

ST. JOHN'S

# Accessibility Plan Annual Report 2025



Alternate format is available upon request.

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# Commitment to Accessibility

The City of St. John's is committed to an accessible, inclusive, healthy and safe community for everyone. We strive to meet the diverse needs of our community by identifying, preventing and removing barriers so that all people can equitably live, work, play and learn here.



# Introduction

The City's Accessibility and Inclusion goals are guided by the **Provincial Accessibility Act**, the advice and recommendations of the **Inclusion Advisory Committee** and **public engagement**.

The City's first multi-year **Accessibility Plan** outlines goals and actions to identify, prevent, and remove barriers, while demonstrating the City's commitment to continually improving accessibility as best practices, regulations, and technology evolve.

The City is actively working to advance accessibility and inclusion in six key focus areas:

- Design and Delivery of Programs and Services
- Built Environment and Transportation
- Information and Communication
- Procurement
- Accommodations
- Employment

This annual report outlines the progress made on the accessibility goals and actions in 2025 as well as next steps in 2026.



# Progress Overview

The City's first multi-year **Accessibility Plan** includes 19 goals to improve accessibility and inclusion in the six key focus areas. To help advance each goal, actions and sub-actions are identified.

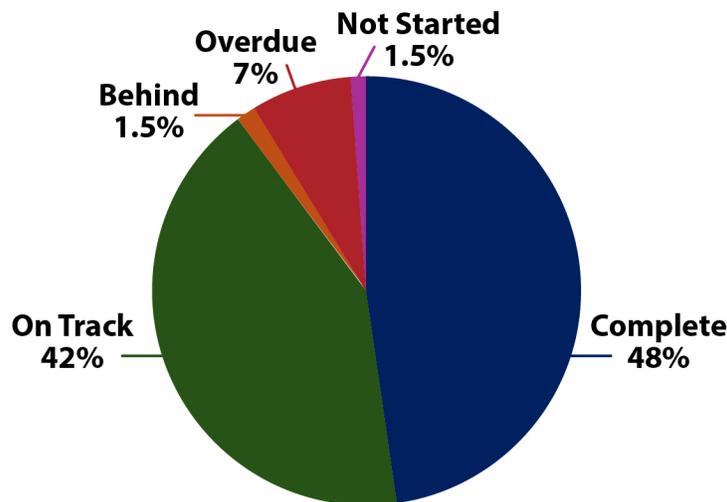
As the plan progresses, new opportunities for improvement may be discovered, which may change the number of goals and actions. Factors that can influence this may include the implementation of new City projects, funding opportunities, best practices and new provincial accessibility regulations.

The first two years of the Accessibility Plan implementation have demonstrated a significant amount of ongoing and new efforts to improve accessibility and inclusion.

In two years:

- 33 actions completed
- 29 actions on track
- 1 action behind but progressing
- 5 actions overdue but progressing
- 1 action not started (to begin in 2026)

## 2024 and 2025 Actions



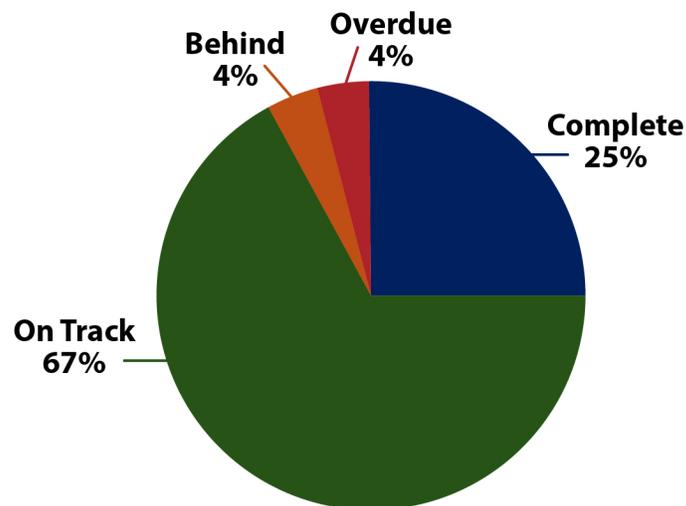
## 2024 Progress

The **2024 Accessibility Plan Annual Report** was presented to Council and the Inclusion Advisory Committee in Spring of 2025. An overview of the progress made in 2024 is below.

- 13 actions completed
- 34 actions on track
- 2 actions behind but progressing
- 2 actions overdue but progressing

## 2024 Actions

■ Complete   ■ On Track   ■ Behind   ■ Overdue



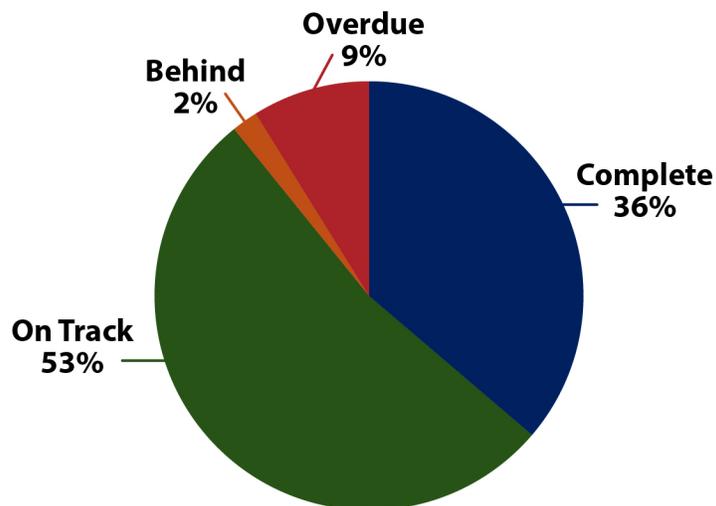
## 2025 Progress

A full progress report for 2025 is included in [Appendix A](#). Progress highlights for each key focus area are included in the sections that follow. An overview of the progress made in 2025 is below.

