

# Town of Lunenburg

## Civic Square Compatibility & Accessibility



### What We Heard Report For the Re-Development of The Lunenburg Civic Square

Prepared by:  
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**APPENDIX A:** Town of Lunenburg Civic Square Compatibility & Accessibility Presentation

**APPENDIX B:** Public Engagement Attendee Participation Handouts

**APPENDIX C:** Accessibility Committee Comments



Above Image: Old Town Lunenburg Historic District Plaque located in the Lunenburg Civic Square.

Cover Page Images: Historic Photos of the Lunenburg Civic Square.

# PROJECT OVERVIEW

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The Civic Square Compatibility and Accessibility Project for Lunenburg, NS, is part of the Town of Lunenburg's principal goal of making Old Town accessible and inclusive for all users. The project consists of the introduction of sensitive architectural and landscape interventions having the least effect on the character defining elements of Lunenburg's Civic Square. Interventions that comply with CSA-B651-18 accessibility code must be skillfully intertwined with the landscape to preserve the values and attributes that support the Outstanding Universal Values of the site.

The Civic Square Compatibility and Accessibility Project will, at a minimum, achieve these five components:

1. Restoration of the bandstand - This much beloved structure is to be restored and made accessible for all to enjoy without impacting its character defining elements. Work is to include the reinstatement of its original finial, now in storage.
2. Rehabilitation of the Cenotaph, LVFD, and UNESCO Monuments as required to make them accessible. The presence of each monument, nearby landscaped and resting areas also invite people to walk around and enjoy their time.
3. Rehabilitated Town Hall entrances at 119 Cumberland St. which meet the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada.
4. Improved access, pedestrian circulation, and connectivity throughout Civic Square.
5. Hard and soft landscaping design with consistent ground surfaces, stairs ramps and railings to create a more unified space.

Project goals and objectives will be achieved through minimal architectural and landscape interventions to satisfy the project scope. The site sensitivity demands an appropriate and sustainable approach where new elements engage in a moving dialogue with its character, materials, and context. The local character, nature and materials will inform project material selection.

Sustainable and inclusive public spaces address the needs of a variety of stakeholders and age groups. The project will engage with this diversity and provide opportunities for a flexible and diverse urban space to be used all year around by different community groups, children, and elderly.

Vigilant's design team, which included landscape architect, Mills & Wright, prepared three concept designs for the Town of Lunenburg Civic Square. These concepts were provided to the Town staff for their review and comments. After this review, our design team conducted an in-person workshop on November 30, 2023 with community members, Town staff, and other stakeholders. The goal of this workshop was to gather feedback from the local community on key design elements to create a final solution the community can be proud of.

This is what we heard.

# WHAT WE HEARD

## METHODOLOGY

The Vigilant design team prepared three concepts for the Lunenburg Civic Square Compatibility and Accessibility Project and presented them to the Town of Lunenburg in the Public Engagement Session. Please refer to *Appendix A* for the presentation slides shown during the Public Engagement.

On November 30, 2023 we met with the Town representatives, local residents, and other stakeholders at the Firehall to engage in a public workshop where we presented these concepts for the opportunity to gain feedback and input. Approximately 24 community members attended the event.

Prior to presenting the three concepts, we discussed the current design of the Lunenburg Civic Square (hereafter referred to as the site). It's terrain and topography, the location of monuments and buildings, and the current level of accessibility access.

The existing landscape of the site has a steep incline from Cumberland St. to Townsend St. as one walks through the monuments. The stairs between the monuments and throughout the site create accessibility barriers and are not inclusive for all

users. As well, some of the existing paved pathways have a slope that is too steep to meet the accessibility requirements, and create difficulties for some users.

Our designs aimed to make the monuments, and bandstand, and access to seating accessible in all three concepts. However, as we went through the design process we realized that not all accessible features are inclusive to all users. For example, when only given switchback ramps and long pathways designed for accessibility compliance, able-bodied users may find these longer pathways are impeding and would prefer a small set of steps for ease of progressing thorough the site instead.

