

Accessibility Plan 2022-2025



932 Highway 1 Hebron P: (902) 742-7159
Nova Scotia B5A 5Z5 F: (902) 742-3164
www.district.yarmouth.ns.ca

Introduction

The Nova Scotia Accessibility Act came into force in 2017 as a means of achieving accessibility in the province by preventing and removing barriers for people with disabilities. The province has a goal of becoming accessible by 2030. The Government of Nova Scotia's Accessibility Directorate is responsible for administering the Accessibility Act and advancing disability issues within government. They work collaboratively with persons with disabilities, municipalities, businesses, post-secondary institutions and others to achieve the goal of an accessible Nova Scotia by 2030. In 2020, the province determined that "prescribed public sector bodies" shall have an approved accessibility plan by April 1, 2022. Municipalities were included in the prescribed public sector bodies and are developing plans for how they will achieve this goal.

This Accessibility Plan was developed by the Municipality of the District of Yarmouth Accessibility Advisory Committee. This committee provides advice to the municipal council on identifying, preventing, and eliminating barriers experienced by people with disabilities in municipal programs, services, initiatives and facilities, and works with staff on the development and oversight of this plan. This document outlines the overarching goals for improving accessibility in the Municipality of the District of Yarmouth. Over the course of the next 10 years, the Municipality will work incrementally at achieving the goals of this plan.

The Municipality created the Committee in order to receive guidance in writing the accessibility plan and organizing actions to improve accessibility. In accordance 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." MODY's Committee meets this requirement.

As part of this process, members of the public were invited to provide input regarding their areas of concern about accessibility in the Municipality. Although the plan must be updated at least every three years, we encourage you to voice your concerns, questions, and suggestions at any time, since the Municipality and the Accessibility Advisory Committee rely on your invaluable input.

For Committee members, serving on the Committee has been an opportunity for engagement, learning, and growth, we are grateful for it. We are proud of the Municipality's Accessibility Plan and look forward to seeing it put into practice

The Municipality of the District Yarmouth partners with other municipal units in several regional agencies and services. These are not part of this document, but the Municipality is committed to working with our partners to improve accessibility for all. These include:

- *Yarmouth International Airport Corporation*
- *Mariners Centre*
- *Yarmouth County Solid Waste Park*
- *Yarmouth Port Authority*

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What We Believe

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.*
- *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.*

The Municipality of the District Yarmouth is committed to ensuring equitable access to community life and participation in society for all people, regardless of their abilities. We are committed to helping all people maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in inclusion. Equitable access is different from equal access. Equality means everybody gets the same thing; equity means everybody is treated fairly, based on their needs and abilities.

Definitions

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.

Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC)

A volunteer committee established by a municipality to advise municipal council on 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 assess 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.

ASL

American Sign Language

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."

Braille

A reading and writing system for people who are visually impaired.

CART

Communication Access Realtime Translation

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.

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.

Pedestrian

A person walking outside or using an assistive device outside to travel at a walking speed.

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.

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.

Retrofit

To add features that were not included in the original design

RHFAC

Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification

Tactile

Related to the sense of touch

WCAG

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines

Areas of Focus

There are five main areas of focus providing a base line starting point, outline of achievements to date and actions moving forward. They will serve as a guide to inform the implementation of the plan. The areas of focus include:

- Goods and Services
- Information and Communications
- Transportation
- Employment
- The Built Environment

Goods and Services

The Vision

People of all abilities have equitable access to goods and services delivered by the Municipality of the District of Yarmouth. This includes ensuring that there are policies, procedures, and tools to promote the accessible delivery of goods and services.

