



ACCESSIBILITY PLAN 2024 - 2026

Town of Carbonear



John Walsh – B.A., B.A. Ed., M.Ed.
Principal Consultant
JW Consulting Associates
11 Wembley Crescent
Mount Pearl, NL, A1N 4T8
(709) 728-8414 (cell)
Email: cet@nl.rogers.com

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0 Statement of Commitment.....	page 4
2.0 Accessibility Goals.....	page 4
3.0 Barriers to Accessibility.....	page 8
4.0 Focus Areas for Next 3 Years.....	page 9
5.0 Advisory Committee on Accessibility.....	page 10
6.0 Council Commitment.....	page 12
7.0 Accessibility Standards.....	page 14
GLOSSARY.....	page 15
CONCLUSION.....	page 17
Appendices:.....	page 19
Appendix “A” – Call for nominations to serve on the Advisory Committee on Accessibility	page 20
Appendix “B” – Minutes from Public Consultation	page 21
Appendix “C” – Tips for Dealing With Persons With Vision Loss	page 23
Appendix “D” – ‘Sign in’ sheet for Public Consultation	page 25

1.0 Statement of Commitment

The Town Council of the Town of Carbonear are committed to making the town accessible by “identifying, removing, and preventing” barriers to accessibility and inclusion. The Town Council of the Town of Carbonear wants to work closely with various stakeholders (especially the ‘Advisory Committee on Accessibility’) to continue to move the town forward towards full accessibility. This will be an ongoing process, but as a council, we are committed to seeing this through. Carbonear’s council intends to make all of its programs, facilities, services, and operations accessible and inclusive (over time), and to be mindful of (and remove) barriers that prevent full accessibility in the future. This is council’s commitment to the people of Carbonear.

2.0 Accessibility Goals

Existing Initiatives (Already Completed)

The town council of the Town of Carbonear have already completed work to make the town more accessible and more inclusive over the past few years. Some of these initiatives are highlighted below:

- Carbonear has made improvements to its sidewalks to make them more accessible. For example, Water Street had a set of stairs on one side of the street and these were eliminated with upgrades so the area is now fully accessible.
- All new sidewalk projects will include accessible sidewalks.
- Accessible parking spaces have been added to Water Street, as well, to make it more accessible.
- The pool has a new inclusive change room constructed (without any barriers) to make it more accessible (and inclusive) for everyone using the facility (including those with mobility issues).
- The town has installed an automatic door opener at the pool for easier access for everyone; this is a ‘must’ for people in wheelchairs, for example.
- The town has also increased parking at the recreation complex for those that have mobility challenges. This is a huge help to those that need the help and the town is happy to be able to accommodate them.
- The town has also been adding fixtures and apparatus at various playgrounds throughout the town that can be used to accommodate children with various physical challenges
- There was also additional lighting added at the town’s track and field facility to better accommodate those with various sight-related needs.
- The new extension to the theatre adjacent to the town hall is now completely accessible, as well.
- Carbonear proudly flies the Pride flag each year to recognize Pride Week and to show its support for the Pride community.
- Carbonear also has ‘sensory zones’ for its Christmas Parade to allow those with varying degrees of sensory issues to enjoy the parade, as well
- Carbonear also holds an annual multi-cultural event at least once a year to try to include the multi-cultural community as much as possible.
- In addition to this event, the town also sponsors other events to recognize and highlight multi-culturalism. For example, the Town has someone from the multicultural community host a cooking class where they show those registered how to cook their native food and help share their cultures with others.

- The town also holds various events for our seniors community.
- Carbonear also has a full slate of recreation programs designed for our youth and young adults (of various cultures) to partake in on a regular basis.

New Initiatives Going Forward

Besides the things the Town of Carbonear have already done (which are impressive both in number and the projects completed), there are several new initiatives that council fully intends to do over the next several years to make Carbonear more ‘accessible and inclusive’:

- Plans for budget 2024 include paved walkways for the recreation complex to make the space more accessible for everyone
- Adopt ‘Clear Print’ guidelines developed by the CNIB
- Council should review and share the information on ‘tips’ to deal with vision impairments
- Council should add lighting to the boardwalk on Water Street (and as funds allow) make the boardwalk a little wider for wheel chair use
- There is also a new rubberized surface to be installed at the playground so that it can be used by wheelchairs (and others with mobility issues)
- A brand new accessible ‘structure’ is also planned for installation at the town’s recreation center, as well
- There will be benches added to the track complex in the spring of 2024 to accommodate patrons that require a rest period
- Drawings have been completed and plans are underway to improve accessibility of the washrooms at the Conception Bay Regional Community Centre. This work should be completed in the spring/summer 2024
- It was mentioned that a rural ‘transit system’ is badly needed in Carbonear
- Members of council of the Town of Carbonear need to raise their level of awareness of the issues of accessibility and inclusion in the town in everything they do at the local level; they seem to be committed to doing that; in other words, council must apply an ‘accessibility and inclusive’ lens to all their decisions as a council
- In re-doing the town’s website, consider those with various stages of vision loss; use contrasting colours; enlarge the print, apply CNIB clear print guidelines (same applies for tax invoices etc.,)
- Council intends to provide funding for the *Advisory Committee on Accessibility* (as part of the town’s Accessibility Plan) to allow them to learn and grow in the broad areas of accessibility and inclusion; as we are all aware, without money – nothing is possible
- The public needs to be more aware of issues of ‘accessibility and inclusion’, as well, and be committed to breaking down barriers; council and staff must commit to sharing information, building awareness, and identifying, removing, and preventing barriers to accessibility within the town. Without the public’s help and support to improve ‘accessibility and inclusion’ in Carbonear, issues relating to ‘accessibility and inclusion’ likely will not improve substantially. When a community is fully ‘accessible and inclusive’ – everybody wins.
- Perhaps the best place to begin to improve accessibility and inclusion is with the *Advisory*

