



# Municipality of the District of Clare

# Accessibility Plan

# 2025-2028

December 2025



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## MESSAGE FROM THE COMMITTEE CHAIR

As Chair of the Municipality of Clare's Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC), I am pleased to present our renewed Accessibility Plan as the Municipality of Clare continues its commitment to be welcoming, inclusive and accepting to all people. Since the initiation of the first plan in 2023, we have accomplished many important goals and have gained momentum in becoming a more equitable and barrier-free community.

This initiative is the result of a collaboration between the Municipality of Clare, Clare's Accessibility Advisory Committee, the Nova Scotia Accessibility Directorate, Inclusion Clare and members of the public by way of an online survey, public open house and various engagement sessions in November of 2025.

On behalf of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, I would like to thank the community members, partners, and municipal staff who have helped shape this plan. Your voices, experiences, and insights are central to this work. Together, we will continue to learn, grow, and take action to create a Clare where everyone belongs.



### Réanne Evans

Réanne Evans  
Committee Chair  
Accessibility Advisory Committee  
Councillor, District 1  
Municipality of Clare

## DEFINITIONS

**Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC):** A volunteer committee established by a municipality to advise the municipal council on identifying, preventing, and eliminating barriers for people with diverse abilities in the municipality's programs, services, initiatives, and facilities. At least half of the advisory committee members are people with diverse abilities, represent a person with a disability, or represent an organization representing people with diverse abilities.

**Disability:** According to the definition in the Nova Scotia Accessibility Act: "A physical, mental, intellectual, learning or sensory impairment, including an episodic disability, which, in interaction with a barrier, prevents a person from participating fully and effectively in society."

**Barrier:** The Nova Scotia Accessibility Act defines a barrier as "anything that hinders or challenges the full and effective participation of people with diverse abilities in society, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communication barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice."

**Accessibility:** Eliminating barriers.

**Equity:** Equity means that everyone is treated fairly, according to their needs and abilities.

**Diversity:** Diversity recognizes the importance of committing to the inclusion of people with different life experiences.

**Inclusion:** A commitment to respect and value all people fairly and to offer them access to the same opportunities.

**Clear language:** Written or spoken language that a person can easily and completely understand.

## INTRODUCTION

The updated Municipality of Clare Accessibility Plan 2025-2028 is the result of active consultation with community members. It outlines our concrete commitments to removing barriers and improving accessibility and inclusion for people with diverse abilities. This plan is based on the objectives of the [\*Accessibility Act of Nova Scotia\* \(2017\)](#) and the [\*Access by Design 2030: Achieving an Accessible Nova Scotia\*](#) strategy.

## OUR COMMUNITY

The Municipality of Clare was established in 1768 and incorporated in 1879. Clare is the only municipality in Nova Scotia that officially operates in both of Canada's official languages. It is proudly Acadian and a member of the Welcoming Francophone Communities initiative.

The Municipality of Clare is comprised of 48 villages along St. Mary's Bay and inland. Clare covers 851 square kilometers in Digby County, in southwestern Nova Scotia. Located between the municipalities of Digby and Yarmouth, Clare has a population of 7,678 (2021 census), with a population density of approximately 9 people per square kilometre.

## COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

In addition to meetings with the Accessibility Advisory Committee, five consultation approaches were chosen to hear the voices of community members. These consultations guided the development of the updated plan.

A public survey was conducted, and four engagement sessions were held, including three with organizations that include first-voice. The following consultations were held:

1. Engagement session at Inclusion Clare
2. Engagement session at *Université Sainte-Anne*
3. Engagement session at *Villa d'la Baie*
4. Public open house at the *Centre communautaire d'la Baie Sainte Marie*, with the Municipality of Clare to listen to community voices
5. A public survey was conducted, and nearly 200 responses were received.

## IDENTIFIED ACCESSIBILITY CHALLENGES

These meetings helped to identify the main accessibility challenges for the community. The top two challenges are as follows:

1. Transportation difficulties limit employment opportunities and participation in community life.
2. The lack of sidewalks and pedestrian crossings in the most frequented areas.

