

ST. JOHN'S

City of St. John's Accessibility Plan 2024-2026



This document is available in alternate format upon request

Land Acknowledgement

We respectfully acknowledge the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, of which the City of St. John's is the capital City, as the ancestral homelands of the Beothuk. Today these lands are home to a diverse population of indigenous, and other peoples. We would also like to acknowledge with respect, the diverse histories and cultures of the Mi'kmaq, Innu, Inuit and Southern Inuit of this Province.

Commitment to Accessibility

The City of St. John's is committed to an accessible, inclusive, healthy and safe community for everyone. We strive to meet the diverse needs of our community by identifying, preventing and removing barriers so that all people can equitably live, work, play and learn here.

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Message from the Mayor

I am excited to share with you our new 2024-2026 Accessibility Plan.

Inclusion and accessibility are core values for our community and it is our responsibility to ensure that everyone can enjoy the amenities that our city has to offer. The City has a strategic direction to be a connected city, one where people feel connected, have a sense of belonging and are actively engaged in community life.

Our accessibility plan shows our commitment to improving accessibility and inclusion in the programs and services we offer, our buildings and public spaces, our information and communication, our workplace and our public transit system. It will provide awareness and education for understanding accessibility issues and what the City currently does to improve access.

We understand that accessibility is not just the nice thing to do, it is the right thing to do. Our plans for continuing to improve accessibility and inclusion is a testament to our dedication to making our City a welcoming place for all.

This new initiative has been carefully developed in consultation with stakeholders. It shows the way forward for breaking down barriers and improving the quality of life for our community and particularly those living with disabilities.



Through the collective efforts of Council, City staff and our community partners, we are confident that we can achieve this vision.

I invite you to actively participate in improving accessibility in our community. Together, we can build a more inclusive City of St. John's.

On behalf of Council, we would like to extend thanks to our community for supporting our wonderful city.

Sincerely,

Mayor Danny Breen - City of St. John's

Message from the City Manager

I am thrilled to introduce an important initiative that will significantly enhance accessibility and inclusion in our city. Our mission as a municipality has always been to ensure that every resident has the opportunity to fully participate in all aspects of civic life. To that end, I'm delighted to present to you our new 2024-2026 Accessibility Plan.

This plan represents a significant step forward in our commitment to make the City of St. John's a more inclusive and accessible place for everyone. We have a clear vision to create a city where every resident can easily live, learn, work, play and thrive.

The Accessibility Plan is a tool for building a more inclusive and equitable City of St. John's, however we recognize that achieving our vision will take time, resources and your active participation. We encourage your input and feedback as we embark on our accessibility and inclusion journey.

To keep you informed about our progress through our various communication channels, we will provide regular updates as barriers are reduced and removed and solutions are implemented. Together, we can create a city where accessibility is a reality and no longer an aspiration.



I am excited about the positive changes that our accessibility plan will bring to our city. We know that accessibility and inclusion benefits everyone. Thank you for your ongoing support in making the City of St. John's a better place to live.

Sincerely,

Kevin Breen
City Manager - City of St. John's

Message from Accessibility Working Group

The Accessibility Working Group is pleased to have contributed to the development of the City of St. John's' Accessibility Plan. The announcement of this plan is an encouraging step forward in our work to improve accessibility and inclusion awareness in our community. The Accessibility Plan provides an outline that will help make the City of St. John's more accessible and welcoming for everyone.

The Accessibility Working Group was established in consultation with the Inclusion Advisory Committee. Members are organizational or community representatives having lived and professional experience with visible and invisible disabilities.

Accessibility is at the forefront of our mission to assist the City of St. John's on matters of inclusion. The City has a responsibility to ensure that everyone can access what it has to offer. This plan creates transparency and awareness about inclusion and accessibility needs, highlights current efforts the City makes to improve access, identifies the barriers that exist and provides actions for reducing and removing these barriers.

The Accessibility Plan is a document that will continuously evolve and be reviewed.



We look forward to the upcoming Provincial accessibility standards under the Provincial Accessibility Act which will further guide the work we do to support inclusion in our community.

The Accessibility Working Group and Inclusion Advisory Committee encourages everyone in the community to review the plan. The feedback received from public engagement was carefully reviewed and considered in the development of this plan. Inclusion and accessibility feedback is always welcomed and appreciated.

Sincerely,
Accessibility Working Group
City of St. John's

Definitions

To ensure understanding of the content within this document, the following terms align with the Provincial Accessibility Act and are specific to the City of St. John's.

Accessibility Plan:

a document that addresses how to prevent, identify and remove barriers in policy, programs, practices and services.

Accessibility Standard:

the necessary accessibility requirements established under the Accessibility Act.

Accommodation:

any action taken to reduce or remove a barrier preventing or limiting access.

Barrier:

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

Built Environment:

buildings, parks, trails, playgrounds, streets, sidewalks, sport fields, bus shelters, bus stops, built and/or maintained by the City of St. John's or Metrobus.

Disability:

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

Key Focus Areas:

areas of operation within an organization that services the public.

Programs:

an activity or set of activities offered by the City or Metrobus that improve the wellbeing of residents, visitors, businesses and newcomers.

Public Body:

an organization that delivers public service including municipalities.

Services:

work done by the City or Metrobus that benefits others.

About the City of St. John's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

The City of St. John's Accessibility Plan (The Plan) is an important step toward a goal of becoming a more accessible and inclusive City. It shows a commitment to offering equitable access to the programs, services and public spaces that we operate.

The Accessibility Plan will evolve based on the changing needs of our community and the development of the Provincial Accessibility Legislation. As accessibility standards develop, the plan will be updated to reflect the responsibilities of municipalities.

