



Town of Amherst
Accessibility, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Advisory Committee
Agenda

Date: **Wednesday, May 28, 2025**
Time: **4:30 pm**
Location: **Council Chambers, Town Hall**

	Pages
1. Call to Order	
1.1 Introductions	
1.2 Territorial Acknowledgement	
“I would like to acknowledge that our gathering today is taking place in (MEEG-MA-GEE), the traditional, unceded and ancestral territory of the Mi’kmaw people. I would also like to acknowledge that Nova Scotia has another unique people. These are the Indigenous Blacks of Nova Scotia whose legacy and contributions date back over 400 years predating confederation of this land. We are all treaty people.”	
1.3 Election of Chair and Vice Chair	2 - 6
1.4 Approval of Agenda	
2. Discussion Items	
2.1 Accessibility, Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity Committee (AIDE) Strategic Plan - Klooster	7 - 35
2.2 Territorial Acknowledgement - Klooster	36 - 39
2.3 Legion Request to Name Green Space - Klooster	40 - 41
3. Next Meeting Date	
4. Adjournment	

MEMORANDUM

To: Accessibility, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Committee
From: Natalie LeBlanc, Municipal Clerk
Date: May 25, 2025
Subject: Election of Chair and Vice Chair

The Accessibility, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Committee Terms of Reference Policy states that the Chair and Vice Chair shall be elected by the Committee at the first meeting annually. Should there be more than one nomination, there shall be an election by secret ballot.

TITLE: ACCESSIBILITY, INCLUSION, DIVERSITY AND EQUITY (AIDE) ADVISORY COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE
SECTION: EXECUTIVE OPERATIONS
POLICY NO: 10350-30

APPROVAL DATE: March 24, 2025

CAO Signature: _____



1.0 BACKGROUND

Under the Nova Scotia Accessibility Act (NSAA) and the Nova Scotia Dismantling Racism and Hate Act (2022) the Town of Amherst is required to appoint a Committee on matters of Accessibility, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity to provide input on accessibility and equity matters within the Town of Amherst.

2.0 PURPOSE

The Accessibility, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Advisory Committee (AIDE Advisory Committee) assists Town Council in fulfilling its responsibilities relating to identifying, preventing and eliminating barriers to people with disabilities, underserved and underrepresented populations and to address systemic hate, inequity and racism in municipal programs, services, initiatives and facilities. The AIDE Advisory Committee plays a pivotal role in helping the Town of Amherst become a barrier-free community while ensuring obligations under *An Act Respecting Accessibility in Nova Scotia* (2017) and the *Nova Scotia Dismantling Racism and Hate Act 2022* are met, and to assist in creating a community of equity, inclusion and wellbeing for all.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

3.1 The definitions in the Nova Scotia Accessibility Act / Nova Scotia Dismantling Racism and Hate Act 2022 will supersede any and all definitions in this policy.

3.2 Barrier means anything that hinders or challenges the full and effective participation in society of person 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.

3.3 Council means the Town Council for the Town of Amherst.

3.4 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 participation in society.

3.5 Hate means provocation, hostility or intolerance by means of threats, harassment, abuse, incitement or intimidation motivated by the actual or perceived race, religion, national origin, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, gender expression, disability or sexual orientation of any person.

3.6 Racism means the discrimination or antagonism by, or the prejudice of, an individual, community or institution against a person or people based on the person's or people's membership or perceived membership in a racial or ethnic group, and having the power to carry out that discrimination, antagonism or prejudice through institutional policies and practices that shape cultural beliefs and values of a society.

TITLE: ACCESSIBILITY, INCLUSION, DIVERSITY AND EQUITY (AIDE) ADVISORY COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE
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4.0 ACCESSIBILITY, INCLUSION, DIVERSITY AND EQUITY (AIDE) ADVISORY COMMITTEE

4.1 Role

The AIDE Advisory Committee shall:

4.1.1 Advise Council on the preparation, implementation, and effectiveness of its AIDE Plan. In accordance with the two Acts. The plan must include:

- i. A report on measures the municipality has taken and intends to take to identify, remove and prevent barriers;
- ii. Information on procedures the municipality has in place to assess any proposed policies, programs, practices, and services and/or any proposed enactments or by-laws for their impact on equity and accessibility for people; and
- iii. Any other prescribed information.

4.1.2 Review and update its AIDE plan at least every three years, in accordance with the Acts.

4.1.3 Consult with the community on accessibility and equity in the town of Amherst.

4.1.4 Advise Council on the impact of Town of Amherst policies, programs, and services on people of equity deserving groups and those with disabilities.

4.1.5 Review and monitor existing and proposed Town of Amherst by-laws to promote full participation of equity deserving groups and people with disabilities, in accordance with the Acts.

4.1.6 Identify and advise on the accessibility of existing and proposed municipal services, facilities and infrastructure.

4.1.7 Advise and make recommendations about strategies designed to achieve the objectives of the Town's AIDE Plan.

4.1.8 Receive and review information from Council and its committees, and make recommendations, as requested.

4.1.9 Monitor federal and provincial government directives and regulations.

4.2 Membership

4.2.1 In accordance with the Act, at least half of the Committee membership must be people with disabilities or represent organizations that represent people with disabilities with preference for the former.

