



Town of Amherst

Accessibility Committee

Agenda

Date: **Wednesday, September 14, 2022**
Time: **6:00 pm**
Location: **Board Room, Town Hall**

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1. Call to Order	
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**TOWN OF AMHERST
Accessibility Committee
Minutes**

Date: May 11, 2022
Time: 6:00 pm
Location: Council Chambers, Town Hall

Members Present Councillor Leon Landry
 Councillor Dale Fawthrop
 Joanne Hopper, Citizen Representative
 Tammy Allen, Citizen Representative
 Marina Godfrey, Citizen Representative
 Matthew Medland, Citizen Representative

Staff Present Kim Jones, Municipal Clerk
 Andrew Bickle, Capital Asset Coordinator / Property Manager
 Cindy Brown, Administrative Assistant
 Sharon Bristol, Community Well Being Manager

1. Call to Order

Chair call the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

1.1 Approval of Minutes of April 13, 2022

Moved By Matthew Medland, Citizen Representative

Seconded By Councillor Landry

That the minutes of the April 13, 2022 Accessibility Committee Meeting be approved as circulated

Motion Carried

2. Information Items

2.1 Final review of Survey

Sharon Bristol discussed that once the survey is approved it will be promoted and sent to various stake holders. The updated survey will be sent to the Committee via email by next week for approval.

2.2 Review proposed project timelines

Sharon Bristol presented the proposed timeline of the survey and it's data collection to develop a strategy. The draft timeline maybe updated as needed depending on stake holders' availability.

Moved By Joanne Hopper, Citizen Representative

Seconded By Tammy Allen, Citizen Representative

To approve draft project timeline.

Motion Carried

3. Discussion Items

3.1 *Rick Hansen Certification Program - Andrew Bickle*

Andrew Bickle discussed the Rick Hansen rating of Municipal properties. When time allows, he plans to do a survey of the Municipal buildings to see what improvements that can be made.

3.2 *Recent improvements and successes - open discussion*

Kim Jones discussed how she would like for residents to submit to the Committee what the Town of Amherst has done to improve accessibility.

4. Adjournment

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 7:00 PM.

Kimberlee Jones Municipal Clerk
Director of Corporate Communications
& Community Well Being

Councillor Dale Fawthrop
Chair

MEMORANDUM

TO: Accessibility Advisory Committee

From: Sharon Bristol

Date: September 13, 2022

Subject: Community Consultation Update

Over the period of July and August 2022, surveys were distributed to various community groups and provincial departments working with seniors and disabled groups including Physio/OT, Salvation Army, Red Cross, Home Care and VON, Seniors Safety, Autumn House and the Bridge Adult Service Centre.

Meetings were held with Erin Duffy physio, Autism (Elaine Mazur) and the 10 Cobequid Housing Authority buildings throughout town to gain feedback from the tenants.