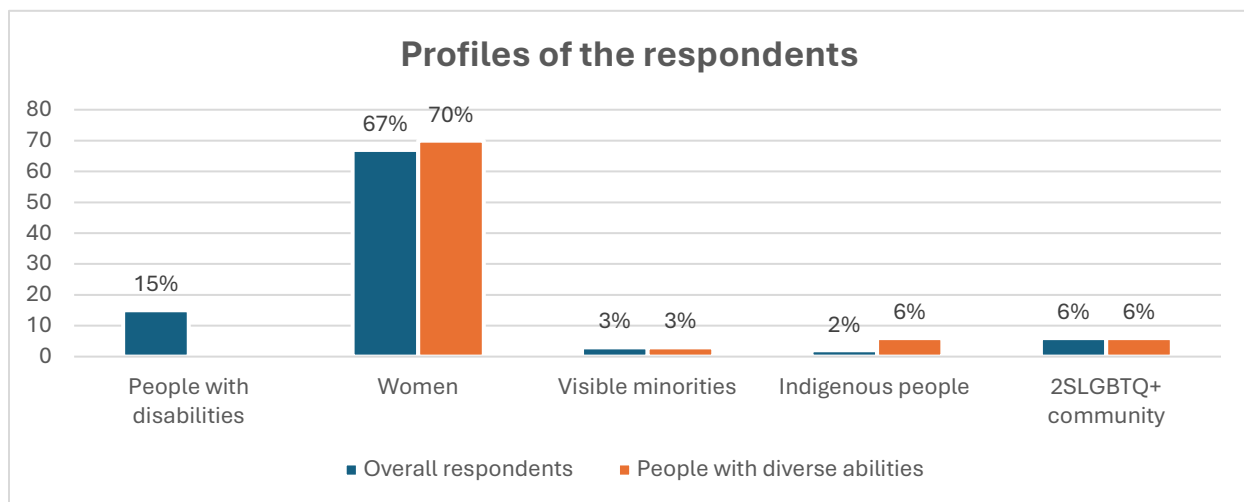
## SUGGESTIONS

In response to the above noted challenges, the following two priorities were put forward:

1. A transportation service offering regular schedules and affordable fares for people with diverse abilities, students, seniors, and the general population.
2. The installation of sidewalks and pedestrian crossings in the most frequented areas.

## KEY SURVEY POINTS

### PROFILES OF THE RESPONDENTS

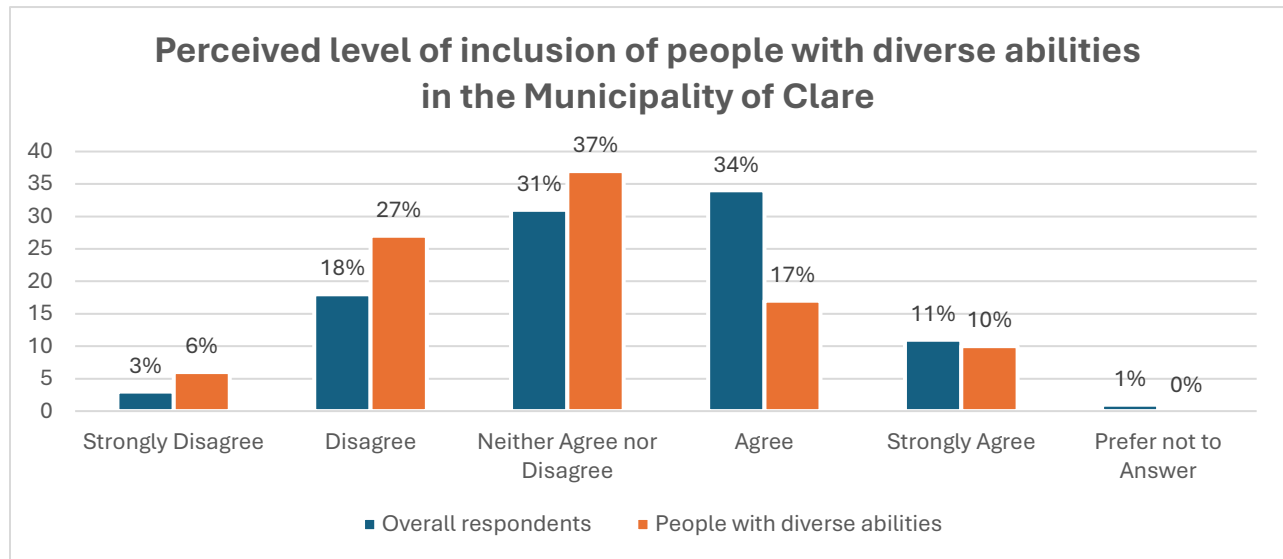


Of the 199 people who participated in the survey:

- 15.74% identified as people with diverse abilities
- 67.84% identified as women
- 3.05% identified as visible minorities
- 2.03% identified as Indigenous people
- 6.09% identified as 2SLGBTQ+

- 31 people self-identified as having a disability. Of those 31 people:
  - 70.97% identified as women
  - 3.23% identified as visible minorities
  - 6.45% identified as Indigenous people
  - 6.45% identified as a member of the 2SLGBTQ+ community

## PERCEIVED LEVEL OF INCLUSION OF PEOPLE WITH DIVERSE ABILITIES IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF CLARE



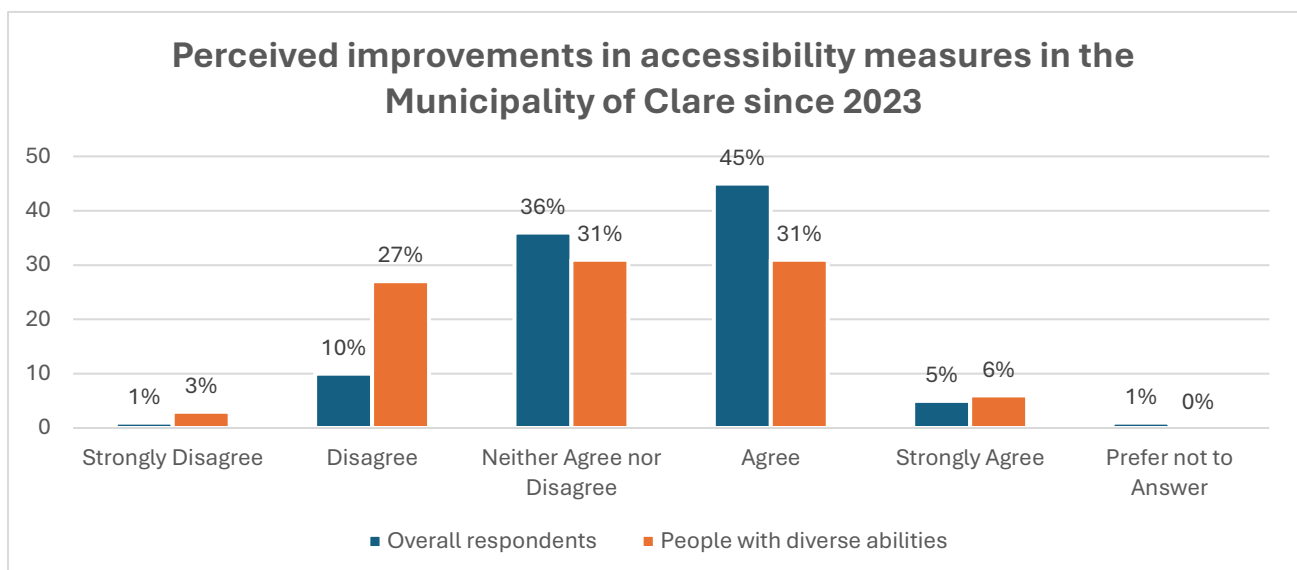
This question aimed to identify the perceived level of inclusion of people with diverse abilities in the Municipality of Clare. The following is the perceived level of inclusion overall as per the survey results:

- **45.76%** agree (34.46%) or strongly agree (11.30%)

Meanwhile, those who identified as people with diverse abilities answered as follows:

- **27.58%** agree (17.24%) or strongly agree (10.34%)

## PERCEIVED IMPROVEMENTS IN ACCESSIBILITY MEASURES IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF CLARE SINCE 2023 (YEAR OF ADOPTION OF THE LATEST ACCESSIBILITY PLAN)



This question aimed to identify the perceived improvements in accessibility measures in the Municipality of Clare since the first Accessibility Plan was launched in 2023.

The following is the perceived level of improvements overall as per the survey results:

- **50.28%** agree (45.20%) or strongly agree (5.08%)

Meanwhile, those who identified as people with diverse abilities answered as follows:

- **37.93%** agree (31.03%) or strongly agree (6.90%)

KEY CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED THROUGH PUBLIC SURVEY RESULTS - TRANSPORTATION

Of the 124 challenges mentioned, 42 relate to transportation difficulties, making it the primary challenge identified through the survey results. This issue also recurs frequently in other themes. Transportation has a significant impact on socio-professional integration and remains a challenge in many rural areas.