The Starting Point

Overview

Following are some of the many services the Municipality of the District of Yarmouth delivers to the public:

- Meetings of Municipal Council and Advisory Committees
- overseeing communication to the public (see Information and Communication section)
- Providing Customer Service counters
- Maintaining municipal roads and sidewalks (including snow removal) (see Built Environment section)
- Maintaining parks, trails, and open spaces (see Built Environment section)
- providing recreational services and activities
- Maintaining sewer services
- Providing Senior Safety Program
- Delivering public engagement opportunities
- Development office, building inspection, fire inspection, by-law enforcement
- Property Assessed Clean Energy program, Commercial Development District Improvement program, Water Supply Upgrade lending program, Grants to Community Organizations, Heritage Property Incentive Program
- Economic development services

Achievements

The main lobbies of the Administration Building (on each floor) are physically accessible

- *Partnered with the Province to fund the installation of a Mobi-mat at Ellenwood Provincial Park*
- *Municipal Building Official has been trained through the RHFAC program offered by Nova Scotia Community College.*
- *Municipal Council meetings are live-streamed to the internet, with closed captioning available*
- *Front counters for Development and Recreation departments are at a height to allow people to sit or wheelchairs to pull up*
- *Senior Safety Program services are brought to the community (home visits)*
- *Multi-mode, frequent communications with the public; i.e. Facebook, website, newsletter, live stream & recorded meetings*
- *Property Assessed Clean Energy, Water Supply Upgrade Lending Program address socio economic barriers*
- *Administration of property tax payment programs*
- *Access to Mobi chairs, hippocamp, sledge hockey gear*
- *Entrance fees for persons who support a person with a disability are waived*

Barriers

- *Although the Administration Building is built at ground level, it is not fully accessible. For example, the front counter does not have space for a wheelchair to go under it.*
- *Although the Rotary Centre at the Recreation Complex is built at ground level, it is not fully accessible.*
- *No staff members are trained in alternative communication methods, such as American Sign Language (ASL).*
- *No resources or funds are designated to offer alternative communications to people who need them (for example, a sign language interpreter).*
- *The Municipality's website is not accessible to people with visual impairments.*
- *Recreation services – need more training for staff, "time out" spaces and health related supports for participants/care givers.*
- *Senior Safety Coordinator's office is not accessible for clients with disabilities who do not wish to meet at their home.*
- *Council chambers have significant design elements which affect those with disabilities*
- *Internal doors in Administration Building not conducive to free movement*
- *Glass barrier at customer service counters problematic for hearing impaired*
- *No Braille on any signage*

Actions

Top Priorities (2022-2025)

- Administration Building accessibility audit
- Rotary Centre accessibility audit
- Engage RCMP to find an accessible location for Senior Safety Coordinator to meet clients
- Incorporate accessibility training in the annual staff and Council training plan
- Where applicable, include an “Accessibility Lens”/Impact Analysis in reports to council and in consultant reports delivered to staff and council
- Engage employees and Councillors in simulation exercises to get a better understanding of the needs of people with disabilities.

Other Initiatives

- Improve Municipal trails so they can be enjoyed by more people of various abilities.
- Provide an adapted listing of recreation programs and services for people of all abilities, and update it annually.
- Train the staff who are responsible for delivering accessible services to people with diverse abilities (including seasonal employees)
- Provide sign language interpreters, on request, to enable people to participate in municipal programs.
- Provide accessible exercise equipment at municipal recreational facilities.

Information and Communications

The Vision

To deliver clear and accessible information and communications to people of all abilities.

The Starting Point

Overview

The Municipality delivers information to the public in many ways, including:

- Meetings of Municipal Council and Advisory Committees, which are open to the public
- Email, the Municipality’s website and social media, newsletters
- Verbally through our front-line staff
- In video conference meetings
- By telephone

Achievements

- *Agendas and minutes of all meetings are posted on the Municipality’s website*
- *People can listen to or watch Municipal Council meetings live on the Internet during the meeting. Closed captioning is provided. After the meeting, people can listen to or watch an archived copy on the Municipality’s YouTube channel.*
- *Newsletter mailed out to residents semi-annually*
- *Electronic newsletter available in French and English*
- *Electronic business transactions – allowing clients to conduct more municipal business electronically, making it more accessible to some*
- *Verbal presentations to Council and Committees by community groups and organizations*

Barriers

- *There is currently no process for hearing-impaired individuals to attend or participate in public in-person meetings, including meetings of Municipal Council and Advisory Committees.*
- *The Municipality’s website is not accessible to people with visual impairments*
- *Public communication should state MODY will work to provide accommodations if made aware*
- *“Plain language” is not consistently used in written material*
- *The Municipal Government Act sets limitations for certain public notices—for example, advertisements must be published in newspapers, which may not be accessible to people with visual impairments.*
- *Streaming video and related technologies do not always work as intended*
- *Council chambers is not accessible to people with disabilities*
- *No materials are available in Braille or any language other than English*