As well, the steep incline of the site requires a lengthy ramp. Ramps require landings at defined intervals, which add to the distance an individual must travel to reach the destination. Lengthy ramps and pathways can be physically exhausting for the user. We felt it was in the best interest of the user to maneuver the monuments on the site so that travel distance between them was lessened. By creating areas of interest (monument plaza), seating / rest areas (landscaped amphitheater seating), and a creative mix of stairs and accessible ramps and pathways we designed concepts for the site that are not only accessible, but also inclusive for all of the users.



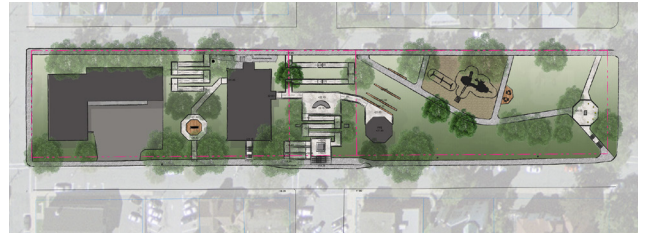
Images (left):  
1. Townhall  
2. Lunenburg Regiment Memorial  
3. Norwegian Memorial  
4. WWII Monument  
5. Bandstand  
6. LVFD Monument  
7. WWI Monument  
8. Old Town Lunenburg, UNESCO World Heritage Site Monument

## METHODOLOGY *(continued)*

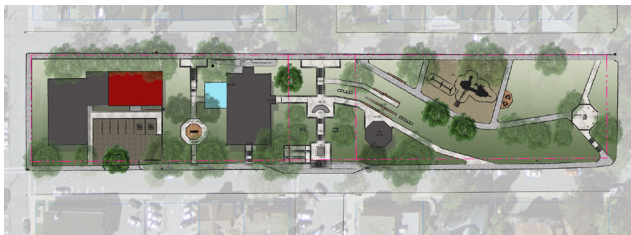
Vigilant presented the three concept drawings, along with photo examples of key design elements and encouraged attendees to ask questions throughout the presentation to ensure each concept design was understood to ensure ample feedback. Vigilant provided each attendee with a worksheet (please refer to Appendix B) to document their comments, questions, and concerns regarding each concept as well as any other thoughts or ideas. These worksheets were collected and analyzed for the purpose of this report.