- 20 actions completed
- 29 actions in progress and on track
- 1 action behind but progressing
- 5 actions overdue but progressing

## 2025 Actions

■ Complete   ■ On Track   ■ Behind   ■ Overdue



# Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

The City has made progress in improving accessibility in the design and delivery of programs and services.

## Highlights from 2025 include:

- Increased the number of wheelchair accessible routes with the addition of routes 10 and 33.
- 2 mini-vans and an SUV were added to the GoBus fleet.
- GoBus customer service improvements resulted in a 50% reduction in complaints.
- Expanded sidewalk snow clearing network to 193 kilometres.
- A corporate-wide accessibility and inclusion orientation is currently being explored.
- Healthy City and Inclusion Staff are included on a new Project Review Committee, improving information sharing and early input from an accessibility lens.
- A new Recreation Program Support Services process was piloted and evaluated. The new process streamlined procedures for applicants and staff and will continue going forward.
- Operational procedures, along with an awareness campaign addressing accessibility barriers caused by improper waste bin placement, have significantly improved compliance with placing waste bins in locations that do not block sidewalks.



# Built Environment and Transportation

The City has made progress in improving accessibility in the built environment and transportation.

## Highlights from 2025 include:

- Opening of the new accessible and inclusive, H.G.R. Mews Community Centre.
- New **Universal Design Guide for Accessible and Inclusive Homes** and **Home Building Checklist** developed in partnership with the Universal Design Network of Newfoundland and Labrador.
- One City-owned housing unit converted to a wheelchair accessible unit.
- LED lighting upgrades producing a brighter and more uniform light that reduces glare and helps people navigate spaces safely were completed at Shea Heights Community Centre and Southlands Community Centre.
- 15 Automated door openers were repaired, replaced or newly installed.
- New accessible change space with adult sized change table installed at Bannerman Park Pool House.
- Government of Canada's Green and Inclusive Community Buildings funding secured for energy and accessibility upgrades for the Kilbride Community Centre.
- New gender-neutral, accessible washroom constructed at Chafe's Lane Park in Kilbride.
- 30 New playground communication boards were developed. 25 are for City playgrounds and 5 were donated to local organizations.
- 13 Crosswalks improved for safety and accessibility.
- 23 kilometres of Shared-Use Paths completed by the end of 2025.
- One new accessible bus shelter installed.



# Information and Communication

The City has made progress in improving accessibility in information and communications.

## Highlights from 2025 include:

- New **City Brand Standards** implemented for accessible and inclusive corporate communications and marketing practices.
- New **Engage St. John's** website with enhanced accessibility considerations including user friendly layout, large font, language translation and a new mapping feature.
- Metrobus print schedules are now larger, with larger font and clearer map details.
- An onboard stop announcement system contract was awarded in 2025 and installation expected early in 2026.



# Procurement

The City has made progress in improving accessibility through procurement.

## Highlights from 2025 include:

- City staff participated in the Accessible and Inclusive Procurement Project facilitated by Inclusive Design for Employment Access (IDEA) Lab, Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) and Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC). The purpose was to explore practical ways to embed disability inclusion in every stage of the procurement process and build confidence among buyers and suppliers to adopt inclusive practices while maintaining compliance with procurement frameworks.
- City staff are completing a review of the provincial procurement process to identify areas where improvements may be considered.



# Accommodations

The City has made progress in improving accessibility through accommodations.

## Highlights from 2025 include:

- The City is developing an accessibility accommodation policy and procedures. Lead staff are in the process of consulting with City Divisions to introduce the policy and ensure current practices are inclusive and accessible.
- Attendant Pass guidelines for participating venues have been developed. These will provide helpful information for venues that accept or may consider accepting City-issued attendant passes.



# Employment

The City has made progress in improving accessibility and inclusion in employment.

## Highlights from 2025 include:

- The City's Human Resources Division is reviewing the City's Disability Management Policy and Procedures, developing a new orientation and updating the Occupational Health and Safety manual.
- The City's Psychological Health and Safety Committee meets monthly. Accomplishments in 2025 include:
  - A Psychological Health and Safety Policy is being developed.
  - A need for mental health training was determined and Mental Health 101 training is being sourced.
- The City's Career webpage now includes a dedicated accessibility section which clearly communicates information about accommodation requests and contact information.
- Metrobus is researching best practices for establishing a Diversity and Inclusion Policy and has established an employment equity statement for job advertisements and the employment section of the Metrobus webpage.



# Next Steps

More exciting work is planned to further improve accessibility and inclusion in City programs, services and spaces.