Actions

Top Priorities (2022 – 2025)

- *Key staff members to include plain writing and inclusive communications in annual training plan.*
- *Work with the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM) to advocate for accessibility to be included in the public notice requirements of the Municipal Government Act.*
- *Ensure the Municipality’s web presence meets the latest Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) and is more user-friendly.*
- *Add standard language on how and when to request an adaptation/support to participate in a Council or Committee of Council meeting.*
- *Identify ways/mediums to communicate with people who we are not currently reaching due to an accessibility barrier.*

Other Initiatives

- *Provide modified editions of key municipal resources—in large print, Braille and/or in plain language—on request. Examples include recreation guides, emergency management information, and bylaw services.*
- *Ensure digital communications, including emergency alerts, are screen-readable. Encourage partner agencies to achieve the same standard of communication.*
- *Provide American Sign Language (ASL) and/or Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) services at Municipal Council and other Municipality-hosted public meetings, on request.*
- *Issue meeting agendas with enough lead time to review and provide for any accommodations which may be required*
- *Use alternate communications methods (bulletin board, digital signage in front of building, monthly newsletter, etc.)*

Transportation

The Vision

That people of all abilities have equitable access to publicly funded and/or regulated transportation.

The Starting Point

Overview

- *The Municipality of the District of Yarmouth does not have a publicly funded transit system.*

Achievements

- *The Municipality's residents have access to Hope Dial-A-Ride, a not-for-profit door to door transportation system operating throughout Yarmouth County.*

Barriers

- *The Municipality is geographically quite spread out, making it difficult for a public transportation system to operate.*
- *Hope Dial-a-Ride only operates Monday to Friday, 8:30 to 4:40, and 24 hours' notice is required.*
- *Only 4 of the Hope Dial-a-Ride vans are accessible to wheelchair users.*
- *The cost of the Hope Dial-a-Ride service may be a barrier to some.*
- *There are no accessible taxis in the area.*

Actions

- *The Municipality of Yarmouth does not presently have a publicly funded transportation system – this section does not apply.*

Employment

The Vision

People of all abilities have equitable access to employment, Council, and Citizen representative opportunities with the Municipality of Yarmouth.

The Starting Point

Overview

- *The Municipality employs 29 permanent employees and approximately 20 seasonal employees. There are 7 elected representatives on Municipal Council and 22 citizen representatives.*

Achievements

- *Members of Council receive technology that makes reading material more accessible because users can zoom in on text and change the font size.*
- *Building Official is trained in the Rick Hansen program*
- *Citizen representatives can receive material for meetings and committee electronically*
- *Citizen representatives can access training offered by the Municipality*
- *Ergonomic assessments for work stations are offered*
- *Funding for multi-position desk adaptations*

Barriers

- *Across the organization there is not a high level of awareness on the adaptive tools and resources to support recruiting qualified individuals/support elected officials with barriers*
- *opportunities are posted in traditional ways, including web pages, which may not be accessible to some individuals.*
- *Work areas at Administration Building are not accessible to people with disabilities.*
- *Accessible parking does not meet all accessibility standards*
- *No interior door systems at municipal work sites have electronic opening; they are heavy and several doors remain closed most of the time*
- *There is not an accessible washroom in the office suites*
- *No standard language in opportunity postings that MODY is prepared to make accommodations to support barrier free access*
- *None of the fleet vehicles have adaptive devices*

Actions

Top Priorities (2022 - 2025)

- *Incorporate accessibility training in the annual staff and Council training plan*
- *State that the Director of Corporate Services is the lead on workplace adaptations*
- *Add standard language to opportunity postings stating adaptations and accommodations can be made*
- *Survey the municipal workforce, Council and citizen representatives to get baseline data on abilities*

- *Include an accommodation fund in annual operating budgets*
- *All municipal councillors and senior management staff will be required to take the Working with Abilities online training provided free by the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission (workwithabilitiesns.ca)*

Other Initiatives

- *Establish a centralized accommodation fund to pay for assistive devices or accommodations councillors, citizen reps and employees need to succeed at their jobs. Promote this fund on the opportunity posting.*
- *Investigate strategies to reach a wider and more diverse audience with opportunity postings. Include statements in the postings to ensure applicants are aware that accommodation will be provided.*
- *Assign a designated staff person to help individuals who may need assistance to succeed at their jobs*
- *Make work areas more accessible to people with disabilities*

Built Environment

The Vision

Municipally owned and operated public buildings and public spaces are accessible to people of all abilities.

