

# 2024-2026 **ACCESSIBILITY PLAN**



A truly great city ensures  
that everyone, regardless  
of age, ability, or  
background, can fully  
participate in their  
community.





## A message from Mayor Dave Aker

On behalf of Mount Pearl City Council, I am excited to share the City of Mount Pearl's first Accessibility Plan. This comprehensive plan has been carefully crafted in collaboration with community members, disability service organizations, our staff, and council members. We are thrilled to be taking more strides towards becoming a leader in accessibility within the province.

Our city, with its diverse population, is home to an estimated 4,800 individuals facing various challenges that impact their freedom, independence, or quality of life. This is why creating a barrier-free and inclusive community is a top priority for our City Council and staff.

Over the past few years, we have made significant progress in enhancing the accessibility of our facilities, programs, and services. The journey doesn't stop here. We are eager to continue hearing feedback from persons with disabilities and their allies. Our goal is to live by the principle of "nothing about us, without us," making sure that every citizen, regardless of their abilities, feels like a valued member of our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mayor Dave". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.



# Statement of Commitment

The City of Mount Pearl is committed to providing an inclusive community and ensuring that all individuals have equal access to Mount Pearl's services and programs in a way that respects their dignity and independence. Our commitment to accessibility begins with identifying, removing and preventing barriers to inclusion of persons with disabilities from full participation in the City of Mount Pearl's services and programs.

We strive to meet, and exceed, all legal requirements under the Newfoundland and Labrador **Accessibility Act** and accompanying regulations as they are developed. An inclusive municipality is one which anticipates and values difference. In taking deliberate action to ensure equitable access to services and opportunities, we advance our vision of a sustainable and prosperous future for all.

## Accessibility Awareness

In January 2024, the City of Mount Pearl will begin promoting our Accessibility Plan and its features by placing announcements on the Summit Center digital screen, on our social media pages, by acknowledging the Accessibility Plan in a Public Council meeting, and by promoting accessibility features at all community events such as Mount Pearl City Days.

In the second edition of our new printed city guide, The Pearl Pulse, we will highlight some of our accessibility goals and will promote accessibility awareness to residents and businesses in our community.





# ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE

## Programs and Services

- In 2023, the city opened the St. David's Smart Accessible Playground which features an accessible rubber surface, an accessible swing set, an accessible water fountain, and accessible picnic tables.
- The city also installed an accessible washroom at St. David's which features an adjustable-height adult change table.
- Accessible swings have been installed at additional playgrounds including Gloria Pearson and Emerald Drive.
- Each week the Summit has a sensory-friendly public swim. During this swim the lights are dimmed and noise is kept to a minimum.
- The city accepts attendant passes for all recreational programs.
- The P.E.A.R.L. program provides funding for recreational programs for those who qualify.
- As part of the city's recreational inclusion, the summer camp program has two inclusion workers who provide assistance to children with special needs free of charge to the participant.
- Throughout the winter months, the city grooms areas of its trail system for walking, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing.
- Included in our winter snow shoe and ski rental program are two adaptable sleds which are free to rent.
- The Summit Center Fitness area has a walking/wheeling track and accessible fitness equipment including SciFit StepOne Recumbent Stepper, SciFit PRO2 Total Body, and HOIST HD-3000 Dual Pully Functional Trainer.

## Built Environment

- An initial accessibility overview was completed by Inclusion NL in September 2023. Recommendations to improve the accessibility of City Hall and Council Chambers have been completed including installation of accessible washroom features, replacing flooring, construction of a ramp in the rear parking lot, and repositioning of chambers desks to accommodate mobility aids.
- The city has increased the number of accessible parking spaces, improved power door opener access and operation, and ensured systems are in good repair.
- Street upgrading projects have included installation of accessible ramps on sidewalks around the city, visibility and transition markings, sidewalk detail changes to ensure a smoother surface, and traffic signal upgrading.

- The city has installed accessible pedestrian signals on several intersections.
- An accessible bus shelter was installed near the shopping center on Park Avenue.
- Light and fan automated sensors have been installed at the City Depot.
- The baseball field at the Team Gushue Complex was upgraded with accessible amenities including accessible pathways around the field and accessible bleachers.
- The Summit Centre was built to be fully accessible with an elevator, accessible doors, walk/wheel ramps in both pools and aquatic wheelchairs. It also features accessible change rooms, showers, and a gender/family-neutral change room.

## Education

- Council and Senior Management have completed Inclusion NL accessibility training and Indigenous cultural diversity training.
- Two additional Inclusion NL accessibility training sessions were held for staff.
- Building Your Accessibility Confidence and Indigenous Cultural Diversity Training are included in the 2023-2024 staff training guide.

