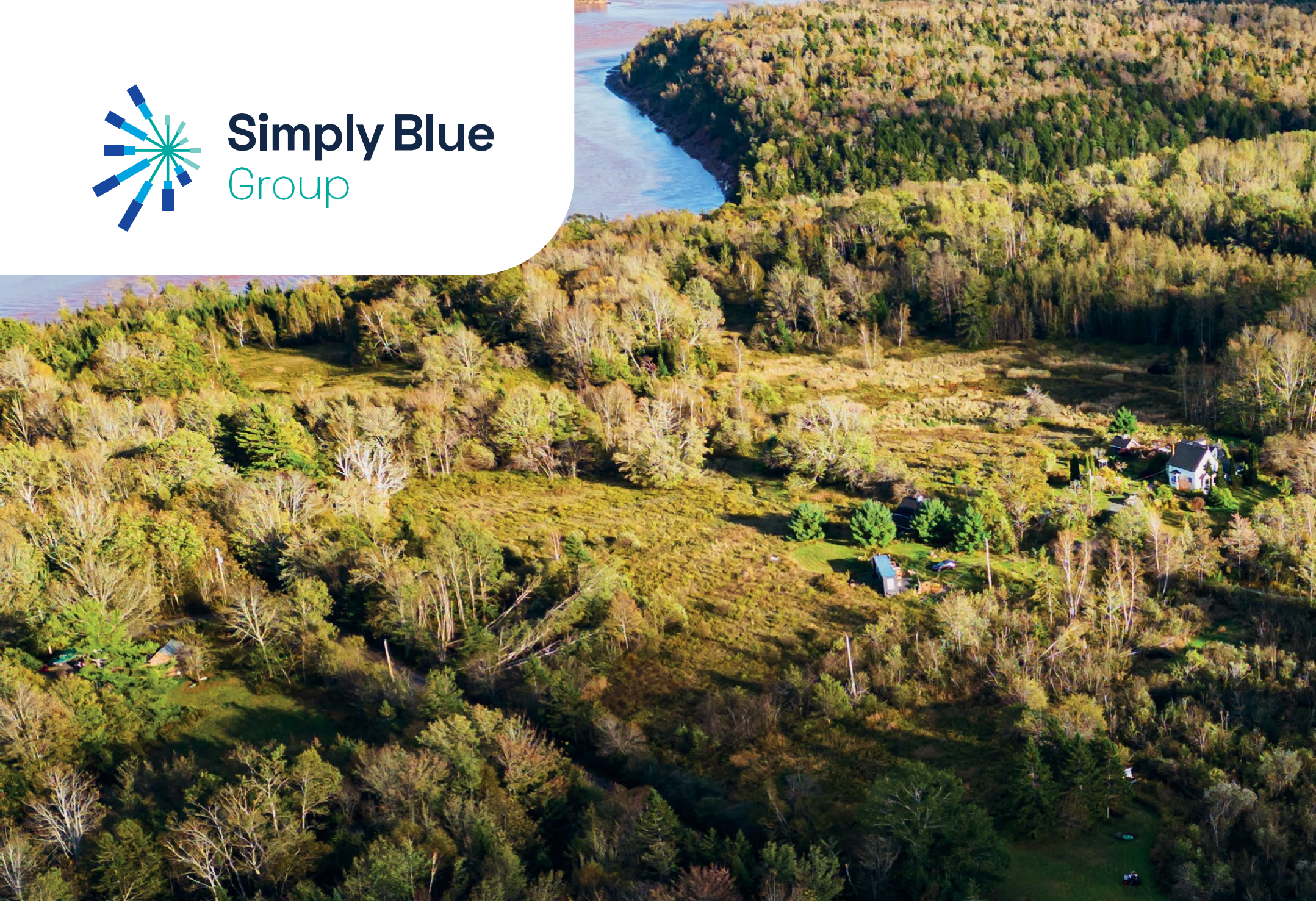
The project requires a provincial environmental assessment and depending on the final design, federal permitting may also be needed.



To support the environmental assessment, we are conducting detailed studies on:

- Wildlife
- Fish
- Air quality
- Water quality
- Socio-economic effects and benefits

These studies will be used to finalize the project layout and minimize impacts as much as possible.

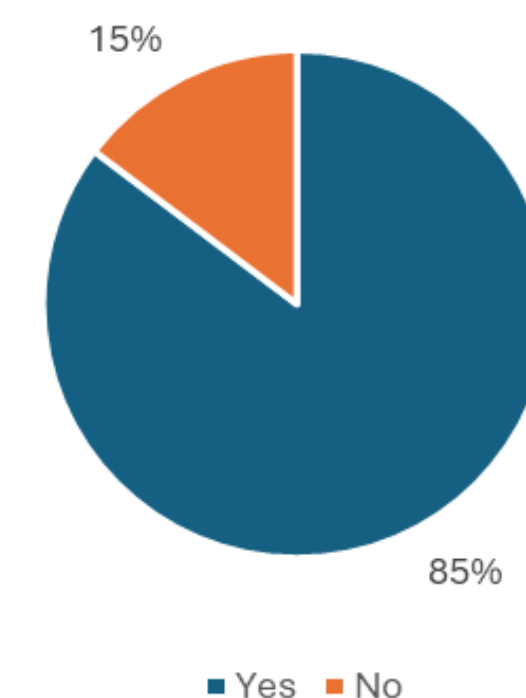


Community Benefits

At a local level, this project will provide long-term, well-paying jobs and generate tax revenue.

The REP's products will support local industries. Development of SAF and renewable methanol will benefit future generations through clean sustainable fuels replacing fossil fuels, reducing emissions at home and around the world, and helping combat climate change.

Do you think the project will have a positive impact on the community?



PROJECT STATS

46,000 acres of private land
secured for power
generation

>750 acres of zoned land in
Goldboro secured

~800MW of onshore wind
in development

~300 MW of solar in
development

~750,000 tonnes/year of
green sustainable biomass
processing

Supply contract signed with
Wagner Forest NS for
700,000 tonnes/ year of
green sustainable biomass

~600 MW of electrolysis
planned for Goldboro
production site

150,000 tonnes/year of
Sustainable Aviation Fuel
(SAF) production

SBG SAF: 90% reduction in
CO₂ emissions when
compared to fossil derived
JET fuel

Final Investment Decision
planned for
2026

Commercial Operation
planned for
2029

Snow Clearing Contract Award

SUMMARY

Staff have completed a competitive process to collect bids for the municipality's winter snow clearing needs.

BACKGROUND

Staff have developed an agreement for a three-year contract.

This approach better enables cost planning during our continued environment of significant inflation.

This approach also better supports contractors in their planning for capital and maintenance of for equipment fleet.

The agreement contains clauses for early termination allowed by either party.

Scope of the work is as follows:

Municipal Administration Building (Parking lot and clean the walkway to the main doors and the storage room)	8296 Highway #7, Sherbrooke
Recplex (rink) (Parking Lot and clean to the main doors and clean fire exists)	128 Old Road Hill, Sherbrooke
Water Treatment Plant (clean the driveway, keep loading dock clear) & Service Garage (driveway)	8226 HWY #7, Sherbrooke
Lake Road to Pumphouse (295 feet)	Between 8218 & 8202 HWY #7, Sherbrooke
Sherbrooke Library (front patio and steps/ramps to both front doors)	11 Main Street, Sherbrooke
Sherbrooke Sewage Treatment Plant (clear the driveway and walkway to the main door)	44 Main Street, Sherbrooke
Public Parking Lot	Next to 16 Main Street, Sherbrooke

Staff Report



Main Street Sidewalks	The distance from Clover Farm (civic #3 Main Street) to the end of Main Street (civic #35 Main Street) is approximately 165 meters =541ft. An additional section 5 ft wide x 183 ft in the parking lot beside 16 Main Street, Sherbrooke.
Stonewall Park (Parking Lot)	On Highway #7. Approximate size for 6 vehicles at entrance to the park

CONSIDERATIONS

The snow removal service operates from December 1 to March 31 annually

Bidders have been asked to provide monthly and per event pricing. Bids were due on October 11, 2024. Two bids were received. Analysis by staff is underway. The best value recommended bid will be presented to council.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff will provide a complete recommendation based on the award and bidder analysis

Department of Community Development & Recreation

Equity & Anti-Racism Plan

SUMMARY

The *Dismantling Racism and Hate Act*, passed in 2022, required municipalities to develop equity and anti-racism plans by April 1, 2025. The Accessibility Directorate has recently provided tools to municipalities to update their Accessibility Plans. Municipalities encouraged to use resources prepared by the Office of Equity and Anti-Racism in tandem with resources prepared by the Accessibility Directorate to develop a single plan that meets legislative requirements of both Acts.

BACKGROUND

The *Dismantling Racism and Hate Act*, passed in 2022, required municipalities to develop equity and anti-racism plans by April 1, 2025. This exercise requires municipalities to undergo a planning process to identify actions that will promote equity and anti-racism by considering the needs of underrepresented and underserved communities. The Office of Equity and Anti-Racism and the Accessibility Directorate are working collaboratively to support municipalities and villages to meet requirements under both the *Dismantling Racism and Hate Act* and *Accessibility Act* into one interconnected planning approach. Municipalities encouraged to use resources prepared by the Office of Equity and Anti-Racism in tandem with resources prepared by the Accessibility Directorate to develop a single plan that meets legislative requirements of both Acts.

The Accessibility Plan for the Municipality was completed in April 2023, but the Accessibility Committee recently agreed to review and update the plan as recommended by the Accessibility Directorate.

CONSIDERATIONS

To take a collaborative approach to planning for Equity, Anti-Racism, Inclusion and Accessibility to create the Equity, Anti-Racism, Inclusion and Accessibility Committee to meet the requirements of the *Dismantling Racism and Hate Act* and the *Accessibility Act* by adopting an *Equity, Anti-Racism, Inclusion and Accessibility Advisory Committee Policy* that enables the Municipality to address systemic hate, inequity and racism and identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility including the development of a Equity, Anti-Racism, Inclusion & Accessibility Plan utilizing *An Accessible St. Mary's - An Accessibility Plan for the Municipality of the District of St. Mary's*, the tools provided by the Accessibility Directorate to update Accessibility Plans, and the tools provided by the Office of Equity and Anti-Racism; and to rescind the Accessibility Advisory Committee Policy 96*+once the *Equity, Anti-Racism, Inclusion and Accessibility Advisory Committee Policy* has been adopted.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Direct staff to draft a for Equity, Anti-Racism, Inclusion and Accessibility Advisory Committee Policy that enables the Municipality to address systemic hate, inequity and racism and identify, remove and prevent barriers of accessibility including the development of an Equity, Anti-Racism, Inclusion & Accessibility Plan.

Equity and Anti-Racism Plan Guidance for Municipalities and Villages

Office of Equity and Anti-Racism

Introduction

This resource is designed to help municipalities and villages to develop equity and anti-racism plans by April 1, 2025, as required under the *Dismantling Racism and Hate Act* and associated regulations.

In addition to this resource, the Office of Equity and Anti-Racism (OEA) will provide municipalities and villages with a self-assessment tool that can help identify areas of focus for their equity and anti-racism plans, as well as an equity and anti-racism primer resource that introduces foundational concepts. The Association of Municipal Administrators of Nova Scotia will also be supporting municipalities and villages as they undertake this work.

Nova Scotia's *Dismantling Racism and Hate Act*

Nova Scotia has committed to addressing systemic hate, inequity, and racism, and to supporting underrepresented and underserved communities and the intersectionality between and amongst them.

The *Dismantling Racism and Hate Act*, passed in 2022, was developed by an all-party committee following engagement with Nova Scotians, and it outlines the provincial government's approach to addressing systemic hate, inequity, and racism. Recognizing the important role municipalities and villages play in addressing racism, hate and inequity, the [Equity and Anti-Racism Strategy](#) identified them as being the first public sector bodies that would be required to develop equity and anti-racism plans. This exercise requires municipalities and villages to undergo a planning process to identify actions that will promote equity and anti-racism by considering the needs of underrepresented and underserved communities.

Municipalities and Villages as Prescribed Public Sector Bodies (PPSBs):

Municipalities and villages are important partners in becoming an equitable, anti-racist and accessible province. PPSB organizations, including municipalities and villages, represent a wide range of sectors and cover essential areas of the lives of people in the province.

Both the *Dismantling Racism and Hate Act* and *Accessibility Act* allows government to prescribe public sector organizations to meet several legislative obligations including the creation of plans to address the goals of each Act. OEA and the Accessibility Directorate are working collaboratively to support municipalities and villages to meet requirements under both the *Dismantling Racism and Hate Act* and *Accessibility Act* into one interconnected planning approach. Municipalities and villages are encouraged to use this resource in tandem with resources prepared by the Accessibility Directorate to develop a single plan that meets legislative requirements of both Acts (i.e., combine efforts to produce a single equity, anti-racism and accessibility plan for 2025-28).

Other public sector bodies that are not yet prescribed under the *Dismantling Racism and Hate Act* are encouraged to consider equity and anti-racism in the updating of their accessibility plans and in other activities and/or planning exercises where applicable. Accessibility plans, to be truly effective, must incorporate the intersectionality that exists within the disability community. PPSBs that are not municipalities and villages are welcome to voluntarily create equity and anti-racism plans using this guide.

Overview of Equity and Anti-Racism in Nova Scotia

Did you know..

- In 2021, there were 52,425 Indigenous people in Nova Scotia, making up 5.5% of the population¹.
- Respondents to the 2021 Census were asked whether they identified with specific categories of visible minority. These racialized groups accounted for 9.8% of the population in Nova Scotia².
 - Nova Scotians that identified as Black made up the largest population in a racialized group in Nova Scotia (28,220). This was followed by those who identified as South Asian (21,655), those who identified as Chinese (11,600), those who identified as Arab (10,610) and those who identified as Filipino (6,615).
- Nova Scotia the highest proportions of transgender and non-binary people aged 15 and older in Canada (0.48% or almost 1 in every 200 people living in Nova Scotia) and amongst aged 15 to 34 among the provinces this statistic increases (1.17% or 1 in every 100 people living in Nova Scotia)³.
- In 2020, the number of police reported hate crimes⁴ increased by 70% in Nova Scotia (roughly six incidents per 100,000 population)⁵.

Underrepresented and Underserved Communities in Nova Scotia

When we speak of underrepresented and underserved communities, we are referring to those groups who experience discrimination and exclusion because of unequal power relationships across economic, political, social, and cultural dimensions.

This includes systemic hate, inequity and/or racism towards people based on one or more protected characteristics as identified in the *Human Rights Act*, which includes: age, race, colour, religion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, physical or mental disability, ethnicity, national or Indigenous origin, family status, marital status, source of income, and political belief, affiliation or activity.

Below are examples of underrepresented and underserved groups in Nova Scotia. Each of these groups has their own unique story, historical setting and history of discrimination and marginalization (this list is not exhaustive and may not include all groups who would identify as underrepresented and/or underserved):

- Mi'kmaw and persons of Indigenous descent;
- African Nova Scotians and persons of African descent;
- Persons of colour;
- Newcomers (immigrants and refugees);
- 2SLGBTQIA+ (2 Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual/Biromantic, Transgender, Queer and/or Questioning, Intersex, Asexual/Aromantic and others whose identities are not reflected);
- Persons with disabilities (physical and mental);
- Persons who are neurodivergent; and
- In some contexts, women.

Intersectionality

It is important to take intersectionality into account as many policies impact individuals in multiple ways as a result of their intersecting identities. The wheel of power and privilege can be used as a visual tool for promoting awareness and understanding of interconnected systems of privilege, oppression, and power dynamics within society. It provides examples within the Canadian context to illustrate how intersectionality of

¹ <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/as-sa/fogs-spg/page.cfm?lang=E&topic=8&dguid=2021A000212>

² <https://novascotia.ca/finance/statistics/news.asp?id=18264>

³ <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/220427/cq-b004-png-eng.htm>

⁴ "Police-reported hate crime is defined as a criminal violation against a person or property motivated by hate, based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation or gender identity or expression, or any other similar factor."

⁵ <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2022001/article/00005-eng.htm>

thirteen categories of social identity uphold power and privilege and shape our interactions and experiences. Mapping out these complex dynamics can help to recognize personal positions of privilege as well as help to understand how systemic inequalities impact different groups within society. This understanding is essential for:

- identifying and addressing barriers to participation;
- guiding efforts to ensure inclusive, meaningful, equitable and accessible services and engagement initiatives for all members of the community;
- navigating conversations around inequities, ensuring diverse perspectives are heard and valued; and
- developing strategies to address power imbalances and create more equitable outcomes in projects, programs, policies, and decision-making processes.

What do we mean by Equity and Anti-Racism?

When thinking about what to include in your equity and anti-racism plan, it is important to understand that this plan is not the same as traditional equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) plans. EDI plans have traditionally been focused internally on an organization and mainly on the employees of an organization. They include actions that promote diversity within the organization and equitable hiring practices.