DISABILITY
 isn’t contagious – **IGNORANCE** is

Committee on Accessibility'. Carbonear has done it right by making an open 'call' to residents to serve on this committee. This committee must be as diverse and representative of the community of 'accessibility and inclusion' as possible

- Ensure the *terms of reference* adopted by the committee address fundamental issues and representation of 'accessibility and inclusion' by considering some of the following groups/ individuals to serve on the *Advisory Committee on Accessibility*:
 - People with physical disabilities
 - Those with visual impairments
 - Those with hearing impairments
 - Members of the LBGTQ+ community
 - Representation from indigenous groups
 - People with emotional or mental health issues
 - Those with intellectual impairments
 - Those who represent "aging adults" – as they prefer to be called
 - If there are people who represent special interest groups, professionals, and advocates that have an established focus and agenda (HUB, First Light, Choices for Youth, Stellas' Circle, CNIB, Hard of Hearing Association, Pride Community, Elaine Dobbin Center for Autism etc...)
 - professionals who work in the field and have specific knowledge to offer
 - Local representatives of the Town of Carbonear (from the above, where possible)
 - Appointing a very capable staff person to serve on the committee – a capable staff person is critically important in organizing meetings; sending out reminders to committee members; organizing training; taking & distributing minutes etc., - essentially, the staff person becomes on the 'lead'
 - Having a member of council serve on the committee who is committed to learning more about accessibility is critically important

Note: You don't need ALL groups represented, but as diverse and inclusive a group, as possible, should be assembled.

- Commit to ongoing learning activities for members of council of the Town of Carbonear and the *Advisory Committee on Accessibility*, and offer 'opportunities to learn' more about accessibility issues to the public, as well; these ongoing learning opportunities could include:
 - Guest speakers
 - Webinars, courses, and other 'on-line' learning tools
 - An introduction and overview of the province's *Accessibility Act*
 - Review of existing (and new) programs, initiatives, services, and facilities that are examples of accessibility and inclusion within the town (and elsewhere)

-
- “Hands On” learning – consultations with professional representatives of those with various disabilities; first-hand experience of barriers to disabilities & accessibility within the town; learning from professionals who work in the field
 - Ensure all future recreational facilities built by the Town of Carbonear are fully accessible – make this the first question that gets asked about ‘new facilities’ owned/operated by the town, “Are the facilities accessible?”
 - Revise the town’s commercial ‘Building and Development’ regulations to ensure all new ‘commercial’ operations are accessible going forward; obviously “existing” businesses can continue to be “grandfathered” by these regulations (if they do not meet the new standard already)
 - Review existing recreational facilities and playgrounds, apparatus, & equipment with a view to accessibility (where practical) – i.e. by removing and preventing barriers to full participation; ensure there are play areas for those with various disabilities
 - Make the public aware of council’s commitment to accessibility through its approval of the town’s revised commercial ‘building and development’ regulations and council’s other commitments
 - Identify new initiatives and facilities which are affordable which demonstrate councils’ commitment to ‘accessibility & inclusion’
 - Perhaps the town could consider placing a ‘link’ on its website to pass along suggestions to the advisory committee when things arise in the community
 - Proudly share the town’s ‘Accessibility Plan’ with taxpayers/public of Carbonear; council should proudly take every opportunity to boast of council’s ‘commitment’ to accessibility when talking to the public or speaking to various community groups and/or at functions
 - Provide an annual award for the “Town of Carbonear Accessibility/Inclusion”(or whatever name you come up with) to help raise awareness and to acknowledge acts that “include others” and improve “accessibility” in the town
 - It was mentioned that the town should consider making a survey available to residents (using survey monkey or some other cost-effective tool) to get ideas on how to make Carbonear even more accessible and inclusive in the future; this could be a job for the *Advisory Committee on Accessibility & Inclusion*
 - Enable the ‘*Advisory Committee on Accessibility*’ to fundraise annually for a ‘cause specific’ fundraiser to help raise awareness of issues of ‘accessibility & inclusion’ in the town (and to highlight the work they do) – this is more about raising awareness than raising money

3.0 Barriers to Accessibility

In Carbonear barriers to accessibility still exist. But (thanks largely to this report) these barriers have been identified below:

Physical Barriers

The physical barriers are more easily identified. There is still work to be done (especially within the business community) to ‘raise awareness’ and to make their commercial facilities more accessible. Many of the businesses were built long ago and served a population of a different era. Several were old houses that were converted to businesses. Modifications to improve accessibility are often very costly. So, these changes cannot happen overnight – but they will happen over time. The Town of Carbonear will continue to work with the business community to help ensure businesses within the Town of Carbonear become more accessible in the future. Having a plan is an extremely important ‘first step’.