The Starting Point

Overview

The Municipality of Yarmouth owns and operates:

- *Administration Building*
- *Rotary Centre*
- *Cape Forchu light station**
- *Sidewalks*
- *parking areas*
- *trails*

**Although the Municipality is the owner of the Cape Forchu Light station, it is not included in this document as it is going through its own developmental project that will have an accessibility lens applied to it.*

Achievements

- *Administration Building lobbies and public washrooms are accessible to people with physical disabilities*
- *Front counters at Development and Recreation are at a height to allow wheelchair access*
- *The Administration building has an elevator*
- *Exterior doors have assisted opening mechanisms*

Barriers

- *Administration Building is not fully accessible*
- *Council chambers and meeting rooms are not fully accessible*
- *Accessible parking spaces do not meet accessibility standards*
- *Upstairs front counter is not at a good height for wheelchairs*
- *Rotary Centre is not fully accessible*
- *Not all sidewalks meet current accessibility standards*
- *Several work-sites do not meet all accessibility standards (i.e. pumping stations, sewer treatment plant)*
- *Meeting spaces do not meet accessibility standards*
- *Glass at front counters is a barrier to some with hearing impairments*

Actions

Top Priorities (2022 - 2025)

- *Provide accessible parking spaces and access to buildings at the Administration building and Rotary Centre*
- *Council to add the recommendations from the building audits to its 5-year capital investment plan*
- *Add microphones to glass at all three customer counters*
- *Emergency management and building evacuation plans are reviewed with accessibility in mind*
- *Lobby provincial government to install crosswalks in certain areas for safety and accessibility.*

Other Initiatives

- *All new municipal buildings (including major renovations) meet the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification (RHFAC) Gold Standard*
- *Sidewalks and curb cuts are improved and maintained, as soon as possible, to the standard outlined in Canadian Standards Association (CSA) B651-18, Accessible Design for the Built Environment*
- *Council Chambers meet CSA Accessibility requirements*
- *Service counters are at an accessible height*

Implementing the Plan

Responsibilities

Accessibility Advisory Committee

- *Review this Accessibility Plan at least every three years as required by the Accessibility Act and recommend updates to Council as required.*
- *Report annually to Council on progress toward meeting the commitments outlined in this Plan.*
- *Receive reports from the CAO (or appointed staff) outlining complaints, concerns and/or questions from the public.*
- *Advocate in a positive manner for the work MODY is doing to improve accessibility.*

Council

- *Recognize the significant cost of implementing this plan and the municipal operational plans and seek adequate funding to allow Municipality to meet the requirements under Nova Scotia's Accessibility Act.*
- *Fund resources required for the AAC to carry out its mandate.*
- *Advocate in a positive manner for the work MODY is doing to improve accessibility.*

CAO/Staff

- *Ensure the commitments outlined in the Accessibility Plan are reflected and operationalized in municipal Accessibility Action Plans required as public sector bodies under Nova Scotia's Accessibility Act.*
- *Accept complaints, questions, and concerns submitted to them by the public.*
- *Provide a summary of complaints, questions, and concerns to the Accessibility Advisory Committee.*
- *Advocate in a positive manner for the work MODY is doing to improve accessibility.*

Schedule or Timeline

In 2017, the Government of Nova Scotia passed the province's Accessibility Act. A supporting document, Access by Design 2030, is the implementation strategy for how Nova Scotia will achieve an accessible province by 2030. It also identifies actions to improve public awareness, build collaboration and increase compliance with existing regulations. The Accessibility Act set an ambitious goal to become a fully accessible province by 2030. As such, we strive to have the commitments of this plan achieved by 2030, to be consistent with the Province of Nova Scotia.