While equity and anti-racism includes EDI, it is not solely EDI. In your equity and anti-racism plans, public sector bodies are expected to look at: the way that policies and programs are developed; how services are delivered; and how budgetary decisions are made. It is not enough for an organization to be actively improving on the diversity of those at all levels of their organization through traditional EDI plans. Organizations also need to be considering its policy making process including: who they engage with to determine their priorities for a given year; who they engage with to determine what options are appropriate for a particular policy, program or service; how they determine impacts; and how they make decisions on the options to pursue.

The provincial Equity and Anti-Racism Strategy includes this policy and engagement focus. The provincial government is committed to enhancing its policy development process by including equity impact assessments (EIA) and evaluations. The EIA supports departments in incorporating an equity and anti-racism focus at every step of developing, for example, a new law or regulation or a new program. And equity evaluations support analysis of existing laws, regulations and policies to determine if they are perpetuating systemic hate, inequity and racism.

Please keep this policy and engagement focus while considering what to include in your plans. OEA and the Association of Municipal Administrators of Nova Scotia will be there to help you along the way.

Creating your Equity and Anti-Racism Plan

Plan Requirements

Your plan is an opportunity for you to share publicly your organization's commitment to equity and anti-racism. Equity and anti-racism plans **must** be:

- informed by engagement with underrepresented and underserved communities within the jurisdiction that the plan covers;
- in place by April 1, 2025;
- publicly available in an accessible format; and
- updated every three years, in line with *Accessibility Act* requirement.

Planning Process Summary

Municipalities and Villages are encouraged to follow the same process for developing their equity and anti-racism plans as outlined in the Toolkit for Updating Accessibility Plans as developed by the Accessibility Directorate. Municipalities and villages may choose to adapt or follow their own planning process. Appendix A

offers a proposed structure that municipalities and villages may want to consider for the development of their plan.

Some requirements and specific considerations are outlined below that should be embedded within your planning process.

- **Complete an assessment of any previous diversity, equity and inclusion plans.** Document progress including:
 - the actions that were fully completed;
 - actions that were started and are still underway (partially completed); and
 - actions where work has not yet started.
- **Identify and document what you learned** from implementing other equity, inclusion and diversity plans and efforts. Here are some questions that can help:
 - What challenges did you experience implementing these plans? Why did they occur?
 - What successes did you experience implementing these plans? What factors contributed to the success?
- **As an organization, reflect on what actions should your municipality or village take in the next three years to advance equity and anti-racism.**
 - What equity and accessibility issues have emerged over the past few years?
 - For an understanding of hate motivated crimes and acts of hate in your municipality or village, in addition to listening to community voices, considering consulting with your local law enforcement agencies to hear about their experiences.
 - What concerns have underrepresented and underserved communities raised—historically or currently? Are there themes?
 - What policy areas may have significant impacts on underrepresented and underserved communities (e.g., land use and zoning by-laws)?
 - What programs are accessed by underrepresented and underserved communities? Do we know if these programs are meeting their needs? Do we know if there are barriers that are preventing them from accessing programs? Are we aware of gaps in programming?
 - What is working well from the actions that have been taken so far to improve equity and anti-racism?
 - What changes have you noticed in the community in terms of culture, such as inclusion, when people with underrepresented and underserved communities are valued and engaged? What actions should be considered in the plan to address or recognize these changes?
- **Some broader equity and anti-racism priority area examples** to consider including in your plan include:
 - Equity and Anti-Racism in Service Delivery
 - Anti-Racism Training and Education
 - Diverse Representation and Inclusion
 - Equitable Hiring and Promotion Practices
 - Language and Cultural Accessibility
 - Equity and Anti-Racism in Planning and Development
 - Community Engagement and Consultation
 - Equitable Access to Economic Opportunities

Example of an Action within an Equity and Anti-Racism Plan

[Recreation Nova Scotia's Anti-Racism Charter in Recreation](#) provides unifying guidelines for the recreation sector to address and combat systemic racism within the sector. Municipalities and villages can become signatories to this charter as a commitment to a more equitable and inclusive recreation system as a part of their equity, anti-racism and accessibility plan and identify specific actions to support this commitment (e.g. initiatives that introduce recreation programs to racialized communities, identify practical and financial barriers and plan to address these barriers).

- **Ensure that underrepresented and underserved communities that your municipality or village serves are engaged in the development and implementation of your plan.**
 - Before you begin planning engagement, develop an understanding of the demographics of the people you serve to inform your engagement approach and ensure underrepresented and underserved populations are included.
 - Appendix B provides a summary of Indigenous and African Nova Scotian communities in Nova Scotia. Where applicable, plan to involve these the community(-ies) in the development of your equity and anti-racism plan.
 - What community-based organizations and not-for-profits exist in your municipality or village that serve underrepresented or underserved communities? Can you partner with them on engagement or for advice and input into your equity, anti-racism and accessibility plan?
 - Before you engage community, identify the key questions you are looking for input on (you may use questions similar to the previous prompt). Since you have already assessed progress made through previous equity and anti-racism plans and efforts, you may have a draft framework and guiding principles ready for direct input.
 - When considering how to include underrepresented and underserved communities in your work, be mindful and reflective of your existing relationships or lack thereof with these communities. Consider previous initiatives undertaken with these communities and how these can positively or negatively impact efforts related to your equity and anti-racism plan.
 - For more information and guidance on community engagement, please review OEA's Public Engagement Guidebook available at oeaengagement.ca.

An Example of Community Engagement

To further the (Halifax) Anti-Black Racism Framework, a phased approach for public engagement was undertaken to aid the development of the Anti-Black Racism Strategy and Action Plan. Collaboration with internal and external stakeholders to receive input, suggestions, and recommendations into the process was central to the development the strategy and plan.

-Halifax Regional Municipality Website

- **Invite feedback from your partners and community on a draft plan**, particularly underrepresented and underserved communities, including persons with disabilities and representatives from organizations representing underrepresented and underserved communities. For example, posting it online or holding an in-person meeting.
 - Consider contacting the Office of Equity and Anti-Racism (OEA@novascotia.ca) for feedback on your draft plan.
- **Revise and update** the plan based on feedback.
- **Publish your plan publicly in an accessible format.**
- **Email a link to your approved and published plan** to OEA@novascotia.ca. While government does not currently approve or endorse each organization's plan, compliance monitoring will be undertaken.

Appendix A – Example Equity and Anti-Racism Plan Template

- **Executive Summary and/or Opening Message**
 - Overview of the municipality/ village's commitment to equity and antiracism.
 - Key objectives.
 - Summary of key initiatives.
 - Can take the form of summary or a message from mayor of municipality, chair of a village, or other lead/sponsor.
- **Overview/How the plan was developed**
 - Purpose of the action plan.
 - Acknowledgement of underserved and underrepresented constituents/members you serve
 - Who did we hear from and work with to create this plan and who will be involved in implementing it?
 - How will we track progress and measure success.
- **Action Plan Commitments/Areas of Focus**
 - Group actions/commitments in thematic areas. Aim for at minimum 3-5 areas of focus for the next three years.
 - Identify specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) indicators associated with actions and commitments where possible.
 - Identify any key partners for commitments/areas of focus (e.g., community-based organizations, other municipalities).
- **Conclusion/Closing Section**
 - How will we commit to continuous improvement and revisiting the plan as needed?
 - Reaffirm commitments to equity, anti-racism and accessibility, including ongoing engagement with underserved and underrepresented communities.

Appendix B – Mi'kmaq and African Nova Scotian Communities in Nova Scotia

Mi'kmaq Communities

The Mi'kmaq are the Indigenous people of Mi'kma'ki. Mi'kma'ki encompasses what is known as present-day Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Quebec (Gaspé Peninsula), New Brunswick (north of the St. John watershed), parts of Newfoundland and Labrador, and parts of Maine.

Mi'kmaq have been rooted in Mi'kma'ki for over 13,000 years according to the carbon dating of artifacts from the Mi'kmawey Debert site.

Seven Districts of Mi'kma'ki:

1. Unama'ki aq Ktaqmkuk
2. Epekwitk aq Piktuk
3. Eskikewa'kik
4. Sipekne'katik
5. Kespukwik
6. Sikniht
7. Kespek



Thirteen First Nation communities in Mi'kma'ki:

- Acadia First Nation
- Annapolis Valley First Nation
- Bear River First Nation
- Eskasoni Mi'kmaw Nation
- Glooscap First Nation
- Membertou First Nation
- Millbrook First Nation
- Paqtnkek Mi'kmaw Nation
- Pictou Landing First Nation
- Potlotek First Nation (formerly Chapel Island)
- Sipekne'katik First Nation (formerly Indian Brook/Shubenacadie)
- Wagmatcook First Nation
- We'koqma'q First Nation

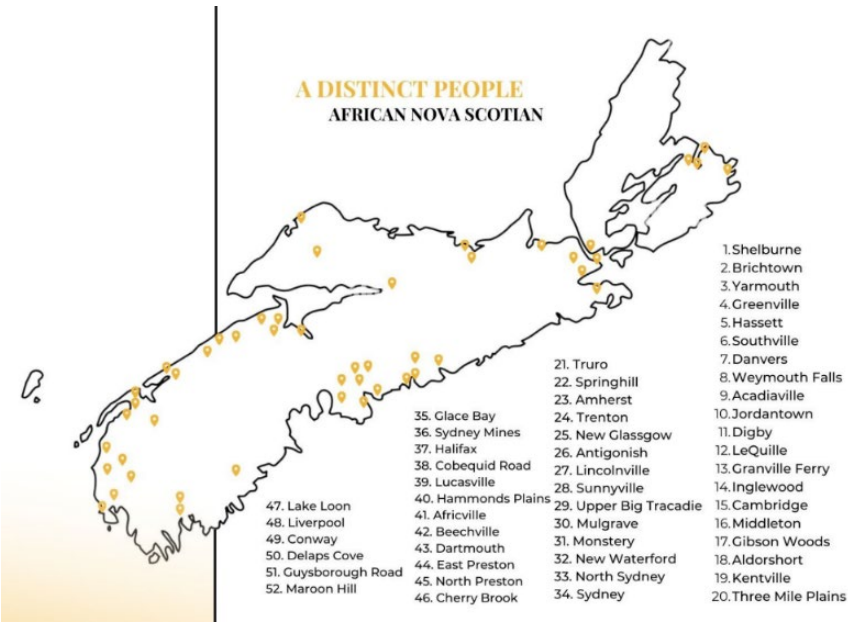


African Nova Scotian Communities

African Nova Scotians inhabited land in Nova Scotia over 400 years ago.

There were multiple known waves of migration into Nova Scotia, such as the Black Loyalists in 1783, the Jamaica Maroons in 1796, refugees from the War of 1812 between 1813-1814 and a Caribbean migration in 1904. In each migration, African Nova Scotians settled in different parts of the province.

The relationship between ANS settlers and Mi'kmaw communities started early. This relationship between communities was essential to the survival of ANS communities. Many settlers learned skills and knowledge of how to live off the land. This included using natural medicines, farming, fishing, and building/labour.



Engagement Questions Resource for Municipalities and Villages

Office of Equity and Anti-Racism

This supplementary resource is intended to provide municipalities and villages with some guidelines and potential questions to ask as part of their efforts to develop a plan to address systemic hate, inequity and racism by April 1, 2025. They can be delivered in a variety of types of engagement from surveys to in-person sessions conducted with members of underrepresented and underserved communities. Additional guidance can be found on page five of the [Equity and Anti-Racism Plan Guidance for Municipalities and Villages](#).

Self-Identification and Demographic Questions

Self-identification is the process by which individuals voluntarily disclose information about their personal identity, such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or other characteristics. Self-identification is important because it allows individuals to define and express their own identity. This process helps municipalities understand the diverse makeup of their communities, including different racial, ethnic, cultural, and other identities. The information collated through this process can be used to help gather statistics about how underrepresented and underserved communities were meaningfully involved in this process. Self-identification helps municipalities understand the diversity within their communities and design policies and initiatives that address the specific needs and experiences of different groups.

Here are some proposed self-identification questions which may be used in the context of a survey.

1. Do you identify as being part of an underrepresented and underserved community (select all that apply)?
 - ☐ 2SLGBTQIA+
 - ☐ Black/Persons of African Decent
 - ☐ Historic African Nova Scotian
 - ☐ Mi'kmaw/Indigenous
 - ☐ Newcomer (Immigrant or Refugee)
 - ☐ Persons of colour
 - ☐ Persons with a disability

- ☐ Religious/Faith-based minority
- ☐ Seniors
- ☐ Other: (write in response)
- ☐ I prefer not to answer

2. In Nova Scotia, people are often described by their race or racial identity. These identities are social and historical descriptors, and do not have a scientific basis. Which race categories do you self-identify with (select all that apply)?

- ☐ Black (e.g., African Nova Scotian, African Descent, African Canadian, Afro-Caribbean descent)
- ☐ East Asian (e.g., Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Taiwanese descent)
- ☐ Latin American (e.g., Hispanic, Latin American descent)
- ☐ Middle Eastern (e.g., Arab, Persian, West Asian descent (e.g., Afghan, Egyptian, Iranian, Kurdish, Lebanese, Turkish))
- ☐ South Asian (e.g., Bangladeshi, Indian, Indo-Caribbean, Pakistani, Sri Lankan)
- ☐ Southeast Asian (e.g., Cambodian, Filipino, Indonesian, Thai, Vietnamese, Southeast Asian descent)
- ☐ White (e.g., European descent)
- ☐ I use a different identifier to self-identify: (write in response)
- ☐ I prefer not to answer
- ☐ I do not know

3. Which gender categories do you currently identify with (select all that apply)?

- ☐ Man
- ☐ Trans
- ☐ Two-spirit
- ☐ Woman
- ☐ Gender diverse
- ☐ I prefer not to answer (this option is checked)
- ☐ I use different language to self-identify (please specify):

4. Which age group do you belong?

- ☐ Under 20
- ☐ 20 - 29
- ☐ 40 - 49
- ☐ 50 - 59
- ☐ 60 - 69
- ☐ 70 and over

General Questions

The list of possible questions provided below are not exhaustive and they can be adapted to suit the unique contexts and needs of different municipalities and villages. By customizing questions to fit the unique needs and contexts of your municipality or village, you will be better equipped to gather meaningful insights and develop a robust plan to address systemic hate, inequity, and racism.

In tailoring questions for your specific engagement, it is recommended that municipalities and villages:

- Ensure that the questions reflect the diversity and specific experiences of your population, including local histories and current contexts.
- Ensure that the questions are written in plain language, inclusive and sensitive to the experiences of underrepresented and underserved communities. Avoid questions that may inadvertently reinforce harm, stereotypes or biases.
- Identify existing community organizations, leaders, and advocates who can provide insights and help with the engagement planning and delivery, and distributions of surveys and other materials.

Programs and Service Delivery

1. Can you share any positive experiences or examples of municipal government programs and services that have effectively supported you?
2. Please share any specific challenges or barriers you may have experienced stopping you from accessing municipal programs and services because of your identity (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, faith, first language).
 - Barriers or challenges can include eligibility requirements, lack of service providers in your area, or insufficient levels of support to meet needs.
3. In your opinion, what services or programs need improvement to be more equitable (fairer) and more accessible for all community members?

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging in the Community

4. What programs or activities could the municipality create to help everyone feel included and like they belong?
5. How can the municipality better support education, awareness and celebration of the diverse backgrounds of its residents?
6. What are the biggest challenges to achieving fairness and inclusion in our community, and how can we solve them?

Policies

7. To your knowledge, what policies or guidelines should the municipality create to promote equity (fairness), fight racism, and improve accessibility for everyone?
8. To your knowledge, are there any current policies or practices that make it harder for people to access services or feel included? If yes, please explain.

Engagement

9. In what ways can government make sure that the diversity of voices and views of underrepresented and underserved communities are actively included, valued, and considered in engagement and decision-making processes?
10. To your knowledge, which community groups, service providers or organizations can the government collaborate with to better understand and meet programing and service needs of underrepresented and underserved communities?
11. How can the municipality improve how it shares information and reaches out to make sure it includes and is accessible to everyone?

Employment and Workplace Environments

12. What should the municipality do to make sure its employees come from diverse backgrounds reflecting and representing the community they serve?
13. Please share any specific challenges or barriers you may have experienced accessing municipal employment information or opportunities because of your identity.
14. How can the municipality make the workplace more welcoming and supportive for all employees?
15. What actions can the municipality take to prevent workplace discrimination and promote fairness accessibility and belonging?

Equity and Anti-Racism Primer for Municipalities and Villages

Office of Equity and Anti-Racism

This resource is intended to provide prescribed municipalities and villages with definitions and concepts that are essential to meaningfully engage in the development of equity and anti-racism plans in accordance with the [Dismantling Racism and Hate Act](#). Municipalities and Villages will be the first public bodies prescribed under the *Dismantling Racism and Hate Act* requiring them to have plans in place by April 1, 2025. Recognizing municipalities and villages may have existing knowledge and awareness of the concepts, in-depth review of this resource may not be necessary for some.