*Civic Square: Existing Site Plan*



*Civic Square: Concept #1*



*Civic Square: Concept #2*

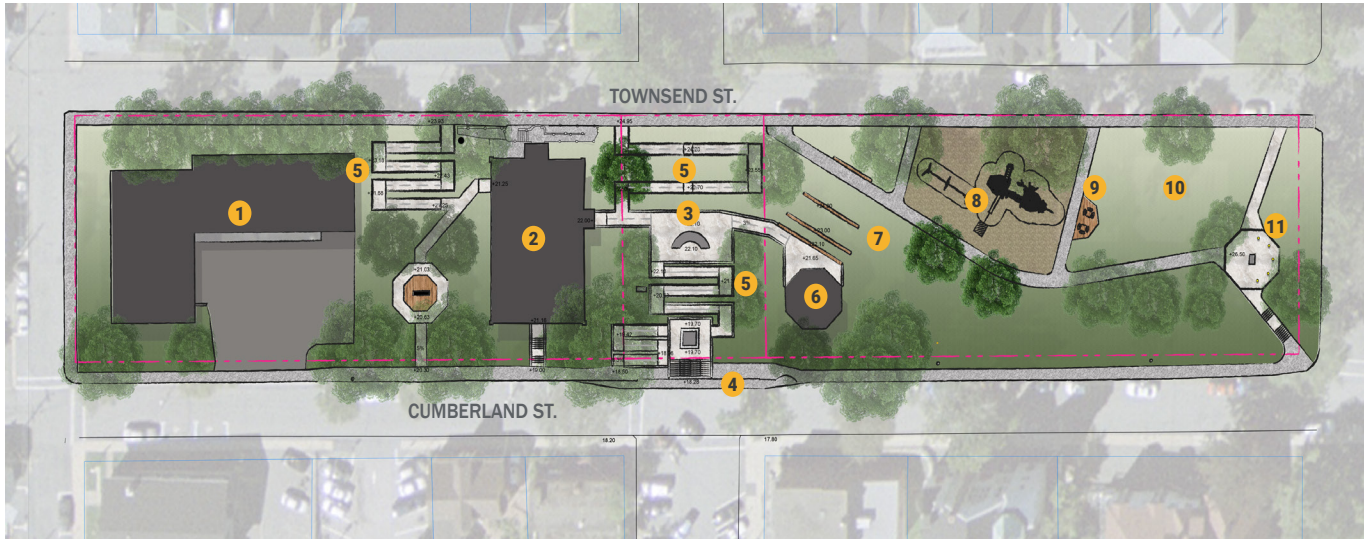


*Civic Square: Concept #3*

After the presentation of each concept, Vigilant conducted an open discussion with all attendees and provided an opportunity to discuss a number of other items (accessibility, inclusivity, lighting, safety, etc). These notes are summarized in the next section of this report.

The images above and to the left are of the existing Lunenburg Civic Square and the three concepts we presented. We have provided a summary of each concept and their key design elements on the following pages.

# Concept One: Ramps



- |                                      |                         |   |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| 1 Old Fire Station                   | 5 Accessible Ramps      | 9 Picnic Area   |
| 2 Town Hall                          | 6 Bandstand             | 10 Open Flex-Space  |
| 3 War Memorials                      | 7 Amphitheater          | 11 Old Town Lunenburg – UNESCO World Heritage Site Monument |
| 4 Entrance Stairs & Widened Sidewalk | 8 Accessible Playground |   |

- Switchback ramps, which meet accessibility standards, to improve access to the monuments and buildings.
- Switchback ramps are accessible, but not inclusive.
- Monuments remain in the same location.
- Added seating in the bandstand area (Amphitheater).
- Added accessible pathways along the playground.
- New accessible equipment in playground.

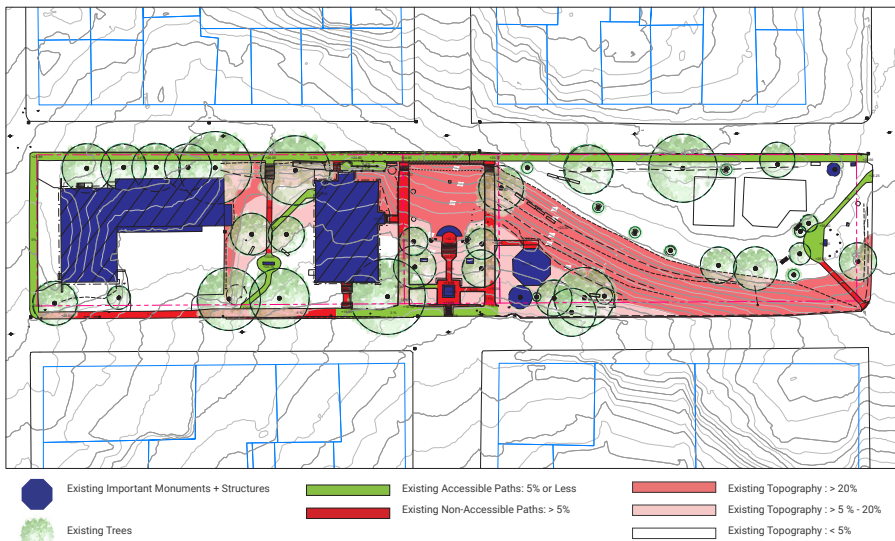
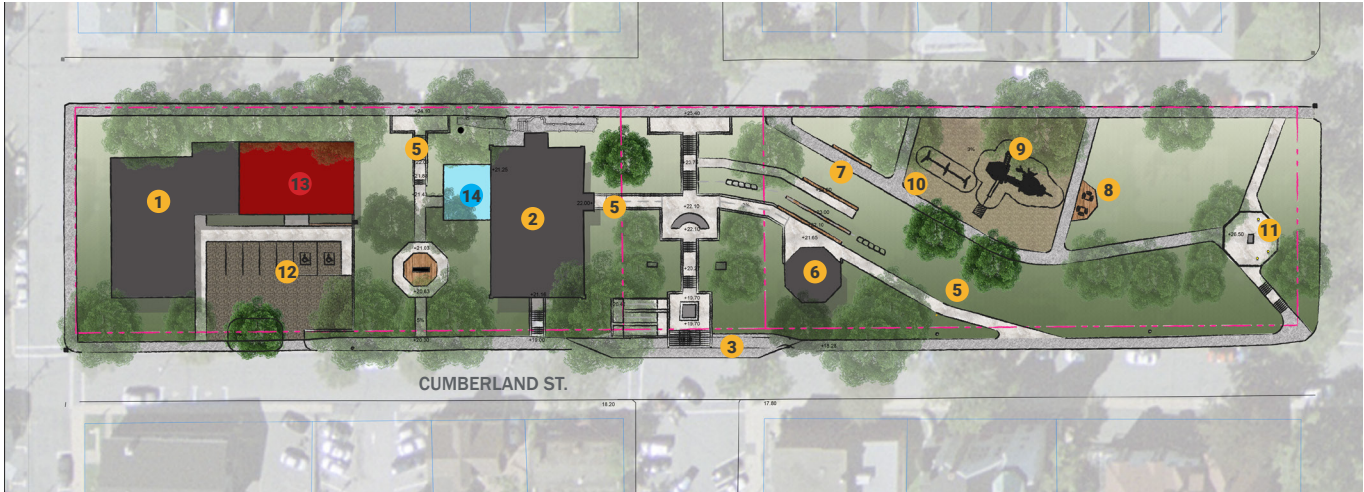


