



Accessibility Plan 2025-2027

VILLAGE OF BADDECK

Reviewed and approved by the commission of the Village of Baddeck on 2025-01-22

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1. Acknowledgement

The Village of Baddeck Commission would like to begin its Accessibility Plan by acknowledging that the Village of Baddeck is in Mi'kma'ki, the traditional (or ancestral) territory of the Mi'kmaq people.

2. Introduction to Accessibility

In 2017 Nova Scotia passed the 'Accessibility Act' which recognizes accessibility as a human right. In consultation with people with disabilities, Nova Scotia is committed to working toward a goal of achieving an accessible province by 2030.

Almost 2 in 5 Nova Scotians over the age of 15 identify as having a disability. We anticipate that this number will grow as our population ages. These numbers underscore both the significance and timeliness of the Accessibility Act.

This legislation is an important part of the government's plan to build a more diverse province that is inclusive for all Nova Scotians.

The Act establishes a framework for preventing and removing barriers to accessibility in six key areas of focus; public transportation, employment, information and communication, delivery of goods and services, built environment, and education.

The Accessibility Act created the Nova Scotia Accessibility Directorate who is responsible for supporting the implementation of the Act and addressing disability issues across government.

Accessibility standards are being developed in these six areas. Accessibility standards are laws that government, businesses, non-profit organizations and public sector organizations need to follow to become more accessible.

A commitment is being made to provide equitable access to all people by identifying, removing, and preventing both physical and psychosocial barriers that prevent full participation and engagement with our communities.

3. Message from the Commission

"We are pleased to assist in removing barriers to participation for the residents and visitors of Baddeck, Victoria County and Cape Breton, making the environment better for all. We will work on developing a Baddeck Plan that integrates with the work of Victoria County's Accessibility Advisory

*Committee in the future. The Village will endeavor to work collaboratively with the Municipality to identify improvement opportunities and implement programs and improvements which will **benefit residents and visitors** whenever physically and financially possible.”*

The Accessibility Act prescribed all municipalities in Nova Scotia (including Victoria County and The Village of Baddeck) as public sector bodies that are required to establish Accessibility Advisory Committees and create Accessibility Plans for their respective municipalities.

An Accessibility Planning Toolkit for Municipalities was published in December 2019 which was designed to assist with this work. The Nova Scotia Accessibility Directorate has provided support by attending meetings, providing appropriate information, support, and resources for us as we developed an Accessibility Plan.

We will collaborate and cooperate in achieving both short and long-term objectives to remove and prevent barriers to accessibility in the following areas:

1. Built Environment
2. Information and Communication
3. Public Transportation
4. Employment
5. Goods and Services
6. Education

As a key component of Victoria County, the Village of Baddeck’s Accessibility Plan will follow the framework used by the Municipality of Victoria County. The Village is essentially District 3 of The County and is bordered by Districts 2 and District 4.

To review the complete Accessibility Plan for Victoria County please open the following link:

[Accessibility - Victoria County](#)

The Village of Baddeck’s first Accessibility plan will focus on the properties owned by the village and will help to set the next steps to make the village more accessible and lower barriers.

4. Village of Baddeck - Organisation

The Village of Baddeck is a Village within The Municipality of the County of Victoria. As mentioned above, there are approximately 800 residents living in an area of less than 5 square kilometers nestled between the Trans-Canada Highway and Bras d’Or Lake.

The Village office is located at 492 Chebucto Street, the main street of Baddeck, directly across from the Victoria County Municipal Offices which are housed in the historically significant building known as the Court House.

The Village owns and operates facilities responsible for providing safe drinking water and effective wastewater treatment to the residents and businesses within the community. The Village also owns

and operates the Baddeck Community Wharf, the public boardwalk on Water St., Kidston Island and the Community Club Property between Academy Street and Shore Rd.

Village staff includes a Village Manager (1 VTE), Administrative Support (1.5 VTE) and Certified Public Works employees (2.5 FTE). A Village Commission of 5 Volunteer Commissioners is responsible for overseeing the operational and financial activities and performance of the Village. The Commission also manages and oversees the activities of all Volunteer Village Sub-committees including:

- Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Waterfront Baddeck Committee
- Community Club Committee
- Audit Committee

5. Message - Vision

The Village of Baddeck and the Village Commission strongly support the vision for accessibility as described by the Municipality of the County of Victoria, outlined below:

“We imagine a county with no barriers, where everything – from education and employment to the physical environment, to music, sports, entertainment, and everyday information – is accessible to everyone regardless of their background, circumstances, and abilities.