TITLE: ACCESSIBILITY, INCLUSION, DIVERSITY AND EQUITY (AIDE) ADVISORY COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE
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4.2.2 All members must adhere to and abide by the NS Code of Ethics Policy.

4.2.3 When making appointments to the Committee, Council will give consideration to representation from different sectors of the community including equity deserving groups.

4.2.4 Appointees shall possess knowledge and understanding of equity and accessibility related issues and services currently being provided by the community.

4.2.5 The Committee shall have up to 10 voting members that includes:

- 2 Town of Amherst Council members as appointed by Council
- 7 community members as appointed by Council
- 1 Amherst Youth Town Council (AYTC) member as appointed by Council

Town of Amherst staff will be non-voting members.

4.3 Terms of Appointment

4.3.1 The initial appointments will be for one-year terms, with further appointments made for up to two years to ensure knowledge is retained on the Committee

4.3.2 AYTC members may be appointed for one or two-year terms.

4.3.2 The Chair and Vice Chair shall be elected by the Committee at the first meeting annually.

5. OTHER

5.1 The Committee shall meet at least quarterly but may meet more frequently as required.

5.2 Meetings of the committee shall be open to the public; however, they are subject to the provision of Section 22 of the Municipal Government Act with respect to closed session meetings.

5.3 The Committee provides open avenues of communication to stakeholders and Council.

5.4 The Committee may establish Working Groups to explore specific issues related to the accessibility plan and/or to other responsibilities, subject to staff capacity. Members of the Working Groups may consist of additional community members.

5.5 Meeting shall convene at 4:00 p.m. on the day selected, unless otherwise specified.

5.6 The Committee and its members shall follow the rules of order as set out in the Town of Amherst Proceedings of Council Policy #10350-24.

TITLE: ACCESSIBILITY, INCLUSION, DIVERSITY AND EQUITY (AIDE) ADVISORY COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE
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6. TERMS OF REFERENCE REVIEW

The Committee will review its Terms of Reference annually and make any recommendations to Council as the Committee deems appropriate.

7. REFERENCES

- 7.1 Bill No. 59 – Accessibility Act, Chapter 2 of the Act of 2017.
- 7.2 Nova Scotia Dismantling Racism and Hate Act 2022.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Title/Role	Responsibilities
Director, Community Living	Adhere to the Strategic Plan, make recommendations to Council when required. Review Terms of Reference annually.
CAO	Appoint non-voting staff members to the Committee
Council	Appoint Council, AYTC and citizen members to the Committee, consider recommendations from the Committee.
Clerk	Schedule meetings, advertise for citizen members.

For Administrative Use Only:

VERSION LOG

Amendment Description	Policy Owner	Approved By	Approval Date
New Policy	Clerk, LeBlanc	Council	March 24, 2025

Minutes reference date: March 24, 2025

MEMO

TO: Accessibility, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Committee
FROM: Mallory Klooster, Manager, Community Well-Being
DATE: Wednesday, May 28, 2025
RE: **Strategic Plan Review**

The Town of Amherst has been working tirelessly since 2022 to identify, prevent and eliminate barriers to people with disabilities in municipal programs, services, initiatives and facilities.

With the Accessibility, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Strategic Plan being approved in April 2025, we are extending that work to include addressing discrimination, racism and inequalities in our community as these can limit access and hinder our resident's ability to navigate our services, education, employment and information in our buildings and town.

Town staff is seeking input, from the members of this committee, on the work plan that has been developed for the following goals and action items.

Under the Accessibility Plan

Priority Area: Goods and Services

Goal 1: Increase Inclusive and Accessible Community Resources and Services

Priority Area: Education

Goal 2: Provide training opportunities for accessibility, equity and anti-racism

Priority Area: Built Environment

Goal 6: Increase Partnerships in Accessibility

Under the Equity and Anti Racism Plan

Goal 3: Increase Community Engagement.

The AIDE Strategic Plan is attached.



Accessibility, Inclusion, Diversity & Equity, (A.I.D.E) Strategic Plan



2025-2030



Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that we are in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People.

We celebrate 400+ years of African Nova Scotian descent.

We strive to foster a diverse community that values everything that makes us unique including our visible differences, such as race or gender expression, as well as our non-visible differences, such as gender identity and diversity of thought.

We are committed to equity, fairness and dignity for all.

Mayor's Message



On behalf of the Town of Amherst, I am proud to introduce our newly combined Accessibility, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity, (AIDE) Plan. This plan reflects our unwavering commitment to building a community where every resident, visitor, and business feels valued, respected, and empowered to participate fully in all aspects of town life.

Previously, our Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity Plan and our Accessibility Plan were separate documents. By bringing them together, we recognize that the principles of IDE and accessibility are deeply connected – ensuring that Amherst is not only welcoming but also designed and structured to allow everyone to thrive.

This plan outlines our vision, goals, and concrete actions to create a more inclusive and accessible Amherst. It is the result of meaningful engagement with our community and a shared commitment from Council, staff, and residents to foster a town where barriers are removed, voices are heard, and diversity is celebrated.