Image: Diagram from Presentation identifying the existing accessible and non-accessible pathways, and the slope of the existing terrain.



Image: Example of a concrete switchback ramp with metal handrail.

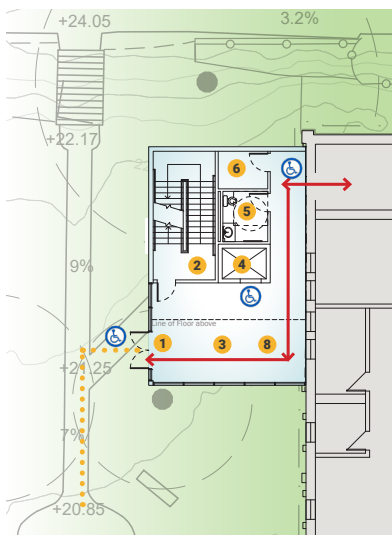
# Concept Two: New Atrium/Elevator



- 1 Old Fire Station
- 2 Town Hall
- 3 War Memorial Plaza
- 4 Central Staircase
- 5 Accessible Ramps
- 6 Bandstand
- 7 Amphitheater
- 8 Accessible Playground
- 9 Picnic Area
- 10 Open Flex-Space
- 11 Old Town Lunenburg – UNESCO World Heritage Site Monument
- 12 Civic Plaza Space
- 13 New Building - See Architecture
- 14 New Atrium - See Architecture

- New atrium structure with elevator added to the town hall
- The new pathways and ramps create accessibility and encourage interaction with the monuments.
- Atrium allows for educational opportunities
- Atrium allows for accessible washroom facilities
- Added seating in the bandstand area (Amphitheater)
- Some ramps were added near the War Memorial Plaza, less than Concept One
- Added accessible pathways, from Cumberland St., along the playground and to the bandstand.
- New accessible equipment in playground.

PROPOSED ATRIUM: GROUND FLOOR PLAN



- 1 Entrance: West Elevation, Accessed from Cumberland St. via the LVM Courtyard
- 2 Stairwell
- 3 Atrium Lobby: Open to floors above
- 4 Elevator: Provides accessible access to all floors of the Town Hall
- 5 Accessible Family Washroom
- 6 Janitor Room