Monitoring and Evaluating

The Accessibility Advisory Committee will be responsible for submitting a report to Council by November 30 each year. Council will set specific benchmarks against which to measure the progress of the plan. This report will track the progress made towards the commitments in this plan and make recommendations on priorities and changes to improve the Plan.

The Accessibility Advisory Committee will review new directives, guidelines, and updates from the province as they are released, and determine if updates to this Accessibility Plan are required based on those updates.

Responding to Questions and Complaints

- *Anyone can lodge a complaint, pose a question, or express a concern about accessibility in the Municipality of Yarmouth. These should be directed to the CAO.*
- *The CAO will respond within a reasonable time. Before responding, the CAO will consult with the staff person responsible for the area of inquiry. The CAO's response will contain the reasons for the decision. The AAC Chair shall receive a copy of such response.*
- *If the complainant still has concerns, they can contact the Accessibility Advisory Committee Chair.*
- *Anyone can appeal to Council if they are not satisfied with the response from the CAO or the Accessibility Advisory Committee. Council may refer any appeal to the Accessibility Advisory Committee for additional review and recommendations before issuing a final response to the complainant.*
- *The CAO will keep a record of all complaints, questions, and concerns submitted to them, and will provide summary updates to the Accessibility Advisory Committee on a regular basis. These updates will become part of the Accessibility Advisory Committee's continual review of the Accessibility Plan and may inform future changes.*

Appendices:

Appendix A: Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

Appendix B: Committee list

Appendix C: Accessibility survey and results

Appendix D: Community engagement questions

Appendix A

Accessibility Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

Background

Under the Nova Scotia Accessibility Act (NSAA), the Municipality of Yarmouth is required to appoint an Accessibility Advisory Committee to provide input on accessibility matters within the Municipality. While it is the legislative mandate of the Municipal Council to make the final decision on all matters that affect the Municipality, the role of an advisory committee is to provide recommendations, advice and information to the Municipal Council on those specialized matters which relate to the purpose of the advisory committee, to facilitate public input to council on programs and ideas and to assist in enhancing the quality of life of the community.

Purpose

The Accessibility Advisory Committee shall advise and assist Municipal Council in promoting and facilitating a barrier-free Municipality of Yarmouth for citizens of all abilities, including persons with disabilities. This aim shall be achieved through the review of municipal policies, programs and services and the identification, removal and prevention of barriers faced by persons with disabilities.

The Accessibility Advisory Committee reports to Municipal Council and is responsible for the following:

- a) Participate in the development and future reviews (every three years, in accordance with the NSAA) of the Municipality's Accessibility Plan which is intended to improve the quality of life for all residents of the Municipality of Yarmouth, including persons with disabilities;*
- b) Advise Municipal Council on the implementation and effectiveness of the Municipality's Accessibility Plan to ensure that it addresses the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to persons with disabilities in the Municipality's by-laws, policies, programs, practices and service standards;*
- c) Advise the Municipality on issues and concerns (barriers) faced by persons with disabilities and the means by which the Municipality may work towards the elimination of these barriers;*
- d) Advise on matters of government policy (municipal, provincial or federal) affecting persons with disabilities and inform the Municipality about the impact of these policies on the Municipality of Yarmouth;*
- e) Review and make recommendations on barriers faced by persons with disabilities to existing facilities owned, lease, or operated (in full or in part) by the Municipality;*
- f) Receive and review information directed to it by Council, and make recommendations as requested;*
- g) Consult with the community on accessibility in the Municipality; and*
- h) Assist in monitoring compliance with federal and provincial government directives and regulations.*

Membership

- a) *The Advisory Committee consists of 2 Municipal Councillors and up to 4 additional community members. Members shall be appointed for a term of 4 years. Committee members may be appointed for consecutive terms.*
- b) *In accordance with the NSAA requirements, at least one half of the members must be persons with disabilities or representatives from organizations representing persons with disabilities.*
- c) *Council will issue a call for applications to serve on the committee. Membership applications will be reviewed by Council, who will then appoint members to the committee.*

Qualifications

Each member of the Committee is an independent representative to the Committee and does not represent the concerns of only one disability or group. The members of this Committee shall work together for the purpose of developing a common approach which is reasonable and practical. Members shall be chosen for the special expertise, experience, dedication and commitment to the mandate of the committee in promoting and facilitating a barrier-free Municipality of Yarmouth to persons of all abilities.

