

Regional Accessibility Advisory Committee

Terms of Reference – January 2024

Town of Truro, Town of Stewiacke, Village of Bible Hill, Village of Tatamagouche, and Municipality of the County of Colchester

Purpose

1. The purpose of the Regional Accessibility Advisory Committee is to:
 - a. Provide advice to the Municipal Councils and Village Commissions on identifying, preventing, and eliminating barriers to persons with disabilities in local government programs, services, initiatives, and facilities; and
 - b. Provide advice that helps the regional communities of Colchester to become accessible communities and meet the obligations under the Nova Scotia Accessibility Act.

Definitions

2. In this Policy:
 - a. **Act:** means the Nova Scotia Accessibility Act.
 - b. **Accessibility Lead(s):** staff of a prescribed public sector body provided to support the work of the Regional Accessibility Advisory Committee.
 - c. **Barrier:** anything that hinders or challenges the full and effective participation in society of persons with disabilities, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communication barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy, or a practice.
 - d. **Committee:** is the Regional Accessibility Advisory Committee.
 - e. **Disability:** the physical, mental, intellectual, learning, or sensory impairment, including an episodic disability that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders an individual's full and effective participation in society.
 - f. **Public Sector Bodies:** for the purpose of this Terms of Reference and the activities of the Regional Accessibility Advisory Committee, the term, Public Sector Bodies shall refer to the Towns of Truro and Stewiacke, Villages of Bible Hill and Tatamagouche, and the Municipality of Colchester.

Principles Supporting Policy

3. The Towns of Truro and Stewiacke, Villages of Bible Hill and Tatamagouche, and the Municipality of Colchester are committed to complying with the Nova Scotia Accessibility Act and the standards it prescribes to create a barrier-free Nova Scotia.

Terms of Policy

Membership

4. Membership of the Regional Advisory Committee shall be comprised of:
 - a. One elected official from each (Truro, Stewiacke, Bible Hill, Tatamagouche, and Colchester).
 - b. A minimum of six other persons, as required under the Act, to ensure that at least 50% of committee membership is comprised of persons that:
 - i. self-identify as having a disability; or
 - ii. are an agent of an organization that represents persons with disabilities.
5. All members of the Committee shall be voting members.
6. The Committee will be supported by staff of Truro, Stewiacke, Bible Hill, Tatamagouche, and Colchester as required through the planning and implementation program.
7. Committee members described in 4 (b) shall be appointed by motion, by the Council / Commission of the Public Sector Body on receipt of an application.
8. The term of membership for elected officials in section 4(a) shall be as determined by the Council or Commission on appointment of a member but shall not exceed the term of Municipal Council (four years or the remaining portion thereof). The term of membership for community representatives in section 4(b) shall be for the term of Municipal Council (four years or the remaining portion thereof).
 - a. Any member of the Advisory Committee may reapply for membership on the Committee.
 - b. Where one or more vacant seats result in the composition of the Committee membership not meeting the minimum threshold described in 4(b), the Committee shall continue to meet and perform its duties as the vacancies are being filled.

- c. Where a member fails to attend three consecutive regular meetings of the Committee, without having been excused by the Committee, the member shall be deemed to have resigned and vacated their seat.

Meetings

9. The Committee Chair shall be determined by way of motion of the Committee at the first meeting following a municipal election, or as required to fill a vacancy.
10. The Committee shall meet at least two times each year. The Committee may convene additional meetings as required to complete work outlined in this Terms of Reference or as directed by the Councils and Commissions of the region.
11. Notice of a meeting shall be delivered to committee members in advance of a meeting, no less than one week prior to the date of such meeting, by way of mail, email, or phone, including by way of voicemail message. A meeting date set by resolution of the committee at a prior meeting shall serve as notice to those present.
12. Meetings of the Committee shall be open to the public.
13. One-third, including a minimum of two other persons, of the voting members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum. All decisions of the Committee shall be made by a majority of those in attendance when a quorum is present.
14. The Committee may establish working groups to explore specific issues related to the accessibility plan and / or other responsibilities. A working group may include additional community members who are not Regional Advisory Committee members. Working groups will report back to the Regional Accessibility Advisory Committee.
15. Any costs incurred by the Committee shall be shared equally among each Public Sector Body. Any budget for the Committee shall be approved by each participating Council and Village Commission.

Role

16. The Committee shall, in accordance with the Act:

- a. Advise the Municipal Councils and Village Commissions on the preparation, implementation, and effectiveness of its accessibility plan, ensuring that the plan includes:
 - i. a report on measures the Public Sector Bodies have taken and intend to take to identify, remove, and prevent barriers;
 - ii. information on procedures the Public Sector Bodies have in place to assess any proposed policies, programs, practices, services, enactments, or by-laws for their impact on accessibility for persons with disabilities; and,
 - iii. any other prescribed information.
- b. Review and update its accessibility plan at least every three years, in accordance with the Act.
- c. Consult with the regional community on accessibility.
- d. Advise the Municipal Councils and Village Commissions on the impact of local policies, programs, and services on persons with disabilities.
- e. Review and monitor existing and proposed by-laws to promote full participation of persons with disabilities, in accordance with the act.
- f. Identify and advise on the accessibility of existing and proposed services and facilities.
- g. Advise and make recommendations about strategies designed to achieve the objectives of the regional accessibility plan.
- h. Assist in monitoring compliance with Federal and Provincial government directives and regulations.