



ACCESSIBILITY PLAN 2022-2025

Port Hawkesbury Accessibility Advisory Committee Draft Plan 2022



Outdoor Built
Environment

Indoor Built
Environment

Community
Consultations

All the Ways
we Work

Communicate
Information

All the Ways
we Consume

All the ways
we Move

All the Ways
we Live

A Town For
Everyone



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Welcome Message

A Town for Everyone



On behalf of the Town of Port Hawkesbury's Accessibility Advisory Committee (PHAAC), we invite you to read our Town's first Accessibility Plan. Nova Scotia is the third Province in Canada to adopt an accessibility law. The Town of Wolfville was selected by the Province to be the first town to create an accessibility plan, which was to serve as a template for other Municipalities across the Province of Nova Scotia. We thank the Town of Wolfville for their leadership for accessibility.

Like the Town of Wolfville, Port Hawkesbury Town Council, by motion, established a Port Hawkesbury Accessibility Advisory Committee (PHAAC). The PHAAC goals were to have 50% of community committee members who are "first voice" citizens who

know first-hand the challenges and opportunities for accessibility in Port Hawkesbury. This goal also aligns with section 44 (2) of the Accessibility Act, “At least one half of the members of an accessibility advisory committee must be persons with disabilities or representatives from organizations representing persons with disabilities.” The PHAAC has met this requirement.

The PHAAC began our work by reviewing other municipal accessibility plans, Provincial accessibility guides and policies, as well as other accessibility resources. We discussed definitions of both “disabilities” and “barriers” in our Nova Scotia context. We also designed a strategy for research, for understanding accessibility in Port Hawkesbury, and for engaging the community; and to keep us on task, we created a timeline to determine our scope of work and targets for completion.

This plan was a team collaboration between PHAAC co-chairs and community members, with support from elected Council members and Town staff members. We were pleased with the significant level of community engagement - especially with first-voice citizens who provided valuable insights regarding both the challenges and opportunities for accessibility in Port Hawkesbury. The community participated via survey, social media input, one-on-one interviews, and stakeholder interviews.

Lastly, the PHAAC identified key themes from the consultations data, and worked together on recommendations to progress accessibility in Port Hawkesbury. In addition, we prioritized these accessibility recommendations as short, medium and long-term goals. We also categorized these recommendations in terms of work that can be accomplished by the PHAAC, by Town staff and Council, by specific stakeholders, and lastly, work requiring collaboration with multiple stakeholders.

Fundamentally, this plan reflects our goal for Port Hawkesbury to be a “Town for Everyone” - regardless of age or level of ability. This will require the Town of Port Hawkesbury (Council and staff) to be responsive to the needs of citizens with various needs and abilities. We all must continue to strive to be a welcoming, inclusive, and accepting community to all people, and to ensure that in all ways, it is a “Town for Everyone” regardless of age or abilities.

With this aim in mind, we encourage you to treat this Plan as a “living document,” to be revisited annually by the PHAAC to ensure priorities continue to be relevant, that citizens can continue to provide feedback, and to allow the PHAAC to continue to

make relevant recommendations to Port Hawkesbury Town Council - whom can consider accessibility recommendations during budget deliberations each year.

We ask all readers of this plan to please continue to voice concerns, ask questions, and make suggestions at any time; this can be done through PHAAC co-chairs and members, through Town staff and Council, in person at the town office, and on our website and social media pages. The PHAAC and the Town of Port Hawkesbury staff and Council appreciate your invaluable input to assist us with our accessibility goals. As PHAAC members, serving on this Committee has been an opportunity for valuable engagement, learning, and growth. The PHAAC chairs would like to extend our thanks to everyone who has contributed their time, talents and energy to the PHAAC and the development and writing of this plan, and to all community members and stakeholders who have contributed feedback and ideas.

The final draft of this plan was presented at a Special Public Meeting held on March 29th 2022. Feedback from Council was incorporated, and the final draft of the accessibility plan was presented to Council at a Public Meeting held on April 5th 2022. (pending acceptance) It was adopted to serve as the Town's Accessibility Plan for the term of 2022 to 2025.

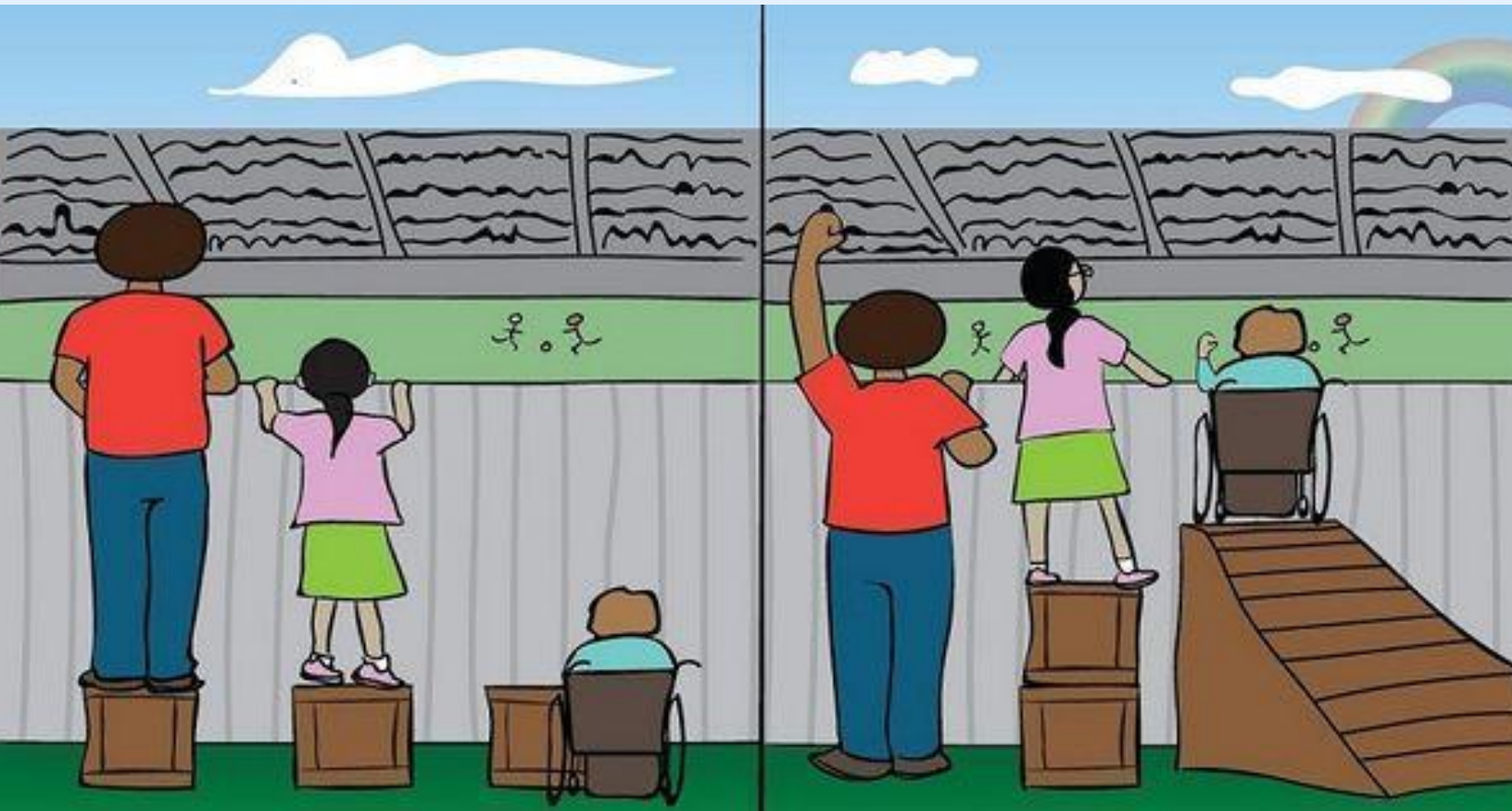
We are proud of this accessibility plan "[Port Hawkesbury: A Town for Everyone](#)" and we look forward to seeing many of the recommendations we've outlined be achieved and implemented over the next three years. We are proud of the citizens and stakeholders who gifted us with knowledge and feedback. We are proud our Town is represented by a Council who is committed to making accessibility a priority.

As PHAAC co-chairs, we are grateful to work with the PHAAC to complete a plan that will improve accessibility in a Town we all care for deeply.

Matthew Higgins
Co-Chair PHAAC

Brenda Chisholm-Beaton
Co-Chair PHAAC

Introduction: Understanding our Path Forward



(Photo by Maryam Abdul-Kareem to illustrate the difference between equality and equity).

<https://muslimgirl.com/heres-care-equity-equality/>

Vision: Equity as an Accessibility Lens

Equitable access to community life and participation in our community are important for everyone, regardless of age or ability. Further, it is important that our community is inclusive and as barrier-free as possible, so that everyone can participate with dignity and independence. PHAAC members acknowledge that “equitable” access is different from “equal” access. Whereas equality ensures everybody gets the same thing or same opportunity to participate; the PHAAC recognizes the need to focus on equity, which alternately ensures everybody is treated equitably, based on their needs and abilities.

The PHAAC is committed to meeting the needs of our community members, especially for those who face barriers to accessibility. We will do this by PHAAC committee work and self-study, by looking at the Nova Scotia and local contexts of disabilities and barriers, and by employing a variety of community consultation methods to identify and work on a

plan to remove and/or prevent barriers, and by understanding and adhering to the requirements of Nova Scotia’s Accessibility Act.

Understanding Disability: The Nova Scotia Context

It is important to understand Disability in the context of our Province of Nova Scotia.

PHAAC members found this website resource particularly helpful:

<https://novascotia.ca/accessibility/stats-on-disability-in-Nova-Scotia.pdf>

According to Statistics Canada, 30% of Nova Scotians aged 15 years and older identify as having *at least one disability*. That is nearly 230,000 Nova Scotians. This is the largest percentage of any Canadian province, and emphasizes the important need for Municipalities to take an active role in improving accessibility in their communities. Additionally, Nova Scotia also has among the highest percentage of adults older than 65—currently 20%. This percentage will increase to about 25% of the population by 2030. Since older adults are more likely to have disabilities than younger people, the number of Nova Scotians with disabilities will rise as our population ages (*infographic diagrams sourced from the above website*).



Disability in Nova Scotia

(Source: Canadian Survey on Disability, 2017, Statistics Canada)

of Nova Scotians 15 years and older have at least one disability

– the Canadian average is 22.3%.



This represents 229,430 people in Nova Scotia.

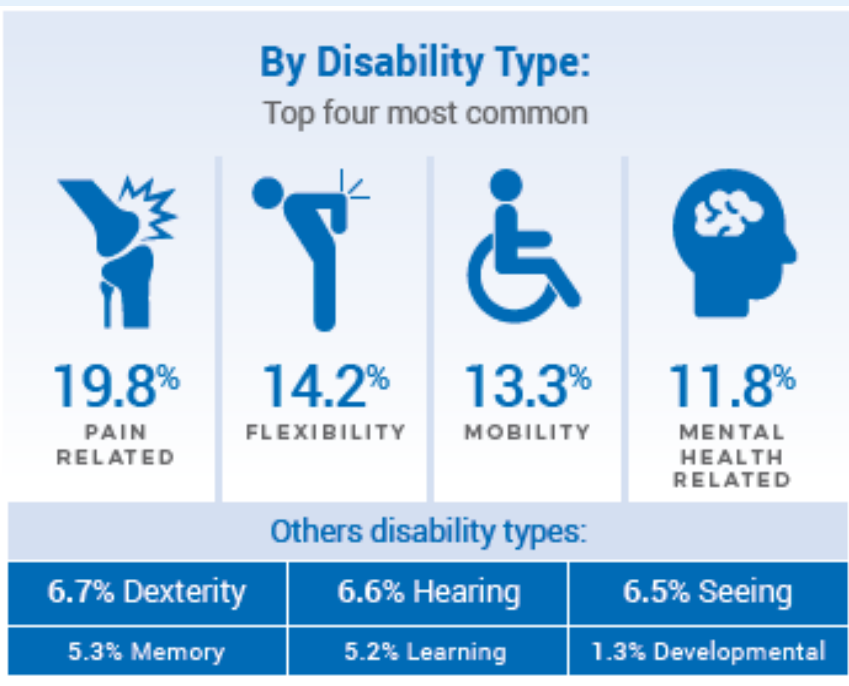
Nova Scotia's Accessibility Act

In 2017, Nova Scotia became the third province in Canada to pass accessibility legislation, which served as a testament to our Province's commitment to become a more equitable and accessible province. The Accessibility Act recognizes accessibility as "a human right" and aims to make Nova Scotia an accessible province by 2030.

The goal of the Accessibility Act is to prevent and remove barriers that restrict people with disabilities from fully participating in society. It enables the government to develop standards for accessibility, and outlines responsibilities for some public sector bodies, including municipalities. The full Accessibility Act can be found at the following website: www.nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/legc/statutes/accessibility.pdf

Definition of "Disability" and "Barrier"

In the Act, a **disability** is defined as "a physical, mental, intellectual, learning or sensory impairment, including an episodic disability that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders an individual's full and effective participation in society."



A **barrier** is defined in the act as "anything that hinders or challenges the full and effective participation in society of persons with disabilities, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy, or a practice."

The government's strategy for achieving an accessible province by 2030 is described in Access by Design 2030, available at:

www.novascotia.ca/accessibility/access-by-design/

Provincial Accessibility Standards

Provincial standards will be developed for the following areas - as outlined in Nova Scotia's Accessibility Act:

Goods and Services – It will be important to ensure that people with disabilities have equitable access to goods and services.

Information and Communication – It will be important to ensure that all people can receive, understand, and share the information they need.

Transportation – It will be important to consider the transportation needs of community members and to make it easier for everyone to get to where they need to go.

Employment – It will be important to make workplaces accessible, and to support people with disabilities in finding meaningful employment.

Built Environment – It will be important to ensure public buildings, streets, sidewalks, and shared spaces are accessible to all people, of all ages, and all levels of ability.

Education – It will be important to make the education system accessible to all students, from early childhood to post-secondary levels.

As described in **Access by Design 2030**, a plan is in place to develop and implement these standards over several years. Municipalities and other affected sectors will be consulted before each standard is enacted. These standards will first apply to the Government of Nova Scotia, then to municipalities and other prescribed public sector bodies, and later to other organizations. The standards for the Built Environment and for Education are currently under development. Other standards will be implemented in subsequent years (in an order to be determined). Access by Design 2030 can be viewed at the following website: www.novascotia.ca/accessibility/access-by-design/access-by-design-2030.pdf.

Our Requirements As a Municipality

Under the Accessibility Act, municipalities and villages are prescribed to do the following:

#1 Establish an **Accessibility Advisory Committee**. (completed)

#2 Develop an **accessibility plan** within one year. (pending completion)

Further, the Act states that accessibility plans must be updated every three years, which the PHAAC has adhered to. It should further be noted that as accessibility standards are implemented, those standards should be integrated into our Municipal plan.

PHAAC Guiding Principles

The PHAAC is committed to guiding principles we use for the work we have undertaken in the development and completion of this accessibility plan. These include:

- Ensuring equal access and participation for all people, regardless of their age or levels of abilities.
- Inclusive treatment of all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence as community members.
- Do our absolute best to understand and to meet the needs of people who face accessibility barriers.
- Do our absolute best to identify, remove, and prevent barriers in our community according to the requirements of Nova Scotia's Accessibility Act.