The plan creates awareness about current efforts to ensure accessibility in City of St. John's and Metrobus operated programs, services and spaces. It will also include areas of focus and actions that support equitable access to:

- programs and services
- the built environment including buildings, public spaces, and public transportation
- information and communication
- goods and services received through procurement
- accommodations to access programs and services
- accessible workplaces and employment



The City understands the importance of learning from and working with those most impacted by accessibility. To ensure we understand the challenges and opportunities for improvement we consulted with:

- persons with disabilities
- caregivers and family of persons with disabilities
- advocates for persons with disabilities
- the **Inclusion Advisory Committee and Accessibility Working Group**
- the **Seniors' Advisory Committee**
- the **Sustainable and Active Mobility Advisory Committee**
- the **Affordable Housing Working Group**
- the **Built Heritage Experts Panel**
- the **Youth Engagement Working Group**
- **City Influencers**
- disability agencies and organizations
- City of St. John's senior leaders
- Metrobus senior leaders

Based on **what we heard** and **what Metrobus heard** from public engagement, focus areas and actions have been identified. The City and Metrobus will continue to work with stakeholders and complete annual reviews to achieve a mutual goal of becoming a more inclusive and equitable place to live, work, learn and play.



Overview of the Accessibility Act

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

The key focus areas specific to municipalities include:

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

The Act requires that Public Bodies create an accessibility plan within 2 years of The Act coming into force and every 3 years after that. Accessibility Plans must address prevention, identification and removal of barriers in public body operations and be publicly available. Public bodies must consult with persons with disabilities or representatives of organizations representing persons with disabilities in preparing a plan.

The Act allows Provincial Government to develop accessibility standards and provide inspection and enforcement power to ensure accessibility standards are met. The first accessibility standard approved to be developed is the Accessible Customer Service Standard.



Overview of St. John's Municipal Services

Community Services

The Department of Community Services provides programs and services in the community to improve quality of life and well-being for residents, newcomers and visitors. Community Services works with community partners to develop solutions to the economic and social challenges facing the City of St. John's. Programs and services are offered through the divisions of Recreation, Tourism, Culture and Events, Housing, Humane Services and Citizen Services (311).



Public Works

The Department of Public Works offers important services such as garbage and recycling collection, waste management, snow removal, ice control, road upkeep, water and wastewater services. Additionally, Public Works oversees the operation of all water and wastewater treatment facilities, as well as the Robin Hood Bay landfill. The department is also responsible for the maintenance of publicly owned city buildings, the city's fleet, parks, playgrounds, trails, open spaces, outdoor sports facilities, and public trees.

Planning, Engineering and Regulatory Services

The Department of Planning, Engineering and Regulatory Services plays an important role in promoting responsible growth, maintaining infrastructure integrity, and preserving the well-being of our community. This department combines the expertise of planners, engineers and regulatory professionals to guide and support development projects, capital projects, infrastructure maintenance and compliance with regulations.



Finance and Corporate Services

The Department of Finance and Corporate Services includes divisions which reach across the organization and provide strategic and corporate services to enhance the City's accountability and operational efficiency. This enhances the ability of those departments who primarily provide front line services to residents to meet their mandates. The department is responsible for the City's annual budget, audited financial statements, assessment and taxation, information technology, human resource management, organizational development and supply chain.



Office of the City Manager

The Office of the City Manager provides connection between the elected officials and the City's administrative function. Led by the City Manager, this department assists Council in implementing its vision, goals and decisions in a timely manner. The Office of the City Manager also directly oversees Communications, Legal Services, the City Clerk's Office, Internal Audit and St. John's Regional Fire Services.



Metrobus Public Transportation

City Council appoints the St. John's Transportation Commission to oversee the operations of **Metrobus** which provides the city's public transit service, as well as the city's para-transit service, GoBus.