## Upcoming plans include:

- Open a new accessible community garden located at the H.G.R. Mews Community Centre.
- Improve accessibility of the Paul Reynolds Community Centre Community Garden.
- Begin upgrades for Bowring Park Playground including new accessible surface and playground equipment.
- Complete construction of a new gender-neutral public washroom at Kelly's Brook Park.
- Construct an additional 6 kilometres of shared-use paths for a total of 29 kilometres by the end of 2026.
- Install new accessible pedestrian signals at prioritized intersections.
- Finalize an Accessibility Accommodations Policy and Procedures.
- Promote and create awareness about the importance of universal design in housing with planners, builders and homeowners.
- Determine a solution for corporate-wide accessibility and inclusion orientations for City Staff.
- Finalize a new Metrobus Diversity and Inclusion Policy.
- Increase the total number of accessible bus shelters.
- Implement a new automated onboard stop announcement system on all Metrobus routes.
- Pilot and evaluate the Quantum Wheelchair Securement system designed to increase user independence in Metrobus.
- Begin engagement and development of the 2027-2029 Accessibility Plan.



## Summary

The City's Accessibility Plan outlines the actions necessary to ensure everyone, regardless of age, ability and other life circumstances can safely and independently use and benefit from the public programs, services and spaces the City provides. By identifying, preventing and removing barriers, the City is creating opportunities for more people to actively participate in community life.

Year one of the Accessibility Plan was focused on understanding current barriers and setting priorities for improvement. The **2024 Annual Accessibility Plan Report** highlighted early progress and reinforced the City's commitment to ensure accessibility and inclusion remains a priority.

Building on year one, year two included ongoing assessment and efforts to improve access. The commitment to explore strategies and solutions often went beyond investigation and many recommendations were put into practice. Throughout the first two years, staff across the organization worked to ensure accessibility and inclusion were considered early in planning.

In year three, work will continue on the plan's goals and actions while evaluating the impact of the progress made. Public engagement will be a key part of this phase of the plan, helping the City gather feedback, share progress and identify priorities for the 2027-2029 Accessibility Plan.

The City understands that meaningful change takes time and that continued effort is essential. The City welcomes feedback and hopes that its commitment and early successes have built trust and strengthened relationships with those who are impacted most. Together we can build an accessible and inclusive City where people feel like they belong.



# Accessibility Feedback

Sharing accessibility concerns or ideas for improvement is important. If we don't know about it, we can't investigate it or fix it. Together we can build a more accessible City of St. John's.

Non-emergency accessibility concerns or ideas can be submitted 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in a way that is accessible to you.

**Phone** 311 or 1 709 754 CITY (2489) and select the category of your accessibility concern or stay on the line to be directed to a customer service representative

**Online** at [StJohns.ca](https://www.stjohns.ca) and select "contact us" from the top banner to submit a service request

**Email** [Access@StJohns.ca](mailto:Access@StJohns.ca)

**Mail** Access St. John's P.O. Box 908, St. John's, NL A1C 5M2

**In person**, at Access St. John's located at inside City Hall at 10 New Gower Street



# Staff and Council Contact Information

For more information about this report, the 2024-2026 Accessibility Plan, upcoming public engagement or accessibility information about programs, services and spaces, contact **Council** or the Accessibility and Inclusion Facilitator.

## Accessibility and Inclusion Facilitator

1-709-576-4450

[Inclusion@StJohns.ca](mailto:Inclusion@StJohns.ca)

[StJohns.ca/AccessibilityAndInclusion](https://StJohns.ca/AccessibilityAndInclusion)



# **Appendix A**

## **Accessibility Plan Annual Report 2025**

The following is a detailed report of the progress made in six key focus areas including ongoing actions from 2024 and new actions started in 2025.

# Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

**Goal:** Investigate opportunities to improve accessibility of public transportation programs and services

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**Action: Implement Route 10 as a wheelchair accessible service route. Complete**

Route 10 was designated as a wheelchair accessible route with the implementation of the summer schedule in June of 2025.

**Action: Improve GoBus reliability. On Track**

Two minivans and a hybrid SUV have been added to the GoBus Fleet, which will allow for additional booking space on wheelchair accessible vehicles, reduce reliance on external sources, such as taxis, and help ensure that service standards are maintained consistently.

An updated No Show policy was presented and approved by the Metrobus Accessibility Committee in January 2025. The policy was distributed to customers and has been in effect since March 2025.

A new feedback policy was drafted and approved by the Metrobus Accessibility Committee in January 2025. The policy clarifies the procedures for submitting feedback and distinguishes the expectations and responsibilities of TOK Transit and Metrobus. TOK Transit has improved customer communication which has resulted in a 50% reduction in customer complaints.

**Action: Investigate opportunities to improve access to bus stops in winter. On Track**

Metrobus clears snow at bus stop shelters. Other bus stops are located along sidewalks maintained by the City. The sidewalk snow clearing network was expanded to 193 kilometres.

**Action: Increase the number of wheelchair accessible routes. Complete**

In addition to route 10, route 33 was also added as a wheelchair accessible route. A new Quantum Automatic Wheelchair Securement Station was added to one Metrobus and will be evaluated in 2026.

