

# Stellarton: Access for All (2025)

An Accessibility Plan for 2021-2030



Pictured above is a black and white logo with a clock above the town name "Stellarton."  
The town motto is located underneath Stellarton and reads, "Spirit, People, Pride."

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## **WELCOME MESSAGE**

On behalf of the Town of Stellarton's Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC), Town Council, and staff, I welcome you to read Stellarton's Accessibility Plan!

In 2017, Nova Scotia established an [Accessibility Act](#) with the purpose of ensuring that our province is barrier-free and fully accessible by 2030. The province worked with the Town of Wolfville to create [Wolfville: Access by Design](#), the province's first accessibility plan that was developed to shape the plans from other communities across the province. This provided us with the base with which to develop what we have today.

This document highlights Stellarton's priorities as we move towards a fully accessible town for all. As we progress forward through our plan, these priorities will evolve, which is essential to fully transform our community to be fully accessible. This plan is a *living document* and will continue to grow and adapt over time.

Since our implementation of the plan in 2021, the Town of Stellarton has taken steps to reduce barriers and increase accessibility wherever possible. 2025 marks a new chapter for accessibility and, beginning with our original plan, we have revised and updated each section to reflect the progress made while highlighting the steps we have yet to take. We are pleased to acknowledge that our list of achievements continues to grow year after year.

Our plan reflects the Town's goal to be proactive to the needs of people with varying abilities. Stellarton strives to be a most welcoming, inclusive, and accepting community to all. With this in mind, we encourage all citizens to voice concerns, questions, and suggestions at any time. All are welcome to attend our AAC meetings, as well as to contact the Town's Accessibility Coordinator at one's convenience.

To our committee members, this AAC has been a great opportunity for increased community engagement, education, and growth. We are grateful for your volunteerism, passion, and dedication to help move us forward to a more accessible future.

The Town is incredibly proud of its citizens and this body of work, Stellarton: Access for All. We look forward to continuing its progress.

**Darren Stroud**

*Mayor*

*Town of Stellarton*

## BELIEF

The Town of Stellarton is committed to ensuring equitable access to community life and participation in society for all people, regardless of their abilities. We are committed to helping all people maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in *inclusion*.

*Equitable access* is different from *equal access*. Equality means that everyone gets the same thing; equity means that everyone is treated fairly, based on their needs and abilities (Figure 1).

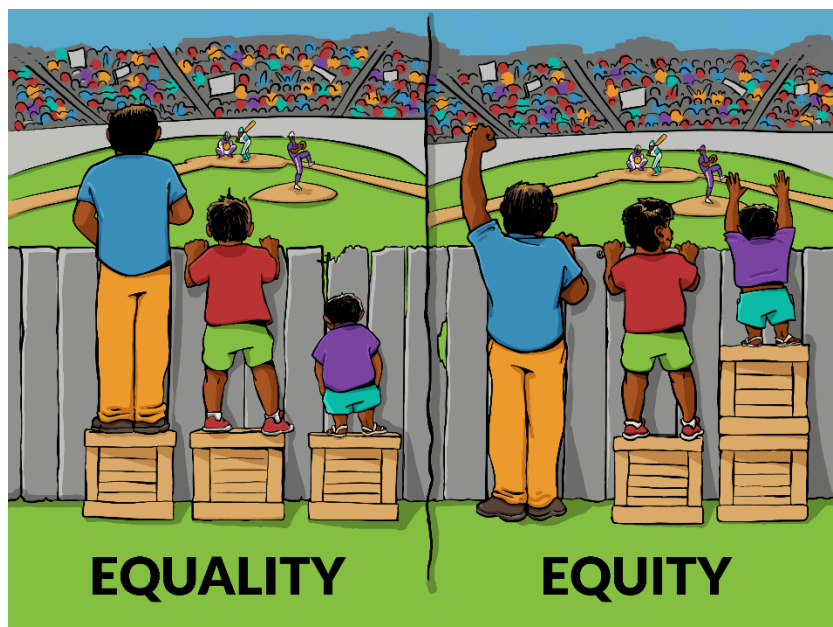


Figure 1: Shows an image divided into two sections.

The left section, depicting equality, shows a tall man, a medium sized man, and a short man each standing on a crate to try and see over a fence to watch baseball.

The short man cannot see over, the medium sized man is just able to see over, and the tall man has more than enough space to see over.

The right section, depicting equity, shows a tall man, a medium sized man standing on one crate, and a short man standing on two crates so that all three men appear the same height and can all watch a baseball game over the fence.

*(Sample from Interaction Institute for Social Change)*

Stellarton is committed to meeting the needs of people who face barriers to accessibility. We will do this by identifying, removing, and preventing these barriers and by meeting the requirements of Nova Scotia's Accessibility Act.