This resource can be used for self-directed or group learning by municipalities and villages in tandem with other supports offered through the Office of Equity and Anti-Racism (OEA) and the Association of Municipal Administrators of Nova Scotia.

If you have any questions, please contact the Office of Equity and Anti-Racism – OEEngagement@novascotia.ca.

1. Introduction to Foundational Concepts

Defining Hate and Racism

Hate means provocation, hostility or intolerance by means of threats, harassment, abuse, incitement or intimidation motivated by the actual or perceived race, religion, national origin, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, gender expression, disability or sexual orientation of any person.

Racism means the discrimination or antagonism by, or the prejudice of, an individual, community or institution against a person or people based on the person's or people's membership or perceived membership in a racial or ethnic group, and having the power to carry out that discrimination, antagonism or prejudice through institutional policies and practices that shape cultural beliefs and values of a society.

In order to understand racism, it is first important to understand that race is a social construct that artificially divides people into distinct groups based on characteristics such as physical appearance (particularly colour), ancestral heritage, cultural affiliation, and racial classification to suit the social and economic interests of the dominant group at that time. Race is a false construct that conflates skin color and ancestry with behavior, intelligence, and culture. Though race is a false construct, it has real consequences for all people.

Racism:

- is a belief that one group is better than another group because of race or skin colour;
- can be a conscious or unconscious attitude or value based on an assumption about characteristics of a particular group or religion;
- can be deeply rooted and displayed openly in racial jokes and slurs or hate crimes;
- can happen on an individual level, or on a systemic or institutional level;
- can result in profiling or stereotyping of individuals because they belong to a certain race;
- can occur when policies or practices that may seem neutral on their surface or are intended to be neutral but that may have discriminatory effects on individuals based on racial, ethnic, national or religious group identity; and
- can result from historical privilege of people who have power.

Anti-racism is defined as the work of actively opposing racism by advocating for changes in political, economic, and social life. This is achieved through the identification and elimination of racism by changing oppressive systems, structures, policies, practices, and attitudes so that historic, current, and future harm can be eliminated and so that power is redistributed and shared equitably.

Anti-racism:

- Identifies, isolates and challenges racism
- Challenges beliefs that foster racism
- Uses direct action at personal and institutional levels
- Creates and implements actions to fight racism for individuals and within an organization or workforce.

An antiracist organization is an organization that:

1. Has restructured all aspects of institutional life to ensure full participation of racialized people, including their worldview and culture; and the full participation of white people as allies in eliminating racism;
2. Has the ability to diagnose and address different types of racism within the organization in a manner that builds strength, community, and trust;
3. Implements structures, policies, and practices with inclusive decision-making and other forms of power-sharing throughout the institution;
4. Commits to the struggle to dismantle racism in the wider community; and
5. Builds clear lines of accountability to racially oppressed communities.

RESOURCES:

- [Evidence-informed practices for anti-racism in government: Embedding anti-racism in the workplace and policy](#)
- [Antiracism and Organizational Change Guide](#)
- [Race Equity and Inclusion Action Guide](#)

Equality, Equity and Inequity

Equality is one of the central principles of democracy and is based on the belief that all people should have the same opportunities to be successful and have a productive, enjoyable life. The idea of equality is key to the notion that everyone will be able to achieve based on their efforts and contributions to society instead of their status or position.

Equity recognizes that everyone doesn't begin in the same place in society. Some people face adverse conditions and circumstances making it more challenging with the same effort to achieve the same goals. Equity advocates for those who may have been historically disadvantaged, making it difficult for them to be successful. What is "fair" as it relates to equity isn't a question of what is the same but rather the point from which a person begins. Equity considers historical and other factors in determining what is fair.

Inequity, by contrast, refers to a state of unfairness or lack of justice in which biases are being perpetuated and individuals or groups are treated differently and unequally, often resulting in systematic and patterned disparities in opportunities, resources, rights, or outcomes. Inequity can stem from past and current decisions, systems of power and privilege, policies and the implementation of those policies made on social, economic, racial, or gender-based distinctions, and it can manifest in various areas of life, including education, healthcare, employment, and access to basic services.

Think of **equity** as: The intentional creation of opportunities for historically underserved and underrepresented populations to have equal access to resources. Equity enables proactive measures and reasonable accommodation necessary to identify structural, systemic and cultural barriers; discrimination, unfairness, and disadvantage; and ensure equitable pathways and opportunity structures for Indigenous peoples,

visible/racialized minorities, persons within the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, persons with disabilities, and, in some cases women, in all spheres of life.¹

Equity of all kinds acknowledges that inequalities exist, and our work should aim to eliminate them and seeks to balance disparities. In developing equity and anti-racism plans, Municipalities and Villages should seek to:

1. Call attention to and identify patterns of inequitable outcomes.
2. Take personal and institutional responsibility for the success of their constituents.
3. Critically reassess policies and practices.
4. Demonstrate race-consciousness.
5. Understand the social and historical context of exclusionary policies and practices.

Summary:

- Equality means everyone is treated the same exact way, regardless of differences. It means access and distribution of a set of resources evenly across individuals. When everyone gets the same opportunity, that is considered fair to those who come with an existing (and often unconscious) unfair advantage.
- Equity helps even the playing field so that everyone can thrive. Equity of all kinds acknowledges that inequalities exist, and our work should aim to eliminate them and seek to balance disparities.

Diversity

Diversity means having a variety of people from a range of different social, economic and ethnic backgrounds, gender identities, sexual orientations, life experiences, competencies and faiths represented on teams, in workplaces in general and particularly in processes like engagement. Representational diversity is an outcome of proactive measures to correct systemic disadvantage, and to create equitable opportunity structures and pathways for a critical mass of those who are historically underserved and underrepresented.

Diversity can be reflected in three different dimensions, all of which shape our identity, as outlined below.

- Demographic diversity (our gender, race, gender identity and/or expression, sexual orientation, and so on) is tied to our identities of origin – characteristics that classify us at birth and that we will carry around for the rest of our lives.
- Experiential diversity (our affinities, hobbies, and abilities); influences we might call identities of growth.
- Cognitive diversity (how we approach problems and think about things) makes us look for other minds to complement our thinking: what we might call identities of aspiration.

Inclusion

Inclusion encompasses norms, practices, and intentional actions to promote participation, engagement, empowerment, and a sense of belonging for members of historically underrepresented and underserved groups in all aspects of life. It is about celebrating, valuing, and amplifying perspectives, voices, styles, and identities that have been marginalized by promoting an institutional culture and practices to ensure all can experience a welcoming space of fairness, dignity, and human flourishing.

Think of **inclusion** as: the active, intentional, and ongoing engagement with diversity. Diversity is what we are, and inclusion is what we do.

Where diversity may focus on the quantitative representation, inclusion focuses on the qualitative experience of belonging. Diversity may exist with inequity, isolation, and marginality, but social inclusion focuses on culture and practices that deepen participation and engagement. Inclusion requires proactive measures to transform cultures and relations of power and privilege, resulting in the social exclusion of under-represented groups so that there are no impediments to full participation by members of equity-deserving groups.

¹ <https://www.ucalgary.ca/equity-diversity-inclusion/literacy-education/edi-glossary>

2. Social Identities, Underserved and Underrepresented Groups & Intersectionality

Social identity

A **social identity** is a category of differences that describes a set of common physical traits, characteristics, or attributes². It is influenced by social categories such as class, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and by the social groups we belong to. A social group is a group of people who share a range of physical, cultural, or social characteristics within one of the social identity categories.

Below is a non-exhaustive list of examples of social identity categories:

- **Sexual identity and romantic orientation:** Asexual, gay, heterosexual, bisexual, lesbian
- **Persons with Disabilities:** Invisible and/or visible disabilities.
- **Race:** Black, East Asian, Latin American, Middle Eastern, South Asian, White
- **Indigenous Identity:** Mi'kmaw, First Nations, Inuk/Inuit, Métis
- **Religious Identity:** Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh
- **Age:** Elders, adults, youth, children
- **Gender identity:** Woman, man, two-spirit, trans, gender diverse
- **Ethnicity:** African Nova Scotian, Hispanic, South Asian descent, European descent

Underrepresented and Underserved Communities in Nova Scotia

When we speak of underrepresented and underserved communities, we are referring to those groups who experience discrimination and exclusion because of unequal power relationships across economic, political, social, and cultural dimensions.

This includes systemic inequity and/or racism towards people based on one or more protected characteristics as identified in the *Human Rights Act*, which includes: age, race, colour, religion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, physical or mental disability, ethnicity, national or Indigenous origin, family status, marital status, source of income, and political belief, affiliation, or activity. Below are examples of underrepresented and underserved groups in Nova Scotia. Each of these groups has their own unique story, historical setting and history of discrimination and marginalization (this list is not exhaustive and may not include all groups):

- Mi'kmaw and Persons of Indigenous descent;
- African Nova Scotians and Persons of African descent;
- Persons of Colour;
- Newcomers (immigrants and refugees);
- 2SLGBTQIA+—2 Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual/Biromantic, Transgender, Queer and/or Questioning, Intersex, Asexual/Aromantic and others whose identities are not reflected;
- Persons with disabilities (physical and mental);
- Persons who are neurodivergent; and
- In some contexts, women.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality is defined as the complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (for example, racism, sexism, and classism) combine, overlap, or intersect, especially in the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups. The wheel of power and privilege can be used as a visual tool for promoting awareness and understanding of interconnected systems of privilege, oppression, and power dynamics within society. It provides examples within the Canadian context to illustrate how intersectionality of thirteen categories of social identity uphold power and privilege and shape our interactions

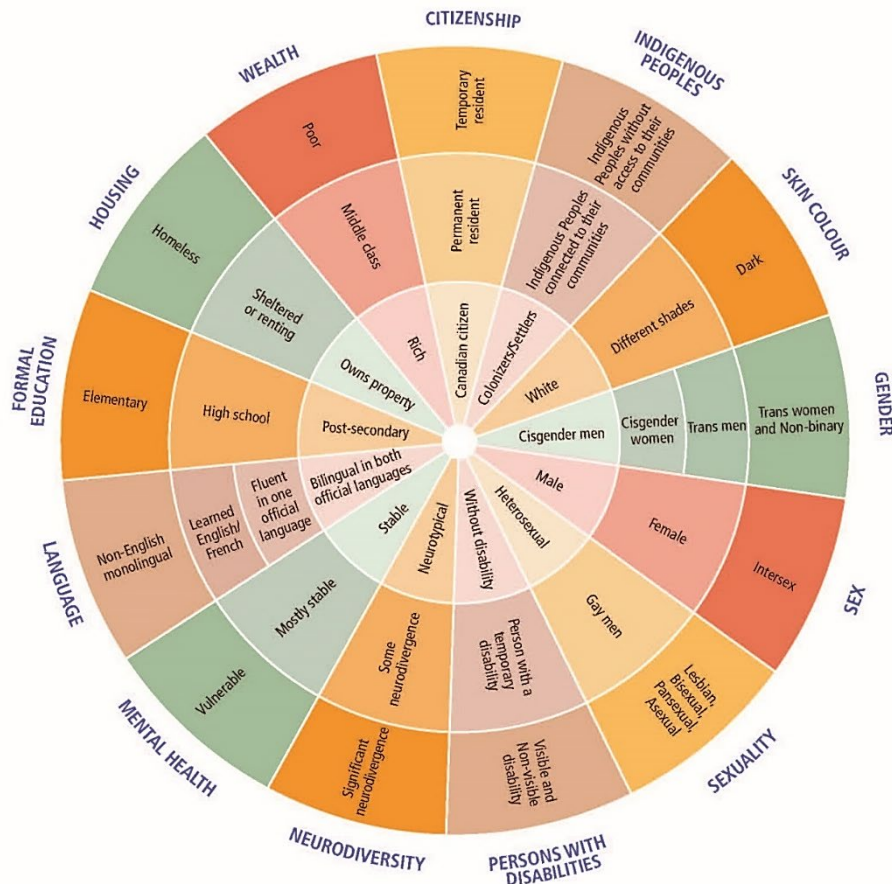
² <https://snohomishcountywa.gov/5686/Social-Justice-Terms>

and experiences. Mapping out these complex dynamics can help to recognize personal positions of privilege as well as understand how systemic inequalities impact different groups within society. This understanding is essential for:

- identifying and addressing barriers to participation;
- guiding efforts to ensure inclusive, meaningful, equitable and accessible programs and services for all members of the community;
- navigating conversations around inequities, ensuring diverse perspectives are heard and valued; and
- developing strategies to address power imbalances and create more equitable outcomes in projects, programs, policies, and decision-making processes.

WHEEL OF PRIVILEGE AND POWER

(the closer you are to the centre, the more privilege you have)



Note: the categories within this wheel are only examples in the Canadian context, and we should not limit ourselves to them. Intersectionality is a broad concept, and this tool is only a beginning point.

Image adapted from Sylvia Duckworth (2020).

WATCH:

- [Intro to Intersectionality](#)
- [Kimberlé Crenshaw - On Intersectionality](#)
- [What is Intersectional Feminism?](#)
- [There is no hierarchy of oppressions - Audre Lorde](#)

3. Understanding Power and Privilege

Power and privilege are two related concepts that influence the dynamics of social injustice. Understanding how these concepts interact and overlap can assist individuals in creating practical ways to foster a more equitable society.

Power is the capability to influence the behaviour, thoughts, and decisions of others, oneself, and/or the course of events. It can be derived from the economy, government, or community. Economic power involves managing money and resources, while political power entails implementing changes in government decision-making processes. Social power involves using cultural values, beliefs, and norms to alter people's actions, thoughts, and emotions.³

Institutional Power is the ability or official authority to decide what is best for others. The ability to decide who will have access to resources. The capacity to exercise control over others.

WATCH:

- [How to understand power - Eric Liu - YouTube](#)

Privilege refers to unearned access to resources that enhance one's chances of getting what one needs in order to lead a comfortable, productive and safe life. It is only readily available to some people as a result of their advantaged social group membership and is often invisible to those who have it.

Privilege can be based on a variety of social identities such as race, gender, religion, socioeconomic status, ability status, sexuality, age, education level and more. Determining who has privilege or disadvantage is complex because cultural, social, and historical changes affect which groups are privileged and which groups are not. When talking about privilege, most folks feel uncomfortable. Having privilege is not inherently a bad thing, but it is how you utilize it and how others are impacted by it, that you must vigilantly attend to.

Privilege can be experienced on personal, interpersonal and institutional levels. The social, economic, political and psychological unearned advantages that privileged groups hold come at the expense of marginalized groups. In Canada, privilege is typically granted to people who have membership in one or more of these social identity groups: white people, males, heterosexuals, wealthy, middle or owning class people, Christians, English-speaking people, and able-bodied people. They have historically held dominance and power over underrepresented and underserved groups. Some everyday examples of privilege:

- An able-bodied person can make plans to visit somewhere new without concern for how the sidewalks are maintained or if the building has mobility supports like a working elevator or ramps. This is an example of able-body privilege.
- White and light-skinned people can easily find and purchase products like bandages, makeup and stockings labeled "nude" or "flesh" that match their skin tone. This is an example of white privilege.
- A person who can expect their work or school holiday schedule to reflect the religious holidays they celebrate has religious privilege.

Once someone acknowledges their privilege, they can move forward in leveraging that privilege to confront societal and institutional discrimination. Other ways a person can leverage their privilege are to have brave conversations with family and friends, advocate for folks without the same privileges, and utilize bystander intervention techniques to support someone you see being harassed because of their identity.

WATCH:

- [Does Privilege Make You Angry?](#)
- [Privilege is power, how you can use it to do some good!](#)

³ <https://joeydolls.com/easy-guide-social-justice-talking-about-power-privilege/>

- [What Is Privilege?](#)
- [How Privileged Are You?](#)
- [Unboxing Privilege](#)
- [Pedagogy of Privilege](#)

RESOURCES:

- [Explaining white privilege to a broke white person](#)
- [Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack](#)

4. Discrimination and Systems of Oppression

Discrimination is the act of denying equal treatment and opportunities to individuals and groups. It operates through policies or practices that exclude or limit an individual or groups from accessing services, employment, housing and enjoying all the benefits of society.

Oppression occurs when individuals are mistreated and excluded from society due to their identity. Oppression is the combination of prejudice and institutional power which creates a system that maintains advantage and disadvantage based on social group memberships. Oppression discriminates against some groups (often called “target groups”) and benefits other groups (often called “dominant groups”).