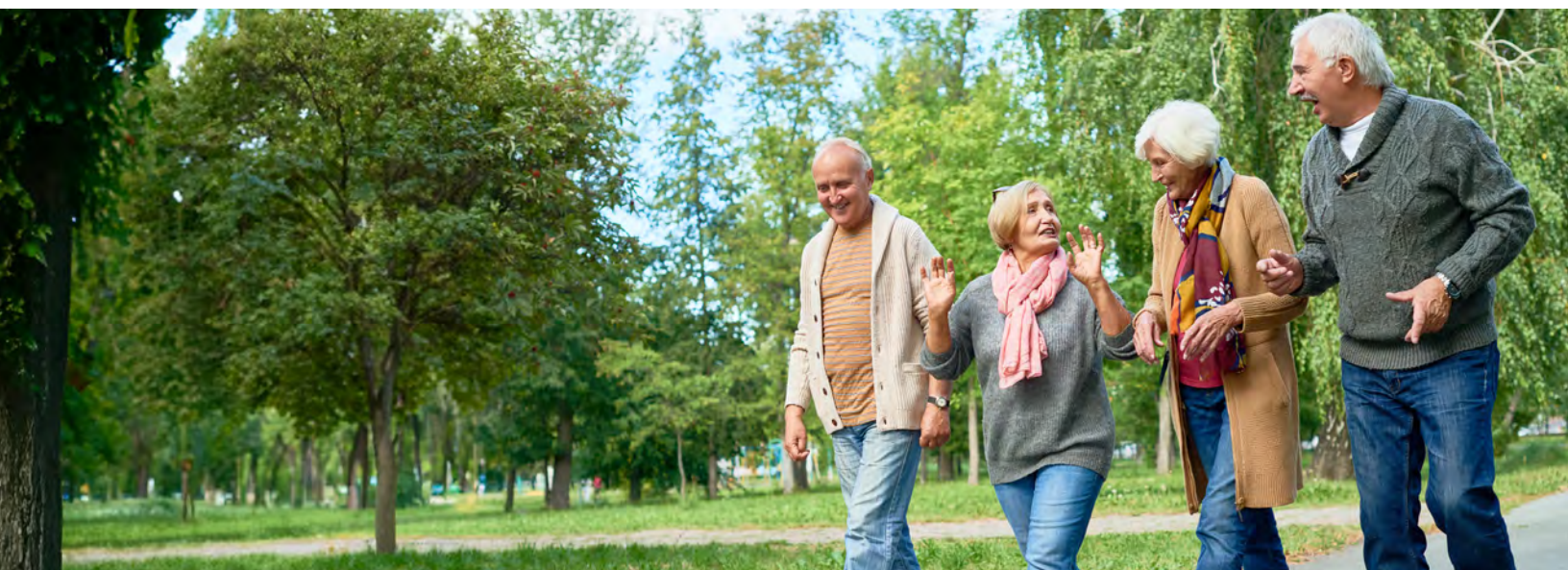
Demographics

The 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability shows that in Canada, just over 22% of people aged 15 and over identify as having a disability. Newfoundland and Labrador shows a higher rate at 23.6%. This is almost 1 in 4 people.

People in this province living with a disability or multiple disabilities, reported that they experience disability related to:

- Pain
- Flexibility
- Mobility
- Mental Health
- Dexterity
- Vision
- Hearing
- Learning
- Memory
- Developmental

The City values the uniqueness of our community. Supporting a significant population of individuals with invisible and visible disabilities is essential in creating an inclusive place. While visible disabilities are readily apparent, the challenges faced by those with invisible disabilities can be just as significant even if they are not immediately visible to others. By recognizing and accommodating the diverse needs of our community, we can ensure that everyone regardless of their disability has equitable access to our municipal services.



Report an Accessibility Concern or Idea

If you are aware of a non-emergency accessibility concern or have an idea for how something can be done better, let us know. You can contact us 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Report your concern or idea in the way that is most accessible to you.

Phone

- Using a phone, dial **311** or **1-709-754-CITY (2489)**
- Listen to the category of your accessibility concern and select the number on your keypad. If your concern doesn't match any of the categories, simply stay on the line and your call will be directed to a customer service representative

311 App

- Download the **311 for iPhone** app or **311 for Android** app to submit a service request

Online

- Go to www.StJohns.ca and select "Contact Us" from the top banner then select "Submit a service request online" and follow the instructions
- Send an email to access@stjohns.ca

Alternate reporting formats may be available, please contact us for more information.



Existing Accessibility Measures

The City of St. John's and Metrobus have worked closely with stakeholders, including advisory committees, working groups, community partners and the public, to improve accessibility in municipal programs, services and built environments.

Key focus areas have been established to help organize areas of achievement as well as areas needing improvement. The City of St. John's and Metrobus are pleased to create awareness about existing accessibility efforts to date.

Information about accessibility and inclusion at the City of St. John's can be found online at www.StJohns.ca/AccessibilityAndInclusion. Information about accessibility and inclusion at Metrobus can be found online at www.metrobus.com/accessibility. These webpages are updated regularly as required.



Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

Programs and services should be planned and delivered with accessibility in mind. This helps to ensure that all community members can access and participate in an equitable manner.

Advisory Committees and Working Groups

- The **Inclusion Advisory Committee** provides advice and recommendations to City staff and Council on matters of inclusion and accessibility as they relate to City programs and services. An Accessibility Working Group and Accessible On-street Parking Working Group have also been established under the Inclusion Advisory Committee to improve accessibility in the City of St. John's.
- The **Sustainable and Active Mobility Advisory Committee** provides information and advice to Council on active and sustainable mobility, including cycling/biking, walking, public transit, and accessibility for both transportation and leisure.
- The **Seniors Advisory Committee** provides information and advice to Council on matters related to seniors that intersect City policies and programs. Items are referred to the Committee by other committees of council, or as initiated by the committee.
- The Accessibility Advisory Committee of Metrobus provides advice and recommendations to Metrobus on matters of accessibility as they relate to Metrobus Public Transit operations.
- A Paratransit Working Group supports the development and evaluation of service and operational guidelines and ensures the delivery of an effective and efficient paratransit service.

City Events

- City organized events are planned using the **Outdoor Event Accessibility and Inclusion Checklist** to increase access, where possible
- Additional temporary accessible parking spaces provided, where possible
- GoBus stops identified, where possible
- Accessible viewing areas provided, where possible
- Sensory friendly areas, times and equipment, such as noise reducing headphones, are provided, where possible
- The Downtown Pedestrian Mall event is **BlindSquare** enabled

Inclusion Awareness Orientations

- Staff in the areas noted below receive orientations which include components of inclusion and accessibility considerations for people with disabilities:
 - Access Centre Customer Service Representatives
 - Recreation Staff
 - Fire Fighters
 - Metrobus staff including customer service, dispatch and drivers
- **Inclusion and Accessibility Considerations for Businesses** is a free, on-demand webinar developed to help businesses understand the importance of accessibility and inclusion.

Legal Services

- Offers a **Municipal Diversion Program** as an effective way to deal with by-law violations and resolving matters outside of court. This helps avoid stress, delays and challenges often experienced in the traditional court process.