Identifying and removing barriers means more than building ramps and accessible washrooms. It calls for a change in overall attitudes where people with diverse perspectives and experiences are inherently valued, and able to participate easily in all aspects of society. “

6. Background Information - The Village of Baddeck

The Village of Baddeck is a vibrant community located on Bras d’Or Lake, only an hour’s drive along the Trans-Canada Highway from the Canso Causeway and mainland Nova Scotia. It has the largest urban population in the Municipality of Victoria County with approximately 800 residents, an Urgent Treatment Centre and a broad array of essential services and stores to support the village, surrounding areas, and the many visitors to Cape Breton.

Tourism plays a vital role in the economic health of the entire area, as evidenced by the many accommodation, restaurants, and tour options available, especially during the summer season.

7. Accessibility Advisory Committee

As per the Accessibility Act, prescribed bodies must have an Accessibility Advisory Committee and at least 50% of their membership must include people with disabilities or organizations that represent people with disabilities. The initial Committee was formed in early 2024. Introduction to the Accessibility Planning Toolkit, Access by Design and 2022-2025 Accessibility Plan Handbooks made it truly clear that having the committee supporting the development of the plan would be beneficial. An appeal went out to Village residents and an initial Committee was formed, including the following participants:

- Gary Crowder: Village Commissioner and Coordinator,
- Roman Braun-Huettner: Village Manager
- Anna MacDonald: Motivated Villager
- Kathy Bonner: Motivated Villager
- Susan MacNeil: Director of Resident Care and Gwynn Shaw: Alderwood Staff
- Carol MacRae: Alderwood Resident

As a note, the Baddeck Accessibility Advisory Committee covers a good cross-section as outlined below:

- Age ranges from the 30s to 80s.
- Personal mobility ranges from limited to relatively mobile.
- Family members with accessibility issues to limited exposure to accessibility concerns.
- Direct & indirect Accessibility issues including mobility, vision, hearing and several others.

The newly elected Commissioner Denise Roberts joined the committee in December 2024.

Special thanks to Heather MacLean, Administrator of Alderwood and Gaby Braun, Director of Recreation at Alderwood for their continuing support.

Baddeck Village Commissioners all support involvement in the program and additional members are needed and welcome.

8. Methods Used

The Accessibility Advisory Committee has incorporated into Baddeck's accessibility plan information and input from Baddeck public meetings, Waterfront Baddeck sessions, committee evaluations and discussions plus plans from Victoria County and other community groups. All information was considered fairly, with special emphasis on input from the County and findings by the Baddeck Accessibility Advisory Committee about items within the Village's boundaries and

influence. One important topic, residents responded to, was the sidewalks in the village. These, especially the ones on Chebucto street, have curbs that make the use of a wheelchair impossible.

The following bullet points show a summary of findings:

- **Build Environment:**
 - Public Washrooms required closer to the waterfront (Update: Being addressed by Waterfront Baddeck)
- **Physical Barriers:**
 - Uneven and unsafe sidewalks, steep ramps from sidewalk curbs, lack of sidewalks throughout village
 - Difficult access to many cafes, stores, churches, public buildings
 - Irregular and steeply sloped streets and parking areas, especially when wet or snow & ice covered.
 - Awkward visibility and unsafe right-angle parking, mixed with parallel parking in same area
- **Signage**
 - Missing crosswalk signs and unpainted crossings (Update: Some signs erected, and street markings painted)
 - Missing, leaning and vegetation obstructed street signs
 - Limited Accessible Parking on Main Street
 - Improved signage for public washrooms
- **Information and Communication:**
 - Improved Village website and on-line information
 - On-line and recorded Village Meetings and Special Messaging Capability
 - More frequent written communication and distribution
 - More attendance and participation at Village Meetings

INPUTS out of Scope of Village and Actively supported by the village:

The Accessibility Advisory Committee was also made aware of additional accessibility barriers, with responsibility outside of Village scope to address. The Village will work with regional and provincial partners to discuss and address these accessibility barriers outside the authority of the village. Regular updates will help to keep the conversation engaging.

- **Transportation:**
 - Limited public transportation availability within the Village
 - Limited public transportation in MCV
- **Employment:**
 - The village is fully supportive but has limited capability (5 full-time equivalents)
- **Information and Communication:**
 - Cellular phone coverage throughout Victoria County and Cape Breton
 - Poor internet access and service throughout Victoria County
- **Goods and Services:**
 - Limited programs for youth and family participation

- Bias toward elderly but limited actions
- **Education:**
 - Limited availability of Educational Programs
 - No real learning opportunities within Village/County

9. Introduction

It is important that the Village of Baddeck’s first Accessibility plan will focus on preventing and removing barriers to the services provided by and properties owned by the village and will help to set the next steps to make the village more accessible. The village commission wants to start on a small scale and build accessibility awareness in the village, as an organisation and its committees and for residents. The goals should be reachable, sustainable and affordable. It is important that the village can act, and accessibility issues are addressed at other responsible departments., partners, and organizations. The Villages plan is not only having a focus on physical barriers and the built environment, but there will also be a focus on language (font size, wording, etc.), signage, etc. as well.

