

INFORMATION NOTE

Title:	Accessibility Plan Progress Report 2024
Date Prepared:	March 20, 2025
Report To:	Committee of the Whole
Councillor and Role:	Councillor Ophelia Ravencroft, Inclusion Advisory Committee
Ward:	N/A

Issue:

To provide a progress report on the accessibility and inclusion improvements made in year one of the 2024-2026 Accessibility Plan.

Discussion – Background and Current Status:

In December of 2021, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador enacted the [Accessibility Act](#) (the Act), which outlines the principles and goals for an accessible province. The Act allows the government to develop accessibility standards, enforcement measures and requires that public bodies develop 3-year accessibility plans going forward.

In December of 2023, City Council approved the City's first multiyear [Accessibility Plan](#), demonstrating a commitment to improve accessibility and inclusion in programs, services and spaces operated by the City.

Guided by the City's [Inclusion Advisory Committee](#), Metrobus' Accessibility Committee, the requirements of the Act and a comprehensive [public engagement](#), the City set goals and actions. These actions aim to identify, prevent and remove barriers in six key focus areas to better meet the accessibility needs of our community.

Since no provincial accessibility standards are currently developed, public bodies are required to demonstrate a commitment to accessibility and make efforts to improve. As a result, the City developed 19 overarching accessibility goals and identified 70 actions to improve accessibility and inclusion in City operations. In 2024, work began on 51 of the actions, with the remaining work scheduled for 2025 and 2026.

The following is a brief overview of the progress made on the 51 accessibility and inclusion actions initiated in 2024:

- 13 actions complete
- 34 actions in progress and on track
- 2 actions progressing but behind
- 2 actions progressing but overdue

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The following are highlights of accomplishments outlined in the report:

- Incorporated CSA B651-23 Accessible Design Standards in new and existing facilities, where possible.
- Enhanced park and playground accessibility with six new accessible swings, a beach access mat at Rotary Park and accessible rest areas at Bidgood Park, Rotary Park and along the Kelly's Brook shared-use path.
- At the end of 2024, 18 kilometers of shared-use paths have been completed and 11 more kilometers are being planned and constructed.
- Installed 5 new accessible bus shelters, bringing the total to 75.
- Improved accessible transportation with new wheelchair-accessible buses and a GoBus service review that increased weekend availability and reduced ride denials.
- Installed accessible pedestrian signals and improved crosswalk accessibility.
- Updated the City's websites, including Curb It St. John's and Robin Hood Bay, to meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 AA.
- Launched an accessible parking webpage featuring an interactive map.
- Purchased additional assistive listening devices for recreation centres and Access 311.
- Enhanced workplace inclusion and employee support by establishing a Psychological Wellness Committee, launching the accessible Reach 360 learning platform, and updating the Employment Equity Policy with inclusive language

The attached report includes celebrations, updated disability related data, progress highlights for each key focus area, a detailed update for each action initiated in 2024 and next steps.

Key Considerations/Implications:

1. Budget/Financial Implications:
 - Accessibility improvements were funded by existing divisional budgets and external funding.
 - As accessibility standards are passed, additional budget allocations may be necessary.
2. Partners or Other Stakeholders:
 - City of St. John's Departments and Divisions
 - Metrobus
 - Government of NL
 - Disability Advocates and Organizations
 - Persons with disabilities, their caregivers and family
 - Inclusion Advisory Committee
 - Metrobus Accessibility Committee

3. Alignment with Strategic Directions:

A Connected City: Develop and deliver programs, services and public spaces that build safe, healthy and vibrant communities.

An Effective City: Achieve service excellence through collaboration, innovation and modernization grounded in client needs.

4. Alignment with Adopted Plans:

- Healthy City Strategy
- Recreation Master Plan
- Affordable Housing Strategy

5. Accessibility and Inclusion:

- The goals and actions of the multiyear accessibility plan directly impact and improve accessibility and inclusion in City programs, services and spaces to create a more inclusive and welcoming City.
- The Accessibility and Inclusion Facilitator and Manager of Healthy City and Inclusion are the staff leads.

6. Legal or Policy Implications:

- Accessibility Act
- Human Rights Act

7. Privacy Implications: None

8. Engagement and Communications Considerations:

- Engagement and Communications staff are consulted regularly throughout implementation of the plan.
- Best practices to support engagement and communication in accessible formats are in place.

9. Human Resource Implications: None

10. Procurement Implications:

- Procurement is a key focus area of the Accessibility Act. Considerations have been identified and implemented in 2024.

11. Information Technology Implications: None

12. Other Implications: None

Conclusion/Next Steps:

Accessibility staff leads from each City department and Metrobus will continue to address accessibility barriers and advance the goals and actions of the 2024-2026 Accessibility Plan. An annual update on the progress made in 2025 will be provided early in 2026.

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Accessibility Plan Progress Report 2024.docx
Attachments:	- Accessibility Plan Progress Report 2024.pdf - Accessibility Plan Report 2024 Presentation.pptx
Final Approval Date:	Mar 27, 2025

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Krista Gladney - Mar 27, 2025 - 10:50 AM

Tanya Haywood - Mar 27, 2025 - 12:23 PM