WATCH:

- [Oppression 101](#)
- [The 4 I's of Oppression: Ideological, Institutional, Interpersonal, and Internalized](#)

RESOURCES:

- [Institutionalized Oppression Definitions](#)
- [Oppression Matrix](#)
- [Download this fact sheet](#) on privilege and oppression in American society from Kalamazoo College
- [AORTA Continuum on Becoming a Transformative Anti-Oppression Organization](#)

Systems of Oppression

The term “**systems of oppression**” helps us better identify inequity by calling attention to the historical and organized patterns of mistreatment. Examples of these systems or “isms” are racism, sexism, heterosexism, ableism, classism, and ageism. These systems enable dominant groups to exert control over target groups by limiting their rights, freedom, and access to basic resources such as health care, education, employment, and housing. Society's institutions, such as government, education, and culture, can all contribute to or reinforce the oppression of marginalized social groups while elevating dominant social groups.⁴

Systems of oppression run through our language, shape the way we act and do things in our culture, and are built around what are understood to be “norms” in our societies. A norm signifies what is “normal,” acceptable, and desirable and is something that is valued and supported in a society. It is also given a position of dominance, privilege, and power over what is defined as non-dominant, abnormal, and therefore, invaluable or marginal.⁵

⁴ <https://nmaahc.si.edu/learn/talking-about-race/topics/social-identities-and-systems-oppression>

⁵ <https://simmons.libguides.com/anti-oppression>

RESOURCE:

- Lens of Systemic Oppression - The lens of systemic oppression is a lens intentionally employed to sharpen focus on the ways in which any given form of oppression (race, gender, class, language, sexual orientation, etc.) may be negatively impacting people's ability to make progress on the things they care about and/or preventing individual or collective action toward the achievement of a particular goal.⁶

5. Implicit Biases, Stereotypes and Microaggressions

Implicit biases, stereotypes and microaggressions are interrelated concepts. Implicit biases are developed through exposure to stereotypes and other forms of misinformation over time. These implicit biases can then lead well-intentioned people to commit microaggressions against racialized people, Indigenous people, and others with marginalized identities.

Implicit bias refers to unconscious, subtle, involuntary assumptions or judgments we make every day based on our prior experiences and culture. This happens "below the surface", deep in the subconscious, where there is no awareness or intention of bias. Implicit bias is also "activated" involuntarily, it is not something that can easily be turned on or turned off. Additionally, implicit bias can be positive or negative.

Examples of implicit bias

- We tend to see an individual as a representation of a particular group rather than as an individual.
- We tend to favor, prefer, and associate positive characteristics with members of the group to which we belong.
- We tend to associate negative characteristics with or disfavor members of groups to which we do not belong.

RESOURCES:

- Understanding Prejudice: Implicit Association Test
- Teaching Tolerance: Test Yourself for Hidden Bias
- Act, Communicating, Implicit Bias (racialequitytools.org)

WATCH:

- Implicit Bias Defined
- Implicit Bias – Concepts Unwrapped
- Verna Myers: How to overcome our biases? Walk boldly toward them - YouTube
- Breaking Bias - Unlearning: Breaking Bias. Building Community. - YouTube

Stereotypes refer to the widely held, oversimplified ideas we hold about a person or people based on their identities (real or perceived). Usually, stereotypes are based on assumptions, popular opinion, or misinformation, are generally negative, are sweeping and simple, and are often characterized by words such as "always" and "never."

WATCH:

- When you picture Doctors Without Borders, what do you see?
- Why Do You Think Stereotypes Are True? | Decoded | MTV News - YouTube

EXERCISE:

- [Deconstructing Stereotypes](#)

RESOURCE:

- [When & How to Avoid Stereotypes | LiteraryTerms.net](#)
- [Teaching About Stereotypes 2.0 | Learning for Justice](#)

Implicit biases and stereotypes can impact our relationships and interactions with each other in many ways. They can lead us to commit microaggressions.

Microaggressions are subtle verbal or nonverbal insults or denigrating messages communicated toward a marginalized person, often by someone who may be well-intentioned but unaware of the impact their words or actions have on the target.

Microaggressions are more than just insults, insensitive comments, or generalized jerky behavior. They're something very specific: the kinds of remarks, questions, or actions that are painful because they have to do with a person's membership in a group that's discriminated against and/or subject to stereotypes.

WATCH:

- [Microaggressions \(Clean\) - YouTube](#)
- [Understanding Microaggressions - YouTube](#)
- [If Microaggressions Happened to White People | Decoded | MTV News - YouTube](#)

RESOURCE:

- [What are Anti-Black Racism Microaggressions?](#)
- [The Micropedia of Microaggressions - the first encyclopedia of microaggressions.](#)
- [21 Racial Microaggressions You Hear On A Daily Basis \(buzzfeed.com\)](#)

EXERCISE:

- [What is the message? \(Versions A-E\)](#)

Confronting microaggressions may result in a defensive response, but it is important to actively combat inequitable and/or racist behaviour when you are able. One way to address these types of inequitable and/or racist comments is to ask for clarification on the comment and challenge the person to consider the impact of their words. For example, if someone were to say, "our colleague doesn't act Black/gay/like a woman," ask what they mean. By asking this question, it forces the person to examine what they're saying. This challenge may raise their awareness that they are reinforcing the idea of what 'acting Black/gay/like a woman' means based on generalization and harmful stereotypes.

Summary:

- Implicit biases are unconscious assumptions or judgements that reinforced or created by stereotypes and other influences.
- Stereotypes are widely held, oversimplified ideas we hold about a person or people based on their identities (real or perceived). Many stereotypes are rooted in prejudice.
- A prejudice is a belief or opinion. It refers to biased thinking. Prejudice is an opinion that is not based on reason or actual experience and usually negative feelings or attitudes toward members of a group; they often come from a place of suspicion, fear, or intolerance.

- Microaggressions are an expression of our prejudiced attitudes through words or actions, often unconsciously or unintentionally. They are closely tied to implicit biases.

6. Inclusive Language and Communication

Being committed to equity and anti-racism requires the use and adoption of inclusive language and communication. Language is not neutral - it is closely tied to the personality of the communicator and the culture and society in which it is used. Language is not always intended to exclude a person or a group, but it may unintentionally have that effect.

Inclusive Language - language that acknowledges diversity, conveys respect to all people, is sensitive to differences, and promotes equal opportunities.

A central tenet of inclusive language is for people to think about the impact their words and phrases have on others. Inclusive language avoids terms, phrases, or expressions that could be racist, sexist, or biased against any group of people. Inclusive language is more than just avoiding the use of a few antiquated or offensive terms and phrases. It is about embracing communication that acknowledges the power differentials and dynamics of our society and their deleterious effects. It is about showing appreciation for the diversity everyone brings to the table. And finally, it is about creating cultures where people can feel free to be their full authentic selves.⁷

Essential ideas relating to Inclusive Language:

- **Observe, confirm, and utilize the terminology that people use to describe themselves:** It is always good practice to observe how the individual refers to themselves, and to check with the person to see which terms they may personally prefer. Start by listening to how people talk about themselves.
- **“Person-First” approach:** This approach emphasizes the humanity in all of us by using terminology that puts the person before a particular aspect of their identity. For example, the person-first approach would use phrases such as “person with a physical disability” rather than “disabled person”, or “people who use drugs” instead of “drug users”. This person-first approach can be helpful for creating inclusive spaces for every person, and this approach can also complement the “identity-first” approach.
- **Language and terminology are always evolving:** Language and terminology constantly change to reflect the ever-evolving values and mindsets of our society. A phrase or term once used may now have a different meaning or may have added connotations when said, so that term may now be outdated and should no longer be used. Be attentive to changes in language used among identity communities.
- **We all must continue learning:** Mistakes can and will happen as we are always learning the best way to use inclusive language as we adapt strive to be inclusive.

WATCH:

- [How language shapes the way we think](#)
- [Why Gender Pronouns Matter](#)

RESOURCES:

- [Using Inclusive Language in the Workplace: An Introduction Written by Katharine Park, Advocacy Lead, Wellness Works Canada](#)
- [A Short Guide to Inclusive Language](#)
- [What is Inclusive Language in the Workplace? Examples, Steps, & Strategies](#)
- [Words Matter: Guidelines on using inclusive language in the workplace \(2018\)](#)

⁷ <https://www.apa.org/ed/precollege/psn/2022/09/inclusive-language>

Equity and Anti-Racism Self-Assessment Tool

Office of Equity and Anti-Racism

This tool was developed for municipalities and villages to meet requirements to develop equity and anti-racism plans under the *Dismantling Racism and Hate Act*, but it can be broadly used by any organization interested completing a self-assessment exercise. It can be used in a facilitated group setting or by individual self-assessment(s).

To meaningfully address systemic hate, inequity, and racism, organizations must engage in critical reflection and evaluation of current practices. By using this tool, your organization can identify strengths and reflect on aspects where the organization is excelling in equity and anti-racism efforts. It will also help identify areas of improvement where the organization can enhance its commitment to equity and anti-racism and begin the process of developing an action plan and monitoring the progress as the organization evolves and new equity and anti-racism goals are established.

This tool asks users to self-assess 12 different organizational characteristics in relation to equity and anti-racism using a spectrum. For each characteristic, select where you think your organization is in terms of progress, and respond to the questions that follow.

The final section of the tool is a precursor to the process of developing an action plan. It prompts users to review the completed self-assessment and identify high level areas that they see as priorities for action. This self-assessment is intended to be a dynamic tool for ongoing improvement. Organizations are encouraged to regularly revisit and update it to reflect the evolving nature of equity and anti-racism policies.

Examples of equity and anti-racism actions and commitments that have been undertaken by municipalities in other jurisdictions are appended to this resource to help generate ideas and discussion.

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or would like to discuss:

OEAEngagement@novascotia.ca.



Section 1: Assessing Your Organizations Characteristics

For each characteristic, identify where you are on the spectrum of progress and answer the questions that follow.

Vision: clear articulation, commitment, and defined direction for growth to achieve equity, inclusion, and anti-racism across all aspects of its mission, values, and strategic objectives.

☐ Not yet started The vision does not articulate a clear focus on achieving equity, inclusion, and anti-racism.	☐ Ready to start Recognizes the importance of equity, inclusion and anti-racism and it is addressing the next steps.	☐ Launched Understand the significance of equity, inclusion and anti-racism and is in the process of developing/changing its vision related to equity, inclusion, and anti-racism.	☐ Well on the way Developed an equity, inclusion, and anti-racism vision and is working to align policies and operations with this vision.	☐ Leading Integrated equity, inclusion and anti-racism in the vision statements which are actively being used to guide policies and operations.
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If selected Not yet started, identify ways your organization can begin to make progress- What are the opportunities and barriers?	If selected Ready to start, Launched, Well on the way or Leading- list the evidence that supports how your organization fulfils this indicator?

Leadership Commitment: The extent to which organization leadership demonstrates a commitment to equity and anti-racism principles.

☐ Not yet started Leadership (management and staff) have not focused on issues related to equity and anti-racism.	☐ Ready to start Members of management and staff are beginning to have discussions related to equity and anti-racism.	☐ Launched Equity and anti-racism lens are leading the discussions within management and staff.	☐ Well on the way Management and staff are consistently integrating equity and anti-racism principles into decision-making.	☐ Leading Management and staff are using an equity and anti-racism lens when creating policies and programs. Management demonstrates accountability to communities and partners.
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If selected Not yet started, identify ways your organization can begin to make progress- What are the opportunities and barriers?	If selected Ready to start, Launched, Well on the way or Leading- list the evidence that supports how your organization fulfils this indicator?

Inclusive Policies: The presence of policies that actively promote inclusion, diversity, and anti-racism within the organization.

☐ Not yet started Has limited or no policies related to inclusion, diversity, and anti-racism.	☐ Ready to start Is interested in developing and implementing inclusion, diversity, and anti-racism policies but may be unclear where to begin.	☐ Launched Has implemented inclusion, diversity, and anti-racism language in policies.	☐ Well on the way Has developed written policies explicitly addressing inclusion, diversity, and anti-racism. May be unclear how to operationalize it.	☐ Leading There are clear procedures and policies related to inclusion, diversity, and anti-racism. Has clear goals, strategies, and indicators of progress.
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If selected Not yet started, identify ways your organization can begin to make progress- What are the opportunities and barriers?	If selected Ready to start, Launched, Well on the way or Leading- list the evidence that supports how your organization fulfils this indicator?

Infrastructure: the presence of established systems, policies, and resources designed to support and sustain equitable practices, address systemic biases, and promote anti-racist initiatives within the organization's structure and operations.

☐ Not yet started Does not have systems, policies and resources designed to support and sustain equitable practices.	☐ Ready to start Has some internal discussions but does not have the structures to guide the work.	☐ Launched Committee has been created to focus on implementing equitable practices, but it is not integrated into the work.	☐ Well on the way Has existing internal committees and has integrated equitable practises into the organizations work.	☐ Leading Using equitable practices to address systemic biases and uses an anti-racist lens in every aspect of the work.
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If selected Not yet started, identify ways your organization can begin to make progress What are the opportunities and barriers?	If selected Ready to start, Launched, Well on the way or Leading- list the evidence that supports how your organization fulfils this indicator?

Training and Development: The provision of ongoing training and development opportunities focused on equity, diversity, and anti-racism education and awareness-building initiatives into organizational culture and practices.

☐ Not yet started Has not done any training and development related to equity, diversity, and anti-racism education.	☐ Ready to start Had some internal decisions on accessing equity, diversity, and anti-racism education for the staff.	☐ Launched Some staff have participated in training and development related to equity, diversity, and anti-racism.	☐ Well on the way All management and staff have participated in training and development opportunities related to equity, diversity, and anti-racism education.	☐ Leading Engage in ongoing education to promote a culture of equity, diversity, and anti-racism. This knowledge is integrated into policies and programs.
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If selected Not yet started, identify ways your organization can begin to make progress What are the opportunities and barriers?	If selected Ready to start, Launched, Well on the way or Leading- list the evidence that supports how your organization fulfils this indicator?

Data Collection, Analysis and Reporting: The organization's commitment to collecting, analyzing, and reporting data on diversity, equity, and anti-racism efforts.

☐ Not yet started Does not collect, analyze, or report data on diversity, equity, and anti-racism efforts.	☐ Ready to start Does not collect, analyze, or report data on diversity, equity, and anti-racism efforts, but views this as a future goal.	☐ Launched Collects some data on diversity, equity, and anti-racism efforts, but not in a comprehensive way.	☐ Well on the way Collects, disaggregates, and analyzes the data but may not know what to do with the information.	☐ Leading Collects, analyzes (with those who the data is about), and reports the data. Based on the data, the organizations uses a diversity, equity, and anti-racism lens to create policies and programs.
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If selected Not yet started, identify ways your organization can begin to make progress What are the opportunities and barriers?	If selected Ready to start, Launched, Well on the way or Leading- list the evidence that supports how your organization fulfils this indicator?

Community Engagement: The organizations effort in intentionally engaging with and supporting underrepresented and underserved communities in meaningful ways (underrepresented and underserved groups include Mi'kmaq and/or people of Indigenous descent, African Nova Scotians, people of African descent, people with disabilities, 2SLGBTQIA+ people, newcomers, and minority faith-based groups). This includes establishing meaningful partnerships with underrepresented and underserved community organizations to address systemic inequalities and foster collaboration.

☐ Not yet started Does not have any strong partnerships with underrepresented and underserved communities.	☐ Ready to start Recognizes the importance of building partnerships with underrepresented and underserved communities but may be unclear where to begin.	☐ Launched Beginning to build partnerships but has not yet created accountable and meaningful partnerships.	☐ Well on the way Actively strengthening partnerships and trust with underrepresented and underserved communities.	☐ Leading Has established strong and accountable partnerships and trust with underrepresented and underserved communities to address systemic inequalities.
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If selected Not yet started, identify ways your organization can begin to make progress What are the opportunities and barriers?	If selected Ready to start, Launched, Well on the way or Leading- list the evidence that supports how your organization fulfils this indicator?

Decisions: The organisation’s decision-making processes are guided by equity and anti-racism principles and a commitment to transparency and accountability with mechanisms in place to address racial biases and promote equity.

☐ Not yet started Equity and anti-racism are not a factor into decision-making processes.	☐ Ready to start Interested in implementing equity and anti-racism principles into decision making processes but may be unclear where to begin.	☐ Launched Decisions are occasionally influenced by equity and anti-racism principles.	☐ Well on the way Decisions regarding policies, programs and resource allocation are informed by equity and anti-racism principles.	☐ Leading Decisions regarding policies, programs and resource allocation are systematically guided by an equity and anti-racism lens.
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If selected Not yet started, identify ways your organization can begin to make progress What are the opportunities and barriers?	If selected Ready to start, Launched, Well on the way or Leading- list the evidence that supports how your organization fulfils this indicator?
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Accountability Mechanisms: The presence of mechanisms to hold the organization accountable for progress in equity and anti-racism action planning. This includes regular assessment and evaluation of organizational practices, policies, and outcomes to identify areas for improvement and track progress towards equity and anti-racism goals.

☐ Not yet started Equity and anti-racism metrics are not included in the evaluations of programs.	☐ Ready to start May recognize the value of including equity and anti-racism metrics in the evaluations of program to focus on accountability.	☐ Launched Preparing to include or is currently including equity and anti-racism metrics in a few programs.	☐ Well on the way Equity and anti-racism are included in evaluations, which reinforces accountability mechanisms.	☐ Leading All evaluation and accountability mechanisms include specific equity and anti-racism metrics which has strengthened the relationship with underrepresented and underserved community.
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If selected Not yet started, identify ways your organization can begin to make progress What are the opportunities and barriers?	If selected Ready to start, Launched, Well on the way or Leading- list the evidence that supports how your organization fulfils this indicator?