As we move forward, we acknowledge that this work is ongoing. Inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility are not just policies but principles that must guide our everyday decisions and interactions. I invite each of you to join us in making Amherst a place where everyone belongs.

Sincerely,
Rob Small
Mayor, Town of Amherst



Purpose

Amherst is becoming an increasingly diverse population which shapes and enriches the town. As we welcome all, we need to acknowledge that there are many forms of discrimination that can affect one's ability to participate in our community, from generations of systemic racism to facing physical barriers when trying to access our programs and services.

The Town of Amherst, in partnership with other levels of government and community organizations, have a pivotal role to play in eliminating inequalities and systemic racism in order to create a welcoming and inclusive community.

This Accessibility, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity (AIDE) Plan outlines our vision and goals over the next three to five years and will guide our work to bring equity, accessibility and anti-racism to the forefront of the Town's decision-making process to strengthen the health and wellbeing of Amherst.



Vision

The Town of Amherst's vision is to be a healthy, prosperous, inclusive and environmentally sustainable community in which people of all ages, abilities, genders and cultures are engaged and proud to live, work and play.

We are committed to ensuring that all citizens have the opportunity to contribute and be valued. We believe in supporting diversity, inclusion and dignity for all citizens of our community.

We further seek to understand how we can be more responsive to the needs of the underrepresented groups of our community. We recognize that we need to create a space that is safe for their voices to be heard thus creating a community that is balanced, equitable and committed to ongoing review of our vision's objectives.



Mission

We provide quality leadership, services, opportunities and resources for the benefit of our citizens, and in support of our growth and development of our community in a fair, equitable and transparent manner.



Guiding Principles

Respect-Integrity-Collaboration-Accountability-Inclusivity-Evidence based decision Making-Sustainability.



How Did We Create This Plan

The Town of Amherst Accessibility, and Inclusion Diversity and Equity committees, each created a strategic plan to guide the Amherst Town Council in making decisions related to accessibility, inclusion, diversity and equity. These strategic plans were adopted by Amherst Town Council in 2022 and 2023 respectively.

As we moved towards the development of a new combined plan for Accessibility Inclusion Diversity and Equity (AIDE) it became apparent that a review of the existing strategic plan goals would be required and further community consultation necessary to bring an updated combined plan forward.

Meetings were held with both committees to look at how best to combine the plans. We met with our community allies and members of underserved and underrepresented groups to guide our work. This included people from the African Nova Scotia community, Indigenous, 2SLGBTQIA+, new settlers, youth, seniors and persons with disabilities.

We also gathered feedback from a survey that was initially intended to inform our work around the new Amherst Police Department Strategy. This gave us insight into how marginalized groups feel about our policing services, systemic racism in the community, and procedures around dealing with hate crimes.

Our Commitment

The Town of Amherst is aware of the need for reconciliation, the acknowledgement of the centuries long displacement and systemic racialization impacting persons of Indigenous and African NS descent.

We also understand that discrimination and bias exists towards individuals who live with disabilities, the 2SLGBTQIA+ and newcomer communities. We are committed to including those who are typically excluded, actively seeking input to hear all voices and identities in the community.

With the guidance of the Town of Amherst Social Equity Committee: Accessibility, and Inclusion, Diversity and Equity, we are committed to doing the necessary work, by growing strong relationships with underserved, underrepresented groups, gathering feedback, researching and revising relevant policies, creating actionable, achievable goals and adequately resourcing the work.





Equity and Anti Racism Plan

Goals	Initiatives/ Actions	Indicators of Progress	Owner/Lead	Target Date
Be the leader in the community known for Equity, Inclusion and Diversity	Ensure compliance with the NS Human Rights Act.	Our policies and procedures will be updated to reflect a lens of equity and inclusion and accessibility.	Chief Administrative Officer	2027
	Work to create a diverse municipal workforce.		Mayor and Council	
	Ensure municipal services are equitable and accessible to all.	Elected officials and staff will embrace fairness, equity and operate with these principles each and every day.	Community Living Department	
	Develop, implement and promote anti racism policies and procedures including ways to hear complaints and resolve disputes.	The community will look to the Town as a role model in AIDE.	Human Resources	
	Provide educational opportunities for elected officials and employees on respect, cultural awareness and the promotion and protection of human rights.			



Goals	Initiatives/ Actions	Indicators of Progress	Owner/Lead	Target Date
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<p>To use Equity, Anti-Racist and Accessible language on all public documents</p>	<p>Ensure that all new public documents, website content, social media posts, publications, policies and procedures will be developed through an accessible and equitable lens.</p> <p>Existing documents will undergo a review to ensure we are updating documents to reflect our vision.</p>	<p>We will ensure 100% of new content meets this standard using readability tools.</p> <p>Training will be provided to content creators to ensure successful implementation.</p> <p>Existing documents reviewed with an equitable and accessible lens.</p>	<p>Marketing Strategist</p> <p>Community Well-Being Manager</p> <p>Director of Community Living</p> <p>Communications Officer</p> <p>Marketing Staff</p>	<p>Ongoing until 2028</p>
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Goals	Initiatives/ Actions	Indicators of Progress	Owner/Lead	Target Date
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**Increase
Community
Engagement**

Over the next 12-24 months we will increase opportunities for engagement by launching an outreach campaign, round tables, to gather public information with diverse groups.