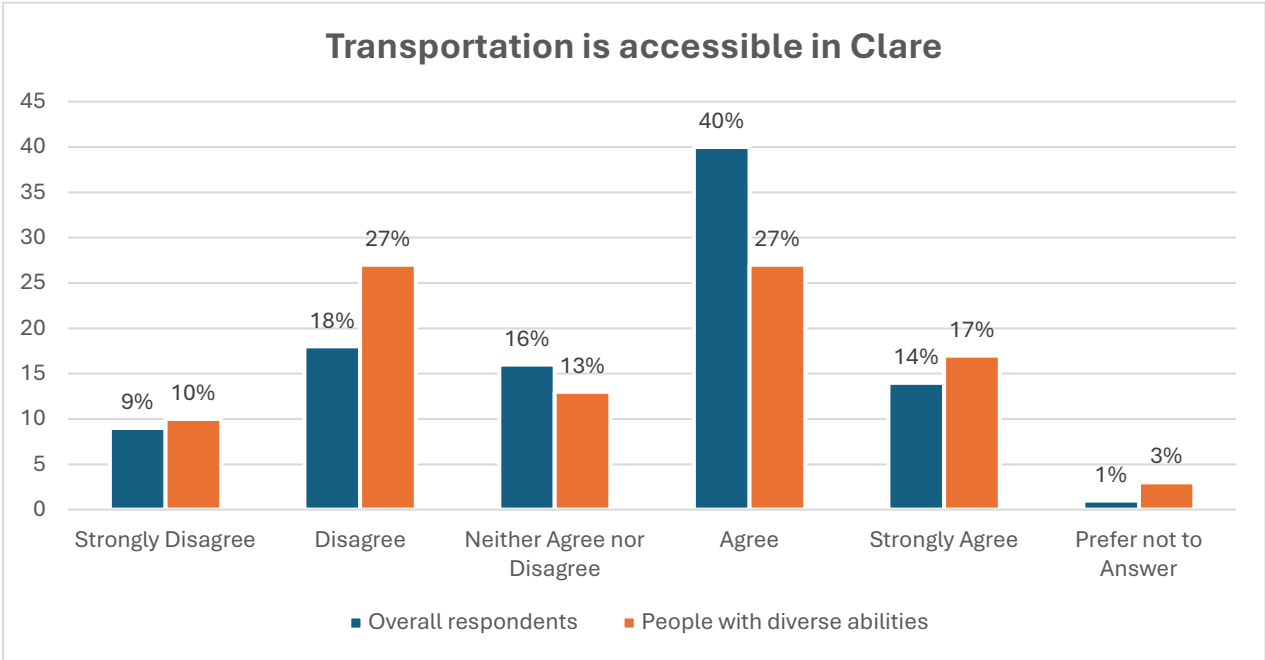
This question aimed to identify whether respondents felt transportation is accessible in Clare. The overall results are as follows:

- **27.68%** disagree (18.64%) or strongly disagree (9.04%)

Those with diverse abilities indicated:

- **37.93%** disagree (27.59%) or strongly disagree (10.34%)

As noted above, transportation is the main accessibility challenge identified in this plan.

