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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TOWN OF ANTIGONISH APPROVES ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

Antigonish, NS – At a special council meeting held on June 1, 2023, the Town of Antigonish officially adopted its first accessibility plan during Access Awareness Week in Nova Scotia.

“I am incredibly proud of the work the Accessibility Committee has done to get this plan finalized,” says Donnie MacInnis, Town Councillor and Chair of the Accessibility Committee. “For council to endorse this plan means we are committed to creating a town that is a safe community for everyone, including residents and visitors living with disabilities.”

UPLAND and Planning + Design was hired by the Town to develop the plan. Working in collaboration with the Town’s Accessibility Committee, UPLAND engaged with 58 individuals representing 43 individuals or groups. Stakeholders included community members with lived experience of disability, service providers working directly with people with disabilities, professionals working in accessibility, and more.

“We would like to thank everyone who took the time to speak with us for the development of this plan,” says Steffen Kaeubler, Partner, Planner for UPLAND. “Firsthand knowledge and experiences are invaluable, and the community engagement process allowed us to create a plan with practical recommendations for improvements we feel like make significant, positive impacts on the lives of people living in Antigonish with disabilities.”

Included in the plan is an implementation plan with recommendations in a phased approach over multiple years. In addition, the plan includes an evaluation section which provides opportunities for the Town to measure and evaluate the plan’s effectiveness year after year. The plan will be updated as the Town achieves milestones and as new opportunities arise.

“The plan provides the Town with a framework and foundation to put meaningful steps forward towards creating a barrier free community. In the 2023-23 budget, there is money allocated for tactile plates to be installed at some intersections, as well as crosswalk beacons for higher traffic crosswalks. There has also been a specific accessibility complaint form added to the Town’s website and available at Town Hall. If residents, or visitors are in our community and see an issue that needs to be addressed from an accessibility perspective, this form allows individuals to contact the Town with that information,” explains MacInnis.

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The Province of Nova Scotia has created a framework to achieve the goal of being an accessible province by 2030. The Town intends to be a partner and advocate in that endeavor by removing and preventing barriers in the community that restrict people with disabilities from fully participating in society. The Town is committed to working with people with disabilities and organizations focused on inclusion to educate the community and spread awareness about the necessity and importance of accessibility.

“Accessibility is a human right,” says Councillor MacInnis. “The Town is proud to have this plan in place which will be a living document; almost a guidebook to how we move forward on everything from planning events to creating a more accessible workplace.”

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