Build stronger connections with youth, the 2SLGBTQIA+ and newcomer community.

Organize and launch an outreach campaign to understand how to improve our engagement strategies.

Through improving our engagement strategies we will increase our participation in community consultations, increase feedback from surveys

Create volunteer opportunities that build a sense of belonging and support relationship building in our community.

Build a community committee of volunteers from all diverse sectors of our community to further our Municipal Strategic plans.

Community Living Department

2025-2027



Goals	Initiatives/ Actions	Indicators of Progress	Owner/Lead	Target Date
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Work to build an Equitable and Inclusive Community

We will continue to increase our promotion, respect, understanding and appreciation of our community’s diversity by organizing annual workshops, offering educational resources on equity and anti racism.

Embed social connection and sense of belonging into decisions about policies and programming.

Partner with community groups and organizations to help create meaningful opportunities that celebrate diverse backgrounds and cultures.

Support a culture of safety and inclusion for all community members.

Community Living Department

Ongoing



Accessibility Plan

Since 2022, the Town of Amherst and the Accessibility Advisory Committee have been working tirelessly to identify, prevent and eliminate barriers to people with disabilities in municipal programs, services, initiatives and facilities.

We are taking the steps to address discrimination, racism and inequalities in our community as these can limit access to our services, education, employment, information and hinder our residents ability to navigate our buildings and town.



Successes to date:

Training:

Training was offered to summer staff to ensure our park programs were more accessible to children with different needs. Safer Spaces training which strives to build and increase awareness of the 2SLGBTQIA+ experience, raises awareness of importance of pronouns, explores privilege and addresses how we can be allies. Physical and Health Training was also offered and focused on behaviors and technique, as well as adapting activities.

Staff attended multiple training opportunities for staff on accessibility and equity offered through the Association of Municipal Administrators Nova Scotia.

Active Living Strategy:

An Active Living Strategy was developed in 2024 where fostering equity, access, inclusion and safety were the key components in planning a framework to ensure an active and welcoming community for all.

Community Support Grants

Over \$20,000.00 was awarded to community groups and organizations to help with accessible projects including Fundy Winds to develop accessible trails, Autism Nova Scotia to help with community programming, the 50 + Club to improve the parking lot to be more accessible as well as the Cumberland County Museum to update displays to be more accessible.

Goals	Initiatives/Actions	Owner/Lead	Target Date
<p>Increase Inclusive and Accessible community resources and services</p>	<p>Through community engagement, services will be created that fit the needs of all residents and visitors of Amherst.</p> <p>All existing services to be reviewed for being equitable, inclusive and accessible.</p> <p>New services will be introduced that increase sense of belonging (Volunteerism).</p> <p>Create reporting/ monitoring system for incidents of accessibility, hate, racism, discrimination and accessibility issues.</p>	<p>Director of Community Living</p> <p>Community Well Being Manager</p>	<p>2025-2026</p>

Goals	Initiatives/Actions	Owner/Lead	Target Date
<p>Improve service delivery for residents</p>	<p>Improve service delivery by educating staff through ongoing awareness and training programs.</p> <p>Increase knowledge and understanding of accessibility, equity, human rights, disability rights and accessibility barriers in our community.</p> <p>Explore new awareness and training opportunities for staff, senior management and Council.</p>	<p>Chief Administrative Officer</p> <p>Community Living Team</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Improve program delivery</p>	<p>Deliver training to all administrative and forward facing staff, including, event staff and summer students on accessibility issues and barriers to participation.</p>	<p>Community Living Department</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Ensure events are accessible to everyone</p>	<p>Continue to improve accessibility of public events hosted by the town by planning events with an equitable, anti-racism and accessibility lens, including location, event delivery and participation.</p> <p>Planning will have culture considerations as well as consider the needs of persons with disabilities including, but not limited to, having adequate accessible event parking, accessible portable toilets and, when possible, places to rest from sensory overwhelming environments.</p>	<p>Community Living Department</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>



Information & Communication

Successes to date:

Delivery of Communication:

Staff attended Accessible Communications regional training on digital communications and plain language.

Website Re-Development:

The Town of Amherst recently completed a website re-development project, which included making improvements for accessibility.

Information:

Community Well Being team exploring different platforms to help information be more accessible to the public on events and activities.

Goals	Initiatives/Actions	Owner/Lead	Target Date
Ensure that all new public documents, website content, social media posts, publications, policies and procedures will be developed through an accessible and equitable lens	We will track and aim for 100% of new content to meet this standard using readability tools.	Community Living Department	Ongoing to 2028
	Training provided to content creators to ensure successful implementation.	Marketing Strategist	
Existing documents will undergo a review to ensure we are updating documents to reflect our vision	Existing documents will be revised where necessary.	Chief Administrative Officer	2028
		Marketing Strategist	
		Staff	

Goals	Initiatives/Actions	Owner/Lead	Target Date
Improve signage to meet provincial standards	<p>Implementing signage consistent with accessibility best practice.</p> <p>Prioritize having signage where necessary and appropriate.</p>	<p>Community Living Staff</p> <p>Operations</p>	2028
Evaluate how we communicate to our external partners	<p>Develop a comprehensive communications plan that identifies strategies on how to communicate to and engage with the public.</p> <p>Seek input from equity deserving groups, persons with disabilities and newcomers.</p>	Marketing Strategist	2028



Successes to date:

Improvement of Town Sidewalks:

\$145,000 for sidewalk improvements 2023/24/25. All the sidewalk improvement projects included the installation of Tactile warning surface indicator plates.