Financial Barriers

Everything is relative, but compared with other municipalities across Newfoundland and Labrador, Carbonear appears to be doing fine financially. But finding discretionary spending for things like accessibility can be challenging – especially with so many other needs at the forefront vying for the same funding/dollar. Everything relating to accessibility seems to be a little more expensive, as well, which makes it even more challenging. As important as ‘accessibility and inclusion’ are, it can sometimes be difficult to divest funds towards these projects in this tight fiscal climate. There are so many needs in a community like Carbonear, and only a limited amount of money to go around. That’s why it’s so important to keep issues of ‘accessibility and inclusion’ in the forefront for the public to see and be aware of.

While it may be argued that (financially) the town is doing well, everything is relative. Understandably, Carbonear’s council are reticent to increase taxes (especially at this time) to cover the increased costs of completing projects on accessibility. That’s where ‘raising awareness’ about issues of accessibility becomes so important. While ‘accessibility’ presents barriers to a small percentage of our population, it says something about the ‘inclusive’ nature of our society when these barriers ‘are’ removed. A more ‘inclusive and accessible’ Carbonear is a stronger community.

Human Resources

In Carbonear (as it appears to be the case everywhere) staff are limited. Even when staff are on annual leave, there are usually no replacements. The work is often left to face employees upon their return from holidays or have others ‘pick up the slack’ for shorter periods of time (or in emergencies). Mandatory programs and services continue – but nothing else. In this day of constant bombardment through various forms of social media – things seem to be getting worse – not better.

But it is difficult, because staffing levels are normally at ‘bare bones’ to begin with. Larger communities (than Carbonear) often have special interest groups and municipal departments to undertake initiatives (like accessibility) and to give it the attention it deserves. The irony is that quite often smaller municipalities have to do the same things as larger municipalities (in order to be compliant) – but they have to do so with much smaller staffing allocations. So, staffing is definitely a barrier to accessibility.

Public Engagement

Getting the public to engage in issues of accessibility & inclusion, especially persons who do not want to identify as having a disability, can be challenging. This is a problem for all municipalities, we realize that. But it is even more challenging in smaller towns where most people know one another – especially families that have been in the community for a long time.

An example would be any ‘stigma’ associated with a person living with a mental health issue or having an intellectual or cognitive challenge. People often need (and expect) help. While these conditions are more difficult to recognize, this creates its own challenge. Some disabilities are harder to detect and these are challenging for everyone to address, as a result, especially if the person with the disability does not identify as someone with a “disability”. Even coming forward to serve on the *Advisory Committee for Accessibility* can be problematic for some. While some peoples’ participation may be obvious – others’ may be less obvious.

Communication

There are segments of our municipal population with hearing issues or visual impairments. But the demands of communications (especially through social media) appear to be increasing. For example, people with visual impairments may not be able to read information on the town website, or even be able to read their tax invoices. Many people have hearing challenges, as well - especially in large crowds or crowded rooms where there is a lot of chatter or peripheral noise (including people with hearing aids). These are important barriers that need to be addressed. Because, as things stand right now, there are definite communication barriers, and they even exist with most social media devices and tools and on most social media platforms, as well. People often can’t communicate well for various reasons, and this can present a problem for public bodies (like municipal councils).

4.0 Focus Areas

- 4.1 While there may be many different areas to focus on (especially in this first Accessibility Plan), the primary area of focus will be to make council and the general public of Carbonear more aware of issues, concerns, and barriers to ‘accessibility’(and inclusion) within the town. Simply put – to raise awareness. This will require a big commitment of time, energy, and resources. This education of council and the general public will be a ‘process’ rather than an ‘event’, but with a full commitment from council this can and will be completed, over time.
- 4.2 Carbonear’s council will make a proclamation declaring that the Town of Carbonear is working towards being an *Accessible Community* that is dedicated to establishing and implementing principles of ‘accessibility and inclusion’ in everything they do ‘going forward’.
- 4.3 Another ‘area of focus’ will be to remove the barriers that currently exist (over time) and to prevent barriers to accessibility from being established in the future.
- 4.4 Council will, going forward, consider all aspects of ‘accessibility and inclusion’ relating to outside (non-elected) committees of council, volunteering with the town, working in the town, as well as hiring of new employees (where practical).

-
- 4.5 Involve staff in the development of ‘accessibility’ and inclusion efforts. Employees can help identify specific budget items required in implementing the plan (in various areas of programs, operations, and services). These budget recommendations can be provided through the *Advisory Board on Accessibility and Inclusion* or they could be provided directly to council (through Committee of the Whole).
- 4.6 Ensure physical accommodations that are fully accessible are provided and available in the community. An ‘accessible and inclusive’ community benefits everyone.
- 4.7 Ensure the town’s development regulations and permitting processes ensure healthcare facilities and clinics are accessible and inclusive for all individuals (at the very least), and work towards gathering support from the business community relating to implementing the town’s revised commercial *Building and Development* regulations.

