

**C.A. Pippy Park Commission
2024-2026 Accessibility Plan**

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Welcome Message / Introduction

The C.A. Pippy Park Commission (the PPC) is a Crown corporation established under the laws of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. The 1,375-hectare land mass that comprises Pippy Park provides space for a diversity of learning institutions, government buildings and open spaces for relaxation and recreation.

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is committed to improving accessibility and inclusion throughout the province. The C.A. Pippy Park Commission fully supports this commitment and seeks to remove barriers, enhance accessibility and enable inclusion within the Park.

Thousands of people work, learn, volunteer, relax, and play in Pippy Park daily, and the Park has evolved as the most identifiable natural landscape feature of the St. John's capital region. It is the primary vision of the Commission to ensure that this identity is sustainable and enhanced into the future through efficient operation of its commercial facilities and stewardship of the natural features inherited from the foresight that established the Park over five decades ago.

In addition to operating one of the largest campgrounds in the Province the Park has many open spaces, trails and playgrounds that are commonly used by the public. Having all of these spaces inclusive and more accessible to a continuum of users is of the utmost importance to the C.A. Pippy Park Commission.

In order to create this Accessibility Plan the Pippy Park Commission participated in a consultation session or consulted directly with the user groups below to solicit feedback on how the Park can be more inclusive and accessible for all visitors and staff.

- Easter Seals NL
- Inclusion NL
- Canadian Hard of Hearing Association
- Coalition of Persons with Disabilities NL
- Epilepsy NL
- NL Association of the Deaf
- CNIB
- Autism Society of NL
- Lifewise

Achievements to Date

- Pippy Park's website www.pippypark.com and social media have been updated to make it more accessible and user friendly (approved and done in consultation with the OCIO and GNL's accessibility requirements).
- A number of campsites are wheelchair accessible and have accessible picnic tables.
- A review is currently ongoing to upgrade the four comfort stations in the Campground and the Pippy Park Head Office to be fully accessible and inclusive spaces.
- The family garden area in Pippy Park has a ramp for wheelchair access/access for those with mobility aids and raised gardening beds.
- Pippy Park already has a number of user groups that reside in the Park who are responsible for increasing awareness and improving accessibility and inclusion such as Easter Seals and Rainbow Riders.

Accessibility Goals

Of note, we have gathered information on effective practices related to accessibility and inclusion for Parks, as well as resources, from a number of disability organizations, which we have included in an annex to this report.

Goal 1: Pippy Park will be an inclusive and accessible environment – both built and natural.

Objectives:

- We will install additional accessible equipment in the playground.
- We will have at least 10 fully accessible campsites.
- Renovations or new builds in the Park will meet or exceed all accessibility requirements.

Activities:

- We will engage a contractor with expertise in universal design to review all of Pippy Park's spaces and facilities. Over the course of the plan, we also will draw on the expertise of key groups such as the Coalition of Persons with Disabilities, CNIB, the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association, NL Association for the Deaf, Lifewise and the Autism Society of NL, among others, to support our planning. In particular, we will review campsites to ensure these are broadly accessible, beyond what might be amenable to those with mobility impairments/wheelchair users. For example, is there a specific site which would be most responsive to a family with a child who has autism?
- We will consult with the City of St. John's and invite Easter Seals in relation to increasing accessibility to the playground; it is anticipated they can provide effective practices for design, implementation and maintenance, as well as identify how the playgrounds might have evolved over the years to meet emerging disability needs.
- We will invite representatives from Easter Seals, CNIB and others (including children with a range of disabilities) to test out the playground equipment and, more broadly provide information on accessibility in the park.
- We will endeavor to identify ways to ensure the Park is sensory friendly – e.g., through consultation with the Autism Society of NL and Lifewise.

Goal 2: Pippy Park will have an inclusive policy framework.

Objectives:

- Pippy Park will establish or amend policies and procedures to ensure inclusion and accessibility are considered in all operations in Pippy Park.
- Pippy Park will implement a process for ongoing review of all policies and operational guidelines for inclusion and accessibility.