Town of Amherst Accessibility Survey

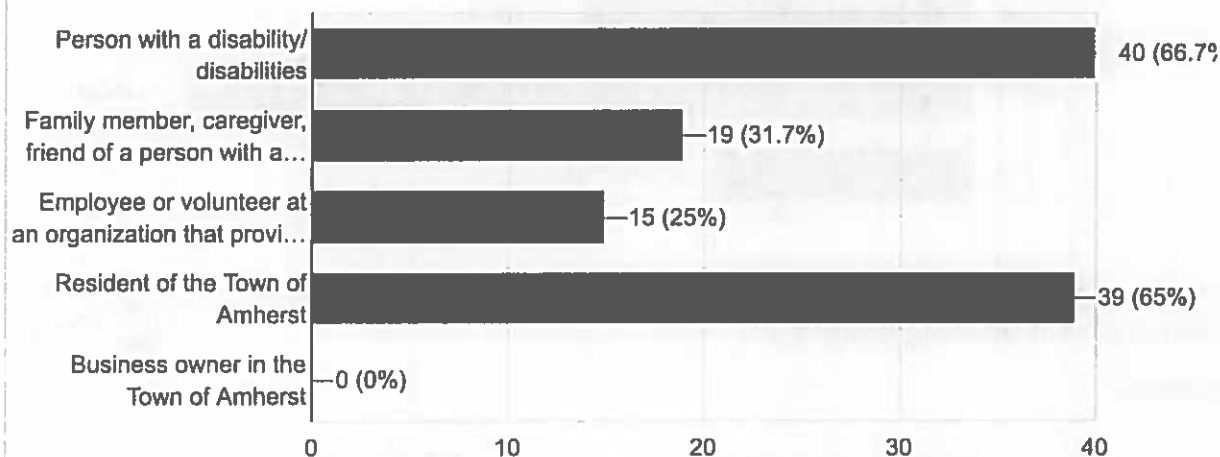
60 responses

Publish analytics

1 Please check all that apply. I am a (an)

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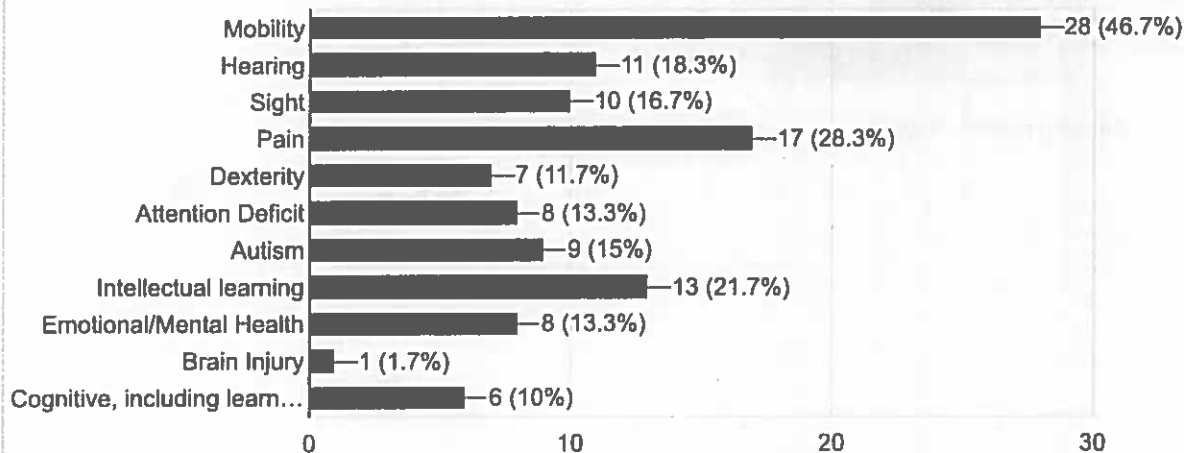
60 responses



2 Which of the following disabilities have impacted your life in some way? Check all that apply

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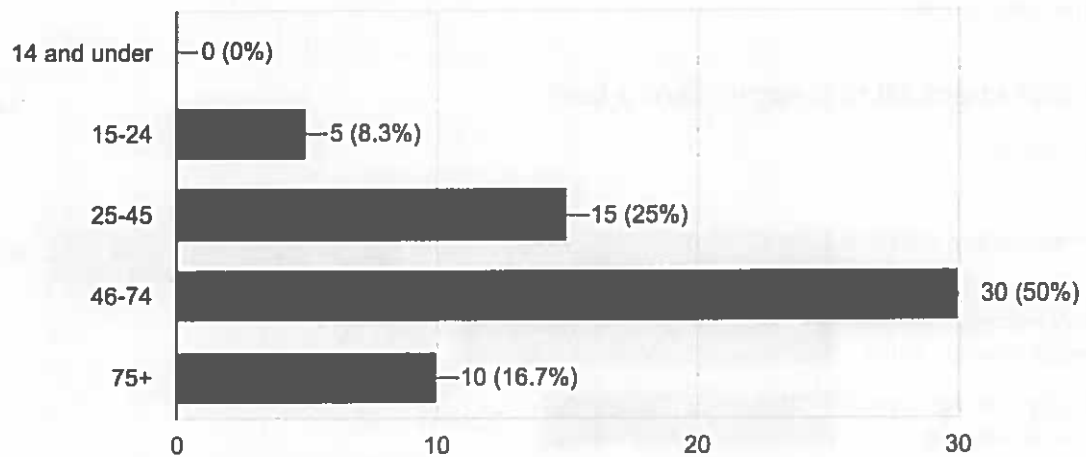
60 responses