5.0 Advisory Committee on Accessibility

- 5.1 One of the first considerations (from council’s perspective) is which member of council is going to be appointed from council to serve on this committee. Obviously, appointing someone from council who is knowledgeable and sympathetic to the needs of the accessible community, and who is open to learning more about the issues and barriers that exist is very important. Perhaps they already have knowledge and training – that would be a plus.

Having a councillor with some ‘clout’ around the council table to serve on the advisory committee will be particularly impactful. The councillor may be required chair the first meeting of the *Advisory Committee on Accessibility*, and definitely will become knowledgeable of the issues relating to accessibility on behalf of council and the barriers that may still exist in Carbonear.

- 5.2 The second consideration is “how” members will become part of the committee. The committee will be an “advisory committee”, meaning that the committee can put forth ‘recommendations’ that may or may not be adopted (or funded) by council. They offer advice and make recommendations (as do all committees of council) to members of Carbonear’s town council on issues of accessibility. Members of the committee are considered “experts” in the field of accessibility in Carbonear. Many committee members have the ‘lived’ experience or are professionals in various fields relating to ‘accessibility and inclusion’. They often have special knowledge to pass along and they have been exposed to ‘training’ in issues relating to ‘accessibility and inclusion’.

BUILDING minds
building **FUTURES**

In Carbonear, council put forth an ‘Open Call’ for nominations to serve on the committee? Will all those who come forth be added to the committee? What role will council play in “appointing” members to the committee? These are practical considerations that will have to be answered before proceeding.

Assuming that council’s committee will become a separate committee, will all members of the committee be residents of Carbonear or will some advisory committee members be representative of professionals or ‘experts’ working elsewhere in the field. That decision must be made relatively quickly. Normally, the advisory committee meets quarterly, but it is left to the committee if they want to meet more often, Many committees on “accessibility” already have “terms of reference” adopted – so there is no need to re-invent the wheel. Borrow where and when you can. The ‘terms of reference’ can be revised and adopted by your own committee for use in Carbonear.

5.3 How should the *Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusion* be reflective of the marginalized community? Putting together a committee that is representative of various disabilities is very important. Consider adding members to the committee from groups/individuals that are normally marginalized from the following:

- People with physical disabilities or mobility issues (1 or 2)
At least one (1) from some of the others listed below (depending on the size of the committee – committees are usually 6-8 people + 1 staff representative + 1 councillor.= 8 or 10):
- Those with visual impairments
- Those with hearing impairments
- Members of the LGBTQ+ community
- Representation of indigenous groups
- People with mental or emotional health issues
- Those with intellectual disabilities
- Representatives of broader special interest groups, professionals, and advocates that have an established focus and agenda
- Local representatives (living in Carbonear)
- Staff person (who can assist the councillor and be a ‘lead’ and knowledgeable on issues relating to accessibility)
- Member of council who is sympathetic and is committed to learning more about ‘accessibility and inclusion’. Perhaps a councillor with a ‘vested’ interest. This person will become council’s liaison on issues of accessibility – with help from the staff person appointed.

Note: As noted previously, all groups don’t need to be represented. But the broader the appeal – the better.

Consider how each individual or group has had to overcome ‘barriers’ to accessibility when choosing membership to your committee. You may also need to consider representatives who live in your community. Except for any professional staff (HUB, CNIB etc.,) who may serve on the committee, having residents of Carbonear will be a priority. Person’s with ‘home grown’ experience(s) are most likely to come forward to serve on the committee.

NOTE: Some disabilities may not be so easy to detect – like ‘intellectual’ disabilities. Other individuals may not want to be *categorized* or be seen to have a disability at all. This can make choosing who may or may not be asked to participate in the work of the committee even more challenging.

- 5.4 Should the advisory committee meetings of Carbonear be ‘public’? There are arguments to be made on both sides. Should the media be invited to attend? Having the meetings open to the public may provide an opportunity for others (other than those who serve on the committee) to be aware of (or even participate) in things relating to accessibility. It also advances the arguments for openness and transparency.

On the other hand, having meetings that are open to the public may prevent committee members from speaking their minds openly and thereby advancing the agenda of accessibility as it needs to be done by the committee. Some committee members may not want the public to even know they are on a committee dealing with issues of accessibility & inclusion (or how they became involved). This is a decision that must eventually be made (by council or the committee itself). Perhaps it is something the committee can eventually decide upon.

6.0 Council Commitment

- 6.1 A staff person must be appointed to become an accessibility ‘lead’, and to support the work of the councillor appointed to lead the committee as an advisory committee of council. Most committees of council require a staff person to be effective. The staff person can prepare meeting agendas, prepare (and circulate) copies for committee members, take and circulate minutes of meetings, arrange for guest speakers or other professional development opportunities, address issues of ‘technology’ for virtual learning sessions, prepare & complete funding applications, schedule professional development opportunities, assist with ‘on-line’ learning, and perform other ‘day to day’ tasks, as required .

- 6.2 The committee should (early in the process) be provided with an opportunity to become familiar with the provincial **Accessibility Act** and what is happening on the provincial level to address issues of accessibility and to remove barriers. These learning opportunities are normally free of charge and are an important means of bringing Committee Members “up to speed” and getting them in touch with other professionals in the field of accessibility. This is an important ‘first step’, in our opinion.