Accessibility and Inclusion: The extent to which the organization ensures physical and digital accessibility for all and actively includes diverse voices. This includes ensuring accessibility of resources, support services and opportunities for advancement for individuals from diverse backgrounds.

☐ Not yet started No effort is made to create an inclusive and accessible environment for staff.	☐ Ready to start Values the idea of being an inclusive and accessible environment but does not know where to begin.	☐ Launched Has created resources, tools and support services but has not implemented in the workplace.	☐ Well on the way Has integrated accessible and inclusive practises, resources, tools and support services into the workplace and organizations work.	☐ Leading Empowering all individuals which includes diverse voices. Ensuring accessibility of resources, support systems and opportunities for advancement for individuals from diverse backgrounds.
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If selected Not yet started, identify ways your organization can begin to make progress What are the opportunities and barriers?	If selected Ready to start, Launched, Well on the way or Leading- list the evidence that supports how your organization fulfils this indicator?

Hiring Practices: The organisation’s commitment to fair, unbiased and inclusive hiring practises that actively seek and prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion.

☐ Not yet started Does not have inclusive hiring practises or processes that actively seek diversity.	☐ Ready to start Recognizes the importance of implementing processes which can contribute to more equitable hiring practises.	☐ Launched Has created hiring processes by designating positions for specific individuals from diverse communities.	☐ Well on the way Has created processes which focuses on candidates’ diversity, equity, and inclusion experience and expertise during the hiring and promotion practices.	☐ Leading Developed and implemented an inclusive hiring process that are intentionally designed to create equal job opportunities for all.
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If selected Not yet started, identify ways your organization can begin to make progress What are the opportunities and barriers?	If selected Ready to start, Launched, Well on the way or Leading- list the evidence that supports how your organization fulfils this indicator?

Employee Resource Groups (ERGs): The existence and support of employee resource groups¹ focuses on promoting diversity, equity, and anti-racism.

☐ Not yet started Have not taken any steps to establish or support ERGs focused on equity and anti-racism initiatives.	☐ Ready to start Recognizes the importance of ERGs in promoting equity and anti-racism efforts and is in the preliminary stages of planning and preparing for their establishment.	☐ Launched ERGs have been formally established within the organization. They may have a defined purpose, membership, and structure. However, activities and initiatives may still be in the early stages of development and implementation.	☐ Well on the way ERGs are actively engaged in organizing events, workshops, and initiatives aimed at promoting awareness, education, and dialogue within the organization. They have gained traction and are making visible contributions to the organization's equity and anti-racism efforts.	☐ Leading ERGs are recognized as influential drivers of change within the organization. They have established themselves as key stakeholders in decision-making processes, and their initiatives and advocacy efforts have significantly contributed to fostering a more inclusive and anti-racist organizational culture.
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If selected Not yet started, identify ways your organization can begin to make progress What are the opportunities and barriers?	If selected Ready to start, Launched, Well on the way or Leading- list the evidence that supports how your organization fulfils this indicator?

Identify any other organizational characteristics related to equity and anti-racism that is not mentioned in this tool, and your self-assessment in terms of progress.

¹ <https://www.greatplacetowork.com/resources/blog/what-are-employee-resource-groups-ergs>

Section 2: Beginning steps to creating an action plan.

Based on the overall assessment, identify three (or more – add cells as needed) areas to enhance your commitment to equity and anti-racism. It is recommended that you identify clear and focused areas for improvement that can be included or considered in the development of an equity and anti-racism action plan for your organization. **A list of examples of actions and initiatives other municipalities have committed to are provided in Appendix A to help you in identifying possible actions for your municipality or village.**

The Equity and Anti-Racism Plan Guidance for Municipalities and Villages provides more detailed guidance on developing your plan.

1.
2.
3.

Supplementary Resources and Reference Material

- [Understanding Meyer's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Spectrum tool, Meyer Memorial Trust](#)
- [Organizational Assessment Tools and Resources, racialequitytools.org](#)
- [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Assessment, Centre for Diversity and Inclusion](#)
- [Complete_Comprehensive_DEI_Assessment.pdf, thecentermsu.org](#)

Appendix A – Examples of Municipal Equity and Anti-Racism Actions and Commitments

Equity in Service Delivery

- Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) has implemented equity-focused service delivery strategies to address the diverse needs of residents, including targeted supports for marginalized communities.
- Vancouver's Equity Framework guides city departments in providing equitable services to all residents. The framework ensures that city services are accessible and responsive to the needs of diverse communities, including marginalized groups such as Indigenous peoples and newcomers.
- The City of Edmonton's Diversity and Inclusion Framework and Implementation Plan provides employees with the tools and support they need to identify and address systemic barriers and build a diverse and inclusive workforce. It gives employers the means to integrate diversity and inclusion values and practices into existing corporate processes, and to enable progress to be measured.

Equity in Planning and Development

- Toronto's Planning Department incorporates equity considerations into land use planning processes, ensuring that development projects address the needs of all communities.
- Vancouver has implemented equity-focused policies in urban planning and development to address systemic inequalities. This includes prioritizing affordable housing developments in neighborhoods with diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and providing incentives for developers to incorporate affordable units in new developments. Vancouver also prioritizes accessibility in its urban planning and development projects, ensuring that new developments adhere to accessibility standards and guidelines.
- Montreal has established the Office of the Commissioner for Combating Racism and Systemic Discrimination to ensure that all units of the city act firmly and in a concerted manner to combat racism and discrimination. This includes integrating equity considerations into urban planning decisions to promote inclusive and equitable development across the city.
- Halifax has implemented equity-focused initiatives in planning and development to address historical injustices and promote inclusive growth for example Community Action Planning.

By-law and Policy Development and Review

- Halifax has established its Community and Race Relations Policy, which aims to ensure that municipal facilities will not be used by individuals and groups that may violate or promote the violation of rights.
- Vancouver's Social Planning Department requires that issues related to multiculturalism and diversity be an administrator's priorities in all aspects of work.
- The Town of Kenora and the Kenora Police Service partnered with Grand Council Treaty 3 to review policies, practices and procedures relating to justice, and to ensure they have a positive impact on First Nations people. One goal was to increase the number of Aboriginal employees working in the justice system.
- Saskatoon's Race Relations Committee reviews policies, practices and programs of the City to recommend amendments and/or new actions with respect to: personnel, law enforcement, leisure services, housing and community services, education and training, use of municipal facilities, and planning and zoning.
- The City of Toronto developed a Fair Wage Policy that requires organizations that do business with the city pay a "fair wage" and to adopt an anti-discrimination policy.

Community Engagement and Consultation

- The Sioux Lookout Anti-racism Committee delivered surveys on community attitudes to every postal box in the municipality. 90% of respondents reported race-related problems in the community.
- The City of Sudbury held focus groups among the Aboriginal, Francophone, multicultural and educational sectors. Participants identified service deficiencies that are perceived to be associated with institutional racism.

- The Town of Markham's Race Relations Committee gathers information and consults with the community to advise the municipal council on issues involving race, ethno-cultural equity and related issues. They also partner with institutions and voluntary organizations to promote mutual trust among the town's racial and ethno-cultural groups.
- The Town of Ajax's Diversity and Community Engagement Advisory Committee provides a forum for residents to discuss issues of diversity and how the Town can assist or respond to their concerns.
- The Town of Georgina's Equity and Diversity Advisory Committee posts meeting agendas and minutes online.
- Edmonton has Women's Advocacy Voice of Edmonton (WAVE) comprised of 15 community volunteers from diverse backgrounds and experiences who provide Edmonton City Council with advice on affairs relevant to municipal jurisdiction.

Language and Cultural Accessibility

- Vancouver's Cultural Communities Advisory Committee advises the city on enhancing access and inclusion for racialized communities. This includes recommendations for language accessibility in city services and programs, such as providing translated materials and interpretation services for residents with language barriers.
- Montreal's police department ensures language accessibility to inform citizens and employees about their rights and recourse mechanisms. This includes providing information in multiple languages and offering interpretation services for residents who require assistance in accessing city services.
- Ottawa offers multilingual services and resources for residents with language barriers. This includes providing translated materials, interpretation services, and multilingual staff at city facilities to assist residents in accessing municipal services and information.
- Halifax's Office of Diversity and Inclusion works to promote language and cultural accessibility in city programs and services. This includes offering translation services, multilingual resources, and cultural competency training for city staff to better serve diverse communities.

Accessibility of Public Spaces and Infrastructure

- The City of Toronto has implemented accessibility standards for public spaces and infrastructure, including accessible transit options and barrier-free building design.
- Ottawa has made efforts to improve accessibility in public spaces, including parks, community centers, and recreational facilities, by providing features such as accessible parking, ramps, and universal washrooms. The city also offers accessibility audits and consultations to businesses and organizations to help them improve accessibility in their facilities.
- Halifax has implemented accessibility initiatives in public spaces and infrastructure, including accessible playgrounds, trails, and waterfront areas, to ensure that people of all abilities can enjoy the city's amenities. The city also provides resources and support for businesses and organizations to improve accessibility in their facilities through programs such as the Barrier-Free Business Program.
- Calgary has taken steps to improve accessibility in public spaces and infrastructure, including parks, pathways, and recreational facilities, by installing features such as ramps, handrails, and accessible seating areas. The city also provides resources and support for accessibility improvements in private properties through programs such as the Barrier-Free Access Grant Program.

Promoting and Supporting Community Initiatives

- Williams Lake co-hosts "Challenge Day" with community organizations and schools, where students, teachers and volunteers tackle bullying, racism and violence. The program allows students time to be heard and an opportunity for people to accept each other and realize that everyone has their own issues and differences.
- Abbotsford Community Services in B.C. organizes the Fraser Valley Cultural Diversity Awards Ceremony, to recognize best practices of local community organizations and businesses that work to promote inclusion and the diversity of the community. It features guest speakers from organizations that promote diversity, as well as representatives from different levels of government.
- Hamilton recognizes leaders of faith, culture and other groups and partners with leaders from large institutions and organizations.
- The Municipality of Chatham-Kent provides information on its website to help employers integrate new immigrants into workplaces, including information on how to hire foreign trained professionals, human resource tools on diversity and other resources available in the voluntary sector.

- The Halifax Immigration Partnership (HIP) works in collaboration with a wide range of partners, from settlement services organizations to government, from service providers to grassroots organizations, from educational institutions to faith groups, from community leaders to newcomers themselves, as part of their commitment to progressive approaches to ensure that Halifax is an inclusive and welcoming community.

Responding to Incidents of Racism and Discrimination

- The Sioux Lookout Anti-Racism Committee provides trained community mediators to assist in achieving co-operative conflict resolution on issues such as discrimination, landlord/tenant and neighbour disputes and workplace relations. They also offer workshops for business and organizations.
- Municipalities in British Columbia, including Campbell River, Kamloops, Quesnel, Terrace and Cranbrook, have adapted the British Columbia Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services Critical Incident Response Model for acts of racism, including hate crimes. A steering committee developed communitywide protocols in response to race-based incidents and created a racism preparedness manual to tell people how to effectively respond to racial incidents.
- Officials of the Town of Georgina visited local schools and other members of the community to encourage people to denounce the hate crimes that took place in their area.
- The Mayor of Thompson, Manitoba denounced hate materials that circulated in schools; the Mayor of Chilliwack spoke out against hate propaganda when it spread to that municipality. Similarly, Peterborough's Race Relations Committee held a press conference to denounce racist assaults against Asian Canadian anglers.

Data Collection, Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation

- The City of Thunder Bay conducted a voluntary self-identification workforce survey of its staff to identify demographic details of its workforce and compare these with the general population.
- York Regional Police monitors the number of hate crime investigations conducted. They also record incidents of possible hate, even if they are determined not to be criminal.
- The City of Saskatoon monitors police statistics and releases reports of incidents of racism.
- The City of Thunder Bay monitors the effectiveness of policies (e.g. whether employment policies help to increase retention of minority employees). This information is used while reviewing policies for revision.
- The City of Calgary is developing and integrating a strategy promote a practice of race-based data collection, use and sharing for City programs and services. They will Collect disaggregated race-based data on hate activities in public spaces, incorporate data analysis in public safety service delivery, and create disaggregated race-based data framework/guideline for public safety service delivery.

Equitable Access to Economic Opportunities

- Vancouver's Economic Development Commission works to create an inclusive economy by supporting initiatives that provide equitable access to economic opportunities. This includes programs that promote entrepreneurship among marginalized groups, such as women, Indigenous peoples, and newcomers to Canada.
- Halifax's Economic Growth Plan includes strategies to promote equitable access to economic opportunities for all residents. This includes initiatives to support diverse businesses, such as procurement programs that prioritize contracts for minority-owned businesses and social enterprises.
- Calgary's Economic Development department works to create a more inclusive economy by supporting initiatives that provide equitable access to economic opportunities. This includes programs that promote workforce diversity and inclusion, such as job training and mentorship programs for underrepresented groups.

Anti-Racism Training, Awareness and Education

- The City of Saskatoon provides cross cultural and cultural sensitivity training throughout the Corporation, so that both management and other employees can work towards eliminating systemic barriers and creating a welcoming and supportive environment for employees of all cultural backgrounds.
- Halifax integrates anti-racism, intersectionality, and multi-cultural content into existing, ongoing, and future training sessions for staff and elected members.

- Black History Month, Asian Heritage Month, Pride and other heritages months are officially recognized and celebrated by many municipalities. Multicultural festivals also help support better understanding and appreciation for the variety of cultures in community that may contribute to addressing racism and discrimination.
- The North Bay & District Multicultural Centre hosts a radio show that discusses the city's immigration program. Current and past programs are also available on North Bay Radio's website.
- The City of Calgary's Diversity and Inclusion office has partnered with internal and community partners to develop Indigenous Awareness to all employees as the foundation for meaningful long-term relationships and ways of knowing, contributing to providing inclusive and equitable services guided by The City of Calgary's Indigenous Policy and Indigenous Policy Framework. The City also hosts an annual event for employees to share and learn called Experience Inclusion.

Diverse Representation and Inclusion

- Toronto's City Council has taken steps to increase diverse representation through initiatives such as the Toronto Youth Cabinet and the Women's Leadership Initiative. These programs aim to ensure that diverse voices are represented in decision-making processes and leadership positions within the city government.
- Vancouver's Racial and Ethno-Cultural Equity Advisory Committee (formerly known as the Cultural Communities Advisory Committee*) advises Council and staff on enhancing access and inclusion for racialized communities to fully participate in City services and civic life.
- Halifax established The African Descent Advisory Committee which advises Regional Council, through Executive Standing Committee, on the impact of municipal policies, programs, and services for People of African Descent. They also have The Accessibility Advisory Committee advises and assists Regional Council, through the Executive Standing Committee, on the impact of municipal policies, programs, and services on persons with disabilities. They also have the Women's Advisory Committee, to support the creation of a gender inclusive municipality and provide advice to Council on matters relevant to the municipal mandate and the Youth Advisory Committee advises and assists Regional Council, through the Executive Standing Committee, on how municipal policies, programs, and services affect youth, and challenge the areas where they can do better.

Equitable Hiring and Promotion Practices

- The City of Toronto has adopted blind recruitment practices and diversity hiring targets to promote equity in its workforce.
- The City of Saskatoon has an employment equity plan, monitored, and approved by the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission.
- The City of Calgary has hired Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Advisors for recruitment panels (e.g., General Managers, Green Line Board and other positions)



Community engagement and updating Accessibility Plans

Prepared by the Accessibility Directorate, August 2024

Community engagement with persons with disabilities is an important aspect of developing and updating your accessibility plan.

“Nothing about us without us” is a key principle of the Accessibility Act. This means no policy or decision should be decided without the participation of the group(s) affected by that policy or decision. Seeking input from persons with disabilities and organizations that represent persons with disabilities is a legislative requirement under the Accessibility Act and provides your planning process with expert, lived experience that will help your plan meet the needs of persons with disabilities.

Community engagement is working with partners and community members to shape decisions. Consider how you can collect a wide range of ideas, views, and insights from the public, your key partners, and internal staff and leadership in your community engagement process.

For more information on community engagement, review the [Engaging with Persons with Disabilities Webinar](#) developed by the Accessibility Directorate.

■ Reflective questions for your community engagement process

1. **What did you learn from your previous community engagement processes?**
 - Reflect on how successful previous community engagement processes were. Identify challenges and how you might do things differently this time. Identify what worked well, and what you might try to do again.
2. **What engagement practices do you want to use?**
 - Consider how you can engage the community in creative ways, such as participatory tours of facilities, kitchen table conversations, focus groups, idea boards, surveys, art projects, storytelling, attending community meetings and events, photographs, door to door conversations etc.
3. **What can you learn from other PPSBs' engagement processes?**
 - Connect with other PPSBs to discuss community engagement practices and learnings.
4. **How will you consider the diversity of people with disabilities in your engagement process?**
 - Consider how identities, such as race, gender, sexuality, and age, overlap. Ensure you take an intersectional approach and include a broad range of people and organizations when seeking input into your plan.
5. **Who will coordinate your engagement processes?**
 - Will a staff person undertake this work, or will you engage the support of an accessibility consultant?
6. **How will you ensure your engagement process is accessible?**
 - Consider the accessibility of your engagement communications, processes, and materials.
 - Refer to the [Guide to Accessible Meetings and Events](#) and the [Guide to Accessible Online Meetings and Events](#).

