



Digital Government and Service NL

# **Buildings Accessibility**

## **Advisory Board**

### **Annual Activity Report**

2019-20

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**Website:** [www.gov.nl.ca/dgsnl/](http://www.gov.nl.ca/dgsnl/)

**PAPER**

**Digital Government and Service NL  
P. O. Box 8700, Confederation Building  
St. John's, NL A1B 4J6  
Telephone: 709.729.4834 Fax: 709.729.4754  
E-mail: [servicenlinfo@gov.nl.ca](mailto:servicenlinfo@gov.nl.ca)**

**REFERENCE PERIOD**

**This report covers the period April 1, 2019 through March 31, 2020,  
the fiscal year of the Buildings Accessibility Advisory Board.**

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## Chairperson's Message

As a member of the Buildings Accessibility Advisory Board, I am pleased to submit the Annual Activity Report for 2019-20. This report is prepared in compliance with the **Transparency and Accountability Act**, which categorizes the board as a Category three government entity and requires the board to submit an annual report. The board is accountable for the preparation of this report and for the results reported.

On behalf of the members of the Buildings Accessibility Advisory Board, I would like to re-affirm our commitment to working with all stakeholders in order to provide strategic advice to the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL on the application of the **Buildings Accessibility Act** and its associated regulations.

Yours truly,



Dennis Gill  
Chair

## **Overview**

The Buildings Accessibility Advisory Board is appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council under the authority of section 18 of the **Buildings Accessibility Act** (the Act). The board consists of a chairperson, representatives of persons with disabilities, one representative of the Department of Digital Government and Service NL (other than the Director of Engineering and Inspection Services), and those other members whom the Lieutenant Governor in Council may appoint. This public body serves solely in an advisory capacity. Members of the board in 2019-20 were:

- Dennis Gill, Chairperson
- Emily Fouchard
- Robert Menchenton
- Brittany Mouland
- Randy Sooley
- Rose Wilson

## **Mandate**

The mandate of the board is to report to and advise the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL on the application of the Act and its associated regulations, and on other matters related to the Act and regulations that may be assigned to the board by the Minister.

## **Highlights and Partnerships**

Generally speaking, the board's clients are those who benefit from improvements resulting from the board's advice and the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL, to whom the board provides advice. More broadly, however, the board's clients are the general public, particularly those with disabilities and those representing the interests of persons with disabilities. The Board engages with such groups as the Architects' Association, Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador, NL Construction Association, Building Operations – Department of Transportation and Infrastructure, Hospitality NL, Board of Trade, Universal Design, Professional Engineers and Geoscientists NL (PEGNL), NL English School District (NLESD), and Office of the Senior's Advocate.

## **Revenues and Expenditures**

The Buildings Accessibility Advisory Board has no revenues. The Board is funded through the operating budget of the Digital Government and Services Branch of Digital Government and Service NL. The Buildings Accessibility Advisory Board is not required to submit audited financial statements.

## **Report on Performance**

Report on 2019-20 Objective

**Objective:** By March 31, 2020, the Buildings Accessibility Advisory Board will have fulfilled all the requirements under the Act by advising on matters pertaining to accessibility in buildings, associated entrances, parking spaces, walkways and other facilities, as per its mandate.

**Indicators:**

- Meetings held, as required.
- Advice provided to Minister on the application of the Act and the regulations.
- Other activities undertaken, as assigned by the Minister.

Results Achieved:

The Buildings Accessibility Advisory Board met on two occasions during 2019–2020 to continue a comprehensive review of the Act. In-Person meetings were held on July 30-31, 2019, and November 13-14, 2019. No meetings were held for the remainder of this reporting year due to COVID-19.

During the four days of deliberations, various sections of the Act, last amended in 2014, came under scrutiny, particularly Section 5 and the Board engaged its key stakeholders in discussions and presentations.

Recommendations on changes to the Act have been drafted, and, after a final review by the Board, will be presented to the Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

No other activities were assigned by the Minister.

Report on 2017-20 Goal

**Objective:** By March 31, 2018, 2019 and 2020, the Buildings Accessibility Advisory Board will have fulfilled all the requirements under the Act by advising on matters pertaining to accessibility in buildings, associated entrances, parking spaces, walkways and other facilities, as per its mandate.

**Indicators:**

- Meetings held, as required.
- Advice provided to Minister on the application of the Act and the regulations.
- Other activities undertaken, as assigned by the Minister.

Results Achieved:

The Board did not meet 2017-2018; this was an in-between board appointments hiatus. The new Board, appointed in August 2018, included six members from diverse communities and backgrounds with a plethora of experience and a superb skill set. The Board first met on January 29, 2019 and were joined by a representative from Digital Government and Service NL. The other meeting that year was held on March 13-14, 2019. During 2019-20, two, two-day meetings were held in July and November 2019. All meetings were held in St. John's. The primary goal for these series of meetings, as prescribed by the Minister, was to do a

thorough review of the Act, and recommend revisions and changes. That goal was accomplished. The subsequent phase is to review the Regulations with a view to suggested improvements.

## **Opportunities and Challenges Ahead**

### **Opportunities**

- To support bringing the building accessibility needs of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to the attention of the Provincial Government.
- To maintain and enhance communication with Newfoundlanders and Labradorians with building accessibility needs.
- To support the continued enhancement of building accessibility in Newfoundland and Labrador.

### **Challenges**

- To ensure building accessibility legislation, regulations, and practices meet the needs of a diverse community.
- COVID-19 issues have impacted building accessibility since March 15, 2020. Improvements to buildings (i.e., accessibility) have been delayed or halted. In some buildings, where pedestrian traffic was re-routed or confined, barriers were encountered.