-
- 6.3 The *Accessible Canada Act* 2019 should also become familiar to committee members. Committee members should be challenged to become familiar with expectations and opportunities to learn more at the national level, and especially to become aware of funding opportunities (both provincially and federally) to access funding to support their local projects and initiatives – which tend to be more costly when it comes to accessibility.
- 6.4 The *Accessibility Advisory Committee* can eventually “tweak” the Accessibility Plan to better suit their needs. The Accessibility Plan must become a ‘living and breathing’ document in order for it to become truly effective. Revisions and updates should become a normal part of the renewal process. The plan must be updated every 3 years according to current requirements.
- 6.5 Learning and collaboration should become a part of the routine work of the *Advisory Committee on Accessibility*. Learning about issues of accessibility should be a major focus of the committee. Council should ensure these opportunities are provided. While most of these opportunities are “free”, there may be donations to be made or registration costs to be covered etc... Things like arranging “guest speakers”, or other ‘hands on’ learning opportunities should be provided to committee members in Carbonear, as well as conference participation and ‘on-line’ learning opportunities. Where practical, the public could be invited, as well. In other words, a commitment to learning should be made and provided by council as a priority.
- 6.6 Council should create a message about its commitment to improving accessibility and share its plan with the public in Carbonear. The plan should become a much-publicized ‘public document’. If the plan and all of the good work of the committee is not widely shared with the public, the town will not likely improve substantially in the broad areas of accessibility. Sharing this information widely allows others to be more active in community events and thereby improves accessibility for everyone in the town. You need to raise public awareness – ‘caring is sharing’, as they say.
- 6.7 Implement the goals and actions identified in the Accessibility Plan over time. The plan is empty words without proper implementation. Implementation is critical to the plan’s success – in much the same way implementation of a ‘strategic plan’ is essential. If council is truly committed to eliminating and preventing barriers to accessibility - action needs to be taken. It is often said, “talk is cheap” - and so it is. There will be costs incurred, but there also will be plenty of opportunities for funding (both federally and provincially) once an Accessibility Plan is adopted. In any case, implementation is the key.
- 6.8 Making opportunities for members of the public in Carbonear (and elsewhere) to learn more about accessibility is critically important. So, these opportunities should be well publicized and shared with the general public. Even if 5 or 10 members of the public participate. Carbonear may eventually become synonymous with accessibility. That would be a tremendous thing to have happen as an “off shoot” to these initiatives.

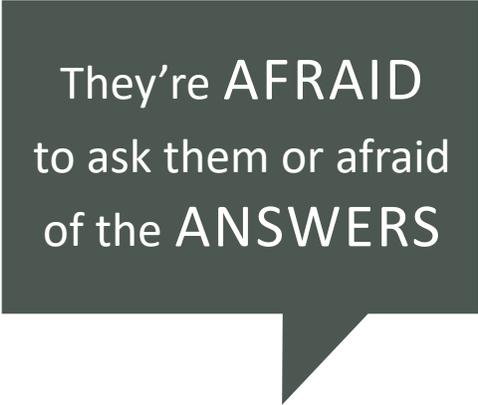
7.0 Accessibility Standards

Eventually, either through a recommendation put forth by the ‘*Advisory Committee on Accessibility*’, or through other means, council will establish new standards for accessibility within the town. Affordability and practicality will be important in establishing these standards, and while they may apply more to future commercial builds or programs, the standards will help identify, remove, and prevent barriers to accessibility that currently exist. This will raise awareness, at least, to these barriers.

Officially, a standard may apply to individuals, organizations, or public bodies that:

- i. Design and deliver programs and services
- ii. Provide information or communication
- iii. Procure goods, services, and facilities
- iv. Offer accommodations
- v. Provide education or offer opportunities for learning
- vi. Provide healthcare
- vii. Provide opportunities for employment
- viii. Own, operate, maintain or control an aspect of the ‘built’ environment other than a private residence with 3 or less residential units
- ix. Conduct an activity or undertaking prescribed in the regulation

The ‘standards’ established by the town cannot violate or supersede the ‘standards’ set by the Province of Newfoundland Labrador through the *Accessibility Standards Advisory Board* in 2022. That will rarely happen, but the caution is important. These are the ‘standards’ that are to be applied in every situation that may exist in Newfoundland and Labrador when it comes to accessibility.



They’re AFRAID
to ask them or afraid
of the ANSWERS

Glossary

The Province of Newfoundland and Labrador defines “disability” as follows:

“A *disability* includes 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.”

Accessibility Act is a provincial law (Province of Newfoundland Labrador) that governs all issues relating to accessibility, in general, which became law in 2021. The Minister Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities oversees the work of his/her officials, and staff within the department can be a huge help and resource to people like those serving on the ‘*Advisory Committee on Accessibility*’ in Carbonear, or the members of council, in general.

Accessible – at the local level, it simply means putting forth efforts to remove barriers to participation; whether they be physical barriers or other barriers (such as enlarging the font size of the print on correspondence for aging adults or for the visually impaired), or removing barriers to participation for various individuals or groups who may not otherwise be comfortable participating. At one time the term “accessible” referred only to physical accessibility, but it has been expanded to include much more.