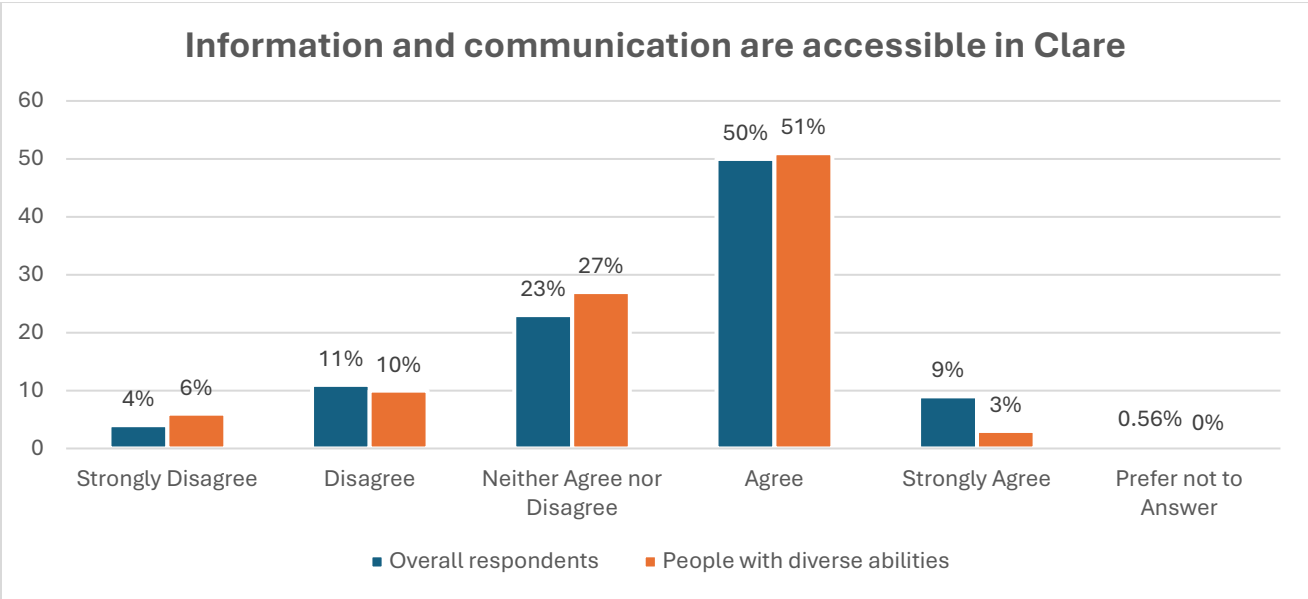




MOST ACCESSIBLE AREAS IDENTIFIED THROUGH PUBLIC SURVEY RESULTS

The three most accessible areas identified through the public survey results are information and communications, goods and services and built environment.

1. Information and communication are accessible in Clare:



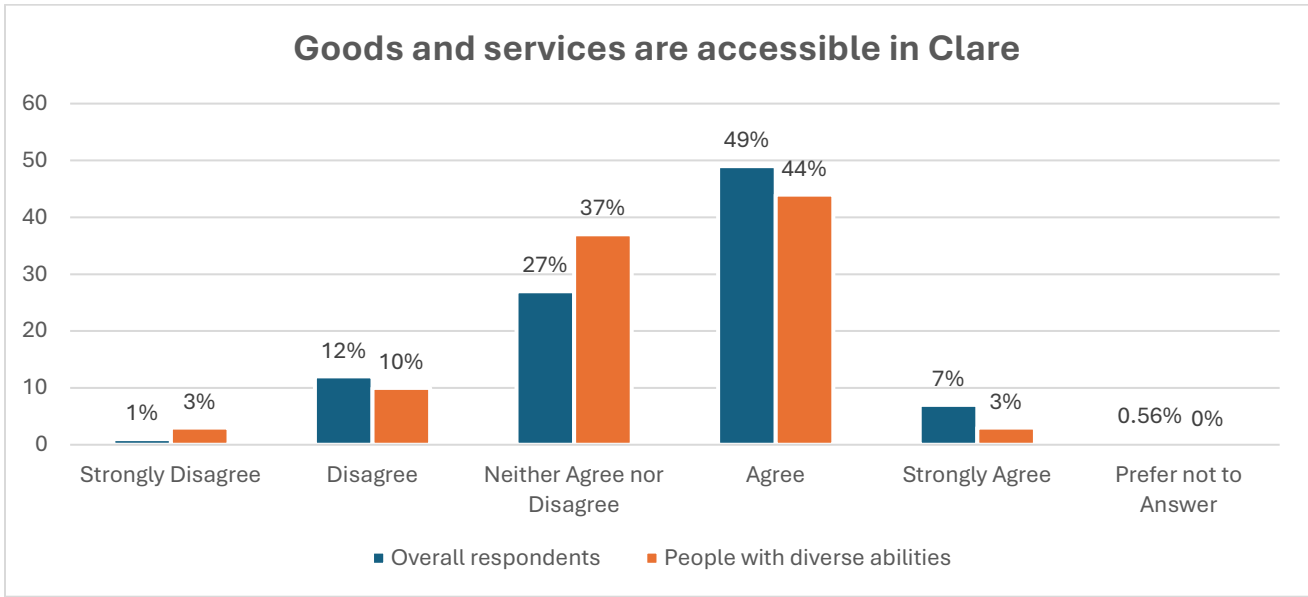
Here are the overall results when we asked if information and communications are accessible in Clare:

- 59.32% agree (50.28%) or strongly agree (9.04%)

Those with diverse abilities indicated:

- 55.17% agree (51.72%) or strongly agree (3.45%)

2. Goods and services are accessible in Clare:



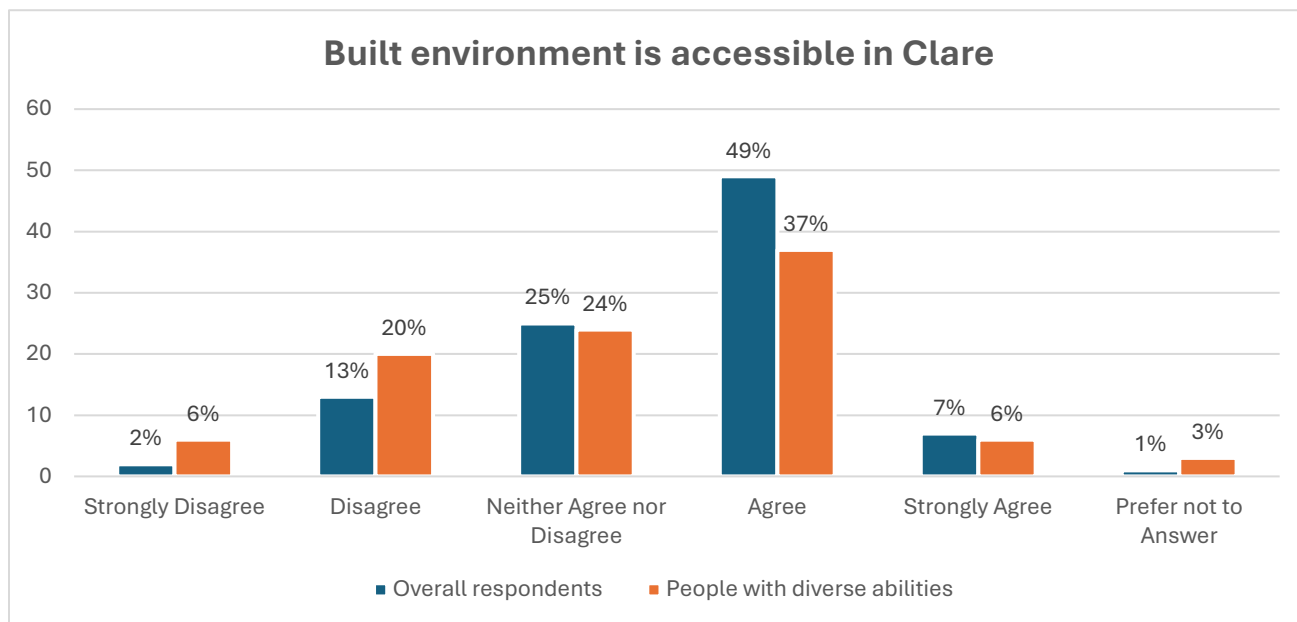
Here are the overall results when we asked if information and communications are accessible in Clare:

- **57.06%** agree (49.15%) or strongly agree (7.91%)

Those with diverse abilities indicated:

- **48.28%** agree (44.83%) or strongly agree (3.45%)

### 3. Built environment is accessible in Clare:



Here are the overall results when we asked if the built environment is accessible in Clare:

- **57.06%** agree (49.15%) or strongly agree (7.91%)

Those with diverse abilities indicated:

- **44.83%** agree (37.93%) or strongly agree (6.90%)

## WORK IN PROGRESS

This section lists the actions that will be completed shortly.

### TRANSPORTATION

- Active transportation plan: In development and will be adopted in spring 2026. The plan will guide future investments in active transportation infrastructure.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

- Update of the municipal website to the EN 301 549 accessibility standard in 2026.