**Goal:** Investigate opportunities to improve procedures that impact accessible parking

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**Action: Investigate parking payment procedures to improve accessibility. Complete**

Parking payment procedures were reviewed. The City accepts debit (tap), credit and mobile payments by the PaybyPhone app and at parking pay stations. Cash payments are no longer accepted as of 2019 due to operational and safety reasons. The City will consider other parking accommodations on an individualized basis.

**Action: Replace accessible parking signage as required. On Track**

All accessible parking signage identified as needing repair, replacement or installation in 2025 was addressed.

**Action: Investigate and implement recommendations from the Accessible Parking Working Group and Inclusion Advisory Committee to improve accessible parking procedures, where possible. Complete**

Based on recommendations of the Accessible Parking Working Group, in 2025 an accessible parking awareness campaign was developed. The campaign includes monthly posts to create awareness about accessible parking concerns including misuse, fine amounts, permit holders with hidden disabilities and parking etiquette.

## **Goal:** Investigate opportunities to enhance staff knowledge about accessibility and inclusion

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### **Action: Identify staff training and learning opportunities and make recommendations.**

#### **On Track**

City staff participated in voluntary learning opportunities related to: Digital Accessibility Standards, Neurodiversity in the Workplace, Overcoming Bias, Inclusive Language, Accessible Trail Maps, Hear to Learn, Active Abilities Canada - Inclusive Recreation Guide, Harm Reduction and Addiction, Recreation and Aging Populations, Inclusion in Program Planning, and Inclusive Systems for Health Equity.

Mental Health 101 training is being investigated.

A corporate-wide accessibility and inclusion orientation is recommended to further support staff in their roles. Staff have completed a jurisdictional scan, reviewed existing courses by external providers, reviewed Reach 360 pre-designed courses, consulted with the Inclusion Advisory Committee, provincial Disability Policy Office and Accessibility Standards Canada Advisory Board. A preliminary outline has been developed with the Inclusion Advisory Committee which includes but is not limited to:

- Overview of applicable legislation
- Why accessibility, universal design and inclusion are important
- Disability awareness including support person, assistive device and assistance animal awareness
- Accessibility and inclusion programs, services and spaces
- Accessibility accommodations
- Service delivery barriers and solutions

**Goal:** Investigate opportunities to ensure accessibility is considered at the planning stage of City projects and make recommendations

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**Action: Incorporate accessibility considerations in corporate-wide Project Review Committee. Complete**

The City's new Project Review Committee and associated forms include information about accessibility and inclusion and relevant staff are invited to provide feedback on projects as they are being reviewed. This has improved information sharing and early input from an accessibility lens.

**Action: Evaluate the use of accessibility and inclusion implications in the decision making process (Briefing Notes). Complete**

Staff collected data from a sample of briefing notes presented to Council in the Fall of 2024. In 2025, the data was reviewed to evaluate if accessibility and inclusion is effectively considered in briefing notes. Based on the review, several recommendations have been developed:

- update briefing note orientation and resources
- provide briefing note refresher training to staff
- improve the approval process
- an Equity Lens Tool is being drafted which should further strengthen staff knowledge
- compare a new data sample after recommendations have been implemented

## **Goal:** Investigate opportunities to improve accessibility of recreation and leisure programs and services

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### **Action: Work with other levels of government and community service providers to identify gaps in programming that benefit persons with disabilities. On Track**

A gap in recreation programming for persons with disabilities is the limited number of one-on-one inclusion support staff available. In April 2025, the City put forward a resolution at the provincial Recreation NL (RNL) Conference for “RNL to advocate to the provincial government for increased funding for organizations and individuals to access one-on-one inclusion support.” This motion was carried unanimously and resulted in the creation of the Inclusion Resolution Task Force. The City is a member of this group, which launched a survey on inclusion for summer day camps, and is consulting with other municipalities to better understand this issue.

The Recreation Division reallocated staffing hours between program areas to increase the number of inclusion support staff available.

Council approved a budget increase for 2026 to further enhance inclusion support staffing. The City continues to work with partners to identify and address gaps where possible.

### **Action: Investigate funding opportunities to improve accessibility of recreation programs and services. On Track**

The City was successful in securing funding from Recreation NL’s 2025 Recreation and Sport for Persons with a Disability Funding Program towards the purchase of balloon wheels for the hippocampe all-terrain wheelchairs. These are available for loan through the Adaptive Equipment Lending Program. Staff continue to seek and apply for funding opportunities to improve accessibility of recreation programs and services.

### **Action: Pilot a new Recreation Support Services/Inclusion Support application and process. Complete**

In 2025, the Recreation Support Services (formerly Inclusion Support) application was updated to better reflect current services. Changes to the registration process were implemented to streamline the intake process and increase opportunities to improve access to City programs for participants who provide their own Respite Support. The pilot was a success and will be implemented going forward and reviewed continuously.

## **Action: Evaluate the 2025 Recreation Support Services pilot process. Complete**

Staff distributed a survey about the Recreation Support Services pilot to applicants. Six responses were received. Three respondents indicated that the registration process was very easy, two indicated it was okay, and one indicated it was difficult. Overall, feedback was positive with some concerns/challenges noted regarding RecConnect, the limited number of Inclusion Support Staff available, and having inclusion and respite support registration together. Additionally, staff received positive verbal feedback from other Recreation staff and participant guardians. Feedback has been reviewed and this registration process will continue going forward.