Activities:

- Our review will begin with policies which relate to internal operations and oversight – e.g., recruitment/onboarding, personnel policies, emergency preparedness, governance, to ensure that, as written and implemented, these are not exclusionary.
- We will then undertake a review of policies which are related to delivery of Park services – e.g., reservation system, park staff roles and responsibilities, to ensure these are inclusive in nature.
- One focus will be to ensure the terminology used in the policies is up-to-date when referring to persons with disabilities.
- We will consult with the Coalition of Persons with Disabilities to identify key issue areas of which we should be aware as we conduct the review.

Goal 3: Pippy Park will ensure all communications (e.g., signage, website, promotional materials) are easy to understand and/or use so as to enable an equivalent user experience for diverse audiences.

Objectives:

- We will employ the best practices in accessible communication.
- We will review our current communication practices to identify areas for improvement.
- We will engage with experts in our community to identify needed adaptive technology for use by Pippy Park staff and visitors.

Activities:

- We will have experts from groups such as CNIB and the Learning Disabilities Association conduct a secondary check on our updated website to ensure it is meeting all current guidelines – such as CNIB’s Clear Print Guidelines

- We will use existing tools and resources, such as those detailed above, to ensure all print communication – brochures, email, signs – is accessible (e.g., employing correct font, print size, contrasting colors; placement; captioning on videos and for meetings, as needed)
- We will engage with EmpowerNL to identify what adaptive technology would be needed to ensure Pippy Park staff and visitors have needed access to information about the Park and its services – e.g., audio descriptions.
- We will engage with the NL Association of the Deaf to identify the most respectful and effective practices for engaging with Deaf people who access the Park’s programs and services
- We will use plain language in information shared with the public.

Promoting Accessibility Awareness

C.A. Pippy Park Commission is committed to promoting and supporting awareness, education and engagement around accessibility and inclusion within Pippy Park.

Glossary of Terms

These Terms use person-first language, but we acknowledge that language is a dynamic and personal matter and that it is up to the individual to indicate their language of preference. We further acknowledge that persons with intellectual and cognitive disabilities should be provided, if requested, assistance in the decision-making and participation processes.

Accessibility

This refers to the design of products, devices, services, or environments for people who experience disabilities. Accessibility related issues intersect with other groups including, Indigenous, 2SLGBTQAAI+, new Canadians, and seniors.

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.

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.

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”.

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.

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.

Statement of Commitment

The Plan will be used as the principal guiding document for barrier removal and improved accessibility and inclusion in Pippy Park.

The plan will help Park employees:

- Identify and document existing barriers (self-assessment).
- Identify a process to upgrade facilities, services, activities, and programs.
- Increase accessibility awareness and understanding.

Focus Areas

Of note, our areas of focus flow directly from our goals.

Built environment

Pursuant to Goal #1, we would focus on the following:

- Comfort stations (bathrooms and showers); as well as re-painting accessible parking spaces, adding accessible signage, installing accessible playground equipment and enabling more accessible open spaces (e.g., trailways).
- The administration and service center of the Campground, which includes the laundry/store, office and registration booth, require accessibility upgrades.
- Pathway from the playground to the service area requires more accessible railing and lighting. More generally, all pathway lighting to be inspected to ensure adequate lighting; install lighting where areas are not properly lit for easy path of travel.
- Installing automatic doors in the comfort stations in the Campground and other buildings within Pippy Park.
- Replacement of existing faucets handles with lever handles and lever door handles.
- Inspection of all thresholds in Park buildings and facilities to ensure heights meet accessibility requirements where necessary.
- Stairs to comply with accessibility design. Installing a horizontal strip across all nosing on stairs, along with painting the rise a contrast coloring to the run will increase high visibility and prevent slips/trips.
- D-Pull handles on cabinets doors.

- Consideration will be given to adding a family washroom or gender-neutral washroom, as well as an adult change table.
- Existing buildings such as the Northbank Lodge and the Pippy Park Headquarters will be upgraded to meet accessibility standards.
- New and existing trails should be reviewed to identify opportunities to increase accessibility; for example, installing a ramp vs stairs.