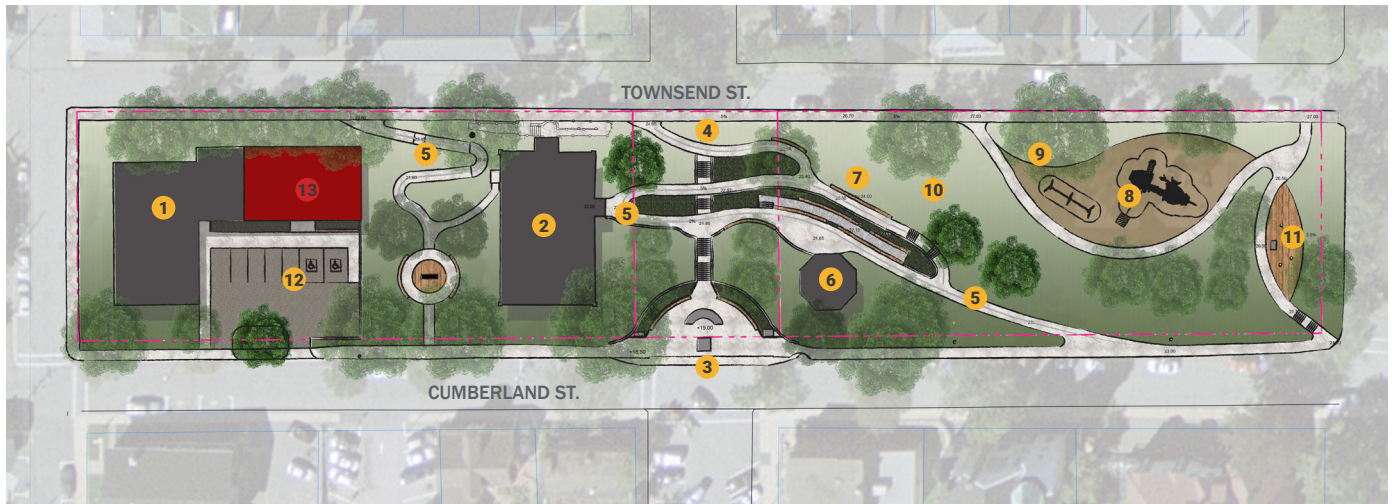
PROPOSED ATRIUM: FIRST FLOOR PLAN



- 7 Entrance: North Elevation, Accessed from Townsend St.
- 8 Areas to display Interpretation Panels for the Lunenburg Civic Square
- New Accessible Pathways
- ♿ Accessible Entryways to Proposed Atrium

Images (left): Conceptual floor plans for first two levels of the Atrium from the presentation.

## Concept Three: Working with the Natural Landscape



- |                      |                         |   |                                    |
|----------------------|-------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| 1 Old Fire Station   | 5 Accessible Walkways   | 9 Picnic Area   | 13 New Building - See Architecture |
| 2 Town Hall          | 6 Bandstand             | 10 Open Flex-Space  |                                    |
| 3 War Memorial Plaza | 7 Amphitheater          | 11 Old Town Lunenburg – UNESCO World Heritage Site Monument |                                    |
| 4 Central Staircase  | 8 Accessible Playground | 12 Civic Plaza  |                                    |

- Some of the monuments are moved to create the War Memorial Plaza at Cumberland St.
- New accessible pathways follow the grade of the sloping landscape to create longer and more natural pathways throughout the area.
- Accessible pathway slope is 5% or less, providing a gradual and gentle incline throughout the Civic Square.
- Moving monuments is key to achieving the gently sloping walks shown.
- Increased playground space.
- New accessible equipment in playground.
- Lawn Space acts as standing room overlooking bandstand and buffers play-area from contemplation spaces.
- Encourages visitors to interact with nature.
- Encourages visitors to interact with the monuments.



Image: Photo taken during the Design Team's initial site visit. View from Cumberland St.

# RESULTS

When asked about the area, attendees said the monuments, public parade, and remembrance day are the first things that come to mind. They expressed their adoration for the view and the beautiful space the Square provides their community. They said they often walk the area daily. These comments highlight the importance of holding these workshops and community discussions to ensure we create a space the community can continue to enjoy.

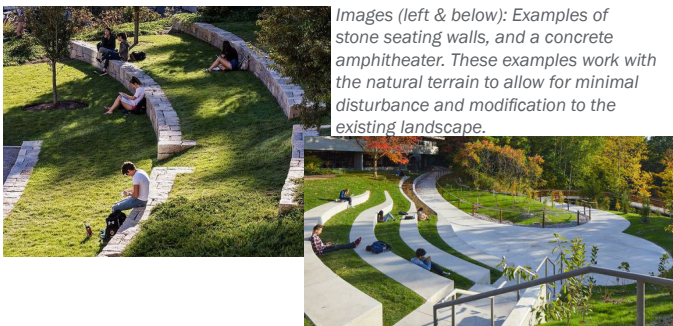
Vigilant analyzed our notes from the workshop, the eleven collected attendee worksheets, and other information collected (other meeting notes and emails) to highlight the following comments, recommendations, and concerns for each of the three concept options.