Accessible Canada Act is a federal law adopted by the Government of Canada in 2019. The law applies primarily to those under federal jurisdiction (such as indigenous groups), but many excellent ideas can be borrowed from this legislation and applied locally in Carbonear.

Advisory Committee on Accessibility – For the Town of Carbonear, the ‘*Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusion*’ looks at the facilities, programs, services, and operations that currently are in place in Carbonear and puts forth recommendations on how the town can prevent or remove barriers so that the town can be more accessible (where feasible) going forward. The *Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusion* become somewhat of local ‘experts’ in the area(s) of accessibility, but as an ‘advisory’ committee the committee can put forth recommendations and provide advice, but council does not have an obligation to implement the suggestions made. It depends on the cost and any funding that may be available, This is the same with all committees of council.

Accessible community refers to a specific community of people which believes in and supports the principles of accessibility (in this case, residents of Carbonear).

Courage

doesn't mean you don't get afraid,

courage means you don't let fear STOP you

Accessibility standards are a set of standards that are provided to public bodies whereby they can (as a public body) develop a set of standards through the provincial *Accessibility Act* which governs all aspects of accessibility, in this case, within the Town of Carbonear.

“A *barrier* means anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in society, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, or a barrier established or perpetrated by an Act, regulations, a policy or practice.”

Building regulations refer to the official regulations which govern builders which have been adopted by the Town Council of the Town of Carbonear to control building and development within the town.

Chair as in “chairing a committee” refers to individuals who are elected or appointed to lead a committee. The additional responsibilities of the chair are to ensure meetings are scheduled; to help prepare the meeting agenda; to note who attends (and who is absent); to liaise with the staff person appointed to the committee; to lead the discussion and maintain “order” in the meetings following the rules of order that have been adopted; to understand the basic principles of democracy and meeting decorum; and to ensure that the “minutes” of the meeting are circulated to others (as decided by the committee).

Goals are defined as a ‘desired result’ or outcomes – something you are aiming to achieve. In terms of improving accessibility, the goals that are identified by the town are things the town would like to achieve to make Carbonear more accessible.

Inclusion is a term broadly used to proactively remove any barriers that may exist that may prevent residents of Carbonear from participating – these barriers could be physical, emotional, intellectual, or through discrimination as a result of prejudice, or it could refer to removal of any type(s) of barriers of any nature.

Intellectual impairments refer to barriers of an intellectual nature (such as autism) which are not so easy to see, but may be a barrier to an individual’s full participation in programs or events in the community for various reasons.

‘*Lead*’ on issues of accessibility is normally the staff person appointed by council to serve on the committee and is an individual who can be trusted to be “in the know” and somewhat of a local expert

Not taking action is the

**ULTIMATE
DISABILITY**

on issues relating to accessibility that council can refer to for advice and to answer questions as they arise etc...

Local representatives are people chosen to represent the town of Carbonear who actually live in the town.

Open Call is a term used in official “Rules of Order” that means that (in this case) council will prepare a document which will be made public “calling” for nominations to serve on the advisory committee

Physical handicaps – are barriers of a physical nature that may prevent some individuals from participating (such as not having wheelchair accessible washrooms or entranceways).

Public refers to anyone who would like to attend a meeting, in this case – whether they be residents of Carbonear or others living in neighbouring communities who may have an interest in issues of accessibility. When public is used there are usually no ‘restrictions’ on who can attend.

Public Document is any document ordered by council to be prepared for viewing by residents of Carbonear or elsewhere. A public document may be shared through social media and posted on the town’s website and thus can be viewed by anyone, and is generally made available for viewing by members of the public (not just residents of Carbonear).

Conclusion

As stated up front in council’s *Statement of Commitment* the Town Council of the Town of Carbonear are committed to working towards making Carbonear a fully accessible and inclusive community. By adopting this ‘Accessibility Plan’ council is demonstrating that commitment. Council realizes that “as a community” Carbonear still has a ways to go before it is fully ‘accessible and inclusive’ – but council are confident the town will get there.

Council will need the help and support of others to achieve their goals. The people of Carbonear, the *Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusion*, all have important (but different) roles to play in directing (and supporting) efforts. Raising awareness about ‘accessibility and inclusion’ is vitally important.

I may be DIFFERENT
from you, but NOT LESS than you

Developing this plan is an important first step and a huge commitment on behalf of the Town Council of the Town of Carbonear. But council should remind itself that developing the plan is just the beginning.

Council must be committed (including financially) to build more accessible facilities and refurbish existing ones in the town (that are currently not accessible). Council must also commit to applying “an accessible lens” to everything it does in the future – whether it’s developing a budget, hiring, accepting or including community volunteers, adding apparatus to an existing playground, building a new playground, assigning people to committees, building new facilities in the town or refurbishing old ones – a commitment must be made to being more ‘accessible and inclusive’. Involving people or segments of the population who may be disenfranchised is an excellent place to start. These people often have much to offer. They just need to be asked or be included. Too often they are left out altogether.