## Areas of Focus

Our plan includes five areas of focus (Figure 2):

**Built Environment** – Accessible buildings and public spaces.

**Information & Communication** – Clear and accessible information and communication from the Town.

**Employment** – Equitable access to jobs with the Town and fair employment practices.

**Goods & Services** – Equitable access to goods and services delivered by the Town

**Transportation** – Equitable access to transportation service for everyone

Figure 2.



### Built Environment

Image shows a roadway, park, church, and house.



### Information & Communication

Image shows people communicating many ways.



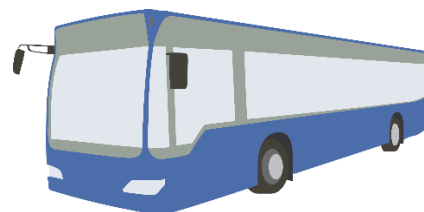
### Employment

Image shows five people working at a desk together.



### Goods & Services

Image shows a customer accessing help at a service counter.



### Transportation

Image shows a public transit bus.

## Built Environment

### Our Commitment

Stellarton's public buildings and public spaces will be accessible to people of all ages and abilities – whether the space is owned, leased, or operated by the Town. The Town will also encourage citizens, and the business community to make other public and private spaces accessible.

### Our Starting Point

The Town of Stellarton owns, leases, and operates public facilities such as Town Hall, Allan Park, many sidewalks, parking areas, and a wide variety of other buildings, parks, and *infrastructure*.

### Achievements

- Traffic lights are equipped with *auditory*, *visual*, and *tactile* markers.
- Tactile walking plate indicators are located on sidewalks – these have been installed on any new or replacement sidewalks.
- Crosswalks in high traffic areas are equipped with lights and sound indicators.
- Trails are regularly monitored to ensure walkability and address any grating issues.
- Have fostered open dialogue with the business community to ensure path of travel, curb cuts, and sidewalks are clear for individuals to move freely.
- Large sidewalks in higher pedestrian-traffic areas.

### General Barriers

- Town Hall is generally inaccessible.
- Playgrounds and parks are generally inaccessible.
- Public washrooms are not fully accessible.
- Accessible parking is limited.
- Additional ramps are needed.
- Cars and pedestrians compete for street priority.
- High cost associated with retrofitting existing buildings.
- Accessibility projects compete with other budget demands, including essential services such as water and sewer services.

### Policies

#### Public Spaces

The Town of Stellarton will:

- By 2030, ensure that all existing municipal facilities meet the accessibility requirements in the latest version of the Nova Scotia Building Code Regulation.
- Provide access for people of all ages and abilities to public buildings, public washrooms, and public parks.

- Ensure sidewalks and curb cuts within the core area are improved and maintained to the standard outlined in Canadian Standards Association (CSA) B651-18, Accessible Design for the Built Environment.
- Provide accessible parking locations with associated curb cuts, spread throughout the core area.
- Ensure all new municipal buildings will meet new policy regulations on accessibility.

#### Community Partnerships

The Town of Stellarton will:

- Work with the Stellarton business community to promote Stellarton as an accessible community and encourage businesses to increase accessibility.
- Encourage private developers to have their existing buildings match new policy regulations on accessibility.
- Encourage small groups (local committees, volunteer groups, non-profit organizations, etc.) to use an *accessibility lens* and make accessible considerations on all future projects.

#### Actions

Priorities

- Ensure Town Hall is accessible.
- Ensure the Police Station is accessible.
- Work with the Stellarton Public Library to ensure that library collections are more accessible.
- Promote the province's Small Business ACCESS-Ability Grant program to the Stellarton business community.
- Work with the Pictou County Housing Coalition on a plan for affordable housing.
- Consider changing Land Use By-Law to allow homeowners and landowners to more easily create co-housing and/or secondary suites.

## Information and Communication

### Our Commitment

Information and communication delivered by the Town of Stellarton will be clear and accessible for people of all ages and abilities. The Town will take steps so staff understand accessibility and barriers to participation and will increase awareness about the accessibility rights of people of all ages and abilities.

### Our Starting Point

The Town delivers information to the public in many ways, including:

- Meetings of Town Council and Advisory Committees, which are open to the public – Council meetings are livestreamed.
- Email, the Town’s website, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and TownApp.
- Public awareness campaigns.
- Display structures to promote events and special town meetings.

### **Achievements**

- Meetings can be held in several locations throughout Stellarton if accommodations are needed.
- Agendas and minutes of meetings are posted on the Town website; hard copies are available at the Town Hall upon request.
- Town Council meetings are livestreamed during meetings; these videos remain on the Town’s YouTube channel for viewing once a meeting concludes.
- Information is available in multiple formats.
- Have established resources to offer ASL services when requested.
- Meeting agendas are available one week prior to meetings for the public to review and request accommodation.
- Communications staff regularly attend workshops and training sessions on promoting inclusion in communications, as well as plain language.
- Closed captioning is available on YouTube videos.