PHAAC: Ongoing Learning and Collaboration

The PHAAC believes it is critical for this Accessibility Plan to be treated as a “living document” - and in turn - we believe our role as members of the PHAAC will require ongoing “learning” and “collaboration” work before, during, and after the approval and implementation of this Accessibility Plan.

From the start, we've taken opportunities to learn about Accessibility in Nova Scotia, about the Accessibility Act, and over the course of our research, to learn from the community and “first voice” disabled citizens about how to improve Port Hawkesbury.

Additionally, our members have expressed interest in inviting guest speakers to meet with us and discuss their own journeys and leadership in accessibility. Some of our members have had the opportunity to speak with accessibility leaders including (the late) Inverness County Warden Laurie Cranton and Antigonish County Councillor Gary Mattie about their “first voice” experiences as accessibility champions. We also have plans to invite Gerry Post (former Executive Director of the Accessibility Directorate of Nova Scotia) to speak to our group as well in the near future.

Collaboration is also important. Our members continue to remain open to collaboration opportunities with neighbouring Municipalities. The PHAAC has invited members of the Victoria County Accessibility Committee to join our meetings, and we have an open

invitation as well for the Accessibility Coordinator for Inverness County to join any of our future meetings. PHAAC members see value in collaborating with and learning more about our Municipal neighbours and their accessibility plans. We will continue to engage with municipalities in the region to better understand our region's current and future accessibility needs.

Finally, what will truly be a key component of the PHAAC's ongoing learning will be from our community members themselves, and "first voice" members in particular. Ensuring we continue to engage with the community will be vital in our ongoing efforts to make Port Hawkesbury a "Town for Everyone".

The following section will outline the strategy that our PHAAC members devised as a means to understand, investigate, and improve access within the Town. Of course, this strategy for increasing accessibility in the Town will require a holistic approach. In some cases, the Town can implement changes independently, whereas in many cases, changes will require collaboration with multiple stakeholders.



Strategy for Understanding Access in Port Hawkesbury

The PHAAC designed and adopted an 8-pronged approach for this accessibility plan. Each approach is important to this plan. Together, these eight approaches help guide our understanding of how we - as a committee - can identify impactful and positive changes that will make our Town more inclusive and accessible.



The Eight Key Approaches for this Plan

Our committee defines these eight key approaches as follows:

1 Community Consultations: This approach is critical to understanding how citizens are able to engage in the community in multiple ways, and *how* and *what kinds* of barriers some citizens face to full engagement in the community. One of the key targets of this approach is to ensure we capture and understand “first voice” experiences from both citizens and stakeholder groups.

2 Communicate Information: This approach is important in three ways. First, it is important to understand how citizens and stakeholder groups are accessing information that enables engagement in the community, and also what barriers currently exist for some citizens to access the information they need.

Second, it is important to understand how the Town is communicating information to citizens and how the Town can improve communication strategies that will - in turn - improve access and remove barriers to access of information.

Third, it is important to ensure that there is an inclusive plan - going forward - to share information and continue open and inclusive communication.

3 Indoor Built Environment: This approach explores municipal indoor public spaces and examines these with an accessibility lens.

4 Outdoor Built Environment: This approach explores municipal outdoor public spaces and examines these with an accessibility lens.

5 All The Ways We Move: This approach explores the transportation needs of community members and how we can make it easier for everyone to get to where they need to go. In this approach, public transit and active transportation are key focuses.

6 All The Ways We Live: This approach explores Town-facilitated programs, events, activities, and more; we are specifically interested in the barriers that exist in the current complement of town-facilitated activities, and how these might be changed and/or redesigned to enable more participation by all citizens regardless of level of ability.

The PHAAC also decided it was important to include “accessible housing” - even though housing isn’t a primary municipal responsibility, it continues to be an important consideration as a “strategic priority” identified by the Town of Port Hawkesbury Council.

7 All the Ways We Consume: This approach explores access to goods and services - and barriers that may exist to access. It is important to ensure that people with disabilities have equitable access to goods and services. The Town of course has its own level of responsibility in any of the goods and services it provides to citizens; however, the PHAAC also acknowledges that even though the Town doesn’t have a primary responsibility to ensure inclusive access to “private sector” goods and services - it is still important to explore collaboration opportunities to improve access to goods and services in general.

8 All the Ways We Work: This approach explores how the Town of Port Hawkesbury is working towards a more inclusive and accessible workplace. Of course, it is important to make “all” workplaces accessible, and to support people with disabilities in finding meaningful employment. Therefore, this approach will look at the Town specifically, as well as other workplace environments and inclusive employment opportunities for people with disabilities in the Town. Of course, the town can only directly change its own workplace; however, the PHAAC sees opportunities to collaborate with other stakeholders to enable more employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

It Takes A Village: Accessibility & Collaboration

The PHAAC began by reviewing the municipal buildings and properties. As conversations continued, it was clear that part of our plan needed to include ALL the ways our community members live, work, and play beyond municipal outdoor and indoor-built environments. All the ways people move, all the ways people live, all the ways people consume, and all the ways people work in Port Hawkesbury would need consideration.

The Town is obviously unable to tackle accessibility alone. Holistic improvements will require additional partnerships, consultations, and collaboration. For example, the section of this plan that explores “All the Ways We Consume” can be a strategic partnership with the Strait Area Chamber of Commerce, who are well positioned to work with local businesses in the Town to set and achieve private-sector accessibility goals to improve access for people with disabilities. Another example of a strategic partnership is with Strait Area Transit, to ensure that our plan is aligned with theirs for “All the Ways We Move” and ensuring people who have disabilities can access affordable and accessible public transit that meets their needs.

And of course, all plans require an effective strategy for community and stakeholder engagement. As will be discussed in more detail later in the plan, Covid 19 and the ever-changing public health protocols required the PHAAC to employ creative and “safe” methods of data collection, to be able to access qualitative and quantitative data from both community members and community stakeholder groups.

Lastly, this plan also required a sound strategy for communicating information to stakeholders and community members during the research and planning phases, the approval phases, and the implementation phases. Some communication strategies

currently employed by the Town are social media, traditional media, and the Town of Port Hawkesbury website. In addition to sharing the completed and approved Accessibility Plan using these mediums, the PHAAC recommends that copies of the plan be made available in hardcopy at the Town of Port Hawkesbury Municipal Office (and/or on a thumbdrive).

The PHAAC feel that these eight approaches are critical in ensuring that the PHAAC is able to research, study, communicate, consult, prioritize, and advise the Town of Port Hawkesbury Council, Staff and others about the important Accessibility work needing to be done from 2022 to 2025. If we are always considering these eight approaches, the PHAAC feels we are best positioned to ensure that the Town of Port Hawkesbury can truly be a town for everyone, regardless of age and ability.

The next part of the accessibility plan will review the eight key approaches, “themes” that evolved from what we learned from the research data provided by citizens and stakeholders, and accessibility recommendations to the Town and other stakeholders.



1: Community Consultations

Helps us to understand what kinds of barriers some citizens face that prohibits full engagement in the community.



A Note About Covid 19

The PHAAC has undertaken community consultation work and research during highly uncertain times; and as such, has had to work with multiple and ever-changing Provincial Public Health mandates and community restrictions during the midst of the global Covid 19 pandemic.

From the onset of research design, we discussed the impacts of Covid 19, and how best to “safely” conduct research for this plan, and still ensure that we are properly and adequately engaging both stakeholders and the community. We decided that we would need to employ some creativity in the design of our plan for community and stakeholder consultations, because ultimately, “safety” had to be of top priority.

We decided to use surveys (online and hard-copy collection methods), social media campaigns and strategies (to gather feedback and data about accessibility opportunities

and challenges), as well as several one-on-one interviews with stakeholders and community members (via email and phone).

We initially hoped to be able to host a few focus groups (in person); however, due to a huge surge in Covid cases in December 2021 and January 2022, we were unable to host any in-person focus group sessions. Despite not being able to host in-person focus groups, we are confident in the quality of the feedback we've collected. We would recommend that in-person focus groups (large and small) be employed in the future, when safe to do so, for future Accessibility plans.

Lastly, our Committee also wants to note that Covid 19 certainly amplified and heightened accessibility challenges, particularly during times of isolation lockdown. As an example, one lockdown required people to stay within their municipalities; since Port Hawkesbury does not have any full-service gas stations, this made it difficult and/or impossible for some citizens to independently gas-up their vehicles. During most lockdowns, citizens were encouraged to get outdoors and stay physically fit in their neighbourhoods; however, not every neighbourhood has active transportation infrastructure that allows all persons with all abilities to engage in this way.

Taken as a whole, designing, conducting community consultations, and meeting virtually on a weekly basis to draft and complete this Accessibility Plan was certainly made more challenging in the midst of the Covid 19 pandemic. We were fortunate to have a core team of PHAAC members who met consistently, and a wider membership who contributed their expertise when they could both in the working group sessions and on their own time completing home assignments.

Research Methods and Data Collection

Due to Covid 19 and the realities of the current Provincial State of Emergency and Public Health protocols, members of the PHAAC have chosen to employ creative kinds of research methods and data collection in order to maximize community input while minimizing the potential for public health safety challenges that are presented when using in-person consultations. Instead, we have kept our community consultations virtual, which include one-on-one interviews with citizens and stakeholders, a localized accessibility survey (both online and paper copies available for completion), and social media-based community input opportunities (via a PHAAC social media page on Facebook).

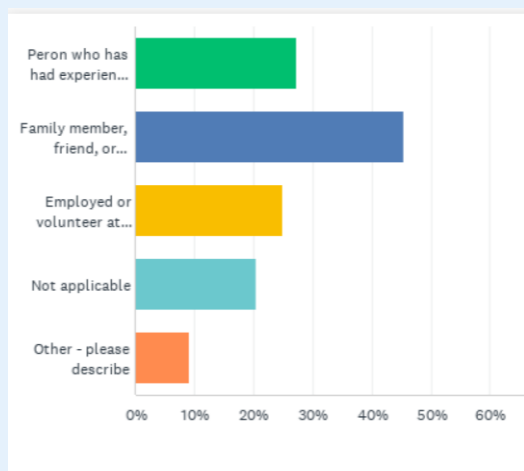
We began our community consultation process in October 2021 and continued until February of 2022. Our PHAAC members were pleased with the wealth of community feedback that resulted from all of our research efforts overall.

Accessibility Survey

The PHAAC designed an Accessibility Survey pertinent to the Town of Port Hawkesbury, that incorporated the key elements of our strategy to ensure a more holistic array of community input. The timeline of the Survey is as follows:

- November 26th 2021 - Create Accessibility Survey (Survey Monkey)
- November 30th 2021 - Survey “live” and added to the Town Website & Shared on Social Media via PHAAC members and Town staff, hard copies accessible to citizens at the Civic Centre Box Office, Leaside, Strait Area Women’s Place, Evergreen Club, ROC Centre.
- January 11th 2022 – Survey shared/boosted on Town of Port Hawkesbury and PHAAC social media pages, link shared via email with Town Council officials.
- February 2nd 2022 – Survey closed/survey responses analyzed by PHAAC.

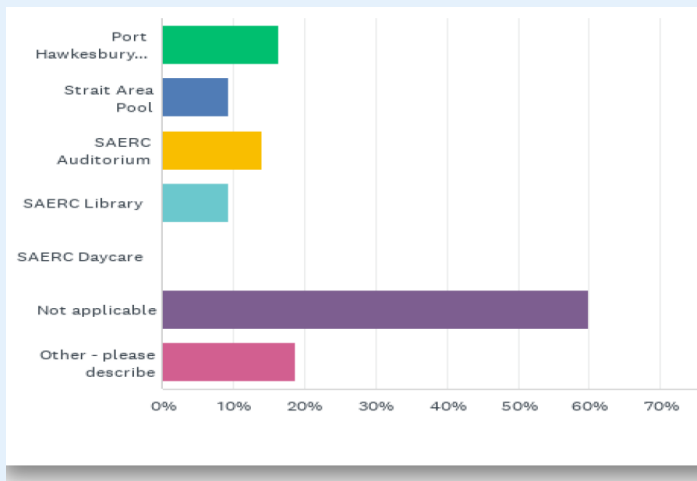
We had a total of 90 survey responses (the Accessibility Survey can be viewed in “**Appendix A**” of this document). The remainder of this section will review the demographic information and survey results.



Graph 1: Check all that apply

More than 80% of the respondents have disabilities, have family/friends who experience disabilities, work with persons with disabilities, and/or are connected in other ways to accessibility challenges. Members of the PHAAC felt we were fortunate to have such a high percentage of respondents with direct knowledge for both the challenges and the opportunities for access in Port Hawkesbury.

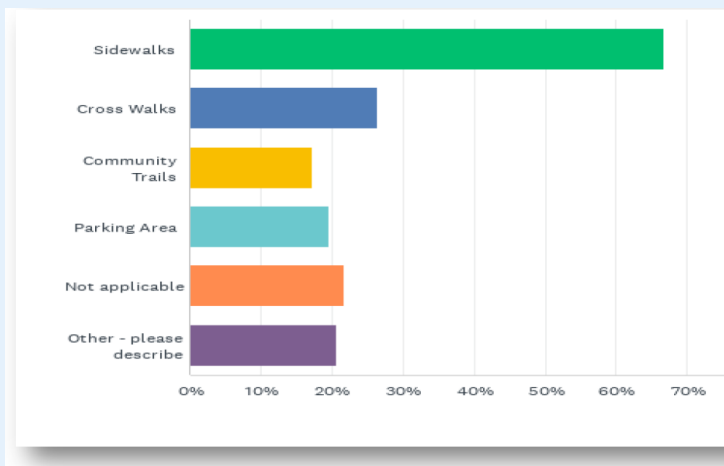
Graph 2: Indoor Built Environment: Have you experienced barriers in any municipally-owned buildings?



According to the survey, a total of 51 respondents (more than half) indicated that they didn't experience any barriers while using/accessing municipally owned buildings.

Of those buildings that were identified as having barriers - the Civic Centre, followed by the SAERC Auditorium were the top buildings, followed by the SAERC Library and the Strait Area Pool facilities.

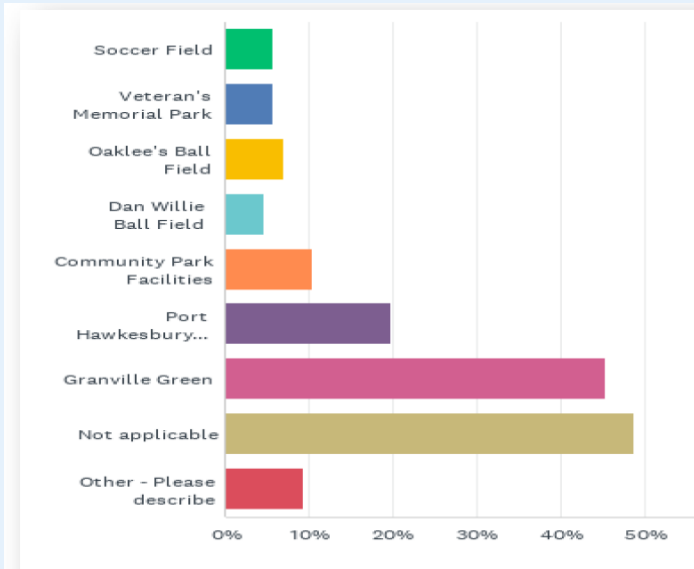
Some of the comments provided by survey respondents will be discussed in more detail under the section for "Indoor Built Environments." Recommendations from the PHAAC (based on overall community consultations) will be discussed later in the plan as well.