10. Actions taken to date – Progress made.

The Village of Baddeck’s Accessibility Advisory Committee was created and has met several times to better understand its role and its ability to encourage accessibility improvements of all types. The information provided by community members, partners and the Accessibility Directorate was assessed and incorporated into the Baddeck Team’s discussion and planning parameters.

The Built Environment was identified as an area to carry our further research to identify accessibility barriers. A walking tour was conducted on April 15, 2024, around the Village ‘Loop’ including Chebucto, Jones, Water and Twining streets to assess accessibility barriers to be addressed. The section and pictures below tell much of the story of what properties were assessed, and what barriers were identified. Also necessary to mention is the consultation of Alderwood on the new boardwalk design and the wharf assessment, to make the existing wharf and the new boardwalk accessible.

11. Barriers to address

Village owned and operated properties:

The following village owned and operated properties were assessed by the Accessibility Advisory Committee for accessibility barriers.

Accessible to Public:

- **Administrative Office (Leased)** → Poorly signed, difficult to access, counter barricade for wheelchairs.
- **Public Wharf and Access** → Poorly signed, poorly lit, access through parking area, trip hazards at entrance.
- **Wharf Parking** → Poorly signed as public, limited accessible parking, tight spaces.
- **Boardwalk** → Poorly signed as public/park, poorly lit, dangerous sections, hidden AED.
- **Community Club** → Development is in progress. Every development action on this property will be reviewed by the Accessibility Advisory Committee.
- **Kidston Island** → Access to the island by ferry which is operated by the Baddeck Lions Club. Dock and ferry are not accessible for wheelchairs. The trail on Kidston Island is not accessible for wheelchairs.

Private (not normally accessible by the public)

- **Wastewater Treatment Plant** → Not accessible to public, unsafe areas along shoreline
- **Water Treatment Plant** → Building is not accessible, except to Village employees.
- **Public Works Building** → Poorly signed, poorly lit, no public access.
- **Well Site** → Not accessible except to employees.
- **Water Tower Site** → Not accessible except to employees
- **Water Reservoir** → Fenced in, not accessible except to employees.

Identified areas on the walk through town

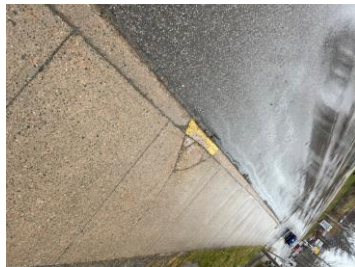
North side of Chebucto Street - The Main Street of Baddeck

- Sloped natural terrain.
- Broken concrete.
- Obstacles embedded in sidewalks.
- Ramped access to road surfaces.
- Worn out street markings.
- Poorly identified curb transitions.