## ACHIEVEMENTS

### BUILT ENVIRONMENT

- Construction of the new Clare Veterans Centre (a multi-use community centre) to fully accessible standards
- Elevator installed at Clare Health Centre
- Accessible features added to Wentworth Lake Park: restrooms, picnic shelters, signage, ramp, accessible kayak launch
- Accessible features added to the Havelock Community Centre: accessible picnic shelter
- The sidewalks in Meteghan have been redone to make them more accessible. They have been widened, resurfaced and extended to the new Villa Acadienne.



Image description: a picture of the exterior of the new Clare Veterans Centre with clear blue skies.



Image description: a picture of the accessible kayak launch at Wentworth Lake Park.



Image description: an automatic door opener installed at the municipal office.

### GOODS AND SERVICES

- Purchase of an all-terrain wheelchair and a floating beach chair for the equipment loan program

## EMPLOYMENT

- Audit of the municipal office carried out to improve accessibility for employees

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

- The Communications Officer followed training sessions on plain language
- The Baie Sainte-Marie Tourism website has been updated and now meets the EN 301 549 accessibility standard
- The Gran Fondo Baie-Sainte Marie website is currently being updated to meet the EN 301 549 accessibility standard
- Several forms used by residents to apply to municipal programs have been updated to ensure accessibility by default (minimum font size 12, legible fonts, contrasting colours, and plain language)

## ONGOING COMMITMENTS

### GOODS AND SERVICES

- Each summer, CJA camp staff receive training on supporting individuals with ADHD and ODD, as well as on adapting games to different abilities
- Summer 2025 saw a change of venue for Canada Day celebrations to offer an accessible site
- Ensuring that events are crafted to be able to accommodate all individuals (wheelchair accessible, adapted play available, etc.)
- Continuing to offer specific programming such as Access Awareness Week, the Special Olympics Send-off Party, and the Terry Fox Run
- Continuing to develop accessible forms for municipal program applications



Image description: Flag raising ceremony during Access Awareness Week in May 2025.

## EMPLOYMENT

- Inclusion Clare is our partner for the execution of work contracts at the Clare Veterans Centre (setting up and taking down tables and chairs)
- Job postings for municipal employment opportunities contain an accommodation request clause

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

- Images are being uploaded with alt text for screen readers on social media and on the website
- Printed documents are designed to be accessible by default (size, font, color) and are available in different formats on request (such as large print)
- Simple and clear language is used
- Continuing to improve how accessibility information for programs and events is communicated, such as clearly indicating wheelchair accessibility and other accommodation details.

## TRANSPORTATION

- Annual financial contribution to Transport de Clare (\$30,000)



Image description: The Clare Special Olympics team in front of the Transport de Clare bus.



# ACTION PLAN

## BUILT ENVIRONMENT

### **Action 1.1: Install accessible signage in municipal buildings and public spaces for people living with a visual impairment**

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#### **Action details**

- Ensure all signage in municipal buildings and public spaces (i.e. municipal parks, community skating rink, etc.) follows the accessible signage CSA/ASC B651:23 standard, accessible design standard for the built environment (brail, high contrast, font and text size, etc.)

#### **Responsibilities**

- Department of community development, communications

#### **Impacts on accessibility**

- Increased ease of orientation in municipal buildings and public spaces

#### **Timeline**

- 2026

### **Action 1.2: Analyze municipal buildings requiring accessibility work according to the CSA/ASC B651:23 standard and Built Environment Accessibility Standard**

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#### **Action details**

- Select the priority needs of municipal buildings for accessibility work using the CSA B651-23 standard and the Built Environment Accessibility Standard

#### **Responsibilities**

- Municipal Council, municipal administration, department of public works, department of community development

#### **Impacts on accessibility**

- Increased accessibility of municipal buildings

#### **Timeline**

- 2028

## GOODS AND SERVICES

### **Action 2.1: Add a legend to identify the accessibility types for all municipal programs and services**

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#### **Action details**

- Ensure all municipal communication about programs include the universal symbols of accessibility with their descriptions (online and in print)

#### **Responsibilities**

- All municipal departments

#### **Impacts on accessibility**

- Increased sense of belonging among people with diverse abilities

#### **Timeline**

- 2026

### **Action 2.2: Acquire accessible rental equipment for recreation activities**

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#### **Action details**

- Assessing the accessibility of new equipment for leisure activities and adaptation to the environmental context

#### **Responsibilities**

- Recreation services

#### **Impacts on accessibility**

- Increased participation of people with diverse abilities in leisure programs

#### **Timeline**

- 2028

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

### **Action 3.1: Develop partnerships with businesses and community organizations to reach different population groups**