Municipal Election

- **Municipal elections** use vote by mail and in-person voting options.
- Use of personal devices to support voting is welcome.
- Accessible voting locations
- Braille voting templates
- Voting stations have enhanced lighting, large print ballots and magnifying devices.
- Staff support for in-person voting available
- Signature guides available

Policies, Plans and Strategies

- **City of St. John's operational policies** supporting accessibility can be found on the City website. Examples include:
 - Leisure Services for Persons with Disability, Policy 09-11-01
 - Guidelines for Attendants Accompanying Persons with Disability, Policy 09-11-02
 - Goals and commitments to inclusion are outlined in Engage!St.John's Policy 12-01-01
- **Metrobus policies** supporting accessibility can be found on the Metrobus website.
- **Healthy City Strategy**
- **Our City Our Future** Strategic Plan
- **Envision** St. John's Municipal Plan



Public Engagement

- Public Engagement in-person events are planned in accessible locations.
- A variety of public engagement tools are used to ensure feedback can be received in a format that is accessible.
- The Inclusion Advisory Committee is consulted for feedback from the perspective of persons with disabilities.

Public Meetings

- Accommodations are available upon request, where possible.
- In-person, virtual and hybrid meeting formats
- In person meetings are hosted at accessible locations.

Public Transit - Metrobus

- Priority seating is available on buses. Seating is prioritized for passengers using wheelchairs or scooters, passengers with disabilities and seniors.
- Operates 5 wheelchair accessible routes (1, 2, 3, 14 and 23)

- 80% of stops on accessible routes are wheelchair accessible or ramp deployable.
- Metrobus prioritizes shelter installation as part of annual budget and operational plan.
- Metrobus customers may purchase and reload m-Cards **online**, by phone, or at any of our sales outlets. All sales outlets are accessible.
- “Plan a Trip” directions are available on the **Metrobus homepage**.
- A Travel Training Program offers education and hands-on experience for individuals with disabilities, particularly those currently using GoBus, who are new to Metrobus.
- **GoBus** is a para-transit service available to eligible individuals who are unable to utilize Metrobus due to disability related barriers.
- GoBus provides door to door service with support from drivers.
- GoBus customers may purchase and reload Go-Cards **online**, by phone, or at any of our sales outlets. All sales outlets are accessible.

Recreation and Leisure

- **Inclusion Support Services** are available to individuals needing support to participate in City of St. John's, recreation and leisure programs. Support services provided at no additional cost include: program selection assistance, accommodations and recreation staff support, where possible. Respite Workers are welcome to attend programs with participants having needs that fall outside the skillset of recreation staff.
- **Attendant Pass Program** is available for eligible individuals who need the support of an attendant to accompany them to events and activities in the community. All City programs accept attendants at no additional cost with a valid pass.
- **Adaptive Equipment Lending Program** provides people living with disabilities with an opportunity to participate in recreation and leisure activities that they may not have been able to participate in without access to adaptive equipment. This program is available free of charge. Inventory includes equipment such as all-terrain wheelchairs, ice sledges, a sit ski, snowcoach, hand cycle and duet bike.

- City **recreation and leisure programs** encourage and welcome individuals of all abilities to participate.
- **Adaptive recreation and leisure programs and services** are available for individuals who may experience barriers to participating in traditional recreation and leisure programs.
- Recreation Program **Registration** may be accessed online using **RecConnect**, by calling or visiting, the H.G.R. Mews Community Centre or the Paul Reynolds Community Centre.

Regulatory Services

- **Parklet design guidelines for City owned Land** include accessible design considerations.
- Accessible taxi licenses are available.

Built Environment and Transportation

Accessibility in the built environment ensures that people of all abilities can navigate and use public spaces and facilities with dignity and independence.

Accessible Parking

- Accessible Parking at City Buildings is allocated and identified as required by **Provincial Buildings Accessibility Regulations**.
- Accessible on-street parking locations are available throughout the city based on usage and request.
- Parking **pay stations** include accessible design specifications.

Affordable Housing

- 20 units are wheelchair accessible.
- 1 in 10 newly constructed affordable housing units led by the City will be accessible pending available funding.

City Hall and City Hall Annex (John J. Murphy Building)

- Accessible parking and drop off area
- Automated entrance
- Customer service rest areas with seating
- Lower service counters
- Private customer service spaces available upon request
- Elevator

Community Centres and Swimming Pools

- New or renovated centres meet or exceed Provincial Buildings Accessibility Regulations.
- Standards from the **CSA-B651 Accessible Design for the Built Environment** are considered in new and renovated centres where possible.

Bannerman Park Outdoor Pool Facility (25 Bannerman Road)

- Accessible parking
- Accessible splash pad
- Accessible playground
- Accessible, gender neutral washrooms and change spaces
- Child size change table
- Pool lift
- Water wheelchair
- Lower service counter

Bowering Park Outdoor Pool Facility (Bowering Park Road)

- Accessible parking
- Automated entrance
- Accessible splash pad
- Accessible, gender neutral washrooms and change spaces
- Adult size change table
- Child size change table
- Pool lift
- Water wheelchair
- Lower service counter window
- Playground with accessible features

H.G.R. Mews Community Centre (60 Blackler Avenue)

New Facility Opening 2024 - The information below reflects features of the new facility.

- Accessible parking and drop off
- Accessible, gender neutral washrooms and change spaces
- Automated entrance
- Adult size change table
- Child size change tables
- Elevator
- Courtesy wheelchair
- Lower service counter
- Assistive listening device
- Private customer service area available upon request
- Child protection seats in changing area
- Zero depth beach entry to leisure pool
- Ramped entry to lap pool
- Water wheelchair
- Canadian Tire Jumpstart Inclusive Playground
- Accessible community garden

Kenmount Terrace Community Centre (85 Messenger Drive)

- Accessible parking and drop off
- Automated entrance
- Courtesy wheelchair
- Accessible washrooms
- Child size change table
- Accessible gender neutral washroom
- Accessible gender neutral change spaces
- Lower service counter
- Assistive listening device
- Accessible splash pad
- Accessible and inclusive playground
- Waiting area with seating

Kilbride Community Centre (34 Fahey Street)

- Accessible parking
- Ramped entrances at rear and side of building
- Accessible washroom
- Child size change table