Graph 3: Outdoor Built Environment: Identified Barriers

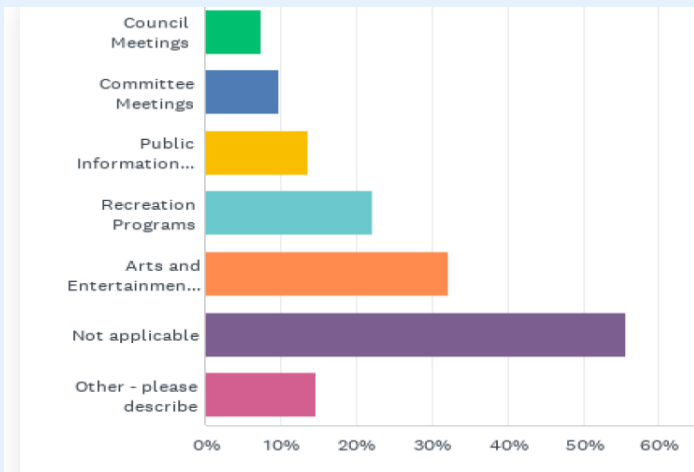
For "outdoor built environment" almost 70% of survey respondents experienced issues on sidewalks, followed by crosswalks/intersections, parking areas and the community trails.

Some of the comments and "common themes" provided by survey respondents will be discussed in more detail under the section for "Outdoor Built Environment." Recommendations from the PHAAC (based on overall community consultations) will be discussed later in the plan as well.



Graph 4: Outdoor Built Environment: Have you ever Experienced issues with Outdoor facilities

The Granville Green was identified as the top outdoor facility with access challenges/barriers, followed by the waterfront, Community Park, sports fields, and the Veterans War Memorial Park. More of these outdoor facilities will be discussed in the context of respondent feedback in more detail in subsequent sections, as will PHAAC recommendations regarding these facilities.



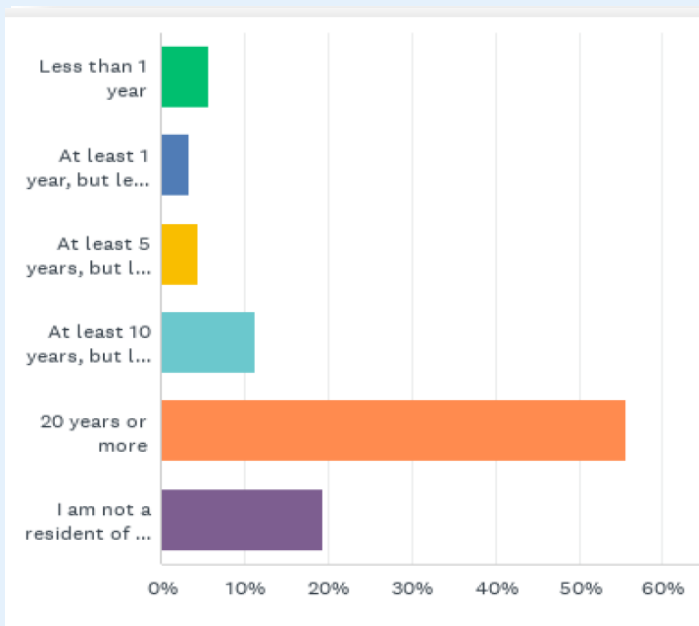
Graph 5: Access to Information: Municipal Programs and Activities

From an “access to information” perspective, more than 55% did not experience barriers to accessing information for municipal services, programs or activities. Additionally, challenges were identified with accessing information regarding council meetings, and others (i.e., hours of operation for the

walking track located at the Civic Centre). Efforts will need to be made to ensure all citizens can be informed and participate.

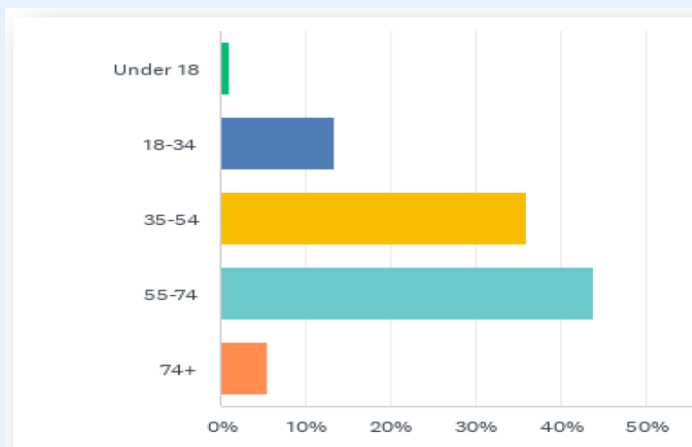
Graph 6: All the Ways we Live: Municipal Programs and Activities

About 62% of respondents didn't identify any barriers to participation in municipal programs and activities. Of the respondents who did, the top barriers were in recreation, arts and entertainment events. Other barriers were identified in public information sessions, as well as Council and Committee meetings. More details will be discussed in subsequent sections.



Graph 7: Demographic Information: Residence

The bulk of respondents were residents of the town for (in the order of “most” to “least”) 20 years or more (55%), 10 years (10%), followed by 5 years or less. PHAAC members noted that having a large portion of long-term residents was valuable in terms of experience with the changing landscape of the town over the past few decades. About 19% of the respondents were non-residents at the time they completed the survey.

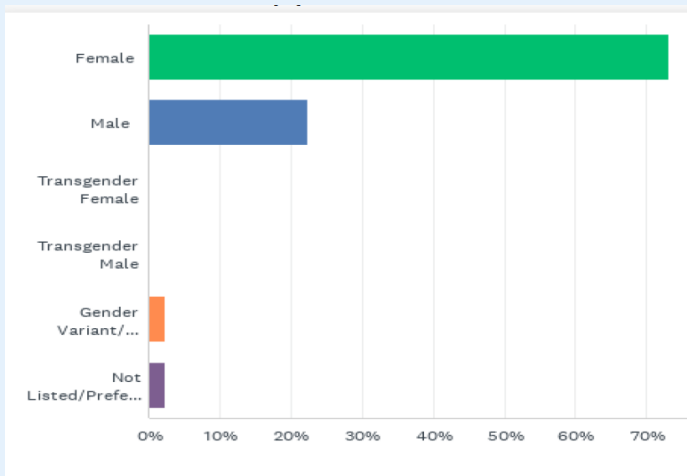


Graph 7: Demographic Information: Age

According to the survey, 44% of the respondents were between the ages of 55-74 yrs old, 36% between the ages of 35-54 yrs old, 14% between the ages of 18-34 yrs old, with the smallest age demographic being older than 74 yrs and younger than 18 yrs of age.

The PHAAC were pleased with the age ranges of the survey respondents contributing feedback to help inform accessibility needs in the Town of Port Hawkesbury. Particularly with the aging population trends we acknowledge in the Province of Nova Scotia overall, we had a great level of feedback from the growing senior population (as a vulnerable age sector that will have increasing accessibility needs over the next decade and beyond).

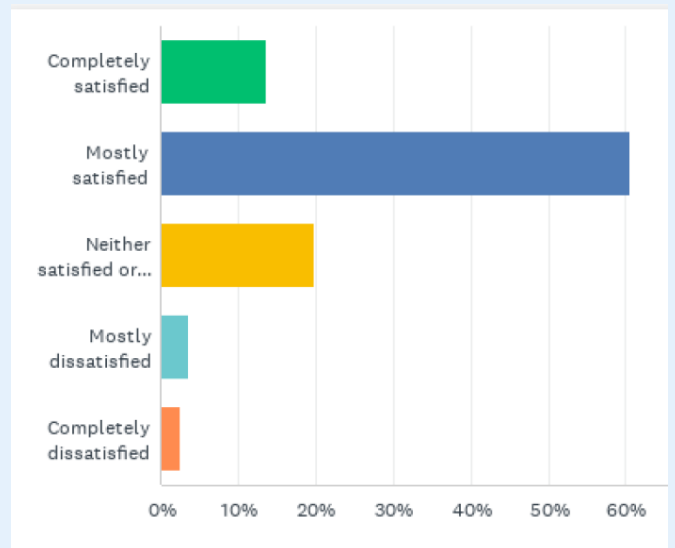
Graph 7: Demographic Information: Gender



According to this survey and the question regarding demographic information on gender, about 73% of the survey respondents identified as female, and 22% as male, with a small number of participants who prefer not to identify with a gender or are non-conforming.

Graph 7: Level of Satisfaction with Port Hawkesbury

More than 74% of respondents were completely or mostly satisfied with the Town of Port Hawkesbury, with almost 20% neutral, and 5% dissatisfied. In conclusion, PHAAC members were happy with the level of participation we were able to garner from this accessibility survey. The majority of the survey respondents participated via online, with a small number of survey respondents submitting paper copies of the survey.



Of the 90 survey responses that were received, the PHAAC felt the survey data gave us a lot of valuable information, especially since we had such a high percentage of respondents who were either “first voice” people with disabilities or who had direct knowledge or experience with people (family members or clients) with disabilities. The PHAAC has included the survey data and other data sources (reviewed in the next sections) to inform the PHAAC accessibility recommendations in subsequent sections.

One-on-One Interviews

The PHAAC members worked together to identify a target of 12 citizens living in Port Hawkesbury who have varying kinds of disabilities (sight, auditory, physical, and others). Ten of the twelve citizens who were identified and who were engaged chose to participate in one-on-one interviews; the two other citizens identified chose to fill out the online survey instead (the template used by PHAAC members to engage citizens by phone or email for one-on-one interviews is in Appendix B). The one-on-one Interviewees were asked the following questions:

#1 What barriers have you experienced in the Town of Port Hawkesbury? Please explain?

#2 Do you have any suggestions for how to overcome these (above) barriers?

#3 What areas in Port Hawkesbury has the Town made progress on? Please explain?

#4 What areas would you like to see more progress on?

#5 What would you like to be able to do in town that you can't do now?

#6 Anything else you would like to add?

The responses provided by these citizens are included in the data outcomes, and captured in “common themes” for each of the Accessibility plan sections of this document. The one-on-one interviews were also used to inform PHAAC recommendations to the Town of Port Hawkesbury Council.

One-on-One Interviews with Stakeholder Groups

The PHAAC members worked together to identify 19 stakeholder groups within Port Hawkesbury who may have clients or who work with citizens who may have varying kinds of disabilities (sight, auditory, physical, and others).

Thirteen (13) out of the twenty (20) stakeholder groups participated in one-on-one interviews; four (4) stakeholder groups decided to share the survey link with their staff/members to fill out the accessibility survey, and three (3) stakeholder groups did not participate. Stakeholder groups identified include: Leaside Transition House, Strait Area

Women's Place, Festival of the Strait, Ceilidh Market, Regional Occupation Centre (ROC Centre), Shalom ROC Society, ROC Independent Living Support, RCMP, YReach Immigrant Services, Nova Scotia Community College Strait Area Campus, Royal Canadian Legion Branch 43, Evergreen Seniors Club, Strait Area Transit, 2 Taxi companies, Tamarac Education Centre, Strait Area Education and Recreation Centre (SAERC), Cape Breton Island Housing Authority , and the Strait Area Chamber of Commerce.

The PHAAC recognizes that this stakeholder list will grow over time; as this number grows, it will continue to amplify the importance of pursuing a holistic and collaborative approach to improving accessibility across multiple sectors and for multiple populations.

Questions asked to stakeholder groups are as follows:

#1 What barriers have your clients experienced in the Town of Port Hawkesbury?

#2 Do you have any suggestions for how to overcome these (above) barriers?

#3 What areas in Port Hawkesbury has the Town made progress on?

#4 What areas would you like to see more progress on?

#5 What would some of your clients with different abilities like to be able to do in town that they can't do now?

#6 Anything else would you like to add?

The responses provided by these stakeholder groups are included in the data, and captured in "common themes" of the Accessibility plan. The one-on-one interviews with stakeholders were also used to inform PHAAC recommendations to the Town of Port Hawkesbury Council.

Social Media “Community Input Campaign” Strategy



ACCESSIBILITY IN PORT HAWKESBURY

Public group · 247 members

Joined ▼

+ Invite

The PHAAC decided that social media could be a great medium to engage a cohort of community members and gather community input. A social media page entitled “Accessibility in Port Hawkesbury” was launched by PHAAC member Cathy Cooke in October 2021 on Facebook. The PHAAC was pleasantly surprised that in less than 24 hours of the page going “live” - there was immediate interest that manifested in more than 100 community members joining on the very first day. Within two weeks, there were more than 200 people who joined this accessibility page. We were even able to recruit a new PHAAC member as a result of this page. The citizen began as a social media “Accessibility in Port Hawkesbury” page member, and later expressed interest in joining the committee (which was approved by the Town Council).

Co-chair Matthew Higgins took on the responsibility of social media PHAAC post “lead” (in addition to Cathy and other members assisting with general posts). The PHAAC worked with Matthew to design weekly posts, while PHAAC member Cathy Cooke monitored and recorded community feedback and post responses.

In addition to general posts, PHAAC members designed a structured 5-week social media “citizen input campaign” to gather community feedback. Each week targeted specific input. PHAAC decided to focus on municipal “indoor” and “outdoor” built environments,

as well as other categories of focus that included “All the Ways we Move”, “All the Ways we Live”, and lastly, “Accessible Housing”.

Week One: Outdoor Built Environment

We began the first week of the campaign targeting five municipal outdoor-built facilities chosen by the PHAAC after we had significant conversations about the outdoor facilities owned by the town that would be useful to highlight from an accessibility perspective.



We used photo content of outdoor public spaces like Granville Green, the Veterans War Memorial Park, the Port Hawkesbury Waterfront, sports fields, and more. Respondents were asked to share their experiences and feedback regarding these outdoor spaces, and to identify any accessibility issues they may have had at these various outdoor Municipal properties.

The social media feedback, experiences, and suggestions by citizens about these outdoor facilities were added to the PHAAC research data - and used to help inform this plan, to

highlight common themes, and to assist in the PHAAC recommendations to Port Hawkesbury Town Council, Staff, and others.



Matthew Clinton Higgins

Admin · December 13, 2021 · 🌐

Our committee would like to hear about any accessibility issues or barriers that you have faced at SAERC pool in port Hawkesbury??



Week Two: Indoor Built Environment

This week, the PHAAC worked with Matthew to focus on Port Hawkesbury municipal “indoor- built” properties. The PHAAC reviewed the overall list of properties, and chose a series of photos of various municipal buildings (like the Civic Centre, the Allan J Airport, the Port Hawkesbury Volunteer Fire Department, and the Strait Area Pool) that the PHAAC felt was important to highlight from the perspective of accessibility.

The posts were designed to engage citizens on the social media page to share any barrier issues they may have experienced, or provide feedback or ideas to improve access.



Matthew Clinton Higgins

Admin · December 1, 2021 · 🌐

We would love to hear of any accessibility issues or barriers that you have faced at the town entrance- fountain park, AT trail



Week Three: All the Ways we Move

The PHAAC then devoted a week to obtaining citizen input about “all the ways people move.” This included some posts about public transit services in Port Hawkesbury (taxi services and Strait Area Transit services). Another key focus was on active transportation, with photo content that highlighted a variety of sidewalks and pathways in Port Hawkesbury. Citizens in the facebook group were asked to share their feedback and/or experiences with any barriers they may have had with either transit services or challenges while

participating in active transportation within the Town or Port Hawkesbury. This feedback, like the other social media post comments, were added to the general PHAAC research data, and used for common themes and helped to inform recommendations.