February 24, 2025 Council approved amendments to the Sidewalk/Curb Construction Policy as part of the Accessibility Strategy. This change was recommended by the Accessibility Committee.

Active Transportation:

Currently, the Town of Amherst partially funds the Cumberland County Transportation Society bus system. The transportation society has fully accessible buses that run daily throughout Cumberland County and the Town of Amherst.

Goals	Initiatives/Actions	Owner/Lead	Target Date
Improve Pedestrian Infrastructure	<p>We will enhance connectivity in the community by improving pedestrian infrastructure including:</p> <p>Sidewalks: replacing the existing brick pavers with concrete.</p> <p>Installation of tactile warning plates.</p> <p>Prioritize safety of pedestrian infrastructure by investigating and making recommendations for appropriate lighting and benches to rest where possible.</p>	<p>Operations</p> <p>CAO</p>	Ongoing as operational budget allows - 2028
Enhance snow removal practices through consultation with outside agencies such as CNIB	Prioritize snow clearance at public buildings and municipally managed parking areas.	Operations	Ongoing
Continue to improve Active Transportation opportunities by reviewing accessibility of trails and sidewalks	Review current Active Transportation strategy, continue to enhance AT opportunities.	Operations	Ongoing

Increase opportunities for citizens to move throughout the community barrier free

Determine feasibility of an accessible community transit system.

Council
CAO
Staff

2027



Education

Initiatives/Actions

Indicators of Progress

Owner/Lead

Target Date

Continue to grow partnerships with schools and education centres at all levels to offer supports where needed

Support in preventing and removing barriers to accessing education.

Inclusion of students in community based cultural events such as, the Mawio'mi and pride events.

Community Living Department

Ongoing

Provide training and opportunities for accessibility, equity and anti-racism

Training and get staff involved in conversation about how equity, racism and accessibility impact their work.

Community Living Department

Ongoing

Work to ensure Community Safety

Support community initiatives such as neighborhood watch, provide training in senior scooter and crosswalk safety.

Police

Community Living Department

Ongoing



Employment

Successes to date:

Human Resources:

We implemented the Employment Equity Policy in February 2024. Over the past two years, we have conducted a comprehensive review of all HR policies to include inclusive language.

All job postings now include language around needing accommodations, equal opportunity and identifying protected groups. We have also eliminated bias from job postings.

We offer flexible work options and accommodations as required and have adopted a Flexible Workplace Policy.

Initiatives/Actions	Indicators of Progress	Owner/Lead	Target Date
Diversify recruitment methods	Advertise jobs through diverse networks and community organizations.	Human Resources CAO	Ongoing to 2026
	Create hiring committee with equitable review of resumes.		
Promote Amherst as an inclusive and diverse workforce	Provide support and accommodations where necessary.	Human Resources CAO Staff	Ongoing
	Create team building and a welcoming atmosphere.		
	Ensure all abilities are recognized and celebrated.		
Review of policies and procedures	Continue to examine policies through a lens of accessibility and equity.	Human Resources CAO	2028
	Create anti-discrimination policies and mechanisms for dealing with issues.	Staff	



Built Environment

Successes to date:

Town Hall:

Replacement of the ramp at Town Hall to current standards -approx. - \$45,000 Addition of handrails at Town Hall entrances- approx. - \$5,000 Ensuring new reception desk is at proper height.

Robb's Complex & Trail System:

\$21,000 for a new trailer groomer. The new groomer attachment can bury stones, remove surface vegetation, breakup clumps of hard packed soil, fill in holes / washouts, and leave behind a levelled surface layer with a single pass of the tractor. The attachment will also be used to maintain the foul lines and warning tracks at the Robb's Complex. The groomer has improved operational efficiency and accessibility of our trail system. 2023.

Stadium Platform:

To allow individuals who use wheelchairs or other mobility devices to have access to view the ice surface over the dasher boards during an ice event, the Facilities Department at the Town of Amherst built a \$2,000 10" high raised platform. The ramp can be moved and stored until needed. This project was completed as of September 2023.

Raised Garden Beds:

Town of Amherst provided \$5,000 to the Amherst Community Garden to build accessible raised garden beds. 2023.

Accessible Playgrounds:

Over the past several months Town staff have connected with like-minded organizations and committees to discuss accessible playground planning, design, cost and inclusivity. Playground consultation was conducted with Camp Tidnish, the Parrsboro Playground Committee and the Town of Westville. Staff also issued a public survey for parents, caregivers and those with disabilities in the Town of Amherst to gain insight and understanding on how to make our play spaces accessible and inclusive for all. Terms of reference for an external Accessible Playground Committee has been developed. Council approved \$200,000 for the construction of a fully accessible playground and a work plan has been developed to move this work forward.