**Goal:** Investigate opportunities to improve services that impact accessible pedestrian routes

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**Action: Investigate opportunities to improve accessibility and inclusion awareness for snow clearing operators. On Track**

Discussions about sidewalk snow clearing and accessibility were held with staff. A corporate Accessibility and Inclusion Orientation is being explored. Staff continue to investigate solutions from other jurisdictions that may be applicable for City staff.

**Action: Investigate methods to improve accessibility of sidewalks in winter and make recommendations. On Track**

The sidewalk snow clearing network was expanded to 193 kilometres. Staff reviewed best practices and procedures from other jurisdictions.

**Action: Complete pruning inspections to identify trees and shrubs that limit accessibility and sight lines. On Track**

Pedestrian route accessibility is improved by removing overgrowth which creates physical barriers and decreases sightlines. This work is completed based on routine inspections and public reports.

**Action: Increase awareness of accessibility barriers created by automated garbage bins placed on sidewalks. Complete**

Accessibility barriers created by inappropriate placement of waste bins have significantly decreased through the implementation of an awareness campaign and stricter non-collection practices for non-compliance. Due to the effectiveness of the waste bin placement improvements, Waste Management has expanded this practice to all waste types including bagged waste, recycling and yard waste. The information distributed to new waste bins users has been updated and now includes more concise user information.

**Action: Evaluate the 72 hour snow removal service standard at pedestrian activated signals and make recommendations. Complete**

The service standard was reviewed and determined that it cannot be further reduced at this time.

**Goal:** Investigate opportunities to improve accessibility of City-owned Affordable Housing procedures

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**Action: Investigate opportunities to improve accessibility of the Affordable Housing Application. On Track**

The City's Legal Division, Housing Division and the Mayor continue to advocate for changes to the City's Municipal Act which would help address housing application barriers. Housing staff investigated if the application could be submitted online. Concern was raised about data collection and privacy due to the type of information requested. The City is actively working on a solution to streamline a safe and accessible tool for City forms.

# Built Environment and Transportation

**Goal:** Investigate opportunities to improve accessible parking, with a focus on downtown

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**Action: Review accessible parking locations allocated for the Downtown Pedestrian Mall. Complete**

In 2025, staff worked to evaluate Metrobus accessible transit stops along Harbour Drive to accommodate the stops impacted by the Downtown Pedestrian Mall Water Street temporary closure. The accessible parking allocation was reviewed; however, no additional changes can be made. There are approximately 59 accessible parking spaces available near the Pedestrian Mall including on-street and parking garage spaces.

**Action: Investigate and implement recommendations from the Accessible Parking Working Group and Inclusion Advisory Committee to improve accessible parking downtown, where possible. Complete**

As road construction and rehabilitation projects are completed, accessible parking allocation including curb infrastructure and proximity to street crossings and amenities is improved where possible. Approximately 59 accessible on street and parking garage spaces are available in the downtown core (23 on-street spaces/36 parking garage spaces). A map of existing accessible parking spaces is available on the City's website to help residents and visitors plan their outing. The launch of the Accessible Parking Awareness Campaign should help reduce misuse.

## **Goal:** Increase the number of affordable housing units with accessibility features

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### **Action: Ensure newly constructed City-owned affordable housing units include accessible units. On Track**

The City has not committed to building and owning any new housing in 2025.

### **Action: Consult the Affordable Housing Working Group and Inclusion Advisory Committee for strategies to increase accessible housing. On Track**

The City worked with the Universal Design Network of Newfoundland and Labrador, which is a member of the Inclusion Advisory Committee, to produce two new universal design (UD) resources with a target audience of planners, builders and homeowners. This work guided the eligibility criteria of the Housing Accelerator Funding for Subsidiary Units, Tiny Homes and Backyard Suites. The City provided an opportunity for applicants to receive up to \$20,000 in additional funding to implement UD features. 75 applications were processed as of 2025 and 20% of applicants included UD features in their projects.

### **Action: Investigate ways to improve accessibility when renovating or upgrading existing City-owned affordable housing units. On Track**

As City-owned units become vacant, the City works to increase the accessibility of the unit by upgrading with universal design features where possible. In 2025, one 2-bedroom unit was converted to a wheelchair accessible unit and renovations in a second 2-bedroom unit is in process. Riverhead Towers units were converted to LED lighting.

### **Action: Investigate and communicate funding opportunities to improve accessibility of affordable housing units in St. John's. On Track**

The City continues to explore funding opportunities and share information with partners through the Affordable Housing newsletter and Affordable Housing Working Group. In 2025, the City promoted its Housing Accelerator Funding for Subsidiary Units, Tiny Homes and Backyard Suites, which included up to \$20,000 in additional funding to implement universal design features. The City is monitoring the Build Canada Homes initiatives and funding for new opportunities.

## **Action: Consider requests to improve accessibility from tenants. On Track**

Accessibility accommodation requests from City-owned housing units are received and accommodated where possible. In 2025, unit upgrades included the installation of roll-in shower stalls, handrails, and grab bars. One unit was converted to a fully wheelchair accessible unit - including kitchen, bathroom, flooring, lighting, and electrical upgrades.