## Employment

- The human resource priorities include hiring a diverse workforce and providing accommodation if needed.
- Two employees have been hired in partnership with the Coalition for Persons with Disabilities.

## Information and Communication

- Marketing and Communications teams have focused on improving accessible communications by including alternative text on all social media graphics and ensuring accessible communication guidelines are followed.
- Live closed captioning has been enabled for all public council meetings beginning on November 28, 2023.
- The Marketing Coordinator has completed Yale University's Social Media Accessibility Workshop.



## St. David's Smart Accessible Playground







# ACCESSIBILITY GOALS



The City of Mount Pearl strives to remove systemic, attitudinal and structural barriers. Identifying potential barriers to help improve accessibility requires a collaborative approach on the part of city staff, City Council, as well as the citizens and organizations that we serve. A key goal of our plan is to continue our consultations with accessibility stakeholders and engage our citizens in a way that is accessible to all.

Our strategy focuses on key areas for improving how persons with disabilities access Mount Pearl services, programs and facilities. Our goals in each of the key focus areas include:

### **Programs and Services**

- Ensure the design and delivery of programs and services provide equitable access for all persons.

### **Built Environment**

- Ensure persons with disabilities have inclusive and equitable access to municipal services, facilities, buildings, and amenities such as our T'railway system.

### **Education**

- Develop and maintain positive partnerships with disability community serving organizations to education our workforce and the community about the importance of accessibility in our city.

### **Employment**

- Ensure our workforce is inclusive and diverse and that all accommodations needed are provided in line with the Human Rights Act.

### **Information and Communication**

- To provide accessible communication to residents so they may be aware of the city's programs and services including the accessibility features of our facilities and events.



# ACTION ITEMS



## Programs and Services

The City of Mount Pearl is committed to ensuring equitable access to our programs and services. Priorities set in this plan include:

- Evaluation of the City of Mount Pearl's attendant pass program.
- Installing sensory-friendly zones at St. David's accessible playground.
- Review venues used for community events and wherever possible, move venue to accessible locations where ensuring full accessibility is not feasible.
- Renewed investment in the P.E.A.R.L. program.

## Built Environment

In 2024, the City of Mount Pearl has committed to the following accessibility features and improvements:

- Conducting a detailed accessibility audit which will identify barriers that prevent individuals with differing abilities from fully participating in or accessing public spaces, technology, or information.
- Constructing a fully accessible boardroom at City Hall to ensure that employees and persons with disabilities can fully participate in meetings, discussions, and decision-making processes.
- Investing in new accessible stages at the Reid Community Center and Glacier, to ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to fully participate in city events.

In addition, the City of Mount Pearl will also be completing the following accessibility upgrades in 2024:

- Replacing the wooden pathways at Brandscombe Pond and Power's Pond with granular stone.
- Completing upgrades at the Team Gushue Complex including installation of accessible pathways around the field installing accessible bleachers.

Over the next three years, the City of Mount Pearl will complete the following:

- Working with the Rotary Club to install additional rest stops along the T'Railway, including areas designed for mental wellbeing and mindfulness. These rest stops will be included in our GIS system.
- Reviewing the accessibility audit and making tangible changes to barriers that are identified.
- Exploring options for increased lighting along sections of the T'Railway.
- Evaluating options for a new, fully accessible community center.
- Developing an audit framework for review of municipal facilities, parks/playgrounds, and trails to access when repairs or upgrades are required to maintain accessibility.

## Education

The City of Mount Pearl is committed to providing quality educational training to all staff on the importance of accessibility, diversity and inclusion. In 2024 and beyond, the following educational opportunities will be offered to city staff:

- Building Your Accessibility Confidence.
- Indigenous Cultural Diversity Training.
- Easter Seals inclusion training (aquatics staff).
- Accessible website, digital and print media training (marketing staff).

In addition to training employees, the City of Mount Pearl will actively promote accessibility through public education initiatives.

## Employment

The City of Mount Pearl strives to be an equitable workplace. Some of the initiatives to be undertaken throughout the duration of this plan include reviewing policies and procedures to ensure the City is providing an accessible workplace and supporting persons with disabilities in finding and maintaining meaningful employment opportunities. This includes:

- Reviewing recruitment materials to ensure job advertisements and applications are accessible.
- Developing a workplace accommodation guideline which outlines the process for providing job candidates and employees with disability accommodations.

## Information and Communication

The City of Mount Pearl is committed to ensuring that everyone receives, understands, and shares information in an accessible way. Below are some of the initiatives that will be undertaken through this plan:

- Initiating upgrades of the City of Mount Pearl website and web content to ensure compliance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1.
- Ensuring alternative format of all municipal promotional materials is provided if requested.
- Developing marketing guidelines for promotional materials to ensure they are accessible to persons with disabilities.
- Creating an accessibility page on City of Mount Pearl website to provide information on the Accessibility Plan and accessibility in our community.