## Concept One: Ramps

It was clear from all feedback provided that this concept, while accessible, provides an aesthetic concern for the community. Almost all of the worksheets collected indicated a concern for the look and feel of so many switchback ramps, especially in contrast to the natural beauty of the Square. During the open discussion numerous members described the visual impact of these ramps in the area as “daunting”.



Images (above & right): Examples of gently sloping walkways that embrace the natural slope of the landscape.



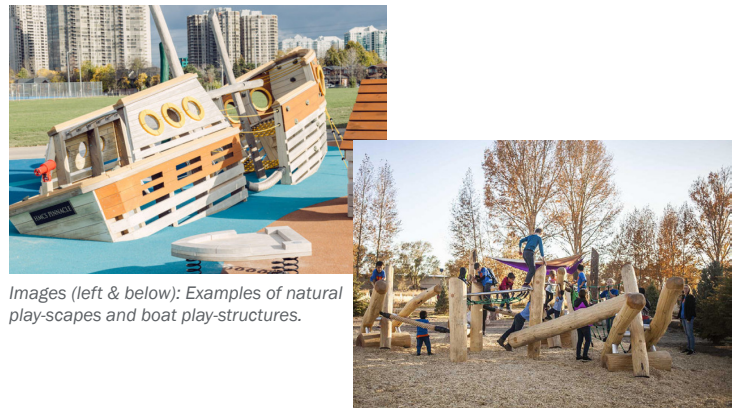
Images (left & below): Examples of stone seating walls, and a concrete amphitheater. These examples work with the natural terrain to allow for minimal disturbance and modification to the existing landscape.

## Concept Two: New Atrium/Elevator

From all the feedback collected, there were numerous concerns with the Atrium; mainly concerns with the overall cost. While some feedback suggested that residents were excited to see more accessible features provided by the Atrium (accessible bathroom and access to the Town Hall), the overall consensus was that this opinion was too expensive.

## Concept Three: Working with Nature

Over half of the worksheets provided and most of the discussion around concept three involved concern with moving the monuments. There was however, more positive feedback from this concept. Community members were pleased to see natural pathways that were integrated with the natural beauty of the topography, reduced ramps, natural play areas and playground(s) incorporating a nautical theme, along with natural options (including stone) for the Amphitheater seating.



Images (left & below): Examples of natural play-scapes and boat play-structures.

Ample feedback was also provided with regards to the reduced number of ramps (with comparison to option one). Town residents were happy to see more natural walking paths and reduced switchback ramps. It was understood that this option required the movement/relocation of numerous monuments to create a War Memorial Plaza. Residents were intrigued to be able to move monuments to street level to increase interaction and accessibility, but these benefits did not outweigh the general concern with moving such historical invaluable centerpieces.

Note: All images, shown on this page, are from our presentation. Please refer to Appendix A for the complete Presentation document.

# SUMMARY

The Lunenburg Civic Square Compatibility and Accessibility Project aims to enhance accessibility and inclusivity in Old Town. The project focuses on sensitive architectural and landscape interventions to maintain Lunenburg’s Civic Square’s character.

Five key components include the restoration of the bandstand, rehabilitation of monuments, town hall entrance improvement, enhanced access and circulation, and unified landscaping design.



*Bandstand, with Holiday Decor*



*Image: Photos taken during the Remembrance Day Service, November 11, 2023*

The project prioritizes minimal interventions, sustainability, and inclusivity for diverse age groups. Three concept designs were presented, incorporating ramps, a new atrium/elevator, and a nature-focused approach. A workshop gathered feedback from community members, Town staff, and stakeholders on key design elements.

The report concludes the community’s preference for designs that balance accessibility with preserving the historical and natural aesthetic integrity of Lunenburg’s Civic Square.



*Bandstand, Community Festival*