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#### **Action details**

- Ask businesses and organizations in the community to share municipal information with their respective clients and groups, to inform people who do not have internet access

**Responsibilities**

- Communications

**Impacts on accessibility**

- Increased sense of belonging for people with diverse abilities who do not have internet access

**Timeline**

- 2026

**Action 3.2: Anticipate the need for accommodations for participation in community events**

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**Action details**

- Include a section for accommodation needs, where possible, in municipal registration forms for participation in community events.
- Develop an internal directory of accessibility resources to promote the sharing of information

**Responsibilities**

- Communications, department of community development

**Impacts on accessibility**

- Increased accessibility of community events for people with diverse abilities

**Timeline**

- 2026

**Action 3.3: Add audio recordings for online communications**

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**Action details**

- Include audio recordings adapted to the language spoken in the region for online communications

**Responsibilities**

- Communications service

**Impacts on accessibility**

- Increased accessibility of municipal information for people with diverse abilities

**Timeline**

- 2028



## EMPLOYMENT

### Action 4.1: Provide accessibility training to municipal staff and Council

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#### Action details

- Develop an accessibility training program for staff members who are currently employed or starting a new position, as well as for the municipal council

#### Responsibilities

- EDIA Coordinator

#### Impacts on accessibility

- Developing an accessible and inclusive work environment for people with diverse abilities

#### Timeline

- 2026

### Action 4.2: Ensure the accessibility of the recruitment and retention stages for people with diverse abilities working for the municipality

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#### Action details

- Analyze current policies
- Develop new policies that are sensitive to the concepts of inclusion and accessibility

#### Responsibilities

- EDIA Coordinator, municipal Council and staff

#### Impacts on accessibility

- Increased hiring and retention of people with diverse abilities at the municipality

#### Timeline

- 2026

## TRANSPORTATION

### Action 5.1: Support the partnership with Transport de Clare

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#### Action details

- Facilitating connections through the optimization of digital tools (improved booking interface and information accessible via voice synthesis)
- Continue financial support

### **Responsibilities**

- EDIA Coordinator, municipal Council

### **Impacts on accessibility**

- Increased ease of travel planning for people with diverse abilities

### **Timeline**

- 2026

## **Action 5.2: Support the development of a transit service**

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### **Action details**

- Study the feasibility of a transit service with regular timetables and affordable fares, complementary to Transport de Clare

### **Responsibilities**

- EDIA Coordinator, communication, department of community development

### **Impacts on accessibility**

- Increased socio-professional integration for people with diverse abilities and members of the community, including students
- Increased attractiveness of the community for new people who want to visit or settle in Clare

### **Timeline**

- 2026

## **MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING**

Monitoring, evaluation, and learning are necessary to achieve concrete results in accessibility. The stakeholders listed below play a crucial role in this process:

- The Accessibility Advisory Committee makes recommendations to municipal Council on the identification, prevention and elimination of barriers for people with diverse abilities.
- The Accessibility Advisory Committee holds quarterly meetings to review progress and commitments outlined in the plan and produces a performance report for municipal Council before March 31<sup>st</sup> of each year.
- The municipal council is responsible for adopting and overseeing the accessibility plan.
- The EDIA Coordinator oversees the implementation of the plan, as well as listening to the accessibility needs of the population and people with diverse abilities.

- Department heads ensure that the commitments outlined in the accessibility plan are reflected and implemented in the municipality's action plans, as per the requirements of the Nova Scotia Accessibility Act.



Image description: A group of people stacking their hands together.

## OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

### **Establishment of an EDIA Committee**

To recognize the relationship between equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) and accessibility, it would be beneficial for the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) to include the EDI component in 2026. This would facilitate the monitoring of the EDI plan and the accessibility plan, as well as related issues. Furthermore, it would prepare for the merging of the two plans in 2028.

### **Merging of the EDIA and accessibility plans**

As recommended in the EDIA plan adopted in March 2025, merging the EDIA plan and the accessibility plan would be beneficial. It is suggested that the work of merging and updating the plans begin in September 2027.

## CONTACT

For any questions or more information about this plan, please contact the municipality's EDIA Coordinator by email at [edia@munclare.ca](mailto:edia@munclare.ca) or by phone at 902-260-5132.