

**Nova Scotia Accessibility Advisory Board**  
**Meeting Summary**  
**Tuesday, November 26, 2024 – 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.**  
**Virtual**

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**Board Members:** Max Chauvin (Chair), Melissa MacKenzie, Earl Muise, Linda Campbell, Louise Gillis, Sarah Moore, Ellen Johnson (Vice-Chair), Rob Patey, Denise Pictou Maloney, Birgit Elssner, Shellene Sparks

**Regrets:** Amy Lays

**Staff:** Dawn Stegen, Amy Middleton, Sumona Sunda, Terri Lynn Almeda, Ashley Gaudet, Hannah MacDougall, Maddi Adams, Kristel vom Scheidt, Laura Beth MacPherson, Lisa Pavalek and Jenny Thornhill

**Guests:** Sherri Aikenhead, Board Coordinator, Deb Ryan, Director of Community Development from Annapolis County, Bianca Go, Andrew Stenhouse, Devon Peterson, Nova Scotia Liquor Commission, Fran Scott, Community Coordinator for the Town of Lockeport, Michelle Vacon, Accessibility Coordinator for the Shelburne Region, Travis Gunn, Chair of the Goods and Standard Development Committee and Dave McCusker, Chair of the Public Transportation Standard Development Committee

**1. Welcome**

Max Chauvin welcomed everyone to the Accessibility Advisory Board meeting and invited Dawn Stegen, Executive Director of the Accessibility Directorate, to remind participants about meeting protocols and introduced staff.

Dawn welcomed staff members Amy Middleton, Sherri Aikenhead, Sumona Sunda, Terri Lynn Almeda, Ashley Gaudet, Maddi Adams, Kristel vom Scheidt, Laura Beth MacPherson, Lisa Pavalek and Jenny Thornhill.

Max shared a Mi'kmaq and African Decent land acknowledgements. He brought regrets from Amy Lays and noted several members would join during the meeting.

**2. Board Operations**

**a. Review of Agenda**

The agenda as previously circulated was accepted.

- b.** A motion to recommend Ross Sampson for a second term as the Accessibility Advisory Board's representative on the Nova Scotia Building Advisory Committee was moved by Sarah Moore and seconded by Earl Muise.

**Motion:**

“Motion to recommend Ross Sampson’s reappointment as the Accessibility Advisory Board’s representative on the Nova Scotia Building Advisory Committee from October 2025 to October 2028.”

Moved was unanimously approved.

**Action:** The Board will submit this recommendation to the Minister for approval.

**c. Motion:**

“Motion to approve the minutes previously circulated from the Board’s September 27<sup>th</sup> and October 18<sup>th</sup> meetings.

The motion was unanimously approved.

**Action:** The minutes for Sept. 27<sup>th</sup> and October 18<sup>th</sup> will be advanced to the Justice Minister for information and posted on the Accessibility Directorate website.

**d. Outstanding Business**

Dawn provided the members with an update that correspondence and advice to Minister were being held due to the election call. They will be resubmitted when the government is formed. The Board’s Employment recommendations were made public on October 25.

The Board’s annual report was previously circulated to members for their review and approval. The Board’s ad hoc Communications and Engagement Committee met in November to discuss how the board can increase awareness of the work underway to improve accessibility and there was high participation in a communications survey and, in the survey from the in-person September meeting. Overall results of the surveys were shared.

**3. Business**

**a. Prescribed Public Sector Bodies Panel**

Max welcomed the panel members from Prescribed Public Sector Bodies (PPSB). Deb Ryan, Director of Community Development from Annapolis County, Bianca Go, Andrew Stenhouse and Devin Peterson from the Nova Scotia Liquor Commission, Fran Scott, Community Coordinator for the Town of Lockeport and Michelle Vacon, the Accessibility Coordinator for the Shelburne region.

Laura Beth MacPherson, Accessibility Manager, and Lisa Pavalek, Compliance and Enforcement Coordinator, with Directorate gave an overview of general regulations and a status update on their obligations and accessibility plans. Ninety-four per cent

of the PPSBs have completed their accessibility plans. Fifty of the 108 have joint accessibility plans.