Paul Reynolds Community Centre (35 Carrick Drive)

- Accessible parking and drop off
- Automated sliding door entrance
- Accessible, gender neutral washrooms and change spaces
- Accessible change room with adult size change table and ceiling hoist
- Child size change tables
- Elevator
- Courtesy wheelchair
- Lower service counter
- Assistive listening device
- Private Customer Service Area available upon request
- Child protection seats in changing areas
- Zero depth beach entry to leisure pool
- Pool lifts for leisure and lap pool
- Water wheelchair
- Water walker
- Shower commode
- Playground with accessible features
- Community garden with accessible features
- Waiting areas with seating

Shea Heights Community Centre (130 Linegar Avenue)

- Accessible parking
- Automated entrance
- Accessible washrooms
- Child size change table
- Courtesy wheelchair

Southlands Community Centre (40 Teakwood Drive)

- Accessible parking and drop off
- Automated entrance
- Courtesy wheelchair
- Accessible washrooms
- Accessible gender neutral washroom
- Assistive listening device
- Waiting area with seating

Emergency Comfort Centres

Centres are established based on emergency type and other factors. Centres will include:

- Accessible parking
- Automated entrance
- Accessible washroom

Central Fire Station (5 Fort Townshend)

- Automated entrance
- Accessible washroom

Humane Services (81 Higgins Line)

- Accessible parking
- Accessible washroom
- Lower service counter
- Waiting area with seating

Metrobus Building (25 Messenger Drive)

- Accessible parking and drop off
- Automated entrance
- Waiting area with seating
- Lower service counter
- Accessible washroom

Metrobus Bus Stops

- 74 accessible bus shelters
- Some stops include rest area seating
- Bus stops identified by vertical signage and/or bus shelters

Metrobus Fleet

- 55 buses with kneeling to the curb ability
- 35 accessible buses with fold out ramps, accommodating 2 wheelchairs with a 1 or 3 point harness

GoBus Fleet

- 18 accessible buses
- Electric lifts
- 6 fixed seats and 2 foldaway seats
- Accommodate up to 4 wheelchairs

Parks, Playgrounds and Trails

- Some City parks have accessible parking, accessible routes, accessible picnic tables and accessible washrooms
- New parks include principles of universal design
- Inclusive and accessible playgrounds are located at:
 - The H.G.R. Mews Community Centre (new facility on Blackler Ave)
 - Kenmount Terrace Community Centre
 - Galway Village Green Park
 - Ariel Place Park
 - Bannerman Park

- Playgrounds with inclusive play features are located at:
 - Bowring Park
 - Victoria Park
 - Froude Avenue Park
 - McNiven Place Park
 - Paul Reynolds Community Centre
 - St. Mary's Playground
 - St. Mary's Elementary
 - Spruce Meadows Park
 - Della Drive Park
 - Larch Park
 - Poplar Avenue
 - Southlands Community Centre
 - Shea Heights Playground
- Trails are maintained by the City and the Grand Concourse Authority. A **Grand Concourse mapping tool** is available which displays mobile-friendly route information.

Robin Hood Bay Waste Management Facility (340 East White Hills Road)

- Accessible parking
- Accessible entrance
- Lower service counter
- Waiting area with seating
- Accessible washroom
- Elevator
- Emergency evacuation chair

St. John's Visitor Information Centre (348 Water Street)

- Accessible on-street parking
- Automated side entrance
- Lower service counter
- Waiting area with seating
- Elevator
- Accessible washroom

Streets and Pedestrian Routes

- New and remediated capital works projects meet or exceed accessibility requirements where possible.
- **Traffic calming** strategies in place for designated areas.
- **Accessible pedestrian signals** are available at 24 intersections.
- **Key2Access** accessible pedestrian signals are available at 9 intersections or pedestrian crossings.



Information and Communication

Accessible information and communication ensures that people of all abilities can access, understand and interact with the information they receive. It communicates information effectively and reaches a broader audience.

City Information

- **Connect with Us** via online services
- **Public information videos** include closed captioning in English
- Forms are reviewed regularly, updated to meet **Clear Print Guidelines** and available in alternate format upon request
- Social media posts include alternative text or image descriptions
- Public safety announcements are provided in American Sign Language
- City services and information using app technology
 - **311 for iPhone** and **311 for Android**
 - **Pay by Phone**
 - **Curb It St. John's**
- **Council meetings** live streamed and closed captioned in English
- City information is provided through a variety of communication formats including: **website, Facebook, Twitter/X, Instagram, YouTube**, mainstream media, the Telegram, brochures
- **Alternate format** of city information available upon request
- A downtown core, **paid parking location map** is available on the City Website
- What We Heard Documents follow **Clear Print Guidelines** and include alt text where necessary
- Alternative services notices may be received by app, phone call, email or text
- **Neighborhood profiles** provide useful information to help get to know and navigate your neighborhood.

Websites

- **StJohns.ca** meets WCAG 2.1 Guidelines
- StJohns.ca offers a “subscribe to this page” option for updates or changes.
- **Accessibility and Inclusion** Information featured in the quick access banner
- Plain language used throughout
- PT Sans, sans serif font
- Text resize capability
- Google translate available in over 130 languages
- Keyboard input navigation capability
- Improved organization and layout with intuitive categories.
- **EngageStJohns.ca** meets WCAG 2.1 Guidelines



Metrobus information and Communications

- Customers may access information in multiple formats including phone, e-mail, live chat, in person, website, print materials and apps.
- **Accessible Transit Handbook** available
- **GoBus user handbook** available
- Metrobus customers can track their bus using the **m-Mobile app**.
- GoBus customers can reserve rides by telephone, TTY, email, webportal, My GoBus App for **iPhone** and **Android**.
- GoBus customers can receive notifications using My GoBus app.
- **How to videos** are available to help customers with the My GoBus app. Videos include captioning and ASL translation.
- Signage available on all buses and bus stops to indicate a variety of accessibility features.