Whether it’s serving on various committees of council, volunteering in the community, coaching teams, hiring people (inside or outside), providing places to meet etc., considering issues of accessibility and inclusion send clear messages that the Town Council of the Town of Carbonear are committed to addressing issues of accessibility and inclusion. ‘Doing’ is more important than “saying’. Council must be willing to set the example – to stand tall and be a leader on issues of ‘accessibility and inclusion’.

If council is committed to doing more and to working “side by side’ with the committee on accessibility, things will slowly change (for the better). Even then patience will be required. The most important thing is to try. Committing to ‘making the effort’ is an important starting point.

Nothing gets done without money. A commitment to funding must be made to make ‘accessibility and inclusion’ a priority in Carbonear. Normally, if there is no financial commitment made on the part of council, accessibility is not a priority – and it ‘must’ be. There must be room in the budget each year for initiatives pertaining to improving accessibility. This is where council needs to start. If something (like accessibility) is truly a priority – council must commit funds to it.

Having a new plan helps establish priorities for improving accessibility. Perhaps with a new *Accessibility Plan* and a renewed commitment from council on issues of accessibility, council may be able to access more funding to complete the task of refurbishing facilities or to do other projects relating to improving accessibility. This will be viewed favourably by most members of the community. Perhaps appointing someone with ‘funding expertise’ to the advisory committee will be helpful. Regardless, council must make issues of accessibility a priority during budget deliberations. A fully accessible Carbonear benefits everyone.

We feel obligated to issue a reminder to council that this plan is meant to be a fluid document. It needs to be updated every three (3) years to reflect changes and improvements that have been made. Perhaps this can be the work of the *Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusion* to bring forth a series of recommendations or changes to be made to the Accessibility Plan that reflect the current state of affairs in Carbonear. Council needs to seriously consider the “recommendations” made by the *Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusion*, and “where feasible” commit funds to completing projects each year.

This is extremely important. Something (regardless of how big or small) must be committed each year to fund improvements to accessibility and to truly make Carbonear as ‘accessible and inclusive’ as possible. If this is done – the plan to make Carbonear accessible will eventually become a reality.

APPENDICIES

APPENDIX A:

Call for nominations to serve on the Advisory Committee on Accessibility



The Town of Carbonear have contracted a consultant to assist with completion of an Accessibility Plan which will consider a range of factors that can create barriers such as inaccessible infrastructure and non-inclusive policies and technologies.

This plan, when developed, will help guide the Town in accessibility standards and inclusion practices.

The Town is creating an Accessibility Committee with 6-8 members.

If you are interested in serving on this committee, please complete the form. As this is only a 6–8-member committee, only one person will be selected to represent each of the following groups.

If you are a person or support persons of the following:
Person with accessibility challenges or lived experience with a disability (a disability includes a physical, mental, intellectual, learning, or sensory impairment), Indigenous, Pride community, multi-cultural community, or other disability

Please consider applying to serve on this committee.
Your input will help us create a more accessibility and inclusive Town.

**DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS:
November 10, 2023**

APPENDIX B:

Minutes from Public Consultation

- The meeting started on time at 7:00 pm - Cynthia Davis (CAO) opened the meeting, made some introductory comments about accessibility and inclusion, and turned things over to John Walsh, JW Consulting Associates
- John welcomed everyone and said he was impressed with the turnout (compared to other public hearings held); John also introduced Mark Walsh of JW Consulting Associates and began a power point presentation
- Inclusion and Equity ... diversity and inclusionthey basically mean the same thing (according to the *Accessibility Act*)
- It was also noted that there were some members of the *Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusion* in attendance (and they were introduced by Cynthia)
- Cynthia also noted the members of council who were in attendance and said she appreciated them coming out for the meeting, as well
- The town has held a flag raising ceremony in support of the LGBTQ+ community for several years; and a number of councillors and members of the PRIDE community come out for the event; it seems to be appreciated by them
- There were a couple of youth representatives in attendance, as well – both foreign students – one from Spain and another from Germany
- Mentioned the provincial department of Transportation & Works recently adopted a ‘Universal Design’ for new builds that complies with all ‘accessibility’ requirements
- CNIB – memo was received from Cynthia today. ... Hard of Hearing Association was mentioned as well – these are both important organizations
- The committee has not met yet (it was noted), but several members were in attendance (as was noted above)
- Hands on learning (and learning from other professionals in the field) is important - but there is nothing like ‘lived’ experience – it was noted; the people ‘in the trenches’ know the barriers they face everyday
- Review and view with an eye to accessibility and inclusion – that lens should be applied to everything council does going forward
- Eventually, staff & council will identify new initiatives – if 4 or 5 get funded every year that’s impressive over time
- Physical barriers – taxi service now includes wheelchair accessibility –there is one in Bay Roberts but is it registered in Carbonear – it was not – seemed to be the conclusion
- A rural transit system is desperately needed; an example of a Filipino family carrying groceries was mentioned to illustrate this point