Week Four: All the Ways we Live

The week four focus was on highlighting various municipal programs, events and activities facilitated by the Town of Port Hawkesbury. Some of the programs chosen by the PHAAC to highlight were: Tunes on the Trails, Granville Green Concert Series, sports and recreation activities (flyers), and more. Co-chair Matthew Higgins asked citizens to provide input regarding any barriers citizens may have experienced at any of these events, and/or while participating in various recreational programming, and/or input as to why they may have been unable to participate due to

barriers.

Week Five: Accessible Housing

This week's PHAAC focus was about accessible housing. Co-chair Matthew Higgins engaged citizens to talk about the need for accessible housing in Port Hawkesbury. Even though accessible housing is not a direct responsibility or within the control of the Town of Port Hawkesbury, our PHAAC members felt it was important to include this topic/focus. We've received feedback that there is a general lack of



accessible housing in the Town of Port Hawkesbury and wanted to make it one of our focuses.

The PHAAC also had discussions about accessible housing and the impact that a lack of this kind of housing stock has on citizens with varying levels of ability. The PHAAC will make recommendations to Council with the full acknowledgement that any role by the Town will be via advocacy and collaboration with other stakeholders who are directly and indirectly involved in increasing accessible housing stock. Some of the stakeholders we identified were: Cape Breton Island Housing Authority, the Province of Nova Scotia, the Federal Government of Canada, as well as other partners like the Port Hawkesbury Housing Advisory Committee and Strait Area Housing Matters Coalition.



In addition to the “social media input campaign” - other posts were created to garner feedback about the importance of creating an accessibility plan for the Town of Port Hawkesbury. Our PHAAC members (Co-chair Matthew Higgins and Cathy Cooke specifically) have been able to grow the social media page to nearly 250 members (and growing).

This social media page will continue to be an important tool for this committee to share the outcomes of the Accessibility Plan, and to keep citizens engaged with the progress that will be made with

improving access in the Town of Port Hawkesbury. The PHAAC members were very pleased with the high level of engagement and input on this social media page, as well as the total number of citizens who joined to provide feedback, experiences, and ideas about accessibility.

PHAAC: Member Capacity

Our PHAAC members who represent “first voice” perspectives regarding disability challenges and issues were also integral to the overall accessibility plan, from initial

design, to outlining the research strategies, to the data analysis, and ultimately, with regard to the multiple PHAAC priorities and recommendations made in this plan. Having active and engaged “first voice” members and leadership on the PHAAC has led to a much more inclusive and informed Accessibility Plan.

Below is an overview of our PHAAC members, from each of the stakeholder groups (Co-chairs, Town Council, Town Staff, and Community Experts).

Co-Chairs	Brenda Chisholm-Beaton Matthew Higgins
Council Members	Blaine MacQuarrie Hughie MacDougall
Staff Supports	Terry Doyle Gordie Snook Melissa Warner
Community	Cathy Cooke Aaron MacDonald Arielle Vienneau Diana Poirier John F Kennedy Karen MacLean Marilyn Talbot



OUR COMMITTEE
THE PHAAC

“Community Consultation” PHAAC Priorities:

Accessibility Plan as a “Living” Document Recommendation (Staff & Council)
(with PHAAC support)

(Timeline - Lifespan of this Plan) 2022-2025

Providing a pathway to ensure all community members are able to play an active role in learning about and providing feedback on accessibility in the Town will be important, especially for “first voice” community members who live with a wide variety of disabilities. The PHAAC recommends that Port Hawkesbury Town Council work with the PHAAC on a “multi-communications strategy” (using a variety of mediums like social

media, website, in-person, traditional media, other community consultation strategies) to ensure we are ready, willing, and able to accept feedback and share information about accessibility in the Town during the lifespan of this Accessibility Plan (2022-2025).

All accessibility community feedback should be shared with the PHAAC as well, so that it can be reviewed annually or “as needed” - and in the spirit of treating this accessibility plan as a “living document” - that can be grown and enhanced over time in collaboration with Town of Port Hawkesbury staff and Council.

Lastly, it is the recommendation of the PHAAC to use the current community consultation strategies (surveys, one-on-one interviews with citizens and stakeholders, social media campaigns, first-voice PHAAC member capacity, etc) along with employing other community consultation opportunities the current PHAAC were unable to safely host (focus groups, sharing circles, accessibility sessions, etc) to inform subsequent accessibility plans (post-2025) that will best position and prepare the Town for “Accessibility 2030”.

2: Communicate Information

Understanding how citizens and stakeholders are accessing information that enables engagement in the community.



This approach is important in three significant ways. First, it is important to understand how citizens and stakeholder groups are accessing information that enables engagement and participation in the community, and also to understand what barriers currently exist for some citizens that limit their ability to access the information they need.

Second, it is important to understand how the Town is communicating information to citizens and how the Town can improve communication strategies that will - in turn - improve access and remove barriers to access of information and participation. Third, it is important to ensure an inclusive communications plan is designed and implemented to reach the most number of citizens possible.

Currently, the Town of Port Hawkesbury communicates information to the citizens of the Town and other stakeholders in a variety of ways. Citizens can access information via: a) Town website, b) flyers/mail-outs, c) social media posts/announcements, d) in-person at the box office/offices, e) by phone, f) traditional media (radio/newspaper), and g) email/electronic messages.

For the purposes of this accessibility plan, the PHAAC paid special attention to the feedback we received regarding access to information.

Common themes demonstrated that most citizens didn't experience significant difficulty with accessing information. However, we did identify some important feedback from citizens who did experience barriers - that we feel - provides an opportunity for access improvement.

Themes: Communicating Information to Citizens

Issues with influx re: Covid 19 restrictions: "Walking Track"

Some citizens relayed that the ever-changing Covid 19 restrictions have been confusing, regarding the Civic Centre and the use of the "much loved" walking track. Seniors in particular like using the walking track as a safe active living activity during the colder winter months. Some seniors noted the availability and status of the walking track was often unknown, and many were unsure about how to access information regarding when and even "if" it was open.

Town of Port Hawkesbury Website

The Town of Port Hawkesbury Website was noted by several citizens as a place to go to access information about the town. Some of the constructive feedback provided was that the website could be made more accessible, with an *AccessiBe* feature for instance (*AccessiBe* is a technology company working to solve the problem of web accessibility).

In general, the feedback regarding the website was positive, and that information is easy to locate. A few citizens even noted that when they couldn't find information on the website, that a simple in-person visit to Town staff often solved their information needs, and further, it was also noted that Town staff were "very helpful and responsive" via phone as well.

Some Seniors Prefer the Newspaper

Lots of citizens appreciate the active social media page for the Town of Port Hawkesbury and view it as a positive source of information. However, it was pointed out by a few senior citizens that social media isn't for everyone. A few respondents pointed out that it is important for the Town of Port Hawkesbury to also share information via the local newspapers. Specifically, a few respondents pointed out that some seniors look for their information about town events and programs in the local newspapers and either do not care for social media, or do not know how to access information on social media or the internet/websites.

An Information Portal/Digital Welcome Package for Newcomers

Some of the important services that citizens would like to access are difficult to find for newcomers. Two examples that were relayed in the data collected were specifically for the Eastern Counties Regional Library, and the Strait Area Pool (both the entrance and the parking area).

One great suggestion that was offered by one of the respondents was for the Town of Port Hawkesbury to create an Information Package and/or offer an Information Portal for newcomers to the Town and to the region. This package could be available at the Town in hard-copy, or made available as a virtual document on the Town's website.

Other suggestions were to ensure the Town's website outlined important accessibility information within the town of Port Hawkesbury. We discussed some of these ideas during our working group sessions. Our committee members, for example, discussed the

possibility of having the Community Trails system rated in terms of most to least accessible. We also discussed identifying walking paths throughout the town based on ease of accessibility. We also noted that the Town can do a better job identifying accessibility features within the town, such as those we have at the Strait Area Pool.

“Communicate Information” PHAAC Priorities:

“Inclusive Communications Plan” Recommendation (Staff & Council)

(with support from PHAAC)

(Timeline - Lifespan of this Plan) 2022-2025

PHAAC members agreed that going forward, an effective communications strategy will be necessary for the Town of Port Hawkesbury to:

- a) share the completed accessibility plan (once approved);
- b) share accessibility information and resources (website, social media, etc.);
- c) share accessibility assets in the Town (for example the accessibility accommodations at the Strait Area Pool);
- d) share accessibility progress in the Town; and
- e) allow for ongoing citizen feedback/engagement to ensure we continue to engage citizens - especially “first voice” citizens with disabilities - as accessibility plans are followed and implemented, and ultimately, treat this accessibility plan as a “living document” that will need to be re-visited often, revised when needed, and added to when needed.

Short Term (within the next 6 months): The PHAAC recommends that the Town of Port Hawkesbury Council share the approved Accessibility Plan on the Town of Port Hawkesbury website and makes hard-copies available at the Town (and/or available via thumb drive). Further, the PHAAC recommends that the Town of Port Hawkesbury Staff and Council include “Accessibility updates” as a regular agenda item to be reviewed at the Committee of the Whole meetings, to ensure that accessibility work/goals remains a priority and remain “on track” to continue progress going forward.

Medium term (within the next 12 months): The PHAAC recommends that Town staff and Council work with the PHAAC on a communications plan to share accessibility

priorities, successes, and news using various mediums (social media, traditional media, website, mailouts/pamphlets, etc.). The PHAAC recommends that Town staff include an “ongoing” feedback portal (via email, social media, in person, phone, etc.) so that citizens can provide feedback regarding access in the town when needed, as needed. This will ensure that accessibility issues and opportunities are captured and shared with the PHAAC over the short and long term. It is the intent that the Accessibility Plan be a “living document” that can be revisited annually (or as needed) by the PHAAC. Additionally, we recommend the Town develop an “accessibility page” on the Town of Port Hawkesbury website to outline the accessibility plan, showcase town-based accessibility assets/accommodations, share accessibility resources and information, share progress on plan outcomes, and to help serve as a communications portal for citizens and stakeholders.

Long-term (next 3 years): Revisit and update the Accessibility Plan: members of the PHAAC and Town staff and elected officials should review the current plan, update as short and medium-term recommendations have been completed, and identify which recommendations (long-term or otherwise) still require completion (determine new timelines), and to explore if new recommendations are required.

3: Indoor Built Environment

This approach helps us to explore our municipal indoor public spaces and examine these with an accessibility lens.



As one of the very first tasks identified by PHAAC members, we requested Town staff prepare a list of outdoor/indoor municipal properties (the municipal properties list can be viewed in **Appendix C**).

The committee began their review of town-owned buildings, especially those that are open to, and used by, the public. Many of these publicly accessible buildings were considered in early discussions as a committee, in the creation of the accessibility survey, and in the design of our social media campaign work. We wanted to collect as much information as we could from citizens regarding the accessibility of these public buildings - including what is working well and what needs improvement.

Themes: What is Working Well

Civic Centre

Of all of our Town-owned publicly accessible buildings, we've had the most positive feedback regarding the accessibility features at the Port Hawkesbury Civic Centre. Comments received about these accessible features included the elevator to access the

second floor, access to wheelchairs, automatic doors, open facility with lots of space, accessible washrooms, accessible seating spaces at the arena/rink, and more.

Regarding some of the stakeholder feedback, it was noted that the Civic Centre continues to be the venue of choice for the Ceilidh Market due to the fact it is accessible to both market vendors and customers from parking to building access, to access to wheelchairs, and the level and open space within the building.

Themes: What We Need to Improve

Automatic Door Openers

The need for automatic door openers was a common theme in the research data. The general consensus of the data and PHAAC member discussions was that the installation of automatic door opening accommodations are essential for making all public facilities accessible.

Even though the Civic Centre received a lot of positive feedback in terms of accessibility, there were improvement suggestions noted in the research data and based on conversations within the PHAAC committee regarding the installation of automatic door openers.

Some of the Civic Centre points of entry suggested for automatic door installs (internal to building) was the main entryway to the rink, and the 2nd level entryway between the “walking track” and the hallway that leads to the Municipal offices. The main entryway discussed in terms of automatic door installs was the external entryways from the Reeves Street entrance. Other conversations around automatic door openers were around maintenance and monitoring schedules to ensure these are always in good working order.

Indoor Built Environment PHAAC Priorities:

Automatic Door Installation Recommendation (Staff and Council)

Short Term (within the next 6 months): Document a list of all publicly used entryways within the Civic Centre and create a prioritized list of entryways that require automatic

door opening hardware. Similar prioritized lists should be done with other public-access buildings owned by the Town of Port Hawkesbury.

Medium term (within the next 12 months): One entryway has been highlighted by the PHAAC. The 2nd floor entryway to the walking track requires an automatic door opener because this is the main corridor/access closest to the elevator that would be used by persons with physical disabilities to access the walking track and/or accessible seating area within the rink/arena.

Long-term (next 3 years+): The long-term goal should be to ensure that all entryways/accesses have automatic door openers installed within all publicly accessible buildings owned by the Town of Port Hawkesbury, in advance of 2030.

Civic Centre Sky Boxes

As noted in the research data and in general conversations during working group meetings of the PHAAC, the “Sky Boxes” located in the Port Hawkesbury Civic Centre within the rink area are not accessible. There are two access points with entryways that do not have automatic door opener hardware, and they are only accessible via stairs.

Civic Centre Sky Boxes Recommendations (Council & Staff)

Short Term (within the next 6 months): No short-term recommendations were made by the PHAAC. We determined that the sky boxes are currently not in high demand nor are they well-used during rink-based events. We felt that before Council should consider investing any time or funding in making the sky boxes and sky box entryways accessible, they should first figure out a strategy to improve the overall demand and general use of these facilities.

Medium term (within the next 12 months): Determine a long-term plan to grow the demand/usage of the sky boxes/facilities.

Long-term (next 3 years+): Pending the demand/usage of the sky boxes has grown, the PHAAC recommends that Council consider installing an accessible elevator to the 3rd floor hallway, and ensure at least one of the sky boxes has an accessible viewing deck installed, complete with accessible doorway and accessible washroom facilities.

Benches and Resting Areas in the Civic Centre

The research data suggested there is a need for more seating available in the public areas within the Civic Centre. Discussions concluded that there are adequate benches and seating available, however, it is currently being stored due to the public health protocols and the restrictions around social gatherings due to Covid 19 over the past two years.

Benches & Resting Areas in the Civic Centre Recommendation (Staff)

Short Term (within the next 6 months): Assuming it meets with public health protocols, the PHAAC recommends that Town staff restore the benches and rest area seating to its normal locations for public use. This includes the ability for walkers on the walking track to use the arena seating to rest when needed.

Medium term (within the next 12 months): Determine if the “restored” seating to pre-Covid settings is adequate.

Long-term (next 3 years): If it is determined that more benches or resting areas are needed, add more seating where required.

Washroom Facilities Nearest to the Walking Track (Civic Centre)

Feedback from citizens determined that it would be better to have the washroom facilities closest to the “walking track” open during the day (not just for special events). The PHAAC discussed the fact that the only washroom facilities open to the public during the day for persons using the “walking track” are located in the hallway between the Municipal Offices and the 2nd floor Arena Entryway (and it was further noted that the arena entryway doesn’t have automatic door openers installed). The PHAAC noted that the washroom facilities that are in the immediate vicinity of the walking track would be easier for persons requiring washroom access because it is “one less doorway” to maneuver through versus the hallway washrooms currently offered.