Administrative review of policies

Pursuant to Goal #2, the focus would also include:

- Specifically, update both employee and supervisor onboarding processes to ensure they are inclusive of accessibility considerations.
- On an ongoing basis, review all new policies for inclusionary practices – both in terms of language employed and identified procedures.
- Ensure emergency preparedness policies include procedures for evacuating people with disabilities

Communications focus

Pursuant to Goal #3, the focus would additionally include

- The following areas relate to Goal #3: The website www.pippypark.com and social media must be routinely reviewed to meet accessibility requirements.
- Ensure signs are safely and appropriately placed and accessible to text-reading apps.
- Ensure all promotional information uploaded on Pippy Park’s website is accessible and easily readable.
- Investigate installing a loop system in indoor public meeting areas/the Head Office to support access by persons with hearing loss
- Incorporate consistent font and font size in all internal and external email to comply with accessibility standards.

Customer service and Staff training

Pursuant to Goal #2, the focus would also include:

Customer service and staff training are critical to enabling respect and inclusion. The following will support a positive customer experience.

- All staff, including seasonal campground staff, must be aware of the *Accessibility Act* and all other accessibility and inclusion requirements for Pippy Park. This could include park guidelines, policies or other resources or guiding documents.
- Staff training days and orientation for new workers. This could include in-house training or bringing in outside expertise such as:
 - The Coalition of Persons with Disabilities NL who could provide training on a range of disabilities.
 - Specific groups such as CNIB, Autism Society, Epilepsy Association, to inform on key access issues for their populations.

Training would be designed to increase staff's understanding about disability, and to educate staff on, for example, terminology, respectful approaches to interacting with persons with disabilities, and effective practice in communication.

- A specific area of focus for training would be on emergency preparedness and steps to take to ensure visitors with a range of disabilities are effectively made aware of emergencies and evacuated safely should the need arise.
- The online campground reservation system should identify which sites are accessible and also be easy to navigate. Persons with disabilities will be given choice of campsites – they may or may not need or want an accessible camp site.
- Consider employing Blindsquare – a navigation app for individuals with vision loss (<https://www.blindsquare.com/about/>)

Actions / Outcomes

Outcomes

Pippy Park believes that achievement of our goals and the framework in which these will be implemented (enhanced staff training and customer service) will result in accessible and inclusive spaces and places in which ALL people can work, learn, volunteer, relax, and/or play.

Report an Accessibility Concern or Idea

If you are aware of an accessibility concern or have an idea for how something can be done better, let us know. Report your concern or idea in the way that is most accessible to you.

You can contact us by e-mail 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You can contact the Manager of Park Operations.

- Using a phone, dial 709-738-3616
- Send an email to info@pippypark.com

Evaluation and Monitoring

The C.A. Pippy Park Commission 2024-2026 Accessibility Plan is a tool that will guide our work to improve accessibility over the next three years.

During review of the Plan, staff will provide updates on progress made in completing actions to improve inclusion and accessibility.

The C.A. Pippy Park Commission will employ several approaches to evaluating how successful we have been in our plan to ensure access and inclusion, including but not limited to:

- Ensure compliance with relevant accessibility laws and regulations in Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Monitor and evaluate the use of accessibility resources to determine if the plan was successful.
- Bring in experts to ensure that all renovations completed meet or exceed current accessibility standards.

- Ensure the following are being adhered to:
 - Plain Language Guidelines
 - Clear Print Guidelines
 - Accessibility Standards Canada
 - Web Accessibility Checkers
 - Microsoft Word Accessibility Checker
 - Color Contrast Checkers

Over the duration of the plan, we will convene a group of persons with disabilities to assess our progress and seek recommendations for improvement. We would provide them a tour and then meet to gather feedback. A key focus will be how our plan might need to be amended during the two-year time frame to meet emerging needs.

Surveys would be implemented with Park users and visitors to seek feedback on changes to date, as well as other areas of concern which they identify during their time in and with the Park. We would consult with the Coalition of Persons with Disabilities to ensure that such a process is accessible and that the survey is in plain language.

Conclusion

This Plan is of utmost importance to the C.A. Pippy Park Commission in its goal to create a safe and inclusive environment where everyone has equal access and opportunity. We welcome the opportunity to build upon work that has been done and continue to identify, prevent, and remove barriers for those who visit or work in Pippy Park This journey will evolve over time as we strive to improve accessibility and remove barriers for everyone.