## **Action: Housing Energy Efficiency Retrofits. On Track**

The City is moving forward with initiatives to deliver energy retrofits to various properties in its affordable housing portfolio. This is in an effort to provide lower energy costs, healthier, more resilient, and more accessible housing. When retrofits are being assessed, accessibility improvements such as smart controls, window placement, LED lighting, lever controls and color contrast are being included as design considerations where possible. Riverhead Towers is undergoing various improvements, including updated LED lighting. A demonstration project which aims to retrofit up to 101 units of housing to reduce energy use by 50% has reached the open call procurement stage. Design to begin in early 2026 and proceed as planned.

## **Goal:** Improve accessibility of City facilities

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### **Action:** Investigate opportunities to improve accessibility in existing City facilities.

#### **On Track**

Facility accessibility improvements are guided by the Provincial Buildings Accessibility Regulations and the CSA B651 Accessible Design Standards, where infrastructure and budget allow. Staff continue to seek and apply for funding to improve facility accessibility. 2025 facility accessibility upgrades include:

- 10 Automatic door openers repaired or replaced and 5 new installed.
- LED lighting upgrades completed at Shea Heights and Southlands Community Centres.
- Bannerman Park Pool House renovated to include a new gender-neutral accessible change space and adult size change table. As a result, all City pool facilities are now equipped with gender-neutral change spaces and adult change tables.
- Replacement of accessible sinks and faucets.
- Improved entrance thresholds.
- Door tension adjustments.
- Wayfinding signage updates using Clear Print Guidelines and the City's new Corporate Brand Standards.
- Funding from the Government of Canada's Green and Inclusive Community Buildings Fund secured to retrofit the Kilbride Community Centre with energy and accessibility upgrades. Accessibility requests include accessible entrance improvements, sound absorbing acoustic panels, lighting, accessible gender-neutral washroom and elevator access. A call for design proposals was issued.
- 5 Facilities were identified in the building condition assessments with potential for accessibility improvements such as installing automatic door openers, moving dispensers, reducing door tension, and adding baby change tables.

## **Action: Investigate opportunities to improve accessibility in new City facilities.**

### **On Track**

The City is committed to building facilities that are accessible and inclusive. Building regulations must meet the National Building Code and Provincial Building Accessibility Regulations. It is standard practice to include accessibility features from the CSA B651 Accessible Design Standards such as, but not limited to: LED lighting, automatic door openers, gender-neutral accessible washrooms and change spaces, and improved wayfinding meeting new City Brand Standards. 2025 new facility improvements include:

- Opening the new H.G.R. Mews Community Centre which features:
  - o 10 accessible parking spaces and 1 van space
  - o A dedicated accessible drop off and pick up area
  - o A large covered entrance
  - o Automatic door openers
  - o Accessible gender-neutral washrooms
  - o Changing spaces with roll in showers, adjustable shower heads and an adult size change bench
  - o Elevator
  - o Ramped pool entry
  - o Water wheelchairs
  - o Large clear wayfinding with Braille
- Plans are underway to open the new accessible community garden adjacent to the new H.G.R. Mews Community Centre which includes varying height beds and wide paved routes to and within the garden.
- A new accessible public washroom, meeting CSA B651 Accessible Design Standards was completed at Chafe's Lane Park in Kilbride. Construction on a second accessible public washroom is underway in Kelly's Brook Park.
- The City contributed to the construction and upgrades of the 2025 Canada Games accessible sport facilities in the City.
- The City will continue to receive feedback from the public, the Inclusion Advisory Committee and Healthy City and Inclusion staff to ensure accessibility and inclusion is considered in new facilities.

## **Goal:** Improve accessibility of parks, playgrounds and community gardens

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### **Action: Increase the amount of accessible equipment available in parks and playgrounds. On Track**

30 Playground Communication Boards were developed in collaboration with the Inclusion Advisory Committee, the Autism Society of NL and Speech Language Pathologists. 24 were installed in City playgrounds, 5 were donated to local organizations and the remaining one will be installed in Bowring Park in 2026. Public feedback has been positive. Many schools, municipalities and businesses have expressed interest in acquiring their own.

2 Inclusive Swing Seats were installed to replace defective equipment.

Bowring Park playground surface and equipment upgrades are in development.

Accessible rest/Viewing areas were added to Wyatt Park and Bannerman Park softball fields.

### **Action: Improve accessibility of community gardens owned and operated by the City. On Track**

Improving accessibility of the path to the community garden at the Paul Reynolds Community Centre is underway as part of the shared-use path development in this area. The accessible H.G.R. Mews Community Garden will open in spring 2026. Features of this garden include a partially paved surface, garden beds of varying heights, accessible tools and two wheelchair accessible garden beds (to be installed in spring 2026).

### **Action: Investigate funding opportunities to improve accessibility at community gardens. On Track**

The City received an Active NL Grant to purchase two wheelchair accessible garden beds and establish a community garden at one of its affordable housing sites.