3 What age group do you belong to? (If you are filling out this survey on behalf of a person with a disability, please state their age)



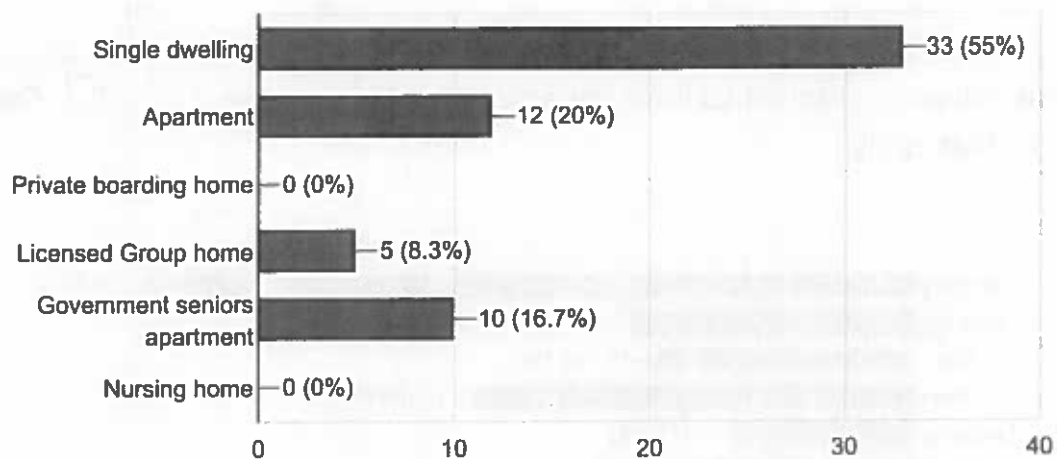
60 responses



4 What is your housing situation?



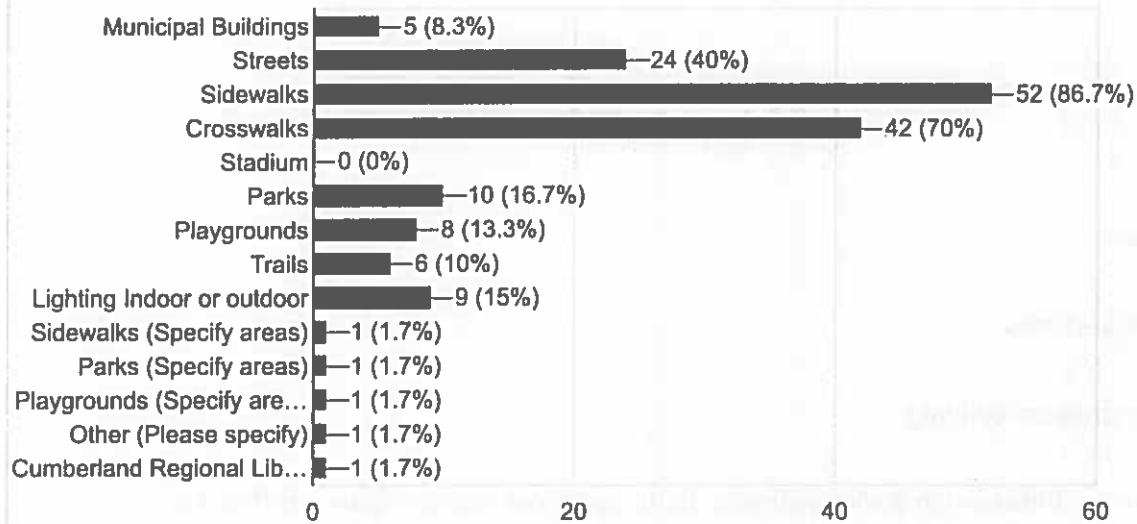
60 responses



5 In your opinion which of the following would be your top three areas to focus for improving accessibility?



60 responses



6 Have you been or are you aware of any inability to participate in a municipal program or activity due to the venue or surroundings? Please specify