Initiatives/Actions	Indicators of Progress	Owner/Lead	Target Date
Review emergency management and building evacuation plan with a lens of accessibility in mind	A new emergency management and building evacuation plan is written with an equitable and accessible lens.	CAO Safety Committee	2026
Conduct built environment assessments	Continue to assess areas of accessibility to provide recommendations to council on improvements.	Operations CAO Council Staff	2025-2028
Improve ability to provide barrier free participation in events	Invest in infrastructure to host inclusive and accessible signature events which will attract tourists and newcomers.	Mayor/Council CAO Operations Community Living Staff	Ongoing to 2030
Improve access to safe, affordable and accessible housing	Support organizations that develop affordable and accessible housing.	Council CAO	Ongoing to 2030
Investigate & make recommendation on the establishment of an Accessible Playground	<p>Review parks and greenspace to evaluate usage and accessibility to accommodate growth and changing needs of the community.</p> <p>Consult community members with lived experience to gain insight and input on what should be included in the playground.</p> <p>Begin fundraising initiatives: community outreach, grants.</p>	CAO Operations Community Living	2028

**Increase
partnerships in
Accessibility**

Work with
community partners
to assist them with
grant writing.

Community Well
Being Staff

2026

Advise on how
community partners
can become more
accessible.



Who is Responsible for Implementing?



Amherst Town Council:

Recognize the importance of implementing this plan and seek adequate funding to allow our municipality to meet the requirements under Nova Scotia's Accessibility and Anti-Racism Acts.



CAO/Staff:

Ensure the commitments outlined in the AIDE Plan are integrated into all municipal practices.



Accessibility, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Committee:

Review this AIDE Plan on an annual basis as required by the Accessibility and Anti-Racism Act and update as required. The committees review the Municipal Accessibility Report Cards annually and report on progress toward meeting the commitments outlined in this plan.



Director of Community Living/Community Well-Being Manager:


Guide the work of the AIDE Committee, book meetings, prepare and distribute agendas and minutes, assist the chairperson in leading the meetings, manage recruitment for the committee when necessary. Act as a liaison with the Accessibility, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Committee and the Amherst Town Council.



Human Resources:

Ensure all employee and hiring policies, procedures comply with Nova Scotia Human Rights Act and are reviewed and revised using an equitable, anti-racism and accessibility lens.





How We Will Measure And Evaluate?

- Develop a communications pathway that includes a emailing/ mailing list of persons who are interested in the ongoing work the committee is doing, to promote the work that is being done, and ask for feedback.
- Host regular information sharing sessions on the work of the committee and ensure underserved/underrepresented and diverse communities are invited.
- Establish a process of inquiry/complaint that is reviewed by the CAO and senior staff to respond to these inquiries.
- Community participation to be tracked and reviewed by the committee and council where required.
- Feedback to be gathered in various forms. The manner in which it's collected will be based on community preference.
- Equity Impact Assessments and Evaluation tool to be used when creating and reviewing policies, procedures, programs and services.



Key Partners

The Town of Amherst has many community allies and partners.

These include:

- The Cumberland African Nova Scotia Association
- Autumn House
- Bridge Adult Service Centre
- Maggie's Place
- Cumberland YMCA
- Lilac Place (Resource Centre for Women)
- Sexual Health Centre
- Schools Plus
- Cumberland Housing and Homelessness Association
- Cumberland Restorative Justice Society
- Cobequid Housing Authority
- Mental Health and Addictions
- Autism NS
- Senior Safety program
- Amherst 50+ club
- Spring Street Academy
- The Nova Scotia Community College
- Y Reach
- West Highlands Elementary
- Amherst Regional High School
- Amherst and Area Multi-Cultural Society
- After the School Bell
- Amherst Food Assistance Program
- Cumberland County Transportation Society
- Cumberland Adult Education
- Cumberland Early Intervention Program
- Cumberland Pride
- Indigenous Affairs
- In the Works
- E.B. Chandler Junior High



Conclusion

We understand this plan is a living document and as our population continues to grow and age, new issues may arise. We will continue towards meeting the accessibility goals by 2030 as well as advancing equity and addressing systemic racism to improve community well-being.

A young girl with dark hair and a bright smile is the central focus. She has a colorful rainbow face paint on her right cheek. She is wearing a vibrant pink, textured t-shirt. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people and what appears to be an outdoor event setting.

Glossary

A Glossary of terms has been developed in an effort to promote understanding and clarify the terms that are contained in the strategy. It is recognized and understood that these definitions may change over time but will form a foundation for understanding in the current document.

Accessibility: Accessibility involves removing the barriers faced by individuals with a variety of disabilities (which can include but not limited to physical, sensory, cognitive, learning, mental health) and the various barriers (including attitudinal and systemic) that impede an individual's ability to participate in social, cultural, political and economic life. Disabilities can be temporary or permanent. As we age our abilities change and therefore an accessible society is one designed to include everyone and be fluid over time.

Anti-Racism involves actively opposing racism by advocating for changes in political, economic, and social life. It includes understanding one's own privilege, challenging internalized racism, and speaking out against racism when it is seen.