## Goal: Improve accessibility of pedestrian routes

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### Action: Implement annual crosswalk safety improvement program. **Overdue**

Planned improvements for 2025 included the addition of rectangular rapid-flashing beacons (RRFBs), overhead flashers, curb extensions, and accessible signals at several locations across the city. To date 13 are complete. Update on each location follows:

- Cornwall Crescent at O'Reilly Street (Overhead Flashers) - waiting on installation
- Doyles Road at Main Road (RRFBs) - complete
- Duckworth Street at Cathedral Street (RRFBs) - waiting on installation
- Duckworth Street at Ordinance Street (curb extensions) - complete
- Elizabeth Avenue at Carpasian Road (RRFBs) - waiting on installation
- Elizabeth Avenue at Whiteway Street (Overhead Flashers) - complete
- Ennis Avenue at Vanier Elementary School (RRFBs) - complete
- Hamilton Avenue at Symonds Avenue (RRFBs) - complete
- Mayor Avenue at Kellys Brook Trail (Overhead Flashers) - complete
- Military Road at Bannerman Street (curb extensions & RRFBs) - complete
- Military Road at Carew (curb extensions & RRFBs) - complete
- Newfoundland Drive at Oderin Place (RRFBs) - complete
- Newfoundland Drive at Virginia River Trail (RRFBs) - complete
- Portugal Cove Road at Kerry Street (RRFBs) - complete
- Waterford Bridge Road at Road De Luxe (RRFBs) - complete
- Winter Avenue at Kings Bridge Road (signal timing improvements) - complete

Work in 2025 was carried out in coordination with other roadwork and infrastructure projects to maximize efficiency and funding

### Action: Improve accessibility of sidewalks. **On Track**

Sidewalk accessibility improvements are ongoing via new capital works projects, the street rehabilitation program, the annual infill program and ongoing sidewalk maintenance. Improvements align with the City of St. John's, Construction Specification Book and include accessibility features such as the installation of accessible curb ramps, tactile warnings, reduced slopes, accessible concrete pads at bus shelters, wide level surfaces, and accessible pedestrian signals, where possible. One accessible pedestrian signal (APS) was installed at the intersection of Torbay Road at Penney Crescent and Highland Drive. A tender is underway for new APS equipment to install at existing prioritized locations established by an Inclusion Advisory Committee Working Group. Canada Drive sidewalk upgrades were implemented in 2025.

## **Action: Improve accessibility of trails. On Track**

The City continues to expand its Shared-Use Path (SUP) network which are wide, level, paved or compacted gravel trails accessible for people of all ages and abilities. At the end of 2025, approximately 23 kilometres of SUPs have been developed. Additional trail areas at Shea Heights, Wyatt Park and Caribou Memorial Softball complex were upgraded with wider, level and hard packed gravel surfaces.

## **Goal:** Improve accessibility of bus stops

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### **Action: Review new and existing bus stop locations in relation to trails, crosswalks and curb cuts. Overdue**

As new wheelchair accessible routes are added, their proximity to curb cuts, crosswalks and community amenities are reviewed in the planning phase. A set of guidelines are being drafted to guide this work and is expected to be completed in 2026. New Metrobus stops were added along Harbour Drive in areas that were previously designated as paid parking. These changes support public transit accessibility for the Downtown Pedestrian Mall.

### **Action: Investigate opportunities to increase the number of rest areas available at bus stops. On Track**

A bench was added to the bus stop near the former H.G.R. Mews Centre. New bench seating was installed adjacent to the new H.G.R. Mews Centre Metrobus stop. Staff will continue to investigate ways to increase rest areas.

### **Action: Increase the number of bus shelters in the City. Overdue**

One new shelter was installed in 2025 on Elizabeth Avenue opposite Keegan Court. A number of other planned shelters are in varying stages of approval. Maintenance crew has also removed and reinstalled several shelters at existing locations due to accident damage, sidewalk construction and upgrades, and upgrade of a shelter for wheelchair accessibility.

# Information and Communication

**Goal:** Improve accessibility of information shared with the public

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**Action: Standardize the use of accessible formats in City information and communication. Overdue**

The Communications Team considers and includes accessibility information for all projects and work. 2025 improvements include:

- New City Brand Standards were implemented across the organization. Brand standards include accessible font, contrasting colors and ensure inclusive imagery are used.
- Staff worked with Information Services Division to ensure new web platforms meet accessibility requirements and worked to update signage, email and presentation templates across the organization with various divisions.
- Engage St. John's webpage was enhanced with improved visuals, navigation and layout, large font and expanded language translation options. It also includes a new interactive map that allows users to explore projects by location.
- An Accessible Communication Policy has been drafted, however it was determined that additional consultation with other City divisions is required before implementation.
- Staff will continue to consult with the Inclusion Advisory Committee on projects in the future.

**Action: Improve the accessibility of information communicated to public transit users. Behind**

Metrobus schedules are now printed on larger paper, including larger font size and clearer map details. Based on feedback from the Metrobus Accessibility Committee, GoBus resources, such as the welcome package, are being reviewed to ensure they are up to date, more user-friendly, use plain language and accessible formats.

A contract was awarded to Strategic Mapping Inc. in 2025 for on board stop announcements but installation is delayed and is expected early in 2026.

**Action: Investigate procedures to collect and record communication needs of those accessing City programs and services. Complete**

The City uses a variety of formats to communicate and receive information from the public including: websites, social media, mobile apps, printed materials, email and verbal communication via phone and in person. The City's Information Services and Information Management Divisions, as well as the provincial Disability Policy Office were consulted. No other efficient methods to collect and store individualized communication needs were determined. However, the City will continue to communicate with the public using multiple accessible formats and welcomes individualized accommodation requests.