37 responses

no

No

Dickey Park

Yes, travel surfaces

yes, superior court building

Yes. There are times when a venues layout, lighting and/or sound makes it difficult to participate

Cannot access the band stand

No

not enough disabled parking spots downtown, businesses not equipped for persons with mobility issues and are avoided because of this

sidewalks sometimes difficult to walk on

do not go downtown because of the sidewalks, slanted, icy in winter

don't go to stadium or town hall

I walk a lot downtown but don't go out to Malls unless by taxi

yes due to lack of wheelchair accessibility

sidewalks downtown are very uneven and sometimes rough, no sidewalk on Station St.



7 Have you experienced or are you aware of any barriers to accessing Town of Amherst buildings, sidewalks or facilities? If yes, please tell us what those barriers were?

38 responses

no

No

Yes

I have trouble seeing and when I go for walks downtown, which I really like to do the sidewalks are really hard to walk on because I use a cane and the end of it gets stuck in the bricks and especially if they are raised up I sometimes trip. The sidewalk has a small hill in front of some buildings which is hard for me and my friend that is in a wheelchair.

No elevator at Town hall.

crosswalks are deadly especially when wet or during rain, the light needs to be longer for the one by the mall

Many sidewalks around town are in poor repair and difficult to navigate

In 2021 I was legally blind (due to cataracts). The downtown sidewalks, crosswalks, and streets were atrocious for navigating (in one day I'm sure I almost tripped nearly a dozen times). Steps are also a hazard unless they are marked with high visibility paint/tape (a huge thank you to those areas).

I have since had two surgeries and am no longer legally blind, but I will never forget the fear of immobility.

Your question is asking about physical spaces and not the environment of the spaces i.e. lighting and sounds. Something being too loud and too busy of a design are also barriers to participation. If you're thinking beyond physical barriers, think layout, flow, noise, lighting. Example does there need to be tvs on in the foyer of town hall?

In a wheelchair, second floor of Town Hall. Obviously.

Several areas in town have NO sidewalks, and there is a large bump when entering a sidewalk with a wheelchair.

Bandstand, anything other than first floor of stadium and Town Hall, ramp to Town Hall is difficult to access in manual chair, sidewalks are uncomfortable to navigate in any wheelchair (manual or power) because of the bumps, and along East Victoria the sloped driveways make wheeling along the sidewalk hard and potentially dangerous in slippery winter weather

sidewalks are uneven, crossings lights not long enough when walking

sidewalks downtown are difficult to walk on with cane or walker, uneven surface lots of places to trip and fall

dont come downtown very often due to uneven sidewalks and crossing

Yes it is very difficult to walk downtown with a walker due to the unevenness of the sidewalks and gaps/holes in the crosswalks

sidewalks are in terrible shape for walking especially with limited sight. So may tripping hazards and lack of attention to the problem areas. Crosswalks do not give enough time to cross for persons with disabilities. Cars do not respect pedestrians

same

hard to walk on sidewalks and crosswalks can be dangerous when you don't move too fast

court house downtown, new townhall downtown not wheelchair accessible

none

hard to get around with a walker

hard to walk around downtown due to sidewalk conditions



8 In your opinion what is already working well in making the Town of Amherst accessible? This does not have to be a municipal building infrastructure, or service.

24 responses

na

CCTS

Stadium

The places I can easily go to are like the bowling alley and places that have no steps going into the building.

Not sure

Our community cares for all.