■ Reflective questions for engaging the public and internal staff

Seek to build sustainable relationships with various groups and individuals through your community engagement process.

1. **What relationships have you developed so far?** Who else can you connect with during this next phase of work?
 - Consider working with your existing network to build new relationships and expand your network.
2. **What role will your accessibility advisory committee** play in community engagement?
 - Consider engaging existing members to hear their perspectives and to expand your engagement reach.
3. **How will you communicate to the community** about the status and progress of your accessibility work?
 - Some options include websites, community events, newsletters, social media, news releases, and annual reports. You are encouraged to work with your accessibility advisory committee to look at ways to best communicate in your organization's context.
4. If you are updating a joint plan in partnership with another PPSB, **will you hold a joint community engagement process?**
5. **Who in your organization should be engaged to provide ideas, views and insights?**
 - Consider your plan's priority areas and actions, and what expertise would help to shape your plan. What functions of your organization (e.g. positions or business units) could help inform your plan? Consider engaging senior leaders (e.g. boards of directors/boards of governors, councillors, executive directors or senior management, wardens, chief administrative officers), staff from a variety of business areas (e.g. policy, public works, human resources, etc) and any internal volunteers and students.

6. **Sample questions to ask.** Questions may differ when engaging the public versus engaging internal staff and leadership and could include:
- What barriers are people experiencing?
 - What are their current accessibility priorities?
 - What has changed since the first accessibility plan?
 - What are some success stories?
 - What changes need to be made to organizational policies, programs, services, procedures, bylaws, etc. to improve accessibility?
 - What are the organization's current accessibility priorities? What opportunities are there to align accessibility plan commitments with other organizational business plans? What changes could be made to policies, procedures, bylaws, etc. to improve accessibility?



Consider methods to consult specifically with people with disabilities at your organization. Everyone brings a perspective from their role in your organization, however, people with disabilities at your organization may offer unique insight into barriers and actions to address them in your accessibility plan.



Resources for updating Accessibility Plans

Prepared by the Accessibility Directorate, August 2024

■ Accessibility Directorate Support

The Accessibility Directorate provides a variety of supports to Prescribed Public Sector Bodies (PPSBs), including the following:

- **Presentations** on topics related to the Accessibility Act
- **Training and education**
 - Accessibility Foundations' Train the Trainer - a program that trains individuals to facilitate an educational workshop called Accessibility Foundations covering basic concepts around disability and accessibility. Participants can then facilitate the Accessibility Foundations workshop for their own PPSP organization or work collaboratively with other trainers on joint facilitation.
 - Virtual Webinars – live webinars regularly offered to PPSPBs on a variety of accessibility and disability topics, such as social media accessibility, plain language, inclusive employment, emergency management for persons with disabilities, and more.
- **Promotional materials** to use for accessibility awareness, such as during Access Awareness Week and International Day of Persons with Disabilities.
- **Advisory supports**, such as answering questions and providing connections to other resources and organizations.

If you have questions or need support, contact us by email at Accessibility@NovaScotia.ca.

Accessibility Directorate Website

- The [Accessibility Directorate website](#) is the official government website for the Accessibility Directorate.
- It includes key policies and documents related to the Accessibility Act including:
 - [Access by Design 2030](#) – Nova Scotia’s accessibility framework
 - [Government of Nova Scotia’s Accessibility Plan](#)
 - minister’s annual reports
 - [accessibility advisory board](#) overview and reports
 - [standard development committees](#)
 - [compliance and enforcement overview](#)
- It hosts resources to assist PPSBs in improving accessibility and meeting their obligations under the Accessibility Act including:
 - [Accessibility Act Essentials Webinar for Prescribed Public Sector Bodies](#)
 - [Accessibility Planning Toolkit for Prescribed Public Sector Bodies](#)
- It also includes general accessibility resources such as:
 - [An Accessible Province by 2030 Webinar](#)
 - [Guide to Planning \(in-person\) Accessible Meetings and Events](#)
 - [Guide to Planning Accessible Online Meetings and Events](#)

Access Includes Everyone Website

- The [Access Includes Everyone](#) website is a public awareness website created by the Accessibility Directorate to increase understanding of disability and accessibility.
- The website includes:
 - a [resource hub](#) with a variety of tools and webinars, such as
 - [Engaging Persons with Disabilities webinar and workbook](#)
 - [Introduction to Disability webinar](#)
 - posters, postcards, bookmarks, social media graphics, email banners, email signatures, virtual backgrounds and more
 - [links to PPSB accessibility plans](#)
 - [Nova Scotia disability statistics](#)

Planning Tools

The Accessibility Planning Toolkit for Prescribed Public Sector Bodies

This is a step-by-step resource to help PPSBs establish an accessibility committee and build an accessibility plan. The following resources are contained in the Accessibility Planning Toolkit for Prescribed Public Sector Bodies (2019) appendices:

The Accessibility Planning Toolkit for Prescribed Public Sector Bodies

- A. Sample terms of reference for Accessibility Advisory Committee
- B. Sample call for applicants for an Accessibility Advisory Committee
- C. Sample application for Accessibility Advisory Committee members
- D. Suggested consultation activities

■ Support for Municipalities and Villages

Municipal Accessibility Equity Anti-Racism Support Program

The Office of Equity and Anti-Racism, the Accessibility Directorate and The Association of Municipal Administrators of Nova Scotia (AMANS) are working together to support municipalities and villages to meet planning requirements under both the Dismantling Racism and Hate Act and the Accessibility Act, improve accessibility and address systemic hate, inequity, and racism across Nova Scotia.

Resources for Municipalities and Villages to help meet legislative requirements through the Dismantling Hate and Racism Act.

The Municipal Accessibility, Equity, Anti-Racism Support Program was created to help coordinate, promote and provide equity, anti-racism and accessibility capacity-building support for municipalities and villages throughout Nova Scotia. AMANS coordinates the program and offers several resources and initiatives such as workshops, lunch and learns, community of practice, networking opportunities, and training.

The Municipal IDEAS webpage is available for municipalities and villages to support employees working on accessibility, equity, and anti-racism initiatives in their organizations. The website offers a collaborative space to support practitioners through education, training, and community of practice networks and promotes current events and opportunities.

If you have questions or would like to learn more about the program, please contact Julie Glaser at JGlaser@amans.ca.

AMANS (Association of Municipal Administrators Nova Scotia) [main website](#)

The Accessibility Planning Toolkit for Municipalities

The Accessibility Planning Toolkit for Municipalities

This is a step-by-step resource to help municipalities and villages establish an accessibility committee and build an accessibility plan. The resources in this toolkit are similar to that of the PPSB toolkit above, tailored for municipalities.

■ Other Learning Opportunities

Sea Change Colab Accessibility and Allyship Training

Sea Change Colab offers a series of free training on accessibility foundations, allyship, accessible recruitment and hiring, accommodations at work, and plain language through funding from the Government of Canada.



The role of your Accessibility Advisory Committee

Prepared by the Accessibility Directorate, August 2024

■ Purpose of this Tool

This tool was developed to support prescribed public sector bodies (PPSBs) in reviewing the role, governance structure, and coordination of their accessibility advisory committees (AAC) as part of their process of updating organizational accessibility plans.

■ Legislative Requirements

The Nova Scotia Accessibility Act has the following requirements in relation to AAC's:

- Every prescribed public sector body must have an accessibility advisory committee
- At least one-half of the members of an accessibility advisory committee must be persons with disabilities or representatives from organizations representing persons with disabilities

■ Role of Accessibility Advisory Committees

The Accessibility Act does not outline a specific role accessibility advisory committees must play in developing, implementing, and updating accessibility plans. PPSBs have reported that their committees have various roles in advising PPSBs in identifying, preventing, and removing accessibility barriers. This includes:

- Supporting the implementation of accessibility plans
- Advising organizations about accessibility
- Supporting the process of updating accessibility plans

It is important to consider the specific role your accessibility advisory committee will play to support the renewal of your plan, and the implementation of your updated plan once complete.

■ Revisiting the Role of Your Accessibility Advisory Committee

The following is a suggested process for reviewing the role of your accessibility advisory committee. You may choose to use some, all, or none of these steps, depending on what is relevant to your committee.

- 1) **Assess the current role and function of your accessibility advisory committee.** Consider asking current committee members and relevant staff the questions below. To get the best quality feedback, consider asking these questions in an anonymous survey or coordinate a facilitated focus group with the committee.
 - What committee work and processes do they feel functioned well? Why?
 - What committee work and processes would they change? Why?
 - Should the committee meet more or less often? Why?
 - Were meetings accessible? What improvements could be made?
 - What additional support does the committee need to fulfill its mandate?

2) Review your committee's terms of reference and governance structure.

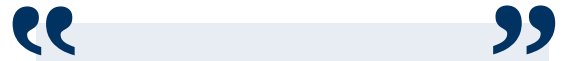
You may need to update your terms of reference, based on feedback received, to reflect new priorities and the role the accessibility advisory committee will play in updating and implementing your accessibility plan. There is a template for accessibility advisory committee terms of reference in The Accessibility Planning Toolkit for Prescribed Public Sector Bodies.

3) Consider the financial resources available for the committee to support future meetings and work.

- Financial and human resources may be needed for engagement processes, training, accessibility services, etc. Check with your organizational leadership to understand the resources available to support the work of your accessibility advisory committee.

4) Recruit new committee members, if necessary.

- The Accessibility Act does not state a minimum or maximum number of committee members. You may need to recruit more members if you do not have representation to meet updated priorities or if you do not meet the requirement to have at least half of the committee members be persons with disabilities or representatives of disability organizations.
- Reflect on the future function of the committee, and whether the current membership represents the various priority areas the committee will be carrying out.
- Reflect on whether your current committee represents a sufficient variety of disabilities and expertise to bring diverse perspectives to your planning.
- Consider intersectionality in representation on your advisory committee. People with disabilities are diverse and have multiple parts of their identities that overlap, such as race, gender, sexuality, age, and more.



We created an ad hoc Accessibility Advisory Committee (originally) formed to address the requirements of the Accessibility Act [which was] dissolved August 31, 2023. A formal terms of reference was developed and a new committee is being formed for 2024; some of the members of the inaugural committee will continue.

– Katie Aubrecht, Associate Professor and Canada Research Chair, St. Francis Xavier University

- Consider what lessons were learned from your first recruitment process. You may choose to hold an open or closed appointment process, or some other approach. Ensure your approach is accessible. Refer to the [Guide to Planning Accessible Meetings and Events](#).
- Develop an approach to promoting the invitation for new members and how you will build awareness in the community about the opportunity to take part on your committee.

5) Confirm a chair and vice-chair for the committee if membership has changed.

- Although it is not required under the Accessibility Act, it is recommended that a chair and vice-chair be selected to support the committee with meeting the terms of reference and chairing meetings. Consider individuals with facilitation and leadership skills for these positions.

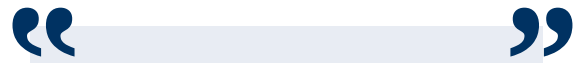
6) Confirm a staff member to support the work of the accessibility advisory committee.

- While it is not required under the Accessibility Act, it is recommended that you appoint an accessibility lead to support the work of the committee, if you have not already done.

7) Orient new and existing members.

Having a documented orientation process for new members of the committee will help members understand their roles and responsibilities and will provide important background for the work they are doing.

- If you have not done so recently, review the Accessibility Act and your obligations, your organization's activities, and committee mandate. This is not only for new members, but a refresher for everyone. Consider what has changed in the context of the committee's work, and what new issues or topics are emerging.



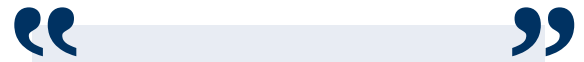
The Village has a representative on the Kings County Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee. The wealth of shared information, staff support and accessibility planning created by this committee has been invaluable in aiding the Village in moving forward with its own accessibility plan. The introduction of the accessibility coordinator has been a tremendous help in providing guidance and support to our Village by assisting with an accessibility assessment and other related activities.

– Robert Sealby, Vice-chair Village of Greenwood Commission, Village of Greenwood

- Consider an orientation for PPSB staff working on accessibility actions and with the committee.
- Consider offering accessibility training to committee members. More information on training opportunities can be found in [Resources for Updating Your Accessibility Plan](#).
- Consider contacting other PPSBs to share learnings from previous orientations, either individually or through various PPSB subgroups.
- Spend time welcoming committee members into the committee and consider multiple rounds of orientation with smaller amounts of information rather than one large orientation.
- Use plain language, especially when introducing committee members to the organizational context and their role. A resource on plain language can be found in [Resources for Updating Your Accessibility Plan](#).

8) Host meetings and carry out committee duties.

- Refer to the [Guide to Hosting Accessible Meetings and Events](#) and [Guide to Hosting Accessible Online Meetings and Events](#) for ways to make the committee more accessible to committee members.
- Think about what structure you will have for your committee meetings.
 - Consider including subject matter experts on staff or in the community to attend your committee meetings to provide additional context to the work.
 - Provide a discussion space where committee members feel valued and are comfortable expressing views outside of the committee mandate.
 - Consider a combination of in-person and virtual meetings throughout the year.



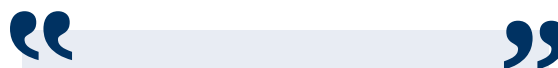
All staff and some committee members are presently in the process of IDEA (inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility) training. The online training focuses on IDEA fundamentals and unconscious bias training. The hope is that all staff increase their knowledge and awareness of removing barriers for persons with disabilities. Additional follow-up training may be required to highlight the importance of respectful communication with people with disabilities.

– Earl MacKenzie, Director of Engineering and Public Works, Town of New Glasgow

■ Accessibility Advisory Committee Engagement and Relationship Building

The following are considerations for engaging members of accessibility advisory committees.

1. Consider ways to have meetings with less formality. Meeting virtually can feel less formal and encourage people to relax in their own space. Meeting in person can also provide connection and social time during breaks.
2. Sharing the time to speak can support engagement. Consider holding a roundtable discussion where each member has an opportunity to contribute during every meeting.
3. For committees that are a mix of community members with disabilities, boards of directors, organizational representatives, or staff, all members may not need the same information or have the same perspective. Consider holding some joint meetings and some meetings just for community members that are less formal.
4. Consider working groups to focus on specific projects or topics.
5. Consider interactive activities related to the committee's mandate, such as tours of buildings or experiencing PPSB programs and services being delivered.
6. Create opportunities for committee members to engage in staff or community events that bring awareness to accessibility and promote the role of the committee.



Our accessibility advisory committee has started to do walkthroughs of municipal spaces during our meetings to take notes on how we can make our spaces more accessible from a First-Voice lens.

– Kevin Waters, Active Living Coordinator, West Hants Regional Municipality



Updating your Accessibility Plan:

A Toolkit for

Prescribed Public Sector Bodies

Prepared by the Accessibility Directorate,
AUGUST 2024



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■ The Purpose of this Toolkit

This toolkit is designed to help prescribed public sector bodies (PPSBs) update their accessibility plans, as required every three years under the Accessibility Act.

An important note for PPSBs:

It is up to each PPSB to decide how to go about updating your accessibility plan. As you move ahead to update your accessibility plan, keep in mind you are not starting from scratch. Your first plan is an important foundation to build on. You can choose to follow one, several or all of the steps outlined in this toolkit. Break down the process into manageable steps that work best for your organization. Updating your accessibility plan is an opportunity to review what's been completed and address changing priorities. Accessibility Act requirements can be found on page 6.

Through a 10-step guide, this toolkit provides PPSBs with useful information to help them carry out the process of updating accessibility plans. This includes information and suggestions to support each step from developing the initial approach to monitoring and evaluation. Information is included to ensure PPSBs meet legislative requirements throughout the process.

■ Background: Why Nova Scotia Needs To Be Accessible

Nova Scotia has the highest rate of disability in Canada and that rate is increasing. 37.9 per cent of Nova Scotians aged 15 or older report having one or more disabilities. That number rises to 42.9 per cent for Nova Scotians aged 65 and older.

% of people with a disability



Persons with disabilities often face barriers that keep them from fully taking part in everyday community life.

In 2017, the Government of Nova Scotia passed the Accessibility Act, which recognizes accessibility as a human right. The purpose of the act is to achieve accessibility by preventing and removing barriers in six key areas:

- built environment
- education
- employment
- goods and services
- information and communication
- public transportation and transportation infrastructure

Government is currently working on developing accessibility standards for each of these areas. Nova Scotia's goal is to have all standards developed and enacted by 2030. See updates and progress on the [development of provincial accessibility standards here](#).