Restrooms at Walking Track Recommendation (Staff)

Short Term (within the next 6 months): The PHAAC recommends that Town staff ensure these washroom facilities are open for use by the public and maintained daily as soon as possible.

Strait Area Pool Facilities: Accessibility Features/Accommodations

Based on a social media post that PHAAC Co-Chair Matthew Higgins made about the Strait Area Pool, it became clear that there was little to no public awareness of the accessibility accommodations and features available. The PHAAC discussions revolved around how amazing it was that the SAERC pool had accessibility accommodations like a ramp entry to access the pool. We also agreed that without public awareness, these accessibility features and accommodations would simply not be used. We further determined that with more awareness, perhaps citizens with physical disabilities would be more likely to access and use the Strait Area Pool.

Town Accessibility Features & Assets Recommendation (Staff)

Short Term (within the next 6 months): The PHAAC recommends that Town staff consider ways to share information in order to showcase Town of Port Hawkesbury accessibility assets and accommodations at the pool, and also, any other accessibility assets at other indoor and outdoor town-owned facilities (to begin building public knowledge capacity).

4: Outdoor Built Environment

The PHAAC members took time to review all municipal outdoor facilities/green spaces used by members of the public (see **Appendix C**). These outdoor built and natural environments were considered in the development and design of our survey and our social media campaign to gather public input. We also had discussions as members of the PHAAC regarding how we might improve access to various outdoor facilities to make these more accessible.

After we collected data and feedback from multiple sources, there were various themes that were gleaned regarding municipal outdoor facilities; some themes included facilities

This approach helps us to explore our municipal outdoor public spaces and examine these with an accessibility lens.



that were working well from an access vantage point, and other themes included facilities that were not working well from an access vantage point.

Themes: What is Working Well

Community Park

Positive comments were made regarding new accessibility features added to the community park (paved walkways, for example); as well as the dedicated parking area improvements with designated accessible parking spots.

Positive feedback was also given with regard to the new “raised” crosswalk installation; citizens noted the raised sidewalk both improves visibility for the safe crossings for pedestrians as well as working as a speed bump to reduce the speed of vehicles travelling along MacQuarrie Extension. Citizens also like the “rainbow” crosswalk feature.

Reeves Street

Positive feedback was received regarding the new design/function of Reeves Street. Comments ranged from viewing the town as more accessible for pedestrians, as looking esthetically better, and that the “lane arrows” makes traversing Reeves Street by vehicle much easier and safer. The PHAAC acknowledges that Reeves Street isn’t owned by the Town of Port Hawkesbury, and therefore recommends that Council pass this positive feedback on to Nova Scotia Public Works.

Themes: What We Need to Improve

Waterfront Restrooms

As noted in the feedback, many citizens who use the waterfront to walk or relax have noted there is a need for public restroom facilities. The PHAAC discussed this feedback and noted that the waterfront does indeed need a long-term solution especially because a) the waterfront has been identified as one of Port Hawkesbury Town Council’s 5 main strategic priorities, b) the Waterfront Advisory Committee is working with the Town and Council on a Waterfront Development Plan and c) the waterfront area is deemed as a “high use” zone for citizens with potential to increase use into the future.

Outdoor Built Environment PHAAC Priorities:

Waterfront Restrooms Recommendation (Staff and Council)

Short Term (within the next 6 months): The PHAAC recommends that Town staff and Council work with the Strait of Canso Yacht Club to ensure public restroom access during the day until a longer term solution can be determined/implemented.

Long Term (within the next 1-3 Years): The PHAAC would recommend that the Town Council consider a long-term solution for the design, location, implementation of permanent restroom facilities at the waterfront location that would potentially serve both the Granville Green and the Waterfront locations. (Note: The PHAAC is unsure if one or more washroom facilities would be needed, but would ask that these washroom facilities be fully accessible for persons with disabilities).

Strait Area Pool Facilities: Parking

Feedback from participants regarding the Strait Area Pool facilities were mainly around parking access. Some citizens believe the parking lot is too small for the pool users; an issue that is made worse by non-pool patrons using the small parking area.

Pool Parking Lot Recommendation (Staff & Council)

Short Term (within the next 6 months): The PHAAC recommends that Town staff and Council consider enhanced signage and new public education engagement strategies to ensure that only pool-users are parking in the designated parking area, and possible outcomes for non-compliance.

Waterfront Boardwalk Access/Ease of Use/Safety

Based on the feedback from citizens, the boardwalk needs to be made safer for users. It was noted that there were loose boards along the current boardwalk that could cause tripping hazards. The PHAAC spoke at length with Town staff and elected officials about the current Active Transportation plans. With the current wooden boardwalk due to be replaced in the near future with an asphalt multimodal trail, the PHAAC noted that there were no requirements for long-term recommendations.

Waterfront Boardwalk Recommendation (Staff and Council)

Short Term (within the next 6 months+): The PHAAC recommends that Town staff and Council consider monitoring the existing boardwalk for loose boards or boards requiring repair for the short term, until the current boardwalk is replaced in the near future.

Community Park Accessibility

Some of the feedback received regarding accessibility challenges at the community park were physical barriers to some of the play equipment, and that adaptive equipment would be useful for some of the uneven terrain/surfaces. One suggestion was regarding



signage/user instructions for any accessible playground equipment. Other comments referred to the gravel substrate in the community park which makes it difficult for wheelchair users.

*Community Park Accessibility Recommendations (Staff and Council)
(with support/collaboration from Community Park Committee & Parks Rec and Active Living Advisory Committee)*

Short, Medium and Long-Term (the next 6 months+): The PHAAC recommends that Town staff and Council continue the accessibility work it has been progressing over the past few years in partnership with the Port Hawkesbury Community Park Committee and the Port Hawkesbury Active Living Advisory Committee. The PHAAC recommends that the long-term goal should be to ensure the community park is fully accessible by 2030,

and to continue to make progress and look for accessibility leveraging opportunities in the short, medium and long-term.

Granville Green: Accessibility Issues/Challenges

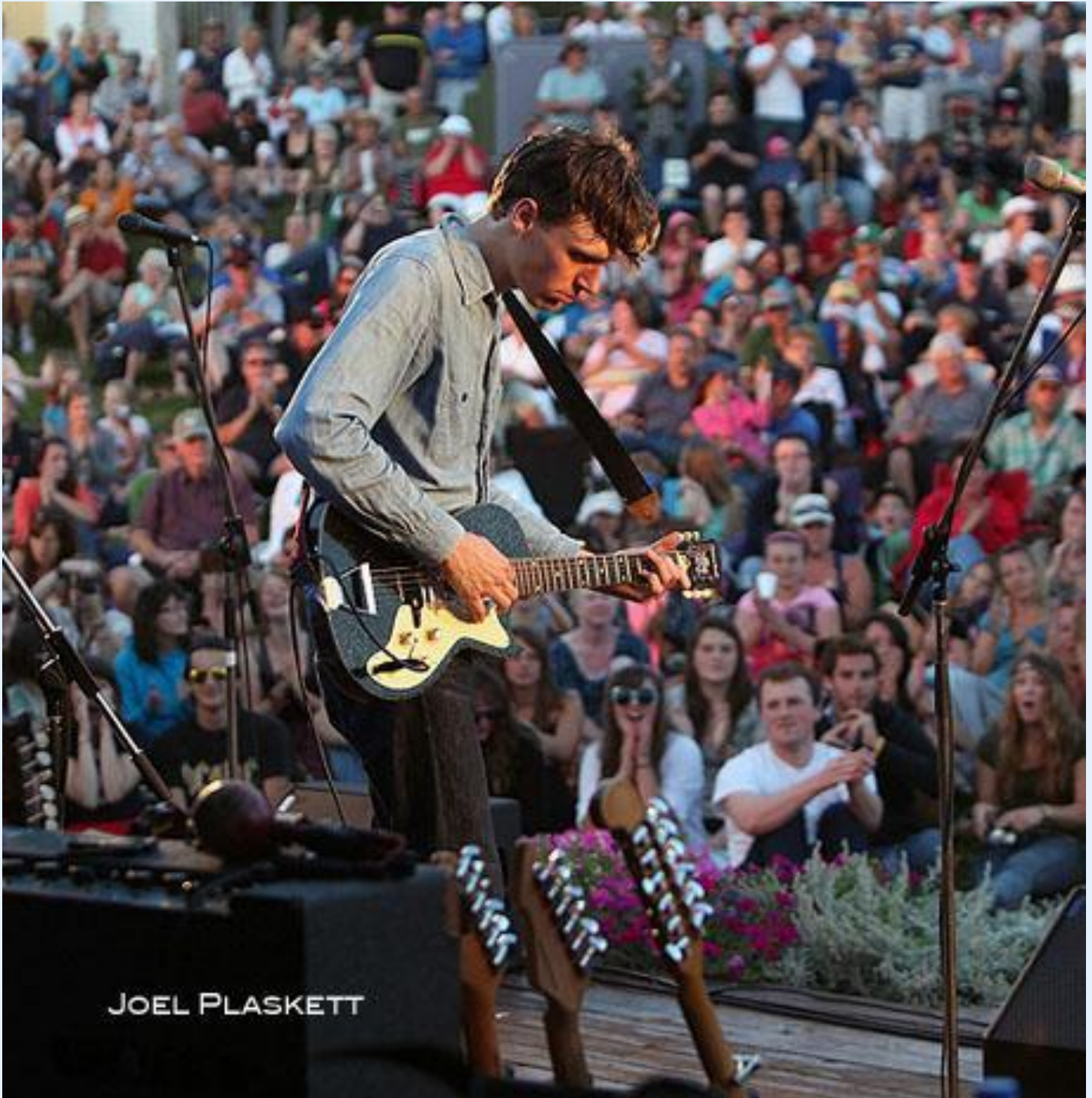
The Granville Green outdoor site has certainly been identified by many citizens as an outdoor built environment owned by the Town that has a wide variety of accessibility issues and challenges. Since it is built on a slope this naturally makes it very inaccessible for persons with mobility challenges. Aside from its obvious accessibility barriers, like the waterfront area, citizens have noted that a lack of accessible washroom facilities creates an added concern for persons with physical disabilities.

Granville Green Accessibility Recommendations (Staff and Council)

Short Term (the next 6 months+): After significant discussion, the PHAAC noted that any permanent plan to make the Granville Green facility accessible would require significant planning and investment to incorporate accessible walk-ways, accessible access to the stage and stage area, accessible permanent restroom facilities, and an accessible viewing area. Also, with the long-term plans for the Granville Green uncertain (it was noted that another site might be better suited for possible re-location), the PHAAC would recommend some short and medium-term goals for now.

Thus some of the PHAAC's short-term recommendations to Council to improve access to the Granville Green is to designate an accessible viewing platform with appropriate markings/signage; ensure volunteers/Town staff understand the intended use of that accessible viewing platform/zone (so it can be used as intended). Additionally, the PHAAC discussed the option for the Town to secure an "accessible" port-a-potty for use for this summer's Concert series, with a plan for placement on a level/accessible service with a clear pathway to/from the viewing platform.

Medium/Long Term (1+years): Once the permanent site for Granville Green is determined (existing or new), invest in a professional concept design plan to ensure all accessibility features are included, planned and implemented so that the Granville Green facilities and concert series will be fully accessible by 2030.



Civic Centre (Parking Lot & Walkways)

Some issues were identified with regard to the Civic Centre Parking Lot in the research data/feedback. For example, one participant noted it would be better if we had a designated area for Accessible pick up/drop off at Civic Centre. After discussion, it was

noted that we actually have this option currently, and that staff can do a better job of advertising it and perhaps identifying it as an option (signage).

Likely the biggest challenge highlighted by several citizens was regarding winter weather. It was noted that snowbanks and ice create huge accessibility barriers, especially when the designated accessible parking areas were not properly cleared for use, in addition to ramp entry and walkways into the Civic Centre entrance. It was suggested by Town staff that this could be remedied via staff snow clearing policy/practices.

Additionally, some citizens shared some feedback with regard to the challenge for persons with disabilities when vehicles are parking along the walkway, blocking access to the onramp to the walkway into the Civic Centre building. It was noted that Town staff can do a better job managing this issue internally when it is witnessed, and that public education regarding this challenge might also help.



Civic Centre Parking Lot & Walkways Recommendations (Staff)

Short Term (the next 6 months+): The PHAAC would accept Town staff suggestions to tackle these challenges as suggested above.

Food Bank: Accessibility Issues

According to feedback from citizens, the Port Hawkesbury Foodbank has a wide variety of access issues outside (as well as inside) the building. After PHAAC took time to discuss these challenges, Town staff shared that there is currently a plan in place to improve the

Foodbank, and funding has been secured for this work. This work is due to begin in the Fall of 2022 which will include automatic door openers, the installation of a new ramp, the installation of a weather barrier for clients waiting outside, and more.

Additionally, access issues were also described in the feedback from citizens with regard to the current process. Some citizens noted that it was difficult to “get” to the food bank - especially in the winter - without access to a vehicle or money to access transportation there. One respondent suggested that a delivery service added to the food bank would remove this barrier, especially for those citizens with physical disabilities who are also suffering with food insecurity (this issue will be discussed in more detail later in the plan).

Foodbank Access Recommendation (Work in progress... Staff & Council)

Short Term (the next 6 months+): The PHAAC accepts Town staff updates regarding the upgrades that are due to begin in the Fall of 2022.



War Memorial Park: Remembrance Day Ceremony Issues

Some feedback relayed that because there was limited concrete surfaces and seating area at the Veterans War Memorial Park, that it made it challenging for seniors and citizens with mobility challenges to attend.



Remembrance Day Ceremony Recommendations (Staff, Council and Legion)

Short Term (the next 6 months+): The PHAAC recommends that Town Staff and Council consider working with Legion Branch 43 to discuss temporary solutions to help offset the challenges identified during Remembrance Day ceremonies. Some suggestions are to have Town staff place temporary benches and/or seating for seniors on the grounds near the walkways for easy access. Another suggestion is to invite citizens to take their own folding chairs to the ceremony. Town staff can consider these, and/or other temporary solutions with Council and the Legion - to be used to accommodate and improve access challenges during the Remembrance Day Ceremonies. If not already a practice, the PHAAC would also recommend that the Civic Centre be offered to the Legion for the ceremony during poor/incremental weather.

Reeves Street Access Issue near Legion (Provincial roadway)

It was noted by a stakeholder group that vehicle access from Reeves Street to the Legion Front parking area is problematic because the curb does not align with the lane that enters the legion parking area.

Legion Alignment/Curb Issue Recommendation (Staff, NSPW and Legion)

Short - Medium Term (the next 6-12 months): The PHAAC acknowledges that Reeves street is a Provincially owned roadway, and recommends that this issue be shared in the short term and then followed up with Nova Scotia Public Works (in the medium term), and any updates directly communicated back to the Legion members.

(Community Park) Sports Fields: Access and Parking Challenges

As noted in feedback from citizens, there isn't an accessible pathway to the baseball, soccer, or t-ball sports fields, nor are there nearby parking spaces.

Although there is parking available across from the Community Park (Old Arena parking lot), it is still a considerable distance away for a person with mobility issues to park and access the sports fields.



*Sports Fields Parking/Pathways Recommendations (Staff and Council)
(with support from Parks Rec and Active Living Advisory Committee)*

Medium and Long Term (1 year+): The PHAAC recommends that the Town consider medium and long-term solutions. If the former arena parking lot continues to be the parking area to access the sports fields, then ensure there are nearby accessible parking spots, as well as a safe and accessible crosswalk and walkway that is level and accessible to access the sports fields. The PHAAC realizes that this solution will take time, planning, and considerable investment. Therefore, the PHAAC recognizes that it is likely that permanent solutions will require longer-term investment and time. We ask that this recommendation align with a fully-accessible Community Park facility for 2030.