Unsure

nothing

Municipal buildings I have encountered are accessible

The Bridge Workshop

Spacious layout of physical structures within the Town and overall ease of access to said structures either by foot or by using a vehicle which can be parked nearby.

I don't know of anything that has been done.

nothing to add

NA

the parks downtown are really nice

nice park downtown like to go hear the music

some business have access to their business but a lot do not

curves on sidewalk sloped more for wheelchairs to cross the street

wheelchair access to buildings



elevators

Buildings have ramps and elevators

9 Do you have any suggestions on how to remove accessibility barriers within the Town of Amherst?

42 responses

no

No

It would help if the dark steps leading into places would have some bright paint on them and also railings would help. If a place has no ramp it would help for my friend to be able to go into that place. I am trying to learn braille and it would be great if more places had braille in and on the front of the buildings to help to know what the building is.

Not at this time

Improve crosswalks and trails-no atvs

Conduct a full and complete community review

fix the crosswalks and the roads, huge step towards easier mobility for most people, and a sidewalk to the hospital. We see people walking out there all the time.

Allow persons on Mobility Scooters to use bike lanes

More grants available to businesses and private citizens.

Think beyond mobility issues

\$\$ and education

Build safe sidewalks that people who use wheelchairs will be able to access

I work as a part of the palliative care team I'm this area. If the community could consider investing in portable ramps that could be borrowed for weeks to months at a time for end of life clients this would make an incredible difference in the lives of many. Folks are often stuck in their homes to die and cannot get outside as their disease progresses. Quality of life can be positively impacted if these ramps were available. I consistently run into this issue. As well- with the extreme cost of building supplies ramps are next to impossible to afford and most people do not have these resources

I cannot identify any specific inaccessibility barrier. However, for people who are wheelchair bound, business owners and operators should be encouraged to install access ramps to doors but within reason.

You just need to start

ask people who have disabilities what they need

improve sidewalk conditions, fix holes and spots where people with visual disabilities could fall

sidewalks need to be reviewed and fixed where there are problems

yes fix the sidewalks and make dedicated walk lights longer with no ability for cars to turn on the light

yes talk to people who have trouble walking. Have them come out and show the town where the problems are.

yes please fix the sidewalk and curbs. I have trouble lifted my legs and moving fast. Its hard to get around

Every business should hve a wheel chair ramp. Improve sidewalks

more wheelchair accessibility

Better sidewalks

when using the street at lights have a sound play so that vision impaired know when to walk across

More accessible parks, wheelchair swings, trails to park, sidewalks should be flat

Fixing sidewalks downtown, fix roads so people dont drive close to sidewalks

sidewalks are bumpy, have to walk on the roads in the winter

sidewalks are broken

Sidewalk should be wider for visually impaired people and safer for wheelchairs. the trees downtown are pretty but when you cant see those are dangerous to have in a walking path. Individuals in wheelchairs should have options at the park, accessible swings and paths to equipment gravel is hard to use a wheelchair on.

sidewalks should be flat, hard to walk downtown. Playgrounds should have more things for adults with disabilities

longer walking lights in spots that need it (by the mall), signs in braille where people can reach, fix the roads

keep the sidewalks repaired and cut the weeds for better visibility

finish sidewalk to Pharmasave

fix the sidewalks

not enough time to cross the street

uneven sidewalks

sidewalks very icy in the winter

even out the sidewalks

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Google Forms



where \mathbf{u} is the velocity vector, \mathbf{v} is the vector of the unit normal to the surface, and \mathbf{w} is the vector of the unit normal to the surface of the body.