An anti-racist person or organization goes a step further than simply stating they are anti-racist. These individuals and organizations work to understand their own privilege, challenge their own internalized racism and call out racism when they see it impacting others.

Barrier: Something that makes it harder for some people to participate. Nova Scotia's Accessibility Act defines a barrier as "anything that hinders or challenges the full and effective participation in society of persons with disabilities, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice."

Disability: As defined in Nova Scotia's Accessibility Act: "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."

Glossary



Diversity: Vancouver's A Healthy City for All (2014) describes diversity as a term that is often confused for race or culture when in fact it should be used to consider the number of interlocking ways that people are disadvantaged and mistreated, and thus how people from various and marginalized groups or communities feel comfortable, safe and able to access their community spaces and institutions (City of Vancouver, 2014)

Equity: Fairness, impartiality, even-handedness. A distinct process of recognizing differences within groups of individuals and using this understanding to achieve substantive equity in all aspects of a person's life (Government of Canada, 2019)

Inclusion: Acknowledging and valuing people's differences so as to enrich social planning, decision making and quality of life for everyone. In an inclusive Municipality, we each have a sense of belonging, acceptance, and are recognized as valued, contributing members of society. Real inclusion takes place when those already included in the mainstreams learn from those who are excluded and initiate change (City for All Women Institute, 2015)

Institutional Racism: Policies, practices and procedures that work better for white people than people of color, often intentionally or inadvertently (National League of Cities, 2017)

Intersectionality: The intersection, or crossover, of our many identities affect how each of us experiences the Municipality. The intersections occur within a context of connected systems and structures of power (e.g., laws, policies, state governments, other political and economic unions, religious institutions and media (City for all Women, 2015)

Marginalization: Refers to a long-term, structural process of systemic discrimination that creates a class of disadvantaged minorities. These groups become permanently confined to the margins of society; their status is continually reproduced because of various dimensions of exclusion, particularly in the labor market, but also from full and meaningful participation in society (Province of Ontario, 2017)

Glossary



Oppression is when one group benefits at the expense of another, using power and privilege.

Plain Language: Conversational communication that makes sense to the intended audience. The goal of plain language is to communicate so clearly the intended audience can easily find what they need, understand what they find, and use the information (plainlanguagenetwork.org/).

Privilege: The experience of freedoms, rights, benefits, advantages, access and or opportunities afforded to members of a dominant group in a society or in a given context (City of All Women Institute, 2015)

Race: A social construct that artificially divides people into distinct groups based on characteristics such as physical appearance (particularly color), ancestral heritage, ethnic classification, and the social, economic and political needs of a society at a given period of time. Racial categories subsume ethnic groups (Portland Metropolitan Region, 2017)

Racism is when people treat others unfairly because of their race, either personally or through unfair practices in organizations.

Racialization: A process of delineation of group boundaries and of allocation of persons within these boundaries by primary reference to (supposedly) inherent and/or biological (usually phenotypical) characteristics (Province of Ontario, 2017)

Racial Equity: Closing the gap so that race does not predict one's success, while also improving outcomes for all (National League of Cities, 2017)

Structural, Institutional or systemic racism: When institutions or systems create or maintain racial inequity, often as a result of hidden institutional biases in policies, practices and procedures that privilege some groups and disadvantage others (Province of Ontario, 2017)

Systemic racism refers to policies and practices within institutions that unintentionally exclude or promote certain groups.

MEMO

TO: Accessibility, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Committee

FROM: Mallory Klooster, Manager, Community Well-Being

DATE: Wednesday, May 28, 2025

RE: Review of Territorial Acknowledgement

During Council's Strategic Priorities Workshop, one of Council's "points to capture" was to obtain a legal opinion on the matter of updating the current Town of Amherst Territorial Acknowledgement.

Prior to asking our solicitor for advice on the wording, staff has inquired with other Municipalities on the development of their Territorial Acknowledgements to gain insight and understanding of best practices.

The Town of Amherst Territorial Acknowledgement has been included for the committee to review and discuss at this meeting:

"I would like to acknowledge that our gathering today is taking place in (MEEGMA-GEE), the traditional, unceded and ancestral territory of the Mi'kmaw people. I would also like to acknowledge that Nova Scotia has another unique people. These are the Indigenous Blacks of Nova Scotia whose legacy and contributions date back over 400 years predating confederation of this land. We are all treaty people."

The Town's Territorial Acknowledgement Policy is attached, along with examples of other Municipal Territorial Acknowledgements.

TITLE: Territorial Land Acknowledgement
SECTION: Executive Office
POLICY NO: 10530-33

APPROVAL DATE: May 23/23

CAO Signature: 

PURPOSE

This policy will provide a corporate Territorial Acknowledgement and an overview of when it should be used relative to Town of Amherst committee meetings and events.

POLICY

The Territorial Acknowledgement will be placed on the agenda following the Call to Order of all Town of Amherst Council and Committee meetings agendas.

The Territorial Acknowledgement will also be read at Town of Amherst events where the public is being formally addressed.

