



Accessibility Advisory Board Annual Report

2018–2019

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Accessibility Advisory Board Annual Report 2018–2019
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Contents

Accessibility Advisory Board Values	1
Accessibility Advisory Board Priorities	2
Accessibility Advisory Board Annual Report 2018–2019	3
Board Mandate	3
Board Membership	4
2018–2019 Activities	5
Looking Ahead to 2019–2020	7

Accessibility Advisory Board Values

The Accessibility Advisory Board is committed to ensuring that the following values are upheld in fulfilling its mandate

First Voice

We prioritize first voice, recognizing persons with disabilities as experts in accessibility. Our work is guided by the lived experience and professional expertise of persons with disabilities.

Respect

We value interactions that are respectful and considerate, and we encourage and facilitate free and frank discussions, inclusive of divergent perspectives.

Human Rights

We uphold accessibility as a fundamental human right and model this through our work as champions for Nova Scotians with disabilities. We commit to ensuring that equality rights are granted to all Nova Scotians without discrimination on the basis of a disability, as established in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Diversity

We recognize the full range of disabilities and the diverse ways that other identities and life circumstances/experiences intersect with disability to construct accessibility barriers. We are mindful that we work for all Nova Scotians and will consider universal design in everything we do. We will also recognize the diverse interests of key stakeholders, including government, private business and community members.

Collaboration

Recognizing the intersectionality of accessibility, we will promote collaboration and coordination among sectors, stakeholders, and initiatives.

Innovation

We believe innovation, responsiveness, and flexibility are essential to advancing accessibility. We will take into account existing and emerging research and research methodology in our work.

Accessibility Advisory Board Priorities

- Board Operations
- Standards Development
- Government of Nova Scotia Accessibility Plan
- Awareness and Communication
- Collaboration and Support
- Monitoring and Evaluation

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Board Mandate

In September 2017, Nova Scotia became the third Canadian province to pass accessibility legislation, committing to a more equitable and barrier-free province. The Accessibility Act recognizes accessibility as a human right and sets a goal of an accessible Nova Scotia by 2030.

Under the act, an Accessibility Advisory Board was established to advise and make recommendations to the minister about accessibility. Specifically, the board

- suggests measures, policies, practices, and requirements that may be implemented by the government to achieve accessibility
- assesses whether existing measures, policies, practices, and requirements are consistent with the purpose of this act
- sets priorities for establishing accessibility standards and timelines for implementing them
- sets long-term accessibility objectives for furthering the purpose of this act
- responds to requests for accessibility advice from the minister

Board Membership



Front (left to right) – Marcellina Shwery-Stanley, Gerry Post, Executive Director, Accessibility Directorate, Alexander Peeler, Warren (Gus) Reed

Back (left to right) – Kevin Russell, Anne Sinclair, Honourable Mark Furey, Minister of Justice, Amy Parsons, Barry Abbott, Cynthia Bruce, Douglas Foster, Rosalind Penfound, David Caswell

Missing – Irene Campbell-Taylor

The Accessibility Advisory Board was established in February 2018 and consists of 12 members. The majority of board members are persons with disabilities. Board members have expertise and experience in diverse areas of accessibility, and reside in various communities across the province. Many thanks to those board members who stepped down during 2018–2019 for their important contributions to advancing accessibility for Nova Scotians with disabilities.

Douglas Foster, Chair, Sydney; **Rosalind Penfound, Vice-Chair**, Dartmouth; **Barry Abbott**, Halifax; **Cynthia Bruce**, Kentville; **Irene Campbell-Taylor**, Mahone Bay (until June 2018); **David Caswell**, Waverley; **Amy Parsons**, Halifax (until March 2019); **Alexander Peeler**, Conquerall Bank; **Warren (Gus) Reed**, Halifax; **Kevin Russell**, Halifax; **Marcellina Shwery-Stanley**, Sydney; **Anne Sinclair**, Halifax

2018–2019 Activities

The board held nine meetings in 2018–2019 (its first full year of activity), including a retreat in December 2018. Meeting summaries are posted publicly on the Accessibility Directorate website.



Access by Design 2030
Achieving an Accessible Nova Scotia



Recommendations for Accessibility Strategy

In June 2018, representatives of the board met with the minister and discussed the board's recommendations for Access by Design 2030, the province's accessibility implementation strategy. Access by Design 2030 was released in September 2018, as was the Government of Nova Scotia Accessibility Plan 2018–2021.

Accessibility Standards

As outlined in Access by Design 2030, accessibility standards will first be developed in the areas of education and the built environment. The board developed terms of reference for standard

development committees to assist them in developing recommendations to government for standards in these areas. After reviewing applications from 143



Nova Scotians, the board recommended 19 members for the Built Environment Standards Development Committee and 20 members for the Education Standards Development Committee. All committee members were appointed in March 2019. Committee members have diverse and extensive experience, and the majority of committee members

identify as having a disability. Three board members are members of the standard development committees.

Board Values and Priorities

The board established its values and developed priorities for 2019–2021, including standards development, awareness and communication, collaboration and support, monitoring and evaluation, and board operations. In addition, the board developed a workplan for 2019–2021 outlining how it will advance these priorities through key actions.



Awareness and Communication

The board established a subgroup to review the priority area of awareness, education, and communications and to finalize the actions the board would undertake in these areas. In its first meeting, the subgroup recommended the board

- develop a presentation for board members to adapt and use in their communities
- participate in National AccessAbility Week activities
- provide input to the Accessibility Directorate as it develops a provincewide awareness campaign

Communication and Collaboration with Government

The board received regular updates on the commitments outlined in the Government of Nova Scotia's Accessibility Plan 2018-2021 and advised government on matters of interest to persons with disabilities. Several Government of Nova Scotia departments provided presentations to the board on topics pertaining to accessibility. This included presentations from

- Municipal Affairs on the Nova Scotia Building Code
- Communications Nova Scotia on its work to advance its priorities within Access by Design 2030 and the Government of Nova Scotia Accessibility Plan 2018–2021
- Communities, Culture and Heritage on the Accessible Transportation Assistance Program
- Internal Services on accessible procurement

The board also provided input to the Accessibility Directorate on other work underway to advance accessibility in the private sector, municipalities, the post-secondary sector, and among community organizations.

Looking Ahead to 2019–2020

In the coming year, the board will continue work on its priority areas, including standards development, awareness and communication, collaboration and support, monitoring and evaluation, and board operations.

The board will support the Standards Development Committees to develop recommendations on standards in Education and the Built Environment. It will provide insight into the efforts to increase Nova Scotians' awareness of accessibility and disability issues, and continue ongoing work with municipalities, post-secondary institutions, businesses, and other entities to advance accessibility. The board will continue its collaborative approach by discussing and advising Government of Nova Scotia departments on accessibility issues of importance to persons with disabilities.