¹ Statistics Canada, *Canadian survey on disability, 2017*. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/181128/dq181128a-eng.htm>

² Statistics Canada, *Canadian Survey on Disability, 2017 to 2022*. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/231201/dq231201b-eng.htm>

■ What Is the Accessibility Directorate?

The Accessibility Directorate is a division within the Department of Justice that supports the implementation and administration of the Accessibility Act. This includes overseeing the implementation of Nova Scotia's provincial accessibility framework, Access by Design 2030, which outlines how Nova Scotia will meet its accessibility goals. The Accessibility Directorate and other government departments play an important role in developing and implementing accessibility standards and supporting organizations that are prescribed under the act to meet legislative obligations. The Accessibility Directorate also has a mandate to address issues related to accessibility and disability across government. You can [learn more about the Accessibility Directorate here](#).

■ Prescribed Public Sector Bodies (PPSBs)

Public sector organizations have a vital role in preventing and removing accessibility barriers. Under the act, government made it mandatory for specific public sector bodies to meet certain requirements. These organizations are called "prescribed public sector bodies" (PPSBs).

PPSBs represent a wide range of sectors, such as health, education, arts, and municipal government. As of July 4, 2024 there are 108 PPSBs.

PPSBs are important partners in helping Nova Scotia achieve our accessibility goals. Their work developing and implementing accessibility plans makes a significant difference to ensure all Nova Scotians can fully participate in everyday life at work, school, or play.

You can see of the list of current PPSBs accessibility plans on the [Access Includes Everyone](#) website.



When you see this symbol, it means this step is required under the Accessibility Act. You can find a complete list of requirements at the end of this document.

Requirements for Updating Accessibility Plans

There are many ways PPSBs can update accessibility plans. The legal requirements for updating accessibility plans are the same as when you created your original plan.



The following is a list of legal requirements for updating accessibility plans, as per the Accessibility Act:

- Accessibility plans must be updated within three years of the original plan deadline. For Cohort 1 the deadline for updating plans is April 1, 2025 and for Cohort 2 it is April 1, 2026.
- Have an accessibility advisory committee. Half of the members must be persons with disabilities or representatives of organizations that represent persons with disabilities.
- PPSBs must seek input from persons with disabilities and representatives of organizations representing persons with disabilities when preparing an accessibility plan.

The Accessibility Act requires your plan to include details on

- progress made to date by your community or organization to identify, remove, and prevent barriers in policies, programs, practices, and services
- action your community or organization will take to further identify, remove, and prevent barriers in policies, programs, practices, and services
- processes in place to assess the effect of your community's or organization's proposed actions on accessibility

Accessibility plans must include information on procedures the PPSB has in place to assess the following for their effect on accessibility for persons with disabilities:

- any of its proposed policies, programs, practices, and services, and
- any proposed enactments or bylaws it will be administering; and
- any other prescribed information

Accessibility plans must be made publicly available online. If requested, plans must be provided in an accessible format within a reasonable time at no cost.

For a complete list of PPSB requirements as per the Accessibility Act, click [here](#). Following the [checklist on page 39](#) will ensure you are meeting your legal requirements.



When Does Your Updated Plan Need To Be Ready?

PPSBs have been split into two groups, called cohorts, based on the date when they were prescribed.

The date when PPSBs need to have their updated plan ready depends on which cohort they are in.

Cohort 1

Cohort 1 PPSBs were prescribed on April 1, 2021, and had a deadline to complete their first accessibility plans by April 1, 2022.

Those plans must be updated and made publicly available by April 1, 2025, and every 3 years following.

Cohort 1 includes

- municipalities and villages
- Nova Scotia Community College and universities
- regional public libraries



Cohort 2

Cohort 2 PPSBs were prescribed on April 1, 2022, and had a deadline to complete their first accessibility plans by April 1, 2023.

Those plans must be updated and made publicly available by April 1, 2026, and every 3 years following.

Cohort 2 includes

- Art Gallery of Nova Scotia
- Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority
- Build Nova Scotia (formerly Develop Nova Scotia and dissolved through the Build Nova Scotia Act)
- Conseil scolaire acadien provincial
- Events East
- Invest Nova Scotia (formerly Nova Scotia Business Inc., Innovacorp both dissolved through the Invest Nova Scotia Act)
- IWK Health Centre
- Nova Scotia Health
- Nova Scotia Liquor Corporation
- Nova Scotia Museum
- Regional Centres for Education
- Nova Scotia Provincial Housing Agency





■ How Will Government Support PPSBs To Update Accessibility Plans?

To help PPSBs meet their legislative requirements, Government provides a variety of supports including resources, training, web-based tools and advisory services.

Refer to the [Resources for Updating Accessibility Plans](#) for more information.

The [Accessibility Compliance Framework](#) outlines Government's approach to supporting compliance under the Accessibility Act, and focuses on education and support.

■ Updating your Accessibility Plan

Updating your plan is an opportunity for you to publicly share your organization's commitment to accessibility, your current and future accessibility priorities and commitments, and the progress you have made to advance accessibility through your previous plan.

This section will provide you with a suggested process to update your plan. There are many ways PPSBs can update accessibility plans while complying with the Accessibility Act. For example, you can edit your original plan or make a whole new plan.

This resource is meant as a guide to support each individual PPSB as they update accessibility plans using an approach and process that is unique to them.

Suggested 10-step Process



Consider engaging with your accessibility advisory committee throughout the updating process.

Step 1 — Identify your approach ✓

Step 2 — Develop a work plan ✓

Step 3 — Update your plan's framework ✓

Step 4 — Engage with the community for input ✓

Step 5 — Review updated framework and community engagement results with organizational staff and accessibility advisory committee ✓

Step 6 — Write your updated accessibility plan ✓

Step 7

Get feedback on the updated accessibility plan from organizational staff, accessibility advisory committee and key partners



Step 8

Finalize and approve your updated accessibility plan



Step 9

Launch and publicly share your updated accessibility plan



Step 10

Monitor and evaluate your updated accessibility plan



Step 1 — Identify Your Approach

Updating your accessibility plan is an opportunity to build off the progress made through your first plan, incorporate new learnings, and meet changing demands and needs. Before drafting your updated plan, think about how your organization wants to approach updating your plan.

Ask yourself the following questions, as an organization:

Q: Do you have any guiding principles and key priorities to keep in mind when updating your accessibility plan?



Identifying principles to guide your process will help you to align with your organization's standards, values, business plans, and other policies/priorities.

Q: What role will your accessibility advisory committee play in the development of your plan?

Reflect on the role your accessibility advisory committee (AAC) played in your previous plan, and consider their role in the development of your updated plan. AAC's play a variety of roles across PPSB organizations.

Refer to the Role of the [Accessibility Advisory Committee](#) resource to learn more about how to re-engage the committee in your planning process.

Q: Are there any staff, leaders, committees, or partners who could contribute to the approach you intend to take?



Consider engaging those individuals and groups who were part of your first plan (such as your accessibility advisory committee members) to seek input into your approach. Their input can help you build off learnings and progress made from the first plan. Re-engaging them will invite them to continue to support the work moving ahead. Also, consider if there are any new individuals or groups who might be able to contribute to your updated plan. For example, is there a division or department that was not included in the first plan that should be included now?

Q: Will you update your own plan as an organization or work in partnership with another organization on an updated joint plan?

If you are updating a joint plan, consider how you will coordinate this process. Will you work collaboratively or independently? Will you create your accessibility advisory committee, and carry out community consultation?

Q: What will the governance/decision-making look like when you are updating your plan?

Consider the following:

- How will staff and committees work together to make decisions?
- Do you need to update the terms of reference for your accessibility advisory committee?
- What role will persons with disabilities play in updating your plan?
- If you are updating or deciding to be part of a joint plan, will you work with a collaborative committee with members from each organization, or will one organization take the lead?

Q: How will you approach community engagement, including engaging with persons with disabilities and organizations representing persons with disabilities?

Who are the key community partners you may want to include in your planning process? For example, members of the business community, non-profit sector, or other key individuals or groups who will be impacted by your updated plan.



“

The Town of Lunenburg is working on a new design for the Civic Square with a central focus on increasing accessibility. The Lunenburg County Accessibility Advisory Committee will be consulted on the proposed designs and public consultations have been done, including one specifically engaging persons with disabilities. The process of including an intentional focus on accessibility for this project is different from how similar work has been done in the past, both in the focus of the project and the form of public engagement.

”

– Ellen Johnson, Regional Accessibility Coordinator, on behalf of the Town of Lunenburg



Q: How will you identify and document what you learned from developing and implementing your first accessibility plan? Here are some questions that can help:

- What challenges did you experience? Why did they occur?
- What successes did you have? What factors contributed to the success?
- What learnings have you had to carry forward into the next plan?

Example Planning Approaches (tailor your approach to your organization)



Keep guiding principles and priority areas from your first plan and focus on updating actions



Cross-government/organizational approach (all divisions/business units involved).



Update a joint plan with another organization.



Align plan's priorities, actions and timing with organizational business plans and budget cycles.



Nothing about us without us: Include First Voice (persons with disabilities) perspectives every step of planning process.



Carrying out Kitchen Table Conversations (small informal in-person gatherings) to seek input from persons with disabilities and others into your updated plan.



Align your plan with equity, diversity, and inclusion priorities, plans, and obligations (intersectional approach).



Present to senior leaders early in the process to build awareness and support.

Step 2 — Develop a Work Plan

Having a work plan will guide the process for updating your accessibility plan.

A work plan includes

- actions/tasks
- milestones
- timelines
- resources required
- roles/responsibilities

Ask yourself these questions:

Q: Who is leading the planning process?

- Do you have an accessibility lead or will you hire a consultant? What will their role be?
- If you are updating a joint plan, will one **organization take the lead**, or will there be **shared leadership** in the planning process between the partner organizations?

Q: What specific roles and responsibilities will your organizational staff, leadership, accessibility advisory committee, and other key partners play in developing your plan and how will they work together?



Discuss the role of staff versus committees, and determine how decisions will be made.

Q: What is your project timeline?



Include time for approvals, document design, and accessibility processes in your timeline. Plans must be made publicly available by April 1, 2025 for Cohort 1s and April 1, 2026 for Cohort 2s.

Q: What resources will you require to update your accessibility plan?

- If you require **financial resources**, do you have a dedicated budget, or will you need to seek new funds?
- How can you support your staff to ensure they have the **time and capacity** to complete this work? Consider your accessibility lead, built environment lead, communication staff, human resources staff, etc.



Consider engaging senior leadership early in the process to build awareness and understanding. You may require leadership support or financial resources to complete your process by requesting funds through your organizational budget or seeking approvals for accessing grants.

Q: How will you engage community, staff, and leadership?



See the section below on community engagement and refer to the Community Engagement and Updating Accessibility Plans resource for more information.



The Accessibility Act states that PPSBs must seek input from persons with disabilities and representatives of organizations representing persons with disabilities when preparing an accessibility plan. This includes when updating your accessibility plan.

Step 3

Update your Plan's Framework

3.1 *Assess progress made through your original plan and identify any new barriers that need to be addressed*

Identify progress made under the previous plan by analyzing the monitoring or evaluation data of your first plan. This will help you identify what aspects from your first plan you want to keep, update, and build on in your updated plan.

Suggested steps:

- Complete an assessment of each accessibility priority area and commitment from your previous accessibility plan. In your assessment, determine if actions were
 - fully completed
 - partially completed
 - not yet started
- Document which priority areas or commitments your organization would like to continue, build on, or remove.



Your organization may also have completed or started some accessibility-related actions that were not included or directly identified in the first plan. Identify and document these actions as well and consider whether they should be included in your updated plan.

Identify and document any new barriers to accessibility that came up over the past three years that were not included in your first accessibility plan. Document potential actions your organization can take to remove and prevent them and consider them for your updated accessibility plan.

If your organization has a method for receiving community input or complaints, such as an online form or email address, document any barriers that were reported. Check for any trends, such as areas where multiple complaints were received.

3.2 Review and update guiding principles and priority areas if needed

Consider revisiting your guiding principles and priority areas. These may stay the same as your first plan, or they may be updated to address new accessibility priorities. Consider getting input from your accessibility advisory committee and staff.



Guiding principles set a standard and will help your plan so it stays in alignment with your organization's current values. Consider aligning with the guiding principles found in relevant provincial policies (e.g., Access by Design 2030 or the Dismantling Racism and Hate Act) such as

- **human rights and social justice**
- **engagement and collaboration**
- **coordination and harmonization**
- **innovation and modernization**
- **equity, antiracism, and intersectionality**



Some examples of accessibility priority areas include (customize for your organization):

- **leadership (e.g. Leading by example)**
- **built environment**
- **awareness and capacity building**
- **employment**
- **goods and services**
- **information and communications**
- **transportation**
- **programs and services**
- **recreation**
- **education**
- **research and development**
- **monitoring and evaluation**



**An example
commitment statement
from the Government
of Nova Scotia
Accessibility Plan
(2022–25)**



We are committed to being accessible in the way we work, do business, and provide services to Nova Scotians.



3.3 *Review and update priority actions to remove barriers*

Through step 3.1 and 3.2 you have already documented the key actions to continue, build on, or newly create to address new barriers. Building on that list, consider what additional actions you may need to include to meet legislative requirements and to take an intersectional or integrated approach to your plan.

Review and incorporate existing legislative requirements



The plan's content (including an updated plan) must meet the legislated requirements under the Accessibility Act.

The Accessibility Act requires your plan to include details on

- progress made to date by your community or organization to identify, remove, and prevent barriers in policies, programs, practices, and services
- action your community or organization will take to further identify, remove, and prevent barriers in policies, programs, practices, and services
- processes in place to assess the effect of your community's or organization's proposed actions on accessibility

Align with accessibility standards, when enacted

Work is underway to develop accessibility standards in six areas:

- built environment
- education
- employment
- goods and services
- information and communication
- public transportation and transportation infrastructure



Keep in mind you are not starting from scratch. Your first plan is an important foundation to build from.

When the standards are enacted, you may consider including actions in your accessibility plan to outline how your organization will comply.

Consider aligning updated actions with other equity, diversity, inclusion and anti-racism priorities

Nova Scotia has committed to addressing inequity, systemic hate, and racism, and to supporting underrepresented and underserved communities. A more equitable and inclusive Nova Scotia includes being a more accessible province.

Consider aligning your updated accessibility plans, processes and committees with your organization's other equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility priorities and plans or other requirements such as through the Dismantling Racism and Hate Act.

Dismantling Racism and Hate Act

Passed in April 2022, the Dismantling Racism and Hate Act enables the minister to require PPSBs to develop equity and anti-racism plans. These plans must outline how these bodies will identify and address systemic inequity and racism.

The Office of Equity and Anti-Racism (OEA) is responsible for administering this act. They will begin working with municipalities and villages first to develop the equity and anti-racism plans required by the act to be completed by April 1, 2025. Other PPSBs may be required to develop equity and anti-racism plans at a later time.

The OEA and the Accessibility Directorate are working together to provide support and guidance to municipalities and villages to help them meet requirements under both the Dismantling Racism and Hate Act and Accessibility Acts. **Municipalities and villages have the option to create two separate plans or integrate legal requirements under both acts into one combined plan.**

If you are seeking more information on how to align accessibility and equity and anti-racism plans, and meet requirements from both acts, please contact the Accessibility Directorate at Accessibility@novascotia.ca.

3.4 *Identify monitoring and evaluation processes to assess the impact of actions on accessibility*



The act requires your organization to include processes to assess the impact the actions within your plan will have on accessibility.

The Accessibility Act requires PPSBs to include a report in their accessibility plan on measures they have taken and intend to take to identify, remove and prevent accessibility barriers. Having a process in place to monitor and evaluate your plan and track progress will help your organization better understand the reasons for success and where improvements can be made.

Review the effectiveness of your current monitoring and evaluation process and update if needed.

For relevant sectors, when updating your monitoring and evaluation process, take into account how your organizational monitoring and evaluation process uses the tools available in the [Nova Scotia Post Secondary Evaluation Framework or the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Toolkit for Municipalities and Villages](#).

Step 4 — Community Engagement

It is important to engage with and seek input from persons with disabilities, organizations representing persons with disabilities, staff, leadership and other key partners such as private sector/business. A good time to engage with community partners is after your updated framework is drafted and before it is finalized.

You are required through the act to seek input from



persons with disabilities and representatives from organizations representing persons with disabilities

in the development and updating of your plan. Consider engaging a wide range of partners that will be impacted by your plan. You can engage with community at any point, however it is recommended that you do so early in the planning process.

Consider how you will engage with community

Community engagement is working with partners and community members to shape decisions. The process of engagement is wide-ranging. Your approach to community engagement may look the same or different from your previous accessibility planning process.

You may wish to gather feedback through a town hall, online survey, door to door conversations, or an event during Access Awareness Week or International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

Consider involving people who are directly impacted by accessibility barriers both inside and outside your organization. This includes staff, clients, and community members.