#### **a. ii. Annapolis County Presentation**

Deb Ryan presented and explained how Annapolis County has made trails and parks accessible. She presented three examples: Old Mill Trail, was Annapolis County's first accessible trail in 2000 (among the first in the province), Annapolis Tidal Beach Park at Cornwall Park which opened in 2023 and the Moon Mist Ability Accessible Trail at Upper Clements trails which opened in June 2024. She also mentioned the Nictaux Park and Playground Accessibility extension that opened in December 2024 and, shared lessons learned in developing accessibility features.

#### **a. iii. NSLC Presentation**

Bianca Go with the Nova Scotia Liquor Commission led a presentation on the crown corporation's accessibility plan and some of the improvements to the built environment and services to customers. The NSLC conducted a Rick Hansen Accessibility Audit of its Young Street store, and it was mostly positive but there are opportunities for improvement with the counters and employee washrooms. The NSLC will pilot changes to the bin tabs (price tags) on the products to make them more accessible. Some of the stores have small entrances which need to be larger. The NSLC plans to launch new accessibility features such as low sensory hours for people who prefer that option.

#### **a. iv. Regional Accessibility Planning Presentation**

Fran Scott and Michelle Vacon shared what they have learned as municipalities working together on a joint accessibility plan. The partnership of three municipalities, Town of Shelburne, District of Shelburne County and the Town of Lockeport share the cost of having a person dedicated to providing guidance and support to the communities on accessibility. They also pooled resources to improve the built environment.

The presenters were complimented for the efforts underway.

### **3.b Access by Design 2030 Update**

Amy Middleton, Director of Policy and Standards gave a presentation updating Access by Design 2030. She highlighted the work underway within government to make updates to the accessibility strategy to reflect current issues and the act review.

### **3.c Board Website Update**

Max asked people to share their feedback on the Board's new website which members were able to view ahead of time on the development site. Discuss followed.

### **3. Standard Development Committee Updates**

#### **a. Goods and Services: Update**

Travis Gunn, Chair of the Goods and Services Development Committee gave a presentation on the feedback the committee received during the public consultation to help shape the recommendations. In total there were eight virtual public consultations, four virtual government consultations, and three written submissions. Participants included goods and service providers, individuals with disabilities, representatives from disability-focused organizations, prescribed public sector bodies, and government partners.

Overall, participants expressed support for the draft recommendations and their potential to enhance accessibility across Nova Scotia. The consultations revealed several key areas for improvement including practical guidance, resources, enforcement and inclusivity and intersectionality, and public awareness. The input gathered will help refine the recommendations for a standard.

#### **b. Public Transportation: Update**

Dave McCusker, Chair of the Public Transportation Standard Development Committee gave a brief update on the work of the committee. The new committee had two orientation meetings and a full-day in-person meeting in Halifax, focusing on intersectionality and identifying transportation barriers. They are forming working groups to develop recommendations over the next five months.

#### **c. Information and Communication: Update**

Jenny Thornhill, Sr. Policy Analyst, reported that the information and Communications Standard Development Committee is reviewing a draft work plan and will finalize it at their next meeting on January 13, 2025.

#### **d. Built Environment: Update**

Maddi Adams shared the education and awareness plan for the built environment standard, which includes government communications, plain language documents, educational videos, and awareness presentations. The Board will share information with members' networks when it is approved and enacted. A member asked if there will be deaf space concepts included in the regulations and Maddi explained that deaf space principles helped in the development of the regulations.

#### **e. Employment: Update**

Amy Middleton said the Board's recommendations for an Employment Standard were made public on October 28.

#### **4. Roundtable**

Max asked members to share anything related to accessibility in their work and community. One member expressed concern that she found it challenging to vote at an advanced poll because she could not use the stairs. Other examples of barriers were shared. The Accessibility Directorate agreed to follow up with Elections Nova Scotia.

Max adjourned the meeting.