Oaklee Bagley Baseball Field: Sunset Manor Request

As shared in feedback, seniors from Sunset Manor used to enjoy watching kids play baseball at Oaklee’s Baseball Field. Unfortunately, vegetation overgrowth now blocks/diminishes this view.



*Sunset Manor View of Ball Field Recommendations (Staff and Council)
(with support from Parks Rec and Active Living Advisory Committee and a possible partnership with the Nova Scotia Community College)*

Short - Medium Term (the next 6 - 12 months): The PHAAC recognizes that an important element of access is directly tied to quality of life. Improving “visual access” for seniors living at Sunset Manor to be able to see Oaklee Bagley Baseball Field, as discussed, would improve quality of life for the seniors there. Therefore, if there are no significant property issues/challenges that would prohibit the reclamation of this view, the PHAAC would recommend clearing of vegetation be completed. The PHAAC also noted that there might be an opportunity to engage with NSCC students to assist with this work (potential contact Waddie Long).

5: All the Ways we Move

Explores how we can make it easier for people to get to where they need to go, including transit and active transportation.



Transit and Active Transportation

The PHAAC discussed how important it is to be able to get from point “A” to “B” within the Town of Port Hawkesbury, whether transportation is occurring via access to public transit, personal transportation (vehicle), or active transportation. The PHAAC chose to focus on transit and active transportation in particular.

The ability to get from one place to another (via transit, walking, biking, skateboarding, in-line skating/rollerblading, jogging and running, non-mechanized wheel chairing, etc) is an important part of an independent and healthy lifestyle. PHAAC members believe that increasing citizen access to, and encouraging, active transportation in our community will benefit our health, community, transportation system, environment and economy for multiple reasons. First, it gives us an opportunity to be physically active on a regular basis; second, it increases accessibility and social exchanges which is important to our physical and mental health; third, it reduces road congestion and contributes environmentally by reducing greenhouse gas emissions; and fourth, it can reduce household costs to citizens via gas and/or transit fees.

The PHAAC did engage with Strait Area Transit (SAT) and taxi companies as stakeholders in accessibility, and further, we did seek to ask for citizen feedback about public access to transit-based transportation. Much of the intent was to understand if there are barriers that exist within the Town of Port Hawkesbury with regard to various modes of public transportation for citizens - no matter their age or level of ability. The PHAAC recognizes that the Town of Port Hawkesbury and Town Council are limited in their ability to change any potential barriers to public transportation, other than to try their best to work via taxi policy, via representation on the SAT Executive Board, and via potential collaboration opportunities with corresponding stakeholders.

Themes: Feedback About Public Transit

Communication/Information

Some of the feedback received from town citizens is that the “accessibility capacity” for SAT is not generally known. The PHAAC discussed this as a potential opportunity for SAT to launch a public education campaign to share information about SAT’s accessibility capacity, services, and other important details that would benefit persons of all ages and all levels of mobility.

Public Transit PHAAC Priorities:

Public Transit Access Capacity Campaign Recommendation (PHAAC & SAT Elected Representatives & SAT Director)

Short Term (the next 6 months+): The PHAAC recognizes that members of Town Council represent the Town of Port Hawkesbury on the SAT Board. The PHAAC would recommend that these members join a meeting with the PHAAC along with the director of SAT to discuss the possibility of a public “accessibility capacity campaign” for public transportation services that SAT can provide to people with disabilities. The PHAAC also believes that public transportation options for people with disabilities should be captured on the Town of Port Hawkesbury website (on the planned Accessibility Page) to benefit

citizens and to bring better awareness to the Town’s public transportation capacity and assist citizens with varying needs).

Themes: What is Working Well with Active Transportation

Intersection Improvement on Granville Street

Based on feedback, citizens feel the new intersections are working really well on Granville Street (we acknowledge these to be on the corner of Old Sydney Road and Granville Streets, Pitt and Granville Streets, and MacSween and Granville Streets). Citizens note it is much easier for pedestrians to cross the road on Granville Street at these intersections,



and due to the new 3-way and 4-way stop signs, traffic along Granville Street is slowed down significantly as well.

Active Transportation Multimodal Trail Network & Nature Trail Systems

Based on feedback, citizens provided lots of positive feedback for newly repaired sidewalk infrastructure, newly developed nature trail systems, and in particular, the new active transportation multimodal trail that connects the NSCC Strait Area Campus entrance, runs along Long Pond and Grants Pond, up Reeves Street hill to the intersection of Pitt and Reeves Street (AT Trail).

Specific positive feedback regarding the new AT trail was attributed to the dedicated parking area (in Embrees Island), and the asphalt surface that provides greater accessibility for persons who require wheelchair access to enjoy the AT trail. Additionally, positive comments were also made regarding improvements for ramped sidewalks and new sidewalk surfaces. Regarding nature trail improvements - the additions of handrails built into the tricky parts of the nature trails were mentioned positively.

Themes: What We Need To Improve with Active Transportation

Sidewalks

Sidewalks were without a doubt the most common challenge identified by citizens with regard to accessible active transportation. Some of the challenges identified with sidewalks were regarding their condition. Multiple challenges were identified around “old” “cracked” “uneven” “overgrown” and “poor” sidewalks that contributed to active transportation challenges for persons of different ages and levels of ability. Another challenge identified was around winter maintenance of sidewalks and the presence of snow and ice.

Feedback was also provided by citizens that highlighted the need for sidewalks where they were absent. Those areas highlighted included MacQuarrie Drive Extension (no current sidewalk connecting the Community Park, ROC Centre, Nursing Home, SAERC), as well as Trunk 4 (no current sidewalk connecting Reeves Street to Trunk 4 to access Walmart and other businesses in the Business Park via active transportation).

Specific sidewalk accessibility challenges noted were for curb cuts (and improved curb cuts) to allow for wheelchairs, scooters, and walkers access to various sidewalks within the Town. It was also noted that some ramps on sidewalks (between entryways) are too steep or awkwardly designed.

It was also noted that the Town should look into accommodations for those citizens who have visual impairments. One suggestion was to use paint markers to better indicate beginning/end of sidewalks and crosswalks. PHAAC members have plans to look into the regulatory practices for this.

Active Transportation PHAAC Priorities:

“Comprehensive Sidewalk Plan” Recommendations (Staff & Council)

Short Term (the next 6 months+): The PHAAC recognizes that Town Staff and Town Council have been working every year to improve sidewalks in high traffic areas of Port Hawkesbury and would like to commend the work that has been done to date. We would ask in the short term, that the appropriate Town staff review the current plan for sidewalk repairs/replacements/builds with consideration of the “above noted” community feedback, and to ensure the plan complies with accessibility standards.

Medium to Long Term (1-3 Years+): The PHAAC recommends that Town Staff and Council consider a comprehensive and assertive plan for sidewalk repair, replacement, and new installations (in addition to AT multimodal trail installations) that will make the Town of Port Hawkesbury fully accessible from an active transportation perspective for 2030. We understand that the 2022-2023 Capital Budget has been approved with an incredibly ambitious and positive sidewalk and active transportation investment. The PHAAC is super grateful to see Port Hawkesbury Town Council and Staff making this significant investment in active transportation infrastructure to benefit all citizens.

Benches

There was certainly lots of positive feedback from citizens with the benches that are placed along Pitt Street and at the waterfront locations. It was also noted that to allow more citizens to engage in active transportation in the Town, more bench installations are needed for seniors and others with mobility challenges. Other locations indicated for more bench installations were along the Community Trails, at the waterfront, and in other high foot-traffic areas of town.



Have a seat and enjoy the beautiful view of our harbour.

Considerations for Benches & Rest Areas in AT Corridors Recommendations (Staff & Council)

(Potential partnerships with the Strait Area Trails Association and the Port Hawkesbury Waterfront Advisory Committee)

Short and Medium Term (the next 6 months+): The PHAAC recommends that the Town Council considers potential opportunities for more bench installations to align with this year's (and subsequent years) plans for sidewalk and active transportation infrastructure work. Ensuring that benches and resting areas are included in these plans will be important to ensure all citizens, of all ages and abilities, can enjoy a healthy and active lifestyle and ensure their needs are being met (should they require resting stops in between their physical activities). Further the PHAAC sees collaboration opportunities to identify new bench installation locations with the Port Hawkesbury Waterfront Advisory Committee and the Strait Area Trails Association.



Intersection Challenges on Reeves Street

Some feedback from citizens indicated that there is often Insufficient time for persons with mobility issues to safely traverse intersections on Reeves Street. Also noted in the feedback was that better accommodations are needed for blind/deaf persons (sound signals/tactile markings).

Additionally, it was noted that placement for curb cuts would need to be improved upon for persons in wheelchairs to access the pedestrian light buttons.

Finally, it was noted by many citizens that the crosswalk on Reeves street near old Sydney road is not working well. Citizens note it needs to be better designed; suggestions were made for a wider “more pronounced” (with brighter paint) crosswalk there. Additionally, it was noted that an audio signal might help pedestrians and also better capture motorist attention and signal them to stop for pedestrians crossing there.

“Reeves Street” Intersection Improvement Recommendations (Staff & Council working with Nova Scotia Public Works)

Short and Medium Term (the next 6 months-12 months): The PHAAC recommends that the Town work with Nova Scotia Public Works to share this feedback and work on possible solutions on:

- a) the timing feature at intersections to allow for more crossing time,
- b) ensure accessibility features at these intersections are to code (curb cuts, button heights, etc),
- c) look into the possibility of adding audio features at intersections,
- d) explore a safer design at the pedestrian crossing near Old Sydney Road (at Reeves Street).

The PHAAC recognizes that the Town of Port Hawkesbury does not own Reeves Street and that this work will require consultation with Nova Scotia Public Works (Province of Nova Scotia), possibly the Reeves Street Advisory Committee as well.

Crosswalk Painting/Maintenance

Some feedback received by the PHAAC were from citizens who outlined challenges with faded crosswalk markings and that this creates safety issues with both pedestrians and also for drivers. PHAAC members discussed this item, and noted that it will be important to ensure the crosswalks in Town are repainted each spring because faded markings are hard for both pedestrians and drivers to see, especially so for pedestrians who may already have challenges with visual impairments.

“Crosswalk” Painting Maintenance Recommendations (Staff, with support from the Town of Port Hawkesbury Infrastructure Advisory Committee)

Short and Medium Term (the next 6 months+ and ongoing): The PHAAC recommends that Town staff (with the support of the Infrastructure Advisory Committee members) continue to monitor the conditions of the crosswalks in Town to ensure these are repainted appropriately each year, and we would also like to see the “rainbow” crosswalks maintained each year as well.

There was lots of positive feedback for the Community Trails in the Town of Port Hawkesbury, and it's important to note one idea that was shared for the benefit of Council. It is the idea that the Community Trails be “classified/graded” in terms of how accessible they are. It was also noted that it would be wonderful for more fully accessible trails to be added to the current system.

Additionally, some feedback for ways to improve the existing trail system was to install more guardrails and bench areas to allow those with physical disability issues to better enjoy them.

“Accessibility Grading” Trails Recommendations (PHAAC, Staff & PH Trails Ass.)

Short and Medium Term (the next 6 months+ and ongoing): The PHAAC recognizes that the Port Hawkesbury Community Trails are overseen and continuously developed by the Strait Area Trails Association and an amazing group of volunteers. Therefore the

recommendation is simply to invite some of the members of the Trails Association to a future PHAAC Committee Meeting to discuss the possibility of this kind of idea and/or collaboration. There may be other potential partners or stakeholders who might be able to



assist with assessing or grading the Trail systems to make it more accessible in advance of 2030.

AT Trail: Geese Droppings Issue

Goose droppings have been identified as an issue for users (in particular, for seniors and people with disabilities using accessibility aids like walkers, wheelchairs, etc).




“AT” Trail Maintenance Recommendation (Staff)

Short and Medium Term (the next 6 months+ and ongoing): The PHAAC recommends for the short term that the Town Council plan for ongoing maintenance of the AT Trail

should include pressure washing the asphalt when needed to clean up after the mess left by geese. For the medium term, the PHAAC recommends preventative measures to keep the geese off of the AT trail (we'd suggest that Town staff look into options that would act as a deterrent for the geese), as well as enforcing rules around citizens feeding geese and ducks at Grants Pond.

6: All The Ways We Live

Explores all of the Town-facilitated programs, events, and activities – We have also explored the need for accessible housing.



The collage features a central calendar for the 'Town of Port Hawkesbury March Break 2022' with dates 14 through 19. To the right are icons for sports (baseball bat, tennis racket, basketball, football) and a green recycling bin. Below these are logos for 'GRANVILLE GREEN RESURGENCE 2022' (with a blue musical note) and 'TUNES ON THE TRAILS PORT HAWKESBURY 2021' (with a green and yellow trail icon).

This approach provided the PHAAC with an opportunity to explore municipal programs, recreation, goods and services, and how these can be designed and implemented in a way that improves accessibility for all citizens, regardless of age or level of ability. Some examples of work that can be done to improve accessibility is to design and incorporate inclusive recreation programming, or working with groups like the Strait Area Trails Association to design accessibility information that will help “grade” trail systems in terms of which are fully accessible to least accessible, etc.

Themes: All the Ways We Live

More Programs for Seniors and Persons with Disabilities

We know from the Provincial data and trends that we, like other municipalities across the Province, will be faced with an aging population. One of the feedback themes was for the Town to consider adding more recreational programming that is designed for, and/or accessible to seniors. These programs can be designed and implemented by the Town and/or there may be opportunities to partner with other organizations or groups to create programming, events, and recreational activities that can combat some of the challenges that seniors may face around social isolation, and more.

PHAAC members also had great discussions around the importance of programming and recreational activities for people with disabilities as well. We know the Town has been incorporating some “sensory-sensitive” events - which the committee sees as a positive direction. The PHAAC is looking forward to seeing more events like these that might cater to people who have varying levels of mobility as well, such as hosting a segment of “Tunes on the Trails” on the fully accessible AT Trail connecting NSCC to the Civic Centre.



“All the Ways We Live” PHAAC Priorities:

*Inclusive & Enabling Programming for Seniors & People with Disabilities
Recommendations (PHAAC, Staff, the Community, Stakeholders & Council)*

Short Term (the next 6 months): The PHAAC recommends that Town staff provide a summary review of the existing complement of recreation programming to the PHAAC so they can be reviewed through an accessibility lens together (Staff and PHAAC members).

Medium Term (the next 12 months): Next steps can be group sessions with PHAAC and Town staff to explore new opportunities for inclusive programming (and to give special consideration to the design of programs that can remove barriers and empower citizens

with disabilities to participate). Part of this recommendation will be community engagement for ideas, especially from seniors and citizens with disabilities. It might also be possible to explore collaboration opportunities with other stakeholders who have accessibility programming mandates (like Autism Nova Scotia, and the ROC Society).

Long Term (the few years): Any final inclusive program (not within budget) or cost reduction policies that are drafted - will be taken to Committee of the Whole for review by Council, and to Public Council Meetings for approval (before being implemented in the long-term).



Accessible Housing

The PHAAC heard loud and clear that there is a tremendous need for accessible housing in the Town of Port Hawkesbury for seniors and for persons with physical disabilities. We heard about the need for adaptable and accessible housing units for the aging population, the need for high density housing and/or apartments with elevator access, and accessible units (ground floor accessible access if there are no elevators).