$$\mathbf{u} = \mathbf{v} \cdot \mathbf{w} \quad (1)$$

$$\mathbf{v} = \mathbf{w} \cdot \mathbf{u} \quad (2)$$

$$\mathbf{w} = \mathbf{u} \cdot \mathbf{v} \quad (3)$$

$$\mathbf{u} = \mathbf{v} \cdot \mathbf{w}$$

$$\mathbf{v} = \mathbf{w} \cdot \mathbf{u}$$

$$\mathbf{w} = \mathbf{u} \cdot \mathbf{v}$$

$$\mathbf{u} = \mathbf{v} \cdot \mathbf{w} \quad (4)$$

$$\mathbf{v} = \mathbf{w} \cdot \mathbf{u} \quad (5)$$

$$\mathbf{w} = \mathbf{u} \cdot \mathbf{v}$$

MEMORANDUM

TO: Accessibility Advisory committee meeting

FROM: Sharon Bristol

DATE: September 13, 2022

SUBJECT: Further engagement and consultation

Contact has been made with the Y's men club, Legion branch 10, Zonta and Salvation Army to speak at their meeting in September/October. Feedback has been positive to proceed with these requests.

Town of Amherst

Accessibility Strategy



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Timeline	
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Ongoing community feedback and consultation	
Resources	

Welcome Message

Nothing about us without us!

Our Vision: A community that is built for everyone

In our community it is important that all citizens have the opportunity to participate in a barrier free society. To that end we believe in equitable access for community living and participation by all regardless of age, ability or gender. Further, it is important that dignity and independence be a pillar of our way of thinking, acting and planning, ensuring that everybody is treated equitably, based on their needs and abilities.

During the learning phase of this strategy development, it was paramount to us that we hear from as many persons as possible with a “lived experience”, especially those who face barriers to accessibility. Only then can we appreciate and rectify the gaps in our built environment, goods and services, communications and programs. Throughout the development of this plan our focus remained firm on how can we remove and/or prevent barriers, thereby understanding and ultimately adhering to the requirements of Nova Scotia’s Accessibility Act.

Understanding Disability in our Province

It is important to understand Disability in the context of our Province of Nova Scotia. 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 experience barriers than younger people, the number of Nova Scotians with disabilities will rise as our population ages

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

Nova Scotia 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. www.novascotia.ca/accessibility/access-by-design/access-by-design-2030.pdf

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. (in progress)

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

Our Guiding Principles

We commit to fostering a culture of accessibility, encouraging the prevention and removal of barriers to participation, and building capacity in these areas amongst municipal staff, Council members, and the public.

Several principles have guided this process and should remain as priorities as we move forward to implement this plan.

Working towards equitable access for all members of our community means that every individual has an equal opportunity, and everyone is treated fairly. Equitable access acknowledges individual circumstances to removing barriers.

It is essential to include first voice perspectives, or lived experience, of people with disabilities in the creation of this plan, actions, and decision-making processes.

Strive to understand, be compassionate and to meet the needs of people who face accessibility barriers.

Strive to identify, remove, and prevent barriers in our community according to the requirements of Nova Scotia's Accessibility Act and the needs of our citizens.

As new standards are introduced and new technologies become available, we will review and update this plan to ensure its relevance. As such, this plan should be interpreted as a living document.

Continue to collaborate with other municipal units, the Accessibility Advisory Committee, the Nova Scotia Accessibility Directorate, and community partners to advance this plan and work towards improved accessibility in our communities

Glossary of Terms

Accessibility Act (2017) The provincial law enacted to achieve accessibility by preventing and removing barriers for people with disabilities. The law defines the role and responsibilities of the Accessibility Directorate and the Accessibility Advisory Board, and addresses standards, compliance, and enforcement. (nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/legc/statutes/accessibility.pdf)

Accessibility Advisory Committee A volunteer committee established by a municipality to advise municipal council about identifying, preventing, and eliminating barriers to people with disabilities in municipal programs, services, initiatives, and facilities. The committee plays a pivotal role in helping the municipality become a barrier-free community that complies with Nova Scotia's Accessibility Act (2017). At least one half of the members of the advisory committee must have a disability or represent an organization that represents people with disabilities.

Accessibility Lens An Accessibility Lens is a tool for identifying and clarifying issues affecting persons with disabilities used by policy developers and analysts to access and address the impact of all initiatives (policies, programs or decisions) on persons with disabilities. It is also a resource in creating policies and programs reflective of the rights and needs of persons with disabilities.