# IMPLEMENTATION PLAN



## Evaluation

During the development of the Accessibility Plan, the City of Mount Pearl established an Accessibility Advisory Committee consisting of members of the public and disability serving organizations. The city will continue to consult with interested members and disability serving organizations throughout the implementation and evaluation of this inaugural Accessibility Plan.

The city welcomes your feedback on our Accessibility Plan from the public, community residents, persons with disabilities, and disability organizations. The Accessibility Plan is a guide for Mount Pearl to advance on improving accessibility and your input will provide valuable insight which may be incorporated into the plan.

## Responsibilities

The City of Mount Pearl has established an Accessibility Team comprising of employees from each of the city's four main departments: Corporate Services, Planning, Engineering and Development, Public Works, and Recreation and Community Safety. Each department has identified people responsible for ensuring the Accessibility Plan is implemented in their respective departments. These individuals include the Manager of Human Resources, Manager of Recreation Programs, Manager and Assistant Manager of Engineering, Superintendent of Public Works, and the Accessibility Lead.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

The monitoring and evaluation of the Accessibility Plan and the implementation of the Accessibility Standards as they are developed will be a coordinated effort of the Accessibility Lead and the Accessibility Team. The City of Mount Pearl is committed to ensuring that all standards will be met or exceeded within the legislative timeframes. A yearly update on the status of accessibility plans will be posted on the city's website.

### Questions and Concerns

People with disabilities, their families, caregivers, and advocates may contact the Accessibility Lead with any questions or concerns by emailing [inclusion@mountpearl.ca](mailto:inclusion@mountpearl.ca) or by calling (709) 748-1148.



# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

## **Accessibility**

Accessibility refers to the practice of making programs, services, facilities, amenities, and/or environments usable for as many people as possible, at the time they are needed, without encountering barriers.

## **Accessibility Act**

The provincial law enacted to achieve accessibility by preventing and removing barriers for people with disabilities. The Accessibility Act defines the role and responsibilities of the Disability Policy Office and the Accessibility Standards Advisory Board, and addresses standards, compliance, and enforcement.

The Accessibility Act can be viewed electronically at the link below:

<https://www.assembly.nl.ca/Legislation/sr/statutes/a01-001.htm>

## **Accessibility Plan**

A plan developed to address the prevention, identification, and removal of barriers in the policies, programs, practices, and services of a public body.

## **Accessibility Standards**

Accessibility standards will be developed by Standard Development Committees under the Provincial Accessibility Standards Advisory Board. They will establish clear, specific, and achievable goals to identify, prevent and remove barriers. Each standard will be introduced in stages with a timeframe for implementation. The standards and timelines will consider all sectors such as government, business, municipalities, and community organizations.

## **Accommodation (or disability related support)**

Any technical aid or device, personal support or disability-related support or other accommodation a person may require. This can include, but is not limited to: accessible meeting rooms; accessible formats such as Braille and plain language; mobility supports to attend a meeting; and, sign language interpreters, captioning or ensuring space has sensory sensitive features.

## **Barrier**

Something that makes it harder for some people to participate. The Accessibility Act defines a barrier as “anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in society, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, or a barrier established or perpetuated by an Act, regulations, a policy, or a practice.



## **Disability**

As defined in Accessibility Act: “disability includes a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment or a functional limitation that is permanent, temporary or episodic in nature, that, in interaction with a barrier, prevents a person from fully participating in society”.

## **Disability Policy Office**

The Disability Policy Office is a division of government that works with all government departments and agencies to assist in the development of policies and programs that include people with disabilities and that are barrier free. This office also acts as administrative support to the Accessibility Standards Advisory Board.

## **Equitable/equity**

A commitment to fairness. Equitable access is different from equal access. Equality means everybody is treated the same; equity means everybody is treated fairly, based on their needs and abilities.

## **Plain Language**

Clear, conversational communication that makes sense to the intended audience. The goal of plain language is to communicate so clearly that the intended audience can easily find what they need, understand what they find, and use the information. Online resources include the Plain Language Action and Information Network.

## **Public Body**

As defined in the Accessibility Act, public bodies include all provincial government, agencies, boards, commissions and committees, municipalities, public educational institutions and private educational institutions. Part I (o.) of the Accessibility Act includes the full list.



[mountpearl.ca](http://mountpearl.ca)

This Accessibility Plan is available  
in alternate formats upon request.

For more information, contact the Accessibility Lead  
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