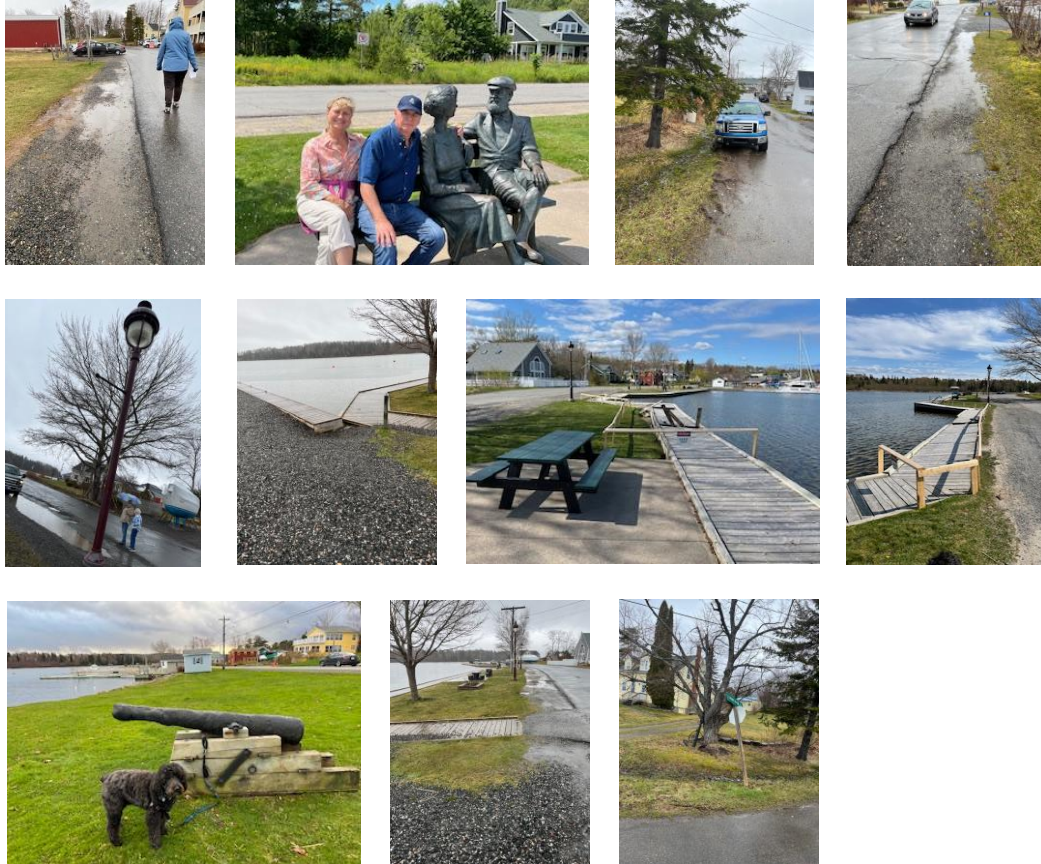


South side of Chebucto Street - The Main Street of Baddeck:

- Limited signage of all types.
- Crosswalk sign on ground at BOLD Centre.
- RBC is the most accessible business location.
- Broken Cement abounds.
- Gravel sidewalk sections.
- Parked cars backing out.



Water Street scenic walk - Alexander and Mabel Statues



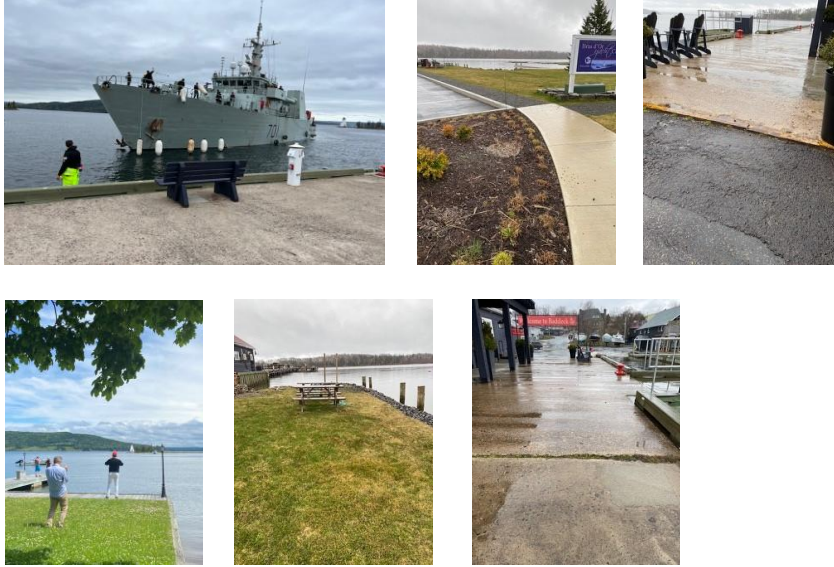
It is important to mention that the boardwalk redesign and construction is in its planning phase. Day to date the plan is to rebuild the boardwalk until July 2025. The village sub-committee Waterfront Baddeck conducted a special meeting with the Recreation Department of Alderwood (nursing home in Baddeck) to discuss the accessibility topic and get advice on the new boardwalk design.

Additionally, Alderwood residents and the director of recreation did a tour to the existing boardwalk to make existing accessibility issues visible.

The new design of the boardwalk includes an accessible area where it is possible to park a van with a ramp, accessible seating, etc.

Waterfront and Wharf area

The tourist magnet of Baddeck, often busy with a great view on Kidston Island and the iconic Lighthouse



It was identified that the Community Centre Public Washrooms on Jones Street are poorly signed.

Alderwood residents visited the wharf as well and helped to identify more accessibility issues which will be addressed in 2025.

- Curb at entrance to wharf makes it hard to move an electric wheelchair on the wharf.
- Adirondack chairs are not accessible. The chairs are too low, and it is hard for people with mobility issues to get out of the chairs.
- Accessible parking spot is too small. Alderwood is using a van with a ramp to transport residents to town. The electric ramp helps residents with rollers or wheelchairs to get in and out of the van. The parking space for rolling out the ramp is too small.