-
- Legislatively the Accessibility Plan is due December 31st, mentioned the cost re-run of not acknowledging accessibility- becoming costly, must be included in all council decision-making to build and include 'accessible' features; if included in the original design – they are much less costly
 - Communication is key, your message is the answer- we need to raise awareness among the public - and the commitment council needs to make (going forward) must be huge – nothing can be done without money
 - It was mentioned that a medical supply store requested to allow for low-back to come in – but it was not done (because of potential for flooding); Cynthia pointed out what 'was done' to accommodate the business' needs; Cynthia also mentioned this was not the forum to bring up 'gripes' with council – there was some disagreement on that
 - Minimum standard – has already been exceeded by the town, but Carbonear needs to aim much higher than meeting the minimum standard
 - Planning and considerations being met, improved to accept culture and diversity
 - Multi-culturalism seems to be big in Carbonear; a lady who prepares food from her homeland (Mexico) spoke and was well received by those in attendance
 - Issues with water 'ponding' and freezing was mentioned; we realize this should not happen with proper drainage, but it does – then it freezes in the winter which makes it worse – that's the downfall of living in a winter climate.
 - It was mentioned by a resident that there have been some close calls by a 'flashing light' at a crosswalk in the town ... the 'meridian' is a rest-stop by the light, walking, and running groups associated with the walking area on Water Street would be familiar with it – maybe if the cross walk was moved down a little it may help, but overall, the town seems to be doing its best – and they were thanked for their efforts
 - It was recommended that more lights be added to the boardwalk and that the boardwalk be widened a little (for wheelchairs)
 - Accessibility pilots on upgrades to Water Street, it's already in the hopper as a 'planned pilot' – we'll see how that works – if it works well in can be expanded
 - Some people highlighted various aspects of the 'consultation' process, those who could not be here and are not represented by the public consultation, council, committee, advisory groups; maybe a link could be put on the website
 - A 'survey' was mentioned and it was felt this was a good idea; this could be done pretty easily by the committee
 - Cynthia mentioned that any suggestions or recommendations could be forwarded to the '*Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusion*' – they're all future projects that can be considered by council – this was an excellent suggestion

Meeting adjourned at 8:33

APPENDIX C: **Tips for Dealing With Persons With Vision Loss**



-
- 1) Always follow “people-first” phrasing by saying “the person who is blind” instead of “the blind person.” Remember that not everyone who is blind, looks blind and that sight loss is on a spectrum – people have a wide range of sight loss from low vision to light perception to total sight loss.
 - 2) Always introduce yourself when you are approaching an individual with sight loss by stating your name or title. Also, remember to always let the person know when you are leaving the conversation or area.
 - 3) If possible, address this person directly, so they know that you are speaking to them.
 - 4) Be conscious of your language and speak normally. Use language that is clear, concise, and descriptive. Don’t change the way you speak or raise your voice. Using clear directions (i.e. straight ahead 10 feet, to the left/right or on the bookcase) is more beneficial than saying phrases like “over there” or “that way.”
 - 5) Never assume someone needs help. Always ask if they need help, and if so, how you can assist.
 - 6) Never grab or touch a person without permission, even if you think they need help. Remember to introduce yourself and ask if they need your help first. If they do need help navigating their environment, it is best to have them grasp your arm just above your elbow.
 - 7) Keep things in their place. Keep things in the same place and if you must move something, be sure to tell the person with sight loss where you have moved it.
 - 8) Keep things safe. Keep areas clutter free. Remember to wipe up spills, keep cupboard doors closed, push in chairs, and keep room doors either completely open or closed. Remove any potential obstacles that may be in the pathway.
 - 8) Speak directly to the person with sight loss. They can speak for themselves and do not need their family member or companion to speak for them.
 - 9) If the person has a guide dog, do not speak to or distract the guide dog in any way – they are working!
 - 10) Using high contrast, lighting, the clock method and clear print guidelines are also great strategies when interacting with someone who has sight loss.

CNIB provides free, in person or virtual, presentations to any municipality, business, health agency or other professional, recreational, or religious organization in the province.

Kim Hart
Manager of Operations and Community Engagement
754-1180 (ext 5803) kimberlie.hart@cnib.ca

APPENDIX D:

'Sign in' sheet for Public Consultation

Attendance – Carbonear Public Consultation – December 4, 2023

NAME (PRINT)	POSITION	SIGNATURE
John Walsh	Consultant	John J. Walsh
MARK WALSH	"	Mark Walsh
Nina Schultheiss	public attendant	Nina Schultheiss
Naiara Roman	Public attendant	Naiara
Nadine Leauc	Public	Nadine Leauc
Alda Jarvis	Public attendant	Alda Jarvis
Patti O'Keefe	Public attendant	Patti O'Keefe
FRANK BUTT	Mayor	Frank Butt
Ian Farrell	Director	Ian Farrell
Kerri Abbott	EDTO	Kerri Abbott
Cathy Somer	TC/DFO	Cathy Somer
ROB BUTTON	DIRECTOR REC	Rob Button
Wyle Sheppard	Public Attendant	Wyle Sheppard
Malcolm Seymour	Councillor	Malcolm Seymour
SAM SLADE	Deputy Mayor	Sam Slade
Randy Abbott	Public Attendant	Randy Abbott
Sandra Abbott	Public attendant Business owner	Sandra Abbott
Chris O'Grady	Councillor	Chris O'Grady
DAWN HOWSE	Public Attendance	Dawn Howse
WALLACE WATKINS	Public Attendant	Wallace Watkins
Danielle Oyle	Councillor	Danielle Oyle

Attitude

is a small thing
that makes a

Big

difference