Procurement

Accessibility must be considered in procurement to ensure that products and services are inclusive and can be used by individuals with disabilities.

- Accessibility requirements are included in procurement processes where appropriate, such as public transit fleet and technology such as app services.
- Service standard minimums are required in para-transit service provider procurement.
- Open Calls for the City of St. John's are posted on the **bids&tenders procurement platform**. Accessibility information for this provider can be found online at **www.bidsandtenders.com/accessibility/**



Accommodations

Accessibility accommodations ensure that individuals with disabilities can participate in city programs and services. Providing accommodations creates equitable access and respect for the diverse needs and abilities of our community.

Calls for Accommodations

- Accommodations to assist individuals to access or participate in programs, services, meetings, facilities, housing and employment are available upon request where possible. Some requests may be based on third party service provider availability.

Accessible Parking

- Residents requiring an **accessible on street parking** space can apply for an Accessible On-Street Parking Permit.
- Accessible on-street parking space additions are considered upon request.

Public Safety Announcements

- Emergency related public safety information includes ASL Interpretation, based on service provider availability.

Automated Garbage Collection Exemption

- **Exemptions** for automated collection may be requested.

Service Animals

- Service animals welcome in city programs, services and public spaces.



Employment

Equal opportunity employment practices ensures that individuals with disabilities are provided with equitable opportunity to contribute skills and talents in the workforce.

City Employment

- City of St. John's **career opportunities** are available on the City's website, **Indeed** and where appropriate, **Career Beacon**.
- Job postings use inclusive language.
- Inclusive interviewing methods
- Accommodations to participate in an interview process may be considered upon request.
- Respectful Workplace Training
- Employee and family assistance program
- Wellness programs
- Disability Case Management process
- Health and dental benefits package
- Flexible or compressed work week options
- Variety of employment types
- Workplace accommodations may be considered upon request.
- Employment Equity Policy 03-01-02
- Respectful Workplace Policy 03-05-19

Metrobus Employment

- Metrobus **employment opportunities** are available on the Metrobus website, **Career Beacon** and **Indeed**.
- Applications may also be accepted in-person and by email.
- Respectful workplace policy and training
- Employee and family assistance program
- Wellness programs
- Disability Case Management process
- Health and dental benefits package
- Variety of employment types
- Accommodations may be considered upon request, where possible.



Barriers and Actions

The City of St. John's and Metrobus are committed to working with stakeholders to identify, prevent and eliminate barriers that prevent access and participation. Barriers may be related to architectural barriers, physical barriers, communication and information barriers, technology barriers, policy barriers and/or attitudinal barriers.

The Provincial Accessibility Act allows the Province to develop accessibility standards and requires public bodies to meet obligations within established timeframes. As standards and regulations are being developed, we will ensure compliance and continue to collaborate and consult with stakeholders to improve municipal programs, services and public spaces.

The City and Metrobus **engaged with stakeholders** in a variety of ways to learn more about the needs of the community. Key barriers and recommendations were identified through this process. City of St. John's and Metrobus staff have reviewed the feedback received and determined what actions may be taken in the next three years.

Many factors including identified needs, safety, current legislative requirements, municipal authority and operational capacity within existing resources such as staffing, budget, equipment, and time were considered. Other actions to reduce barriers that are not identified in this plan may also be implemented and investigated as resources permit. Any actions that the City and Metrobus takes to reduce barriers will be reflected in updates as necessary.



Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

Barrier: Application processes for City owned affordable housing limit access for people with disabilities, such as the requirement to provide Canada Revenue Agency documentation.

Action(s):

- Review current process to determine if required documentation is necessary or can be substituted.
- Investigate if applications for affordable housing can be completed and submitted online.

Barrier: Accessibility is not consistently considered in project planning and implementation.

Action(s):

- Evaluate employee awareness of available procedures and resources that support accessibility in project planning.
- Evaluate the use of accessibility and inclusion implications considered in decision making process (decision notes).
- Investigate employee training opportunities to target deficiencies identified in the evaluation process and make recommendations for improvement.



Barrier: Trees and shrubs impact access to trails, pathways and lines of sight.

Action(s):

- Continue to identify trees and shrubs that limit access and sightlines through trail and roadside pruning inspections and maintenance.
- Continue to resolve citizen service requests, where possible.

Barrier: Lack of communication boards at playgrounds.

Action(s):

- Work with stakeholders, such as the Inclusion Advisory Committee and the Autism Society of Newfoundland and Labrador, to learn more about communication boards.
- Investigate funding sources to purchase and install communication boards at City playgrounds.
- Identify and prioritize locations.

Barrier: Limited number of accessible public transit routes.

Action(s):

- Implement Route 10 as an additional wheelchair accessible service route.
- Continue to investigate solutions for implementing additional wheelchair accessible routes, where possible.



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

Action(s):

- Work with other levels of government and community service providers to identify gaps in programming that benefit persons with disabilities.
- Improve communication about existing City and community based programs and services that benefit people with disabilities.
- Investigate accessibility improvements at community gardens on city owned land, such as improved paths of travel, accessible beds and accessible gardening tools.
- Investigate funding opportunities to improve accessibility in programs and services, including community gardens.

Barrier: Automated garbage bins placed on sidewalks block access.

Action(s):

- Continue to provide automated bin users with instructions which include visuals, text and video to increase understanding.
- Increase communication of automated garbage bin use and proper placement through the website, social media and other means of communication where appropriate.

Barrier: Lack of GoBus reliability.