Some of the feedback discussed by the PHAAC included the fact that there is little to no accessible public housing and fully accessible seniors housing. Sunset Manor, for example, is managed by Cape Breton Island Housing Authority who has indicated that the demand for these units are tremendous, as well as their individual public housing

units, and those wait lists are significant. It was also noted that many more accessible public housing units are needed, but the challenge is the time it takes to renovate units for accessibility because the need for public housing is so pronounced that units do not often become vacant to allow for accessibility renovations.

The PHAAC recognizes that accessible public and private housing stock is not under the direct control nor is it the primary responsibility of Municipalities. Nevertheless, PHAAC members believe there is an advocacy role that Town Council and senior staff can play.

“Accessible Housing” PHAAC Priorities:

“Accessible Housing Advocacy Plan” Recommendations (PHAAC, Staff, Housing Coordinator, Council & Multiple Stakeholders)

Short Term (the next 6 months): The PHAAC recommends Town Council and staff work together (and when a Housing Coordinator is in place, he/she should be included) with the PHAAC to identify all potential stakeholders from both the Public and Private sectors, as well as the not-for-profit and economic development sector stakeholders, who have a stake in, or a mandate for, accessible housing.

Medium Term (the next 12 months+): to explore the potential for the creation of an *Accessible Housing Advocacy Task Force* who can work together to design an **Accessible Housing Advocacy Plan**. This plan should be a collaboration between the PHAAC, the Town, and housing stakeholders as well as other partners (like the Port Hawkesbury Housing Advisory Committee and the Strait Richmond Housing Matters Coalition).

The PHAAC recognizes that important elements of designing a plan like this will require research, community consultation, stakeholder consultations, and the development of grass-roots strategies that will create an enabling environment for the future development of more accessible housing stock in the Town of Port Hawkesbury. Once the plan is complete, plan implementation can occur in the longer term. (Note: This work will outline building code elements that will meet basic “liveable” standards, which will better position new builds for accessibility). The housing coordinator should be the “lead” for the development plan with the task force.

Long Term (1-3 years+): The PHAAC recommends that once an Accessible Housing Advocacy Plan is designed, the working goals and strategies that are identified in the plan be implemented to increase the development of more accessible housing stock in the

Town of Port Hawkesbury, whether this takes the form of renovations, or new builds, or public sector housing, or rental developments. The strategies will be determined over time based on research, collaboration, and potential partnerships.

Food Security for Seniors and Citizens with Disabilities

The PHAAC heard loud and clear regarding the barriers for seniors and persons with disabilities to access food at the Port Hawkesbury Food Bank and via other sources. Some of the barriers that were identified were around a lack of transportation to-and-from the food bank, inability to afford transportation to access the food bank, access issues at the food bank for persons with mobility issues, as well as challenges in attitude, stigma, and culture around food bank use (too proud to use the food bank, thoughts that its for people who are “worst off”, fear of being seen accessing the food bank, and more).

Some solutions to these access issues (also evolving from the community and stakeholder consultations data) are a) the design and implementation of a volunteer “food delivery” service for seniors and persons with disabilities in collaboration with the Port Hawkesbury Food Bank and potentially others, b) community garden cultivation and growth for community members - including seniors and disabled community members - to access fresh fruit and vegetables, and c) connect seniors and persons with disabilities with information about available services and programming via Feed Nova Scotia, 211, and other advocacy organizations that will help.

“Food Bank” Delivery Model Recommendations (PHAAC, Staff & Food Bank Chair)

Short Term (the next 6 months): The PHAAC members will invite the Chair of the Port Hawkesbury Foodbank to a future PHAAC Committee Meeting to discuss both the challenges and the potential solutions suggested by citizens. Any medium and long-term actions will rest with the Food Bank board and chairperson, and we can explore potential partnerships into the future.

As far as community gardens and navigational assistance for seniors are concerned, the PHAAC will have to have more discussions and do more research before PHAAC members will be able to make recommendations with regard to these two options. We know there is a small community garden that was once in use - however, we are unsure of its status. As far as seniors' navigational assistance, there may be organizations providing that

service in the region; it will be important to find out more information with regard to what may be available for seniors, so we can identify potential gaps.

7: All the Ways We Consume

This approach explores access to goods and services – and barriers that may exist to access for people with varying levels of ability.



This approach explores access to goods and services for citizens in the Town of Port Hawkesbury, and barriers that may exist to accessing goods and services for consumers, regardless of age or level of ability. It is important to ensure that people with disabilities have equitable access to goods and services in the Town.

The Town of course has its own level of responsibility in any of the goods and services it provides to citizens of the Town (as discussed in the last section regarding access to recreation activities and other programs). As far as broader responsibilities, such as goods and services provided to all consumers by the private sector, the PHAAC recognizes the limited role the Town can play in improving accessibility challenges.

The PHAAC acknowledges that even though the Town doesn't have a primary responsibility to ensure "private sector" goods and services are provided to all citizens in Port Hawkesbury (including those who are disabled) - it is still important to explore

collaboration opportunities to improve access to goods and services in general. Therefore, the PHAAC sees an advocacy role for the Town to play in partnership with private sector stakeholders and the Strait Area Chamber of Commerce.

Themes: All the Ways We Consume

Full Service Gas Stations

We've had feedback regarding barriers for seniors and people with disabilities at the current gas stations in Port Hawkesbury due to a lack of "full service" gas attendants. We used to have full service at one gas station - however, this service has been discontinued. As a result, a lack of full service offerings have created barriers for seniors and people with disabilities, who must leave Port Hawkesbury to access full service gas stations.

"All the Ways We Consume" PHAAC Priorities:

"Full Services" Advocacy Letter Recommendations (Staff & Council)

Short Term (the next 6 months+): The PHAAC recommends for the short term that Town staff work to draft an advocacy letter to be approved by the Town of Port Hawkesbury Council, and issued to the existing gas station owners operating in the Town of Port Hawkesbury. The advocacy letter should outline the issues expressed to the PHAAC regarding the need for full service fueling options at gas stations, and the Council's Accessibility plans to make the Town fully accessible in the short, medium and long term in advance of 2030. The advocacy letter might possibly be endorsed by the Strait Area Chamber of Commerce and collaboratively written/signed. It would also be advantageous to outline the short-comings for not making full service fueling options available (for example, decreased sales).

Medium Term (next 12 months): Town Staff and/or Town Council can follow up with local gas stations to see if full services will be implemented in the future.

General Business Accessibility Improvements

The PHAAC members were provided with significant feedback regarding the importance of accessibility features for businesses. We've already reviewed the need for full service gas stations. Other accessibility needs identified in the data include:

- Automatic Door Opening hardware at entryways.

- Accessible Washroom Facilities (especially in restaurants).
- Accessible Parking (and policies) to stop people from blocking access to business entryways.
- Improve conditions of parking lots and parking lot maintenance.
- Celebrate/Showcase Businesses who improve accessibility.
- Create Value Proposition for Accessibility for Businesses.
- Sensory Accommodation Hours of Service.



Advocacy 101

“Accessibility Advocacy Plan” Recommendations (PHAAC, Staff, Council, SACC and other Stakeholders)

Short Term (the next 6 months): Share the community feedback with the Strait Area Chamber of Commerce regarding the accessibility issues being experienced by citizens accessing goods and services in the Town of Port Hawkesbury.

Medium Term (the next 12 months): The PHAAC recommends that collaborative discussions be explored with the PHAAC, Staff, Council, Strait Area Chamber of Commerce and other potential stakeholders to create an Accessibility Advocacy Plan that will help encourage, inform, and connect businesses to funding resources and accessibility programs to improve access.

Long Term (next year or more): Once a team is secured, the plan can be designed, researched, and when ready, implemented in partnership with local businesses.

8: All the Ways we Work

This approach explores how the Town of Port Hawkesbury is working towards a more inclusive and accessible workplace.



This approach explores - first and foremost - how the Town of Port Hawkesbury can work towards a more inclusive and accessible workplace. Of course, it is important to make all workplaces accessible, and to support people with disabilities in finding meaningful employment. Therefore, this approach will look first at the Town specifically, and second, at workplace environments and inclusive employment opportunities more generally for people with disabilities in the Town.

Of course, the PHAAC acknowledges that the Town of Port Hawkesbury can only directly change its own workplace and workplace policies; however, the PHAAC sees advocacy opportunities that might help people with disabilities as well as workplaces seeking to become more inclusive and accessible.

Inclusive Hiring Policy and Enabled/Accessible Work Environment

The Town of Port Hawkesbury does not currently have accessibility-based hiring or workplace policies, nor does the Town have a plan for workplace accommodations for persons with disabilities to work for the Town.

“All the Ways We Work” PHAAC Priorities:

Town of Port Hawkesbury Accessibility Workplace Policy Recommendation (Staff & Council)

Short Term (next 6 months): The PHAAC recommends that Town senior staff begin by researching other municipal Accessibility Workplace Policies and determine what best practices are.

Medium Term (next 12 months): The Town senior staff can use their research and best practice data to draft a Port Hawkesbury Accessibility Workplace policy that includes inclusive accessibility hiring policies and a plan for necessary workplace accommodations needed at the Town of Port Hawkesbury to accommodate staff with disabilities.

Long Term (next year or more): Once policies are in final draft, these can be brought to council for approval. With policies in place, Town staff and Council will be able to add these to the Port Hawkesbury Accessibility Plan: A Town for Everyone.

Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities in the Town

The PHAAC members were provided with significant feedback regarding the importance of employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. Some of the common themes shared with the PHAAC are as follows:

- It is important to help people with disabilities to find and maintain meaningful employment. Making workplaces more accessible like accessible washroom facilities, accessible ramps, desks that will fit wheelchairs (and more) is an important step.
- Educate employers and businesses about how they can be more inclusive and understanding of people with disabilities, and be more open to employing them.

- Encouraging employers to be open to learning and doing things differently as persons with disabilities “bring a diverse background to any workplace.” Employers should also be open and willing to provide “assistive devices” when necessary.
- Educate businesses and employers about possible funding opportunities or subsidization for the employment of people with disabilities.
- Provide information (possibly on the Town’s soon-to-be Accessibility web page and other information sharing mediums) to citizens about programs and work opportunities that may be available.
- Accessibility Job Fair (partner leads identified were the Cape Breton Partnership, Strait Area Chamber of Commerce, and Nova Scotia Works). First step would be to engage businesses who are ready to accommodate and hire staff with varying levels of ability/mobility, and invite citizens to attend an “accessibility job fair.”
- Program that oversees “Business Mentoring” and “Workplace Placements” to provide experience-building opportunities for people with disabilities to build and enhance their resumes.
- The Strait Area Chamber of Commerce can build a category of awards to give to employers and businesses who lead by example with inclusive hiring practices and accessible workplaces for staff with disabilities (this would bring more prominence and awareness to employers doing this important work and encourage others to do the same).



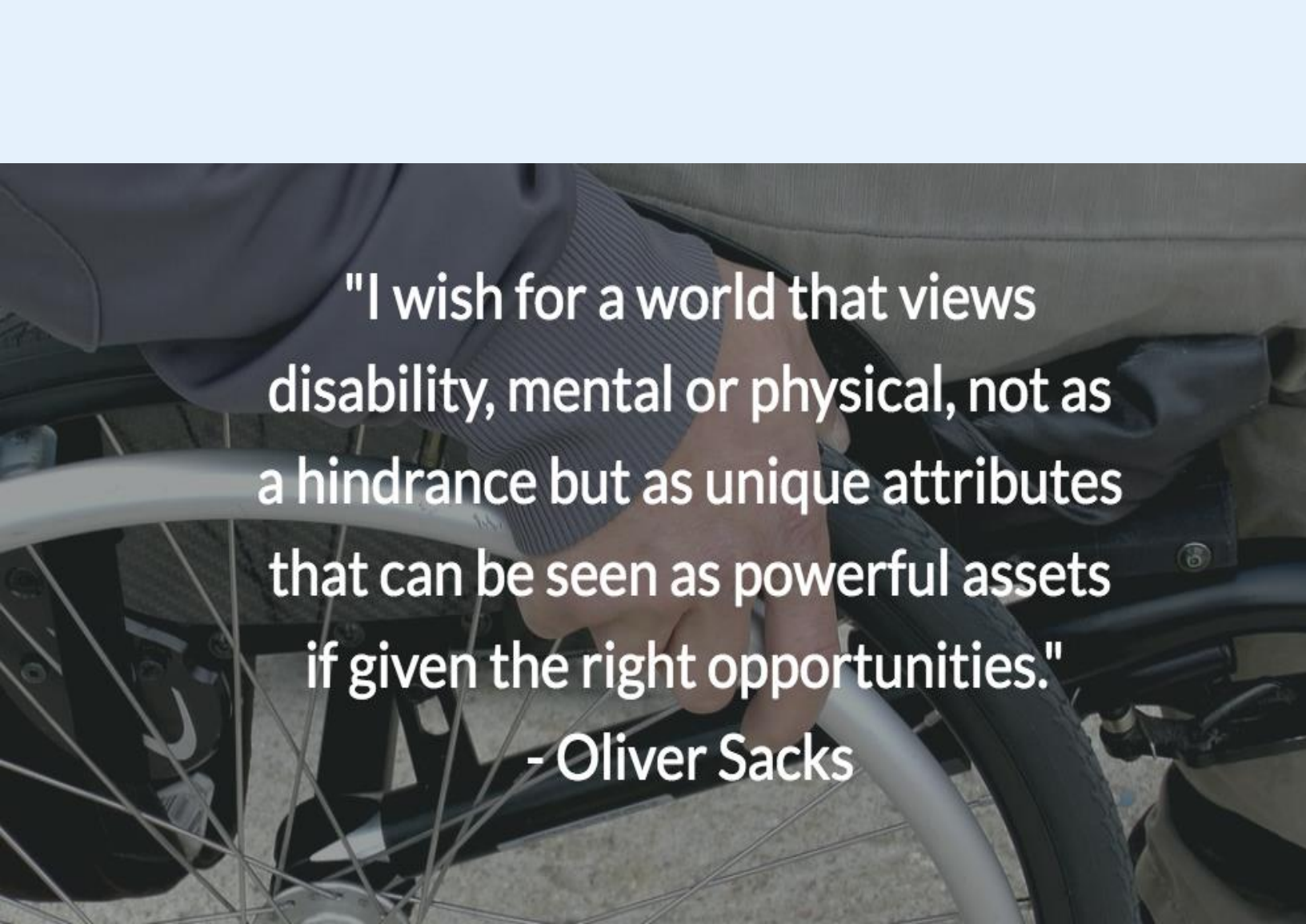
“Accessibility Workplace Awards” Recommendation (PHAAC, Staff, Council, SACC)

Short Term (in the next 6 months): Share citizen feedback with the Strait Area Chamber of Commerce regarding “all the ways we work” employment feedback - listed above.

Medium Term (within the next 12 months+): The PHAAC recommends that the PHAAC and Town staff meet with the Strait Area Chamber of Commerce to identify potential solutions and action items to assist people with disabilities to find meaningful employment.

The PHAAC really liked the ideas around Accessibility Work Fairs, and around awards and recognition for businesses who commit to inclusive hiring and who have accessible workplaces. For example, the Town might consider partnering with the Strait Area Chamber of Commerce in the design of an accessibility award category that celebrates businesses who lead by example with regard to accessibility considerations.

Long Term (next year or more): Implement any collaborative solutions determined via the above processes (like job fair). One in particular the PHAAC would recommend is a Town-sponsored award to be issued via the Strait Area Chamber of Commerce to recognize businesses who are leading by example in accessibility.