**Goal:** Increase awareness of accessible and inclusive programs, services and spaces

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**Action: Develop a process to ensure accessibility considerations are included in advertising and public communication. Complete**

The Marketing and Communications team has been trained to identify gaps in information and seek additional information. Processes are mostly informal as of now, however updated checklists created in collaboration with Healthy City and Inclusion Staff and the introduction of an Accessible Communications Policy, which is being drafted, will support formal processes.

**Action: Investigate the development of Facility Access Guides. On Track**

A jurisdictional review of facility access guides in Canada and beyond was completed. Information about the different styles was presented to the Inclusion Advisory Committee in November 2025. Work is underway to develop facility access guides for the H.G.R. Mews Community Centre and Paul Reynolds Community Centre in 2026.

**Action: Improve awareness of accessibility and inclusion information for parks, playgrounds and facilities. Complete**

Website updates were completed for recreation facilities and parks webpages. A dedicated webpage was developed to outline the locations of inclusive playgrounds and parks that have accessible features. The City's Trail webpage links to a Grand Concourse trail mapping tool where trails may be filtered by accessibility. The City's Trail Explorers program information includes trail difficulty ratings from one with relatively flat, short and easy routes to 5 with steep inclines, long distance and rugged terrains. Facility accessibility summaries were prepared and published in the 2024-2026 Accessibility Plan. Event promotions include facility accessibility information which is communicated through public notices, including media releases and social media. The City is working on a new website feature that will allow parks to be searched by accessibility feature.

**Action: Identify opportunities to increase employee awareness about event planning tools and resources that improve accessibility and make recommendations. Complete**

City staff ensure that events are accessible and inclusive. Event accessibility information is communicated with event promotions. **The City's Outdoor Event Accessibility Checklist**, created in collaboration with the Special Event Accessibility Working Group of the Inclusion Advisory Committee, is being reviewed and updated. When complete, the updated resource will be used moving forward.

**Goal:** Investigate opportunities to improve how the City receives feedback and responds to accessibility concerns

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**Action:** Investigate solutions for reporting concerns to Access St. John's in accessible formats. **On Track**

A new online customer service relations system was launched in 2025 which allows residents to report concerns to the City. The system directs the request to the right division more efficiently. It also has the ability to track request progress. This system is accessible via mobile phone or tablet. The City is investigating best practices and options for accessibility improvements from other municipal customer service centres. The City welcomes accommodation requests at Access St. John's.

# Procurement

**Goal:** Improve accessibility considerations in procurement processes

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**Action: Update language used in procurement processes to ensure accessibility is considered in purchasing goods and services. Overdue**

A review of the Provincial (NL) process is expected to be completed in the second quarter of 2026. City staff participated in the Accessible and Inclusive Procurement Project; facilitated by Inclusive Design for Employment Access (IDEA) Lab, Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) and Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC). The purpose is to explore practical ways to embed disability inclusion in every stage of the procurement process and build confidence among buyers and suppliers to adopt inclusive practices while maintaining compliance with procurement frameworks.

# Accommodations

**Goal:** Investigate strategies to improve accessibility accommodations

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**Action: Review and update attendant pass guidelines. Complete**

Attendant Pass Guidelines for participating venues have been updated and will be distributed in 2026.

**Action: Develop a process for sharing attendant pass guidelines with participating organizations. Complete**

City staff have developed a list of participating organizations that accept attendant passes. Guidelines will be shared on the City's website and directly with participating venues, as well as with other venues considering accepting these.

**Action: Investigate accommodations that may increase accessibility of waste collection services. Complete**

A Garbage Cart Exemption for people who experience physical barriers to move their cart to the collection point may be requested. The application process includes a form which collects non-intrusive information to help staff assess eligibility and alternate solutions. Other individualized accommodations may also be arranged by contacting the City. Waste Management staff initiated a jurisdictional scan in Fall of 2025 to determine if other accessibility considerations may be implemented.

**Action: Develop an Accessibility Accommodations Policy. On Track**

The Accessibility Accommodation Policy and Procedures have been drafted. Consultation with internal divisions is ongoing to ensure the procedures reflect the accommodations that the City provides.

# Employment

**Goal:** Investigate best practices in equity, diversity, and inclusion in human resources policy and procedures

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**Action: Improve accessibility in Metrobus employment process. Complete**

An employment equity statement has been added to all job ads and the employment section of the Metrobus webpage.

**Action: Develop a Metrobus Diversity and Inclusion Policy. On Track**

Research is underway for best practices to establish a Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

**Action: Refine and develop practices to support equity, diversity and inclusion in City employment. On Track**

Human Resources Division are reviewing the City's Disability Management Policy and Procedures including developing a new orientation for city staff and updating the occupational health and safety manual.

The City's Psychological Health and Safety Committee is collaborating with the City's Policy Analyst to develop a Psychological Health and Safety Policy. Some psychological health and safety initiatives have started such as offering Mental Health 101 training for employees in 2026. This group is also completing a risk assessment based on divisions and data collected from the Employee Engagement Survey; St. John's Regional Fire Department is near completion.

The City's careers webpage and contact information was updated to include an accessibility section which clearly communicates that accessibility accommodation requests are welcome.