Action(s):

- Continue to work with GoBus service provider to address capacity issues related to the current labour shortage.
- Review GoBus no-show policy to improve accuracy and accountability.
- Create more opportunities to evaluate customer satisfaction and feedback.
- Enhance enforcement of service standards within the GoBus contract.
- Create more accountability standards and enforcement for door-to-door support from taxi drivers.

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

Action(s):

- Investigate disability awareness training opportunities and requirements for City and Metrobus staff and make recommendations.

Barrier: Snow build up at curb cuts, accessible parking spaces, bus stops and pedestrian signal activators.

Action(s):

- The 2022-2023 pedestrian activated snow clearing service enhancement pilot project, which implemented a 72 hour service standard, has been adopted as a permanent seasonal procedure.
- Continue to provide snow clearing operators reminders to avoid creating barriers, where possible.
- Continue to investigate methods to reduce or address barriers created by snow clearing procedures.
- Continue to resolve citizen service requests, where possible.



Built Environment and Transportation

Barrier: Limited amount of accessible parking locations and payment options, particularly downtown, near the Pedestrian Mall event.

Action(s):

- Improve communication of existing accessible parking spaces on City website.
- Continue to work with the Accessible Parking Working Group to determine solutions for improvement.
- Continue to monitor condition of accessible parking signage and replace as needed.
- Continue to resolve citizen service requests, where possible.
- Review current accessible parking spaces allocated for the Downtown Pedestrian Mall event.
- Investigate alternative parking payment options.

Barrier: Playgrounds without accessible equipment or with broken accessible equipment.

Action(s):

- Improve communication regarding accessible and inclusive playgrounds and those that have accessible features.
- Continue to purchase new inclusive swings annually to install at new locations or replace worn/damaged swings.
- Investigate funding opportunities to install inclusive swings at new locations.
- Continue to resolve citizen service requests, where possible.
- Continue to repair/replace playground equipment as required by Canadian Standards Association.

Barrier: Limited number of City managed accessible affordable housing units.

Action(s):

- Continue to consider accessibility requests from tenants.
- Ensure 1 in 10 newly constructed affordable housing units is accessible based on funding.
- Consult the Affordable Housing Working Group and Inclusion Advisory Committee to develop solutions to improve.
- Investigate if accessibility improvements may be completed when renovating or upgrading units.
- Investigate funding opportunities to improve accessibility in affordable housing.

Barrier: Facilities without automated door openers and openers that are not in working order.

Action(s):

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



Barrier: Not enough lighting at building entrances and exits.

Action(s):

- Newly built facility entrances and exits use bright LED lighting.
- Continue to ensure entrance/exit lighting meet building code requirements.
- Continue to resolve citizen service requests, where possible.

Barrier: Stairs without color contrasting edges and proper handrails.

Action(s):

- Continue to resolve citizen service requests, where possible.
- Through regular asset management process and inspections, investigate requirements and locations where color contrasting stair treads and handrails are needed.

Barrier: Washroom soap dispensers, grab bars, hand dryers and paper towel dispensers installed incorrectly or in a location that is not functional.

Action(s):

- Continue to ensure that newly constructed washrooms comply with the Provincial Buildings Accessibility Regulations.
- Continue to consider standards outlined in the Canadian Standards Association B651 Accessible Design for the Built Environment, where possible.
- Continue to resolve citizen service requests, where possible.
- Review existing washrooms to ensure amenities are correctly installed and functional.



Barrier: Limited access to older child/adult changing spaces and changing tables.

Action(s):

- Improve communication regarding existing facility accessibility amenities.
- Continue to meet or exceed Provincial Buildings Accessibility Regulations in newly constructed facilities, where possible.
- Continue to include gender neutral change spaces and at least one adult size changing table in newly constructed facilities where changing spaces are offered.
- Identify locations where adult sized changing tables are required.
- Determine if existing inventory or budget supports the purchase and installation of additional adult sized change tables.
- Investigate funding opportunities to purchase new adult sized change tables.

Barrier: Construction causes loud noise, smells and unexpected changes to the environment for those who are neurodivergent.

Action(s):

- Promote **subscriptions** on the City's website to receive email notices for news, service disruptions, traffic advisories, emergencies and program information.
- Continue to ensure that new city vehicles include broadband backup alarms with multi-frequency sound that is less high pitched.
- Continue to monitor decibel levels from City equipment to ensure compliance with established standards.

Barrier: Lack of accessible trails.

Action(s):

- Investigate where existing trails may be improved for accessibility.
- Continue to improve accessibility through the new projects, such as shared use paths, with features that include wider, level surfaces.

Barrier: Sidewalk and curb access is impacted by narrow widths, poor conditions, construction, and objects blocking access such as signage, poles, hydrants and drainage grates.

Action(s):

- Continue to remove barriers from sidewalks and curb cuts through capital works projects and street rehabilitation projects.
- Ensure no newly installed signage, poles, grates or hydrants create accessibility barriers, where structural integrity and built environment permit.
- Continue to create boulevards that separate sidewalks from streets, where capital projects permit.

- Ensure that Traffic Control Plans include provisions to maintain or provide accessible alternative routes, where possible.
- Promote **subscriptions** on the City’s website to receive email notices for news, service disruptions, traffic advisories, emergencies and program information.
- Investigate additional funding sources to improve accessibility of sidewalks.
- Continue to resolve citizen service requests, where possible.

Barrier: Lack of bus shelters, benches, crosswalks, curbs and access to trails at bus stops.

Action(s):

- Continue to add accessible bus shelters and prioritize installation.
- Investigate adding rest areas, such as benches, to bus stops that do not have shelters.
- Investigate bus stop placements in relation to trails, crosswalks and curb cuts for existing and new bus stop locations.



Information and Communication

Barrier: City information is not consistently communicated in plain language or formats that are accessible.