A close-up photograph of a person's hand resting on the silver metal rim of a wheelchair wheel. The person is wearing a grey long-sleeved shirt. The background is slightly blurred, showing the black frame and tire of the wheelchair. The overall image has a soft, muted color palette.

"I wish for a world that views disability, mental or physical, not as a hindrance but as unique attributes that can be seen as powerful assets if given the right opportunities."

- Oliver Sacks

Port Hawkesbury: A Town for Everyone



Like the journey that the Province of Nova Scotia is on to become accessible by 2030, so too is the Town of Port Hawkesbury. From the onset of the work of the PHAAC, we've looked at creating a strategy to identify and remove barriers to inclusion that people with disabilities continue to face every day. We hope our collective efforts will help ensure that Port Hawkesbury will be a Town where EVERYONE can participate fully.

The PHAAC encourages Port Hawkesbury Town Council to use this Accessibility Plan as both a resource and as a living document for Port Hawkesbury. We'd like to commend the Town of Port Hawkesbury Staff and Town Council on the work you have already undertaken to improve accessibility in the Town, and we further appreciate the opportunity to recommend accessibility work to be done. We can build on this work together, and continue to drive the changes needed to create a more equitable and inclusive Town. The PHAAC feel that these changes will have significant positive economic and social impacts on people with disabilities, their families, and the community overall. By doing this work together, we are solidifying our shared

commitment to accessibility and helping to build a more welcoming Town that is inclusive to everyone.

Next steps, once this accessibility plan is approved, will be to begin digging into the short-term recommendations that will require work from Town staff, Town Council, the PHAAC members, and other potential stakeholders. Short, medium and long-term goals can be tracked and discussed as a “standing item” every month at Committee of the Whole. This will allow staff and Council to continue to be engaged after this accessibility plan is approved, and every year for the duration of the plan’s lifespan from 2022-2025.

In the months following the completion of the accessibility plan, the PHAAC will continue to work on some of the priorities outlined in this document, as well as continuing to work with Town staff and Council to support and engage where and when we can.

Finally, we wouldn’t have been able to do this amazing work without the “first voice” community volunteers who stepped up and dedicated their time, talents and energy to the PHAAC. A most humble thank you!



“Accessibility allows us to tap
into everyone’s potential.”
- Debra Ruh



not every disability
is visible

The members of the PHAAC would like to leave Port Hawkesbury Town Council and the readers of this plan with a few inspirational quotes and thoughtful statements regarding accessibility, disability, and barriers. We hope that this accessibility plan will inspire you to do your best to always be inclusive of others in your thoughts and actions, and to do your very best to be accommodating to other community members of all ages and all abilities who - like you - want to live, work and play in a Town we are all so very proud of!

Let's work together to ensure Port Hawkesbury is a "Town for Everyone."



diversity is beautiful

diversity in the animal world
there are millions of different kinds of animals - more than we can count!

diversity of people
people come in a great variety of shapes, sizes, genders, abilities, and appearances - we are all unique!

diversity of human brains
no two brains are alike, but we have names for different types - like ADHD, autistic, dyslexic, typical, & more!

Appendices



Appendix A: Accessibility Survey



How Do We Make Port Hawkesbury More Accessible

The Port Hawkesbury Accessibility Advisory Committee's was formed by Town Council to assist in developing an Accessibility Plan in accordance with "An Act Respecting Accessibility in Nova Scotia, 2017" (The Act).

The Accessibility Committee provides advice on identifying, preventing and eliminating barriers for people with all ranges of abilities in municipal programs, services, initiatives and facilities. The Committee plays a pivotal role in the creation of barrier-free community and ensuring the obligations under the Act are met.

To help us write this plan, we need to hear from persons with accessibility challenges of all kinds.

Please help us make Port Hawkesbury more accessible by first identifying the issues through answering the following questions about your knowledge and experience.

If you don't want to complete the survey, you can still share your thoughts with us by calling or leaving us a voicemail at (902) 625-7893, emailing info@townofph.ca or sending a message on our facebook group: [ACCESSIBILITY IN PORT HAWKESBURY](#)

No questions are mandatory; you may leave any question empty if you wish to do so.

Accessibility issue(s) may include; impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. Impairment is a problem in body function or structure; an activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action; while a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations.

1. Please check all that apply to you.

- Person who has experience accessibility challenges (visible or invisible)
- Family member, friend, or caregiver of a person with accessibility challenges
- Employed or volunteer at an organization that provides services to people with accessibility challenges
- Other (please specify)

2. Have you encountered any barriers to accessing any municipally owned buildings in the Town of Port Hawkesbury including:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Port Hawkesbury Civic Center | <input type="checkbox"/> SAERC Library |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strait Area Pool | <input type="checkbox"/> SAERC Daycare |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SAERC Auditorium | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) |

If so, please tell us about it.

3. Have you ever encountered issues utilizing :

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sidewalks | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Trails |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cross Walks | <input type="checkbox"/> Parking Area |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) | |

If so, please tell us about it.

4. Have you encountered any issues in accessing outdoor facilities in the Town of Port Hawkesbury including:

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Soccer Field | <input type="checkbox"/> Veteran's Memorial Park |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Oaklee's Ball Field | <input type="checkbox"/> Dan Willie Ball Field |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Park Facilities | <input type="checkbox"/> Port Hawkesbury Waterfront |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Granville Green | <input type="checkbox"/> Other(please specify) |

If so, please tell us about it.

5. Have you encountered any barriers to learning about the existence of municipal programs or activities such as:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Council Meetings | <input type="checkbox"/> Committee Meetings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public Information Sessions | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation Programs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arts and Entertainment Events | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) |

If so, please tell us about it.

6. Have you encountered any barriers to participating in a municipal programs or activities such as:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Council Meetings | <input type="checkbox"/> Committee Meetings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public Information Sessions | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation Programs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arts and Entertainment Events | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) |

If so, please tell us about it.

7. Have you encountered any barriers to utilizing Strait Area Transit? If so, please tell us about it.

8. Do you have any suggestions on how the Town of Port Hawkesbury can support people with disabilities in finding and maintaining a meaningful employment?

9. In your opinion, what are the top priorities for improving accessibility in Port Hawkesbury?

10. In your opinion, what is already working well in making Port Hawkesbury accessible?

11. Do you have anything else you would like to share about accessibility?

We are collecting the demographic information below to ensure we hear from as many types of people as possible. We would appreciate your help in telling us about yourself, but these questions are optional.

12. How long have you been a resident of the Town of Port Hawkesbury?

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 1 year | <input type="checkbox"/> At least 1 year, but less than 5 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> At least 5 years, but less than 10 years | <input type="checkbox"/> At least 10 years, but less than 20 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 20 years or more | <input type="checkbox"/> I am not a resident of the Town of Port Hawkesbury |

13. When was the last time you were physically present in or on the Town of Port Hawkesbury's municipal facilities?

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Within the past 24 hours | <input type="checkbox"/> Within the last 7 days |
| <input type="checkbox"/> More than a week ago, but less than 2 weeks ago | <input type="checkbox"/> At least 2 weeks ago, but less than a month ago |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A month or more ago | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't recall |

Appendix B: One-on-One Interview Template



How Do We Make Port Hawkesbury More Accessible?

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To help us write this plan, we need to hear from persons with accessibility challenges of all kinds.

Please help us make Port Hawkesbury more accessible by first identifying the issues through answering the following questions about your knowledge and experience.

If you don't want to complete the questions listed below, but still want to share your thoughts – you can do so by calling us or leaving us a voicemail at (902) 625-7893, emailing info@townofph.ca or sending a message on our facebook group: [ACCESSIBILITY IN PORT HAWKESBURY](#)

No questions are mandatory; you may leave any question empty if you wish to do so.

Accessibility issue(s) may include; impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. Impairment is a challenge in body function or structure; an activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action; while a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations.

Questions:

- #1 What barriers have you experienced in the Town of Port Hawkesbury? Please explain?
- #2 Do you have any suggestions for how to overcome these (above) barriers?
- #3 What areas in Port Hawkesbury has the Town made progress on? Please explain?
- #4 What areas would you like to see more progress on?
- #5 What would you like to be able to do in town that you can't do now?
- #6 Anything else would you like to add?

Appendix C: Port Hawkesbury Outdoor/Indoor Facilities

The following is a list of Town-owned facilities, green spaces and open spaces. All maintenance and upkeep is the responsibility of the General Manager of Facilities, Parks and Operations. Oct. 30/2020

<u>Buildings</u>	<u>Square Footage</u>	
Port Hawkesbury Civic Centre	97 000	
Fire Department	11 050	
Water Treatment Plant	10 188	
Waste Water Treatment Plant	15 360	
Airport (buildings, etc.)	2 400	
Granville Green Bldg. & Stage	476	
Wharf Pump House	100	
Creamery	8770	
Yacht Club	3300	
Waterfront Business Office	1250	
Waterfront Station House	1980	
305 Granville Street	3000	
402 Customs House	2120	
Food Bank	1750	
Soccer Club House	600	
Oaklee Field Club House	960	
Splash Pad Bldg	63	
Electrical Bldg	360	
Washrooms	675	
Rec Shed	1700	
Pump Track Shed	525	
Old Arena	34 600	
Mini Mall (Incubator Mall)	12 352	
Buildings Total Square Footage		<u>210 579</u>
<u>Improved Grounds</u>		
Veterans Memorial Park	35 000	
Airport Runways/Apron, etc.	13 547 160	
<u>Green Properties</u>		
Main Playground Site		
Dan Willie Ball Field		
Soccer Field		
T- Ball Field	1 285 020	
Oalkee Ball Field	200 376	
Prince Street Park		
Prince Street Park Hill	196 020	
Former Sewer Plant Site	152 460	
Fountain Park Site	57 000	
Entrance to Town	43 600	
Granville Green	14 900	
Waterfront Locations	87 000	
Green Properties Total Square Footage		<u>15 618 536</u>

Appendix D: Port Hawkesbury Accessibility Advisory Committee

Co-Chairs

Brenda Chisholm-Beaton
Matthew Higgins

Council Members

Blaine MacQuarrie
Hughie MacDougall

Staff Supports

Terry Doyle
Gordie Snook
Melissa Warner

Community

Cathy Cooke
Aaron MacDonald
Arielle Vienneau
Diana Poirier
John F Kennedy
Karen MacLean
Marilyn Talbot



OUR COMMITTEE

THE PHAAC



TOWN OF PORT HAWKESBURY ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Arielle Vienneau - Our PHAAC is fortunate to have Arielle step up to put her name forward as a committee member. She brings “first voice” knowledge and experience to the table, and is passionate about accessibility.

Diana Poirier – Diana has been the Executive Director of the Regional Occupational Centre (ROC) for 15 years, and has worked in the disability field for almost 25 years. The ROC supports over 40 individuals with varying disabilities through social programs and social enterprise, as well as Shalom House, which was opened in 2010 and provides an independent living program for up to 9 individuals! We are very fortunate to have Diana’s passion for inclusion, accessibility, experience and knowledge on our committee.

Karen MacLean – Karen has been the Residential Supervisor with the ROC Society since 2008. In this role, Karen is responsible for supervising, supporting, and ensuring all members are treated with respect, with equitable access and the opportunity to fully participate in all aspects of their lives, be it in their home, work, and community. Karen also supports members at Shalom ROC Society (group home) or in the ILS (Independent Living Support Program). Our PHAAC is privileged to have Karen’s combined 33 years of knowledge in Human Services, Disabilities Support and ROC. In her position, Karen has had many first-hand experiences, where accessibility has been a real issue in the community, allowing her to advocate and be a voice for those who cannot.

Matthew Higgins – Matthew is a resident of Port Hawkesbury and brings a greatly appreciated “first voice” perspective to our PHAAC. Matthew also serves as Co-Chair of the Port Hawkesbury Accessibility Advisory Committee, and has used his leadership to manage the social media research campaign, and create engaging posts on our social media page. The PHAAC is so fortunate to have Matthew’s leadership and perspectives, and his advocacy for persons with disabilities is very inspirational.

Cathy Cooke - Cathy is also a resident of Port Hawkesbury who brings “first voice” representation to our committee. Cathy’s enthusiasm and personal experiences allow her to be a valuable member of the PHAAC and we appreciate her continued input, word-smithing talents, and leadership with Matthew on the management of our social media page and compiling community feedback from our page. Cathy’s capacity has been incredible, and she brings a wealth of knowledge in community work, such as “Your Way to Wellness Education” which is an initiative that supports people who live with chronic pain.

Aaron MacDonald – Aaron is a resident of Inverness County and brings his “first voice” experiences and knowledge to our PHAAC. Aaron can always be counted on to provide “first hand” experiences and information to our committee, which has allowed us to adopt much more inclusive perspectives in the work we do as a committee. We are grateful for his contributions during the working group sessions and meetings.

John F. Kennedy – John is also a resident of Port Hawkesbury and has many years of experience living with and supporting persons with disabilities, both as a parent and as a community advocate. John's knowledge and personal experiences are a tremendous benefit to our PHAAC. We are very fortunate to have John lend his voice to our work.

Brenda Chisholm-Beaton – Brenda, or Mayor Brenda as we know her, is Mayor of Port Hawkesbury. She and Co-Chair Matthew have been driving forces on our PHAAC, working hard to keep committee members on target to get this important work done. Brenda’s commitment to accessibility in our community, along with her energy and passion for inclusivity, has served to motivate our committee members to produce a Municipal Accessibility plan that truly reflects the diverse voices in our community.

Blaine MacQuarrie – Blaine is one of our Town Council representatives on the PHAAC. Blaine is currently retired, but has worked with clients with varying levels of mobility and understands the importance of having a community that meets the needs of all residents. Blaine brings a strong advocacy voice and tireless work ethic to our committee.

Marilyn Talbot - Marilyn joined our PHAAC committee around mid-way into our work, and we were happy to add her to our team. Marilyn, as a long-standing resident and community volunteer, is always generous with her time, and she learned about our committee via our social media page.

Hughie MacDougall – Hughie is one of our Town Council representatives on the PHAAC who sits on the committee as an “alternate” - and as such - has lent his time and energy to assist in the creation of this plan and attend several meetings. Hughie is also able to offer a strong advocacy role to the committee, both from his council position as well as his personal life.

Terry Doyle – Terry, as the Chief Administrative Officer for the Town of Port Hawkesbury, is a senior staff member of our PHAAC. Terry is also a strong voice, both personally and professionally, in advocating for persons with disabilities and for identifying and removing barriers to persons with disabilities from within our community.

Gordie Snook – Gordie, as General Manager of Facilities, Operations and Parks, serves the committee as Coordinator, in various ways and support. Gordie has a personal and professional commitment to moving accessibility and inclusion forward in all communities, especially the Town of Port Hawkesbury.

Melissa Warner – Melissa, as our Town Clerk, has been a tremendous support to the PHAAC. Melissa has helped committee members via administrative support, minute taking, and assistance with meetings. Melissa played an integral role in the technical

creation of our survey, and in preparing the survey and one-on-one interview and social media data for review.

CAO's Annotation for Official Policy Book

Policy Review Notification: March 29, 2022

Policy Review Date: March 29, 2022

Approved by Council: April 5, 2022

I certify this to be a true copy of the Accessibility Plan as adopted by the Town Council of Port Hawkesbury at a Public Meeting held April 5, 2022.



**Terry Doyle, P. Eng.
Chief Administrative Officer**