Restaurants and Retail

- Newer buildings and construction have street level access.
- Long ramps provide access to raised businesses and patios.
- Parking in front of businesses backs over sidewalks.
- Historic post office, BYC and others are difficult to access.
- Municipality Washrooms are reasonably accessible.
- Kudos to Tom's Pizza for markings on ramps



12. Priorities and Actions

Priority Area 1: Awareness and Partnerships

- Meet with Municipality Representative Councilor Jess Kerr and staff Cassandra Yonder to discuss an integrated approach and have a joint discussion about planning with the Municipality of the County of Victoria.
- Identify the best demonstrated accessibility practices in the Village of Baddeck and publicize them in the Village Newsletter
- Congratulations and Celebrations for recent accessibility improvements (some improvements have occurred), celebrate successes, even the small ones.
- Collaborate with the Seniors home Alderwood to make sure accessibility is addressed accordingly, recommendations can be made, and barriers can be eliminated.
- The Accessibility Advisory Committee will meet quarterly and if necessary, add special meetings to discuss the progress and plan accordingly for future projects.
- Follow up with Provincial Support Groups and build network.
 - Accessibility Directorate
 - Organizations for people with disabilities to gain experience and knowledge.
 - Community groups (e.g., Inclusion Nova Scotia)
- Federal, Provincial and Regional Appeals for Funding
 - Provincial and Municipal grants to fund accessibility improvements.

Priority Area 2: Tourism - Kidston Island

Kidston Island is accessible by a ferry during the summer which is operated by the Baddeck Lions Club (for 75 years). During the summer months, the Baddeck Lions Club is operating the beach on the island and offers lifeguards and a swimming program for tourists and residents. For the upcoming year the Lions Club Accessibility Committee is working on making the ferry and the beach more accessible and raised money through grants and different events (e.g. Mobi-Mat for the beach, ramps to and off the ferry, etc.). The village of Baddeck is a collaborative partner of the Lions Club on this matter.

Priority 3: Built Environment

- Review Village controlled assets and locations and develop a specific improvement plan for every year related to the budget, which can be addressed in grant applications.
- The Village of Baddeck Commission's focus is building accessibility awareness in all its committees. For every development project on village properties the Accessibility Advisory Committee will have an opportunity to review the designs and provide advice and input from an accessibility perspective.

Priority 4: Information and Communications

- Improved signs and access to information; use more easy-to-read language, fonts, through Village information and communications.

Priority 5: Investing in the future.

- Explore areas outside the built environment where the village can help to prevent and remove accessibility barriers including.
 - **Transportation** within the Village and to nearby attractions.
 - **Employment:** posting process for jobs for people with disabilities.
 - **Programs and Services:** centralized location for all information; key point of contact.
 - **Education:** collaborate with Baddeck Academy and develop a school project.

13. Costs and Budget

The Village will review the accessibility aspects on projects and its financial impact.

- Grant applications may allow Baddeck to make improvements gradually according to reviewed plans.
- Simple Budget needs to be developed, focused on priorities; Accessibility budget item will be created in future budgets.

14. Monitoring and Evaluation

Quarterly meetings of the Accessibility Advisory Committee will help to monitor, review and evaluate the actions taken by the Village of Baddeck. The AAC will take a lead role in identifying barriers within the village and make the commission aware of these. The meeting minutes will be presented to the commission, so decisions to improve accessibility can be made.

15. Conclusion

In conclusion, accessibility is a crucial aspect for the Village Commission and its employees, ensuring an inclusive and equitable environment for the community they serve. By prioritizing accessibility, the commission can foster a more productive, collaborative, and responsive place, while also ensuring that public services are available to all residents, regardless of their physical or cognitive abilities. This commitment not only meets legal and ethical standards but also strengthens the community's trust and engagement, making it essential for the commission to continually invest in accessibility improvements.

16. Glossary

Accessibility: The quality of being easy to approach, reach, enter, speak with, use, or understand.

Disability: Includes a 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.

Diverse: Including or involving people from a range of diverse backgrounds.

Inclusive: The concept that no parties are left out.

Equitable: Different from equal access, equity means everybody is treated fairly based on their unique needs and abilities.

Barrier: Anything that hinders or challenges the full and effective participation in society of people 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.

Accessibility Standards: A set of provincial laws that individuals, governments, businesses, nonprofit organizations, and public sector bodies must follow to identify, eliminate, and prevent barriers.