### **General Barriers**

- Lack of public education surrounding digital/communication accessibility.
- Plain language is not consistently used in municipal documents.
- Streaming video and related technologies do not always work as intended.
- Staff require training on accessibility standards.

### **Policies**

The Town of Stellarton will:

- On request, provide information in an accessible format, or format that considers a person’s specific needs.
- Ensure the Town’s digital presence and IT systems are designed for people of all ages and abilities.
- Hold all in-person public meetings in barrier-free locations upon request, until Town Hall is accessible.
- Provide annual training to frontline staff in better ways to communicate with people of all ages and abilities; have accessible format documents available for staff to deliver to customers.
- Provide accessible accommodations and/or transportation to Town functions, upon request.



## **Actions**

### **Priorities**

- Provide modified editions of key municipal resources on request.
- Implement a public awareness program to build awareness around accessible accommodations.
- Ensure digital communications, including emergency alerts, are screen readable. Encourage partner agencies to achieve the same standard of communication.
- Ensure the Town's web presence meets the latest Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). Remove any inaccessible CAPTCHA settings and/or other identified barriers.
- Share opportunities for accessibility training with residents and local businesses.

## **Employment**

### **Our Commitment**

The Town of Stellarton will remove barriers to employment for people of all ages and abilities who seek a career with the Town of Stellarton. Our workplace will reflect the Town's diverse population. The Town will make our employment practices and workplaces more accessible for new and existing employees of all ages and abilities.

### **Our Starting Point**

The Town employs 40 permanent employees. There are five elected representatives on Town Council, including the mayor. Elected representatives must be Canadian citizens, at least 18 years old, and live in the community. The Council may appoint other members of the public to serve on committees or task forces.

### **Achievements**

- Members of Council receive iPads for onboarding to be connected with Town Hall and the community. Users can individualize their settings to allow for visual/hearing accommodations. iPads also have additional accessibility settings to make the device and the content more accessible to individual users.
- A designated staff member serves as the Accessibility Coordinator and is available for staff to advocate for accessible needs.
- Relevant staff have taken training workshops to identify and eliminate barriers that may limit job opportunities for qualified individuals.

### **General Barriers**

- Town-owned buildings are not accessible, potential employees with disabilities face challenges.

- Jobs are posted in traditional ways, including web pages, which may not be accessible to some individuals.

## **Policies**

The Town of Stellarton will:

- Offer accommodation during recruitment, if needed.
- Offer accommodation to employees of all ages and abilities.
- Work with the Town employees to build an understanding of the value of accessibility and inclusion.

## **Actions**

Priorities

- Update the employee training manual to include a section on respecting diversity. This will include training in working with people of all ages and abilities.
- All Town employees will take the Working with Abilities online training provided free by the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission ([workwithabilitiesns.ca](http://workwithabilitiesns.ca)).
- Establish a centralized accommodation fund to pay for assistive devices or accommodations that employees need to succeed at their jobs. Promote this fund on job postings.
- Investigate strategies to reach a wider and more diverse audience with job postings. Include statements in the job postings to ensure applicants are aware that accommodations can be provided.

## **Goods and Services**

### **Our Commitment**

The Town of Stellarton will ensure that people of all ages and abilities have equitable access to goods and services delivered by the Town of Stellarton. This includes ensuring that there are policies, procedures, and tools to promote the accessible delivery of goods and services.

### **Our Starting Point**

The following are some of the many services the Town of Stellarton delivers to the public:

- Managing meetings of Town Council and Advisory Committees.
- Overseeing communication with the public. (See Information & Communication)
- Providing customer service counters.
- Maintaining streets, including sidewalk snow removal. (See Built Environment)
- Maintaining parks, trails, and open spaces; including playgrounds. (See Built Environment)
- Maintaining water and sewer services.

- Providing emergency services like police and fire.

### **Achievements**

- The Recreation Centre at Allan Park has a ramp, automatic door opener, and accessible washroom.
- Have established resources to offer ASL services when requested.
- Snow removal is complete at Town Hall for residents to access during regular operational hours.
- Stellarton participates in the “GoPlay Fund” initiative – providing funding assistance to those who need to participate in recreational programming.
- Relevant staff provide accessibility updates in monthly reports to Council when applicable.

### **General Barriers**

- Town Hall is not accessible.
- Recreation facilities are not fully accessible.

### **Policies**

The Town of Stellarton will:

- Deliver all goods and services without bias.