Action(s):

- Evaluate employee awareness of internal accessible communication resources available for staff who create and communicate public information.
- Investigate employee training opportunities to target deficiencies identified in the evaluation process and make recommendations for improvement.
- Investigate additional accessibility evaluation tools that staff can use when creating information.
- Investigate if a procedure to collect and record individual communication needs of those who access City programs and services is available.

Barrier: Limited public knowledge of existing accessibility amenities available.

Action(s):

- Improve website information, wayfinding and signage.
- Investigate the development of Facility Access Guides which describe the physical environment, points of interest, sensory expectations, etc.
- Include accessibility features in advertising campaigns and public communications, where applicable.



Barrier: Public knowledge of how to report accessibility concerns such as accessible parking misuse or trees and shrubs blocking access to sidewalks and trails.

Action(s):

- Procedures for reporting accessibility concerns are outlined on page 16 of this accessibility plan.
- Investigate alternative ways to report urgent concerns.
- Investigate the resident satisfaction survey's capacity to include an accessibility feedback component.

Barrier: Information about accessible parking and accessible pick up/drop off locations are not communicated well.

Action(s):

- Improve accessible parking information on the City website.
- Investigate the development of an online map that identifies public accessible parking spaces managed by the City.
- Continue to work with the Accessible Parking Working Group to determine solutions for improvement.



Barrier: Lack of accessible information and communication types to support public transit riders with disabilities.

Action(s):

- Implement a stop announcement system for Metrobus regular routes that include audible and visual information.
- Implement BlindSquare, wayfinding and navigation app technology to assist customers in locating bus stops.
- Investigate GoBus app language to ensure clear, plain language is used.

Barrier: Information about construction and alternative accessible routes is not communicated well.

Action(s):

- Promote **subscriptions** on the City’s website to receive email notices for news, service disruptions, traffic advisories, emergencies and program information.
- Work with contractors to ensure required signage is available onsite.

- Ensure that Traffic Control Plans include provisions to maintain or provide accessible alternative routes, where possible.

Barrier: City event accessibility information in promotions is inconsistent.

Action(s):

- Evaluate employee awareness about event planning tools and resources available and make recommendations.
- Investigate employee training opportunities to target deficiencies in event promotions and make recommendations.



Procurement

Barrier: Lack of protocols ensuring accessibility is considered in procurement processes.

Action(s):

- Update language used in procurement processes to ensure accessibility is considered in purchasing goods and services.
- Continue to ensure all new buses in the Metrobus and GoBus fleets are accessible.
- Future Metrobus procurement will include forward-facing wheelchair securing equipment.
- Ensure para-transit contracts consider accessibility and inclusion implications in service standards.



Accommodations

Barrier: Lack of ASL (American Sign Language) support for those attending City programs and services.

Action(s):

- Continue to offer calls for accommodations for City programs and services and arrange support, where possible.
- Continue to work with ASL interpretation providers to increase access to City meetings, programs and events and public safety announcements, where possible.

Barrier: Non-city venues that participate in the attendant pass program have limited ticket purchasing and seating options for wheelchair users.

Action(s):

- Review and update **Attendant Pass Guidelines**.
- Share attendant pass guidelines with participating venues on an annual basis.

Barrier: Placing waste at the curb for removal can be challenging for persons with disabilities.

Action(s):

- Continue to offer the Automated Garbage Collection exemption.
- Investigate other options to assist individuals to get waste to curb for collection.



Employment

Barrier: Data regarding employees with disabilities is not available.

Action(s):

- Explore best practices for equity, diversity and inclusion in City and Metrobus Human Resource procedures. Refine and develop new practices to support equity, diversity and inclusion, where possible.

Barrier: Programs are not available to support employment of persons with disabilities.

Action(s):

- Continue review of current Employment Equity Policy and research best practices and implement where possible.
- Consider accessibility accommodations in Metrobus recruitment processes.
- Metrobus commits to developing a Diversity and Inclusion Policy.



Evaluation

Municipalities play a vital role in shaping communities and ensuring that people can access and benefit from the services they have to offer. The City of St. John's 2024-2026 Accessibility Plan is a tool that will guide our work in accessibility over the next three years.

During annual reviews, staff will provide updates to council on progress made in completing actions to improve accessibility. The accessibility plan will be updated every three years. Updates to the plan will include obligations required by provincial accessibility standard regulations as they are developed.

To evaluate the success of the plan the City will:

- Ensure accessibility plan compliance with relevant accessibility laws and regulations in Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Investigate and/or evaluate the use of accessibility resources and checklists such as:
 - **Outdoor Event Accessibility and Inclusion Checklist**
 - **Microsoft Office Accessibility Checks**
 - **PDF Accessibility Checks**
 - **Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification**

- **Accessibility Standards Canada**

- Web Accessibility Checkers
- Color Contrast Checkers
- Continuously monitor accessibility in new initiatives and decisions during the planning phase.
- Update the Accessibility and Inclusion webpage as necessary.
- Continue to receive, consider and resolve concerns from stakeholders including the public, disability organizations, the Inclusion Advisory Committee and the Accessibility Working Group, where possible.



Conclusion

At the City of St. John's, we are proud of the work that has been done to build a community that is inclusive, diverse and accessible for all. We are committed to ensuring everyone can participate fully in all City programs, services and public spaces.

The City is always looking for ways to improve and we value feedback from the community. Together we will continue to create a more accessible and inclusive community that benefits everyone.



Contact Us

For more information about this Accessibility Plan or accessibility in City of St. John's municipal operations, **contact council** or contact the Accessibility and Inclusion Office.

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[StJohns.ca/AccessibilityAndInclusion](https://www.stjohns.ca/AccessibilityAndInclusion)

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