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Subject: Request for Accessibility Impact Assessment Prior to Implementation of AVRL Library Closures
Date: June 4, 2026 4:33:48 PM

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To the AVRL Board and participating Municipal Councils, the NS Accessibility Advisory Board and honorable members of the provincial cabinet,

I am writing to request that an Accessibility Impact Assessment, or equivalent accessibility review, be completed and made public before any final decision is implemented regarding the proposed closure of library branches within the Annapolis Valley Regional Library system.

Public libraries provide more than access to books. They serve as community hubs that offer accessible information, internet access, technology, educational programming, social connection, and public services that are particularly important for seniors, persons with disabilities, individuals without reliable transportation, and residents facing economic barriers.

Nova Scotia's Accessibility Act establishes a goal of an accessible province by 2030 and requires public-sector organizations to identify, prevent, and remove barriers to accessibility. Given these objectives, I believe it is important that the impacts of any branch closure on accessibility be carefully evaluated before decisions are finalized.

Specifically, I request information on the following:

- Whether an accessibility impact assessment or accessibility review has been completed in relation to the proposed closures.
- Whether AVRL's accessibility planning process or any accessibility advisory committee was consulted.
- How the impacts on seniors, people with mobility disabilities, people with visual or cognitive disabilities, and individuals without access to private transportation were assessed.
- Whether increased travel distances and transportation barriers were considered.
Whether the loss of accessible technology, internet access, programming, and community space at affected branches was evaluated.
- Whether any mitigation measures have been proposed to address identified accessibility concerns.
- Whether any reports, studies, analyses, or briefing materials related to accessibility can be made publicly available.

If no accessibility assessment has been conducted, I respectfully request that one be completed and released for public review before any closure is implemented.

The purpose of this request is not to oppose accessibility planning or fiscal responsibility, but to ensure that decisions affecting public services are informed by a thorough understanding of their impact on residents who may face barriers to accessing alternative services.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Sarah Himelman
Kentville, NS