The Town of Amherst Territorial Acknowledgement will read as follows:

"I would like to acknowledge that our gathering today is taking place in (MEEG-MA-GEE), the traditional, unceded and ancestral territory of the Mi'kmaw people. I would also like to acknowledge that Nova Scotia has another unique people. These are the Indigenous Blacks of Nova Scotia whose legacy and contributions date back over 400 years predating confederation of this land. We are all treaty people."

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Title/Role	Responsibilities
Clerk	Ensure policy is kept up to date and added to all Committee meeting agenda templates.
All Staff	Ensure the Territorial Acknowledgement is made at any events where the public is formally addressed.

For Administrative Use Only:

VERSION LOG

Amendment Description	Policy Owner	Approved By	Approval Date
New Policy	Clerk, LeBlanc	Council	May 23, 2023

Territorial Acknowledgements Examples

Location	Land/Territorial Acknowledgement	Development
Cumberland County	We acknowledge that we are in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people.	
East Hants	I would like to begin by acknowledging that we are in Mi'kma'ki (MEEG-MAGEE) and the District of Sipekne'katik, (SA-BAGON-NAG-ITI), the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq (MEEG-MAW) people. East Hants further acknowledges the 50 African Nova Scotian communities whose 400-year history have contributed to the provinces culture, history and legacies. We are all Treaty people.	Completed a staff report that went to Council and took a look at what other municipalities in our area did for land acknowledgements. They tried to personalize it to their area and align it with their corporate values.
Halifax	The Halifax Regional Municipality is located in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and traditional lands of the Mi'kmaq people. The Municipality acknowledges the Peace & Friendship Treaties signed in this Territory and recognizes that we are all Treaty People.	
New Glasgow	The Town of New Glasgow would like to acknowledge that we are on the land known as Mi'kma'ki (MEEG-MAGEE), the traditional territory of the Mi'kmaq people. The Mi'kmaq are the first people of this land and have been here in present-day Nova Scotia for more than 10,000 years. Today, Nova Scotia continues to be home to over 24,000 Aboriginals, including well over 13,000 Mi'kmaq. Pictou Landing First Nation is the Mi'kmaq community closest to us with a population of 470 members living on-reserve. To learn more visit Pictou Landing First Nation .	
Truro	The Town of Truro is in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaw People, and is subject to the Treaties of Peace and Friendship. The Town of Truro is situated in a region long inhabited by Indigenous Peoples.	

<p>Kentville</p>	<p>Kentville resides within the ancestral territory of the Mi'kmaq people. We acknowledge that our work is located within unceded and unsurrendered Mi'kmaq Territory. We all have a responsibility and accountability to uphold in the process of Truth and Reconciliation.</p>	<p>Did not consult Indigenous groups but did reach out to some strong organizations when making it. Used IONS language which was crafted by professionals who work in reconciliation.</p> <p>In conversation with their Neighborhood Outreach Program Coordinator, they did suggest connecting with both Indigenous and African Nova Scotian groups to build relationships and see how they would like to be acknowledged.</p>
<p>Annapolis Valley</p>	<p>We acknowledge that we are in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People. This territory is covered by the "Treaties of Peace and Friendship" which Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) People first signed with the British Crown in 1725. The treaties did not deal with surrender of lands and resources but in fact recognized Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) title and established the rules for what was to be an ongoing relationship between nations.</p> <p>We also acknowledge that people of African descent have been in Nova Scotia for over 400 years, and we honour and offer gratitude to those ancestors of African descent who came before us to this land.</p>	<p>Use standard provincial acknowledgements that NS gov't also shares. But think it's a great idea to meet with indigenous communities as well as other underrepresented communities to have a more individualized acknowledgement so it doesn't feel like "checking a box".</p>

MEMO

TO: Accessibility, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Committee
FROM: Mallory Klooster, Manager, Community Well-Being
DATE: Wednesday, May 28, 2025
RE: Legion Request to Name Green Space

The Amherst Legion has made a request to Amherst Town Council to consider naming the green space next to Town Hall.

In keeping with the spirit of inclusion and diversity, it has been suggested to choose a Mi'kmaw name and to consult with our Indigenous community as well as the AIDE Committee to support the Legion and Town in choosing an appropriate name.

Staff will bring all recommendations back to Council in the fall.

A letter from Lorne Baird, Legion President, is attached.



**Branch 10
Amherst**

The Royal Canadian Legion
Branch name and number

47 LaPlanche Street
Amherst, NS B0L 1C0

Phone: 1-902-667-8487
amherstlegion@outlook.com

1 February 2025

Town of Amherst
98 East Victoria St
Amherst, NS
B4H 1X6

Diversity and Inclusion Committee

Ref: Telephone conversation Lorne Baird/Hal Davidson

During subject conversation, I mentioned to Deputy Mayor, Hal Davidson, that the green space next to town hall should have a proper name. This is the location that has the mural, number 2 Combat Battalion Stone and the Afghanistan Memorial.

In keeping with the spirit of inclusion and diversity, I suggest a Mi'Maw name. There is a similar place out west named Kwikwexwlhp (Kweekweekwelf) which, in the Salish language means "healing place".

I would ask that your committee consult one of our Mi'Maw brothers or sister to find an appropriate name.
• Thank you for your consideration.

L. B. Baird CD
President
RCL Br 10