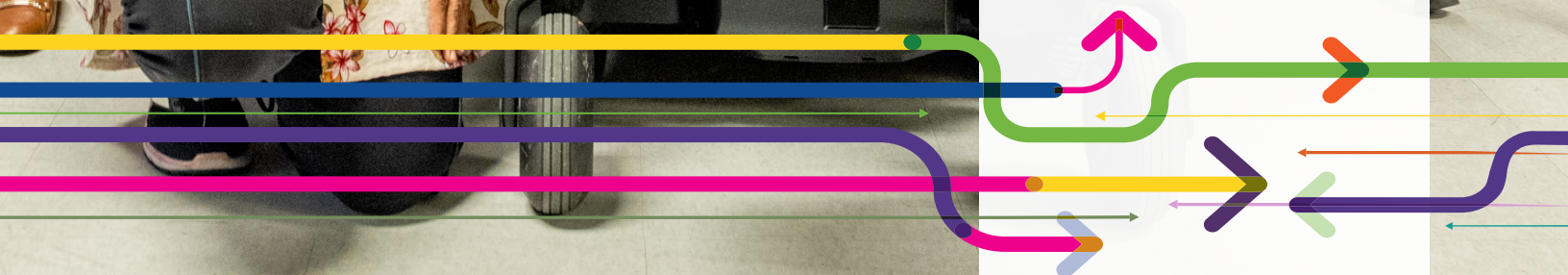
Engage with a diverse range of people with disabilities, including people with disabilities who also identify as African Nova Scotian, Mi'kmaq, Indigenous, 2SLGBTQIA+, newcomer, seniors, youth, and other marginalized community members.



“

Through the Accessibility Act, **disability** is defined as a physical, mental, intellectual, learning, or sensory impairment, including an episodic disability that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders an individual's full and effective participation in society.

”



Before you engage with any community, **identify the key questions you want input on.**

Example questions:

Q: Over the next three years, what role should our (PPSB) organization play in advancing accessibility?

Q: What accessibility barriers exist within our organization?

- Consider all areas of the organization, not only the built environment. Compare this to what you gathered for your original plan. Consider asking about each standard area, as well as any other emerging or priority issues.

Q: What accessibility issues have emerged over the past few years?

Q: What is working well from the actions we have taken so far to improve accessibility?

Q: What changes have you noticed in terms of culture, such as disability inclusion (when people with disabilities are valued and engaged), and ableism (the negative treatment of people with disabilities)? What actions should we consider in the plan to address or recognize these changes?

Q: Do our draft principles, priorities and actions represent a foundation that will help ensure a good accessibility plan for our organization?

Consider documenting how your organization includes and engages with people with disabilities—whether that is staff, volunteers, or community—in your accessibility plan.

Often the last step of your community engagement process is synthesizing, analyzing, and theming community engagement results. It is recommended that you compile the information into a report. This report can be easily shared with partners and may be included in the introductory section of your updated plan.

For more information on community engagement refer to the [Community Engagement and Updating Accessibility Plans resource](#) and [Engaging with Persons with Disabilities Webinar](#), developed by the Accessibility Directorate.

A person in a wheelchair is seen from behind, riding along a wooden boardwalk. The sun is low on the horizon to the left, creating a strong lens flare and casting long shadows. The person is wearing a dark jacket and a backpack. The background shows a body of water and distant hills under a clear sky.

Community Engagement in Practice

“

”

In 2023, we started working on our Campus Active Transportation Plan. While the plan development is still in progress, the engagement sessions and meetings conducted to get community feedback was a hugely fruitful experience. The key focus of the [Active Transportation] Plan will be to develop infrastructural elements on the campus that will create a campus fit for users of all ages and abilities (AAA). People participating in the engagement session helped hugely to understand various expectations that an everyday campus user has.

– Member of a Prescribed Public Sector Body Organization



Step 5

Review Updated Framework and Community Engagement Results with Organizational Staff and Accessibility Advisory Committee

Consider holding a planning session with all areas of your organization to finalize **the priority actions** you want to include in your updated plan based on community engagement results. This is a good time to share progress made so far including

- the results of the assessment of your original plan (progress made, new barriers to address)
- draft framework
- community engagement results
- budget for carrying out the plan

Meet with staff from your organization and share the draft framework. Seek staff perspectives on what they learned from developing and carrying out the first organizational plan and if they would add or change anything to the draft framework based on their perspective.

Take time with staff to **provide an overview of community engagement results**. Engage in a discussion with staff on what actions should be considered from the engagement results, and what would be feasible to carry out to address new barriers.

Engage staff across the various functions of your organization so you have the full picture of what is possible to align actions with organizational business area priorities, commitments and budgets.

Meet with your accessibility advisory committee and go through the same process as outlined above. If it makes sense for your organization, you could also consider hosting a review session with both staff and your accessibility advisory committee at the same time.

Once the discussions have been completed, **identify any additional actions from your community engagement process** and include them in your draft plan.

Step 6 — Write Your Updated Accessibility Plan

At this point you will have the main components of your updated plan identified. This step is putting all the components of your updated plan together into your draft document.

Use the framework you developed in Step 3 and the final list of actions from Step 5 as a guide to **draft the core components** of your updated plan (see accessibility plan template [here](#)).

A common updated plan outline includes:



Front section

- Front Cover
- Table of Contents



Welcome section

- Acknowledgements subsection
- Message subsection
- Introduction subsection



Background

- About
- Values and/or principles
- Methods Used
- Progress Made



Our Plan section

- Priority Areas and Actions
- Monitoring and evaluation process



Back section

- Conclusion
- Contributors
- Resources
- Glossary
- Appendix
- Back Cover



Consider hiring a plain language writer to draft the updated plan or hire a plain language editor to review and revise your draft plan. This will ensure your plan is written and communicated in a way that is easy for readers to understand the first time ([plain language](#)).



“

Our Accessibility Advisory Committee was very active in developing the accessibility plan, engaging and giving constructive feedback about the plan.

”

– PPSB organization



Step 7

Get Feedback on the Draft Updated Accessibility Plan

Once your updated plan is drafted, it is important to re-engage those who were involved in developing the framework to give them an opportunity to review it. The approach to seeking feedback on the draft updated plan is up to each organization based on capacity, however the following tips are recommended:



- **Consult with your accessibility advisory committee to validate the updated plan before it is finalized.**
- **Gather feedback from your organization (staff and leadership) to ensure it is feasible, aligns with other plans and priorities, and meets the needs of key partners. For example, collect feedback through email.**
- **Invite feedback from your partners and community, particularly persons with disabilities and representatives from organizations representing persons with disabilities. For example, post your draft updated plan online or hold an in-person meeting to get feedback.**
- **Consider contacting the Accessibility Directorate for feedback on your draft updated plan. The directorate can offer general feedback, as well as feedback on how you can ensure you meet legislative requirements.**
Accessibility@NovaScotia.ca

Step 8

Finalize your Updated Accessibility Plan

After seeking feedback on your draft plan, **revise and update** the plan.

Consult your accessibility advisory committee and have them approve the updated plan before you present it to senior leadership for approval.

Ensure your plan is presented in an accessible format. You may wish to develop these additional formats, such as large print, ASL, or others, right away, or develop them upon request. Refer to the [Resources for Updating Accessibility Plans](#) for resources on plain language and creating accessible documents.



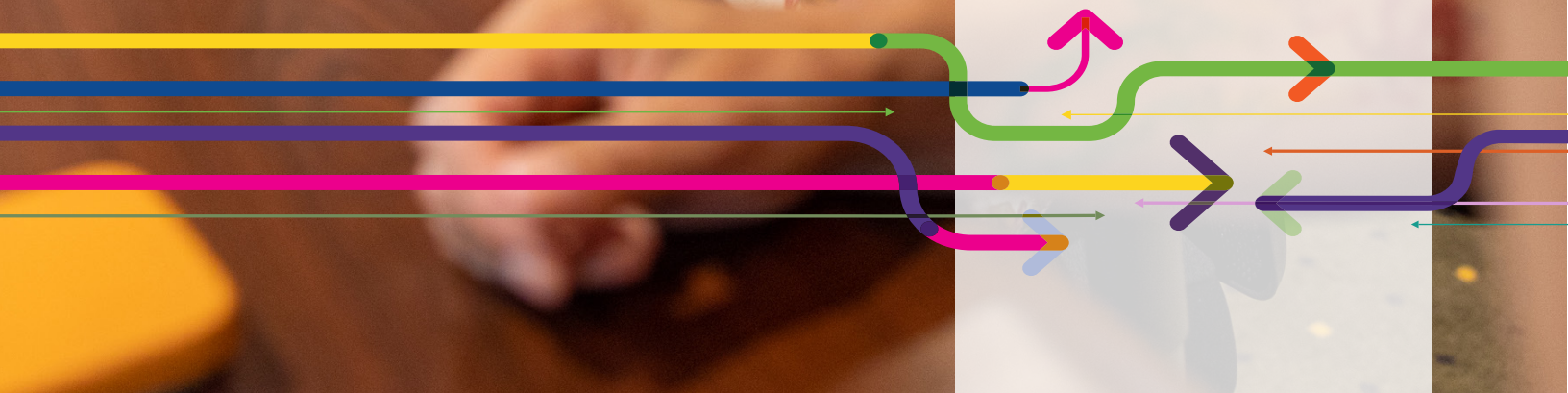
Approve your updated plan within three years of the previous plan's deadline. If your plan is a joint plan, you may need to have it approved through each organization separately.



Example: Consulting with your Accessibility Advisory Committee

“ The Lunenburg County Accessibility Advisory Committee (LCAAC) conducted an in-depth review of the draft Town of Mahone Bay Accessibility Implementation Plan. This is a plan that details actions the town will take to meet the commitments in the Lunenburg County Accessibility Plan. The LCAAC review took several meetings where members discussed the proposed actions and brought their expertise to the document. Town of Mahone Bay Council has now accepted the plan, including the changes recommended by the LCAAC. This was an example of the dedication and expertise of the LCAAC members and how town council recognizes the value of their feedback.

– Ellen Johnson, Regional Accessibility Coordinator,
on behalf of Town of Mahone Bay



Step 9

Communicate Your Updated Accessibility Plan



Accessibility plans must be made publicly available online by April 1, 2025 for Cohort 1s and April 1, 2026 for Cohort 2s. Include time for approvals, document design, and accessibility processes in your timeline. You must make your plan available in an accessible format upon request at no charge within a reasonable timeframe.

Now that you've got your updated plan, share it through a variety of channels. This way you can celebrate what you have accomplished and raise awareness about your organization's commitment to accessibility. This includes posting your updated plan on your organization's website.

Report back to staff and community

The community took the time to provide input into your updated plan—now it is time to share it with them.

You can do that by

- sharing the website link to your updated plan with all key partners
- hosting a town hall meeting
- hosting an event during Access Awareness Week or International Day of Persons with Disabilities
- posting your updated plan on your organization's social media
- emailing information about the updated plan to residents, members, students, etc. and partners
- issuing a media release

Email the Accessibility Directorate a **link** to your approved, updated plan at Accessibility@NovaScotia.ca.

While the Accessibility Directorate does not currently approve or endorse each organization's accessibility plan, we do review plans and provide feedback. We also share links to the plans online.

Step 10 ● Monitor and Evaluate Your Updated Accessibility Plan



The Accessibility Act states plans must include information on procedures the PPSB has in place to assess any proposed actions for their effect on accessibility for persons with disabilities.

There are many reasons why monitoring and evaluation is important to your planning process and accessibility work. When you take the time to collect, analyze and reflect on data related to implementing your accessibility plan, you will learn about actions and approaches that are working well and those that are not. This will help you celebrate accomplishments, make informed decisions, be accountable and transparent and know if you are making a difference.

Carry out the monitoring and evaluation process you decided on in step 3.4 ([page 25](#)).

Communicate your annual progress to key partners. You can do this through an annual report.

Invite continuous feedback on your accessibility efforts by having an online form, phone number, and/or email address. Be sure to document and keep this feedback for your next update.

If at any point your organization, organizational contact, or accessibility plan changes, let the Accessibility Directorate know so we can continue to connect and support you. Email Accessibility@NovaScotia.ca

**Example:
Making your
Accessibility Plan
Publicly Available**

“ Dalhousie’s annual plan update was released December 2023 during its second annual Accessibility Week.

The updates are found online: <https://www.dal.ca/about-dal/accessibility-plan/recent-initiatives.html>

– Siobhan Smith,
Accessibility Planning
Specialist, Dalhousie
University



■ Requirements Checklist

The legislative requirements for updating your accessibility plan are the same as when you developed your first plan. Following the checklist will ensure you are meeting your legal requirements.



Accessibility plans must be updated within three years of the original plan deadline. For Cohort 1 the deadline for updating plans is April 1, 2025 and for Cohort 2 it is April 1, 2026.



Have an accessibility advisory committee. Half of the members must be persons with disabilities or representatives of organizations that represent persons with disabilities.



PPSBs must seek input from persons with disabilities and representatives of organizations representing persons with disabilities when preparing an accessibility plan.



The Accessibility Act requires your plan to include details on

- progress made to date by your community or organization to identify, remove, and prevent barriers in policies, programs, practices, and services
- action your community or organization will take to further identify, remove, and prevent barriers in policies, programs, practices, and services
- processes in place to assess the effect of your community's or organization's proposed actions on accessibility



Accessibility plans must include information on procedures the PPSB has in place to assess the following for their effect on accessibility for persons with disabilities:

- any of its proposed policies, programs, practices, and services, and
- any proposed enactments or bylaws it will be administering; and
- any other prescribed information



Accessibility plans must be made publicly available online. If requested, plans must be provided in an accessible format within a reasonable time at no cost.

For a complete list of PPSB requirements as per the Accessibility Act, click [here](#).

■ Links to resources

The following is a listing of website and resource links found in the toolkit.

Access by Design 2030, Province of Nova Scotia:

<https://novascotia.ca/accessibility/access-by-design/>

Accessibility Act, Province of Nova Scotia:

<https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/legc/statutes/accessibility.pdf>

Accessibility Act Review and Government Response:

<https://novascotia.ca/accessibility/act-review/>

Accessibility Compliance Framework, Province of Nova Scotia:

<https://novascotia.ca/accessibility/compliance-overview/>

Accessibility Directorate, Province of Nova Scotia:

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

Accessibility resources, Province of Nova Scotia:

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

Access Includes Everyone, Province of Nova Scotia:

<https://accessible.novascotia.ca/accessibility-stories>

Canadian Survey on Disability, 2017, Statistics Canada:

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/181128/dq181128a-eng.htm>

Canadian Survey on Disability, 2017 to 2022, Statistics Canada:

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/231201/dq231201b-eng.htm>

Creating Accessibility Standards, Province of Nova Scotia:

<https://accessible.novascotia.ca/creating-accessibility-standards>

Dismantling Racism and Hate Act, Province of Nova Scotia:

<https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/legc/statutes/dismantling%20racism%20and%20hate.pdf>

Engaging with Persons with Disabilities resource, Province of Nova Scotia:
<https://accessible.novascotia.ca/resources/engaging-persons-with-disabilities>

Government of Nova Scotia Accessibility Plan:
<https://novascotia.ca/accessibility/plan/government-accessibility-plan.pdf>

Plain language:
<http://www.plainlanguagenetwork.org>

Reviewing your Accessibility Advisory Committee resource
<https://novascotia.ca/accessibility/resources/>

Community Engagement Resource
<https://novascotia.ca/accessibility/resources/>

Updating Accessibility Plans Resource
<https://novascotia.ca/accessibility/resources/>

Project Planning Support for the Ecum Secum Fire Hall

SUMMARY

This report will set the expense documentation for expenditures regarding a provincial grant where the municipality will provide project planning support for the planning of a new multi-use community and fire hall in Ecum Secum.

BACKGROUND

Earlier this year, staff building official/building inspector made a recommendation to the Ecum Secum fire that they begin plans and preparations to develop a new hall that would replace the existing hall.

The department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage approved funding for \$60,000.00 for the purposes of making a plan for the redevelopment of the building and that the municipality would lead that process and support the hall.

Staff have been working with a committee from the hall and staff have recommended that the plan and solution for a building development/future construction project is to identify all building needs and create construction ready documents with all needed engineering and features identified. Work is under way to identify all needs, and a building consultant has been hired to begin initial plans.

CONSIDERATIONS

Financial considerations:

The \$60,000.00 in project funds is held and administered by the municipality on behalf of the fire hall where payments to services and vendors will be made by the municipality as the fire hall selects services recommended by staff and where the fire hall has been enabled to take part in decisions to ensure that their goals for the re-developed structure will be met.

Staff including the finance department have reviewed our audit needs for approval of project payments to services contracted to complete work for the re-development plan. Our audit requirements will be met by the payment from the municipality directly to vendors where staff confirm that the funds are for completed services under the planning project and our normal audit control of two signatures on the cheques will be in place.

Staff Report



RECOMMENDATIONS

N/a. For information only.