

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: hrcinquiries@novascotia.ca; Mayor & Council Town of Kentville; shamilton@kentville.ca; PublicOnlyCouncilEmail;villageoffice@portwilliams.com; info@town.middleton.ns.ca; villageclerk@lawrencetownnovascotia.ca; chrispalmermla@gmail.com; John Lohr; mlajulievanexan@gmail.com; accessibilityboard@novascotia.ca; barbadamsmla@gmail.com; mlaritcey@gmail.com
Subject: Fwd: Request for Accessibility Impact Assessment Prior to Implementation of AVRL Library Closures
Date: June 5, 2026 10:05:30 AM

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Dear Sarah,

Thank you for taking the time to share this thoughtful and detailed request. Your message underscores how essential accessibility is to the mission of a public library system, and we appreciate the care you have taken to outline the concerns that many residents—particularly those facing barriers—may experience as a result of the planned branch closures.

We want to acknowledge the importance of the issues you have raised. Public libraries serve as vital community spaces, and any change to branch operations has the potential to affect all residents, including seniors, people with disabilities, individuals without access to transportation, and community members who rely on library technology, programming, and welcoming public space. Ensuring that these impacts are fully understood is a responsibility we take seriously.

Your request for clarity regarding accessibility assessments, consultation processes, and the evaluation of potential barriers is both reasonable and appreciated.

Accessibility is a core value, and we recognize that decisions of this scale must be informed by a thorough understanding of how they may affect those who depend most on equitable access to library services. I will take your suggestion forward for consideration, and in the meantime, would refer you to AVRL's 2025 Accessibility Plan for further details about how we are working to address accessibility issues

https://valleylibrary.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/AVRL_Accessibility_Plan_2025.pdf

We thank you again for bringing forward these concerns with such respect and care. Your input contributes meaningfully to the ongoing conversation, and we remain committed to ensuring that accessibility considerations are part of any decision that may impact our communities.

Thank you,

Julia Merritt
Chief Executive Officer

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Sarah Himelman** <sarah.himelman@proton.me>

Date: Thu, Jun 4, 2026 at 4:33 PM

Subject: Request for Accessibility Impact Assessment Prior to Implementation of AVRL Library Closures

To: <administration@valleylibrary.ca>

Cc: <hrcinquiries@novascotia.ca>, <councilandmayor@kentville.ca>, <shamilton@kentville.ca>, <allcouncil@westhants.ca>, <villageoffice@portwilliams.com>, <info@town.middleton.ns.ca>, <villageclerk@lawrencetownnovascotia.ca>, <chrispalmermla@gmail.com>, <johnlohrmla@gmail.com>, <mlajulievanexan@gmail.com>, <accessibilityboard@novascotia.ca>, <barbadamsmla@gmail.com>, <mlaritcey@gmail.com>

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
sarah.himelman@proton.me