Barrier Something that makes it harder for some people to participate. Nova Scotia's Accessibility Act defines a barrier 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.”

Disability As defined in Nova Scotia’s Accessibility Act: “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.”

Equitable/equity A commitment to fairness. Equitable access is different from equal access. Equality means everybody is treated the same; equity means everybody is treated fairly, based on their needs and abilities. Equity recognizes and values differences, removing systemic barriers and accommodating individual differences, as needed.

Government of Nova Scotia Accessibility Plan A multi-year plan setting specific priorities and commitments for achieving accessibility within the Government of Nova Scotia. The first plan was published in 2018 and covers the years 2018-2021. (novascotia.ca/accessibility/plan)

Meaningful In the context of our Accessibility work, the term meaningful is used to ensure the efforts being made are deemed valuable by those affected by the efforts.

Plain language Clear, conversational communication that makes sense to the intended audience. The goal of plain language is to communicate so clearly that the intended audience can easily find what they need, understand what they find, and use the information (plainlanguagenetwork.org/).

Prescribed Means “prescribed in the Accessibility Act General Regulations.” The Accessibility Act enables the government to use the regulations to identify which organizations must comply with certain requirements. These requirements include forming an Accessibility Advisory Committee and developing an accessibility plan within one year. The use of the word “prescribed” in legislation is intended to give wide authority for regulations to be made that set down a specific rule or direction

Community Consultation

The Accessibility Committee undertook public consultation efforts in May through September 2022. Despite the challenges coming down off the pandemic, the Committee heard from more than XXX residents and organizations on the issue of accessibility through an online survey, visits to senior's complexes, phone calls, emails, and informational interviews.

Respondent Demographics

XXX% Persons with a disability (visible or invisible)

XXX% Family member, friend, or caregiver of a person with a disability

XXXX% Employed or volunteer at an organization that provides services to people with disabilities

Many of which self-identified as all of the above

XXXX% Women

XXXX% Men

XX% Non-binary

Remainder preferred not to say

Age

XXXX% aged 55-74

XXXX% aged 35-54

XXXX% aged 74+

XXX% aged 18-34

XXX% aged Under 18

Type of disability

Mobility

Hearing

Sight

Pain

Dexterity

Attention Deficit

Autism

Intellectual learning

Emotional/Mental Health

Brain Injury
Cognitive (memory)
Other

Housing situation
% single dwelling
% apartment
% board with another person
% LBH
XXX% Government seniors home
XXX% Nursing Home

Barriers identified
Municipal Buildings
Sidewalks
Crosswalks
Trails
Streets
Stadium
Parks
Playgrounds
Lighting indoor/outdoor

Qualitative data:

The Plan

Each of five areas (Built Environment, Information and Communication, Goods and Services, Transportation, Employment

- What is working well
- Commitment
- Starting Point
 - Achievements
 - Barriers

- Policies
- Actions
- Future priorities

What is working well:

Municipal Buildings

Accessible parks improvements

New sidewalks to mall district

Implementing the Plan

Timeline

Key responsibility

Ongoing Learning and Collaboration

MEMORANDUM

TO: Accessibility Advisory Committee

FROM: Sharon Bristol

DATE: September 13, 2022

SUBJECT: Strategy discussion- What is working well

As we move to the development of an accessibility strategy for the Town of Amherst, we will be focusing on the 5 key areas of Goods and Services, Information and Communications, Transportation, Employment, and Built Environment. Part of the strategy will be identifying in each of these areas consideration of what is working well, identifying strengths and weaknesses identifying any barrier, setting a commitment to improve said barrier and formulating an action plan to do so.

With this being said it would be advisable to consider those areas where we feel as a committee and community that something is working well. An example might be elevators in buildings, our recent work in making parks more accessible etc.

Please give some thought to areas in each of these categories that you would like to put forward as positives.