### **Actions**

Priorities

- Identify a space and create an accessible playground.
- Train the staff who are responsible for delivering accessible services to people with diverse abilities.
- Provide accessible exercise equipment at municipal recreational facilities.
- Waive the entrance fees at leisure activities for support persons for people with a disability.

## **Transportation**

### **Our Commitment**

The Town of Stellarton will ensure that people of all ages and abilities have equitable access to publicly funded and/or regulated transportation services. These currently include CHAD Transit and Pictou County Transit (PCT).

## **Our Starting Point**

PCT runs a 20-passenger bus operating on a one-hour loop between Stellarton and New Glasgow, with shuttles connecting the towns of Pictou, Westville, Trenton, and Pictou Landing to the main loop.

Operating hours (Stellarton/New Glasgow loop): Monday to Saturday 7am-9pm, Sunday 9am-5pm.

Operating hours (Pictou, Westville, Trenton, Pictou Landing): Monday to Saturday 7am-8:30pm.

CHAD Transit is available for door to door on demand service.

## **Achievements**

- Bus is equipped with the following:
  - Free wifi hotspot.
  - One door for all with a quick operating ramp.
  - Pull stop request cords.
  - Ability to use a child safety seat.
- CHAD Transit has a subsidy program for riders; if client is unable to pay, CHAD Transit will cover the cost.
- PCT bus is fully accessible.
- The Stellarton/New Glasgow loop operates seven days a week.
- Expansion pilot includes connections to four additional communities.
- Monthly pass option offers seniors, students, and youth discounted rates.
- Payment method on bus is not limited to cash only – debit, Visa, and Mastercard accepted.

## **General Barriers**

- CHAD Transit has a fleet of eight accessible vehicles, availability may be limited.
- Shuttles connecting to other towns do not operate on Sundays.

## **Policies**

The Town of Stellarton will:

- Ensure that no resident is denied transit because of a disability.

## **Actions**

Priorities

- Town Staff will work with PCT Staff to review snow removal for flagging buses and steps (including costs) required to improve snow removal timelines.
- Ensure there are flagging locations in Town designed to meet or exceed Canadian Standards Association (CSAA) Standard B651-18, Accessible Design for the Built Environment.
- Explore subsidized transit fares and/or passes for people with disabilities and/or low income.

- Ensure public knows CHAD Transit’s door to door on demand service is for all populations, and the mission is Community Transportation for All.

## **Implementing the Plan**

### **Responsibilities**

- Town Council is responsible for adopting and overseeing *Stellarton: Access for All*.
- The CAO is responsible for implementing the plan and assigning an Accessibility Coordinator.
- The Accessibility Coordinator is responsible for receiving and responding to public concerns, complaints, and suggestions.
- The AAC is responsible for giving feedback and recommendations to the Town Council.

### **Schedule**

- All priorities will be implemented by 2030.

### **Monitoring & Evaluation**

- Stellarton’s AAC will continue to meet regularly and review priorities to ensure that we are positioned to meet our goals by 2030.

### **Responding to Questions & Complaints**

- Anyone can lodge a complaint, pose a question, or express a concern about accessibility in the Town of Stellarton. These should be directed to the Accessibility Coordinator.
- Before responding, the Coordinator will consult with the staff person responsible for the area of inquiry. The Coordinator’s response will contain the reasons for the decision.
- Anyone can appeal to Council if they are not satisfied with the response from the Accessibility Coordinator. Council may refer any appeal to the AAC for additional review and recommendations before issuing a final response to the complainant.
- The Accessibility Coordinator will keep a record of all complaints, questions, and concerns submitted to them, and will provide summary updates to the AAC on a regular basis. These updates will become part of the AAC’s continual review of the Accessibility Plan and may inform future changes.

## **Glossary**

**Accessible:** Easily used or accessed by people with disabilities; adapted for use by persons with disabilities.

**Accessibility Lens:** A tool for identifying and clarifying issues affecting persons with disabilities to access and address the impact of all initiatives on persons with disabilities.

**Braille:** A system of writing for the blind that uses characters made up of raised dots.

**Equal Access:** Individuals have access to the exact same services – every person is equal; every person gets the same things.

**Equitable Access:** Individuals have access to the same services, but individuals have access to supports needed in order to succeed, based on their needs and abilities.

**Infrastructure:** The basic equipment and structures (such as roads and bridges) that are needed for a country, region, or organization to function properly.

**Living Document:** A document that can be changed and modified, as needed.

**Municipal Government Act:** A provincially mandated set of rules that all Nova Scotian municipalities are required to follow.

**Retrofit:** To adapt or modify something for a new purpose or identified need that may not have been available or considered necessary at the time of manufacture.

**Tactile Markers:** Indicators designed to provide walking surfaces with a series of raised bars, which are designed to guide visually impaired walkers down the safest possible route.

**Note:** Glossary words are italicized throughout this plan.