Roles and responsibilities – Members

Membership on this committee is a position of responsibility and requires a strong commitment to the Terms of Reference. Committee members are required to:

- a) *Attend all regularly scheduled meetings*
- b) *Promote the role(s) of the Committee and its undertakings*
- c) *Offer input to the committee on all aspects of accessibility, inclusion, accessibility barriers, and universal design, including solutions and outcomes for a positive result to each.*

Roles and responsibilities – Chair person

A Councillor shall serve as Chair Person and Vice Chair Person. The Chair Person shall facilitate the meetings and allow for input from all Committee members. The Chair Person shall also act as the spokesperson for the Committee. In the Chair Person's absence, the Vice Chair shall be responsible for fulfilling this role.

Roles and responsibilities – Staff (non-voting)

Staff representatives from the Municipality of Yarmouth shall provide administrative and research support to the Advisory Committee. This includes, but is not limited to, the preparation and distribution of agendas, minutes and staff reports.

Meetings

- a) *The Advisory Committee shall meet at least on a biannual basis, or more frequently as determined by the Committee to fulfill its duties.*
- b) *Agenda items will be compiled by the Municipal Accessibility Coordinator, and agenda items should be forwarded to staff at least 2 weeks in advance of meetings. Agendas and staff reports shall be made available to the Advisory Committee three business days prior to the scheduled meeting.*
- c) *Decisions of the Advisory Committee shall be made by a majority vote of those voting members present at a meeting; and shall be in the form of recommendations to Council*
- d) *Quorum shall consist of a majority of the total number of voting Advisory Committee members.*
- e) *The committee shall adhere to the same procedural rules as those found in parts 12, 13, 14, & 15 of the Council Procedural Policy C-028-19*

Conflict of interest

Members shall declare all possible conflicts of interest before agenda items are presented and leave the meeting or that part of the meeting during which the matter is under consideration. Members shall adhere to the Council Code of Conduct as well as all Council by-laws and policies.

Review

These terms of reference are to be reviewed every 4 years.

Appendix B **Committee Members**

Members

- ❖ *Councillor Sheri Hurlburt, Chair*
- ❖ *Councillor Loren Cushing*
- ❖ *Sherry Robertson (Yarmouth Life Skills)*
- ❖ *Monette Comeau*
- ❖ *Linda Vickery*

Staff

- ❖ *Victoria Brooks, CAO*
- ❖ *Darlene LeBlanc, Director of Corporate Services*
- ❖ *Dwayne Roberts, Building Official*
- ❖ *Barb DeViller, Administrative Assistant*

Appendix C
Accessibility Survey & Results

**Municipality of Yarmouth
Accessibility
Survey Results
May 10th - August 20th, 2021**

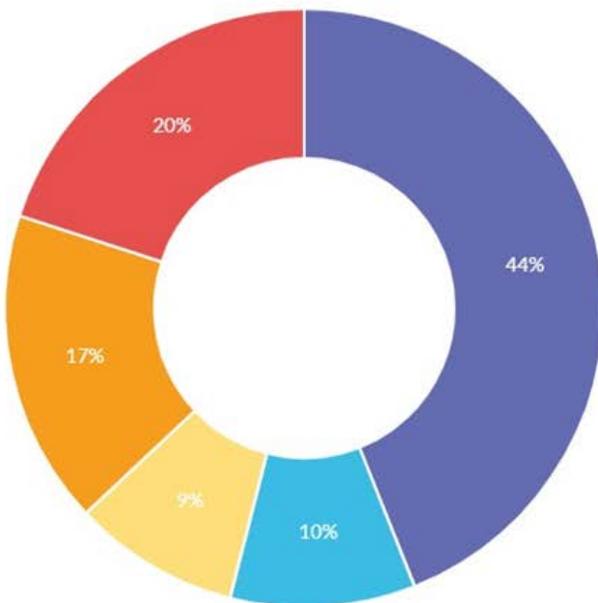
**Municipality of Yarmouth
Accessibility Survey**

60
Responses Since
May 10

Responses Today
0

Active

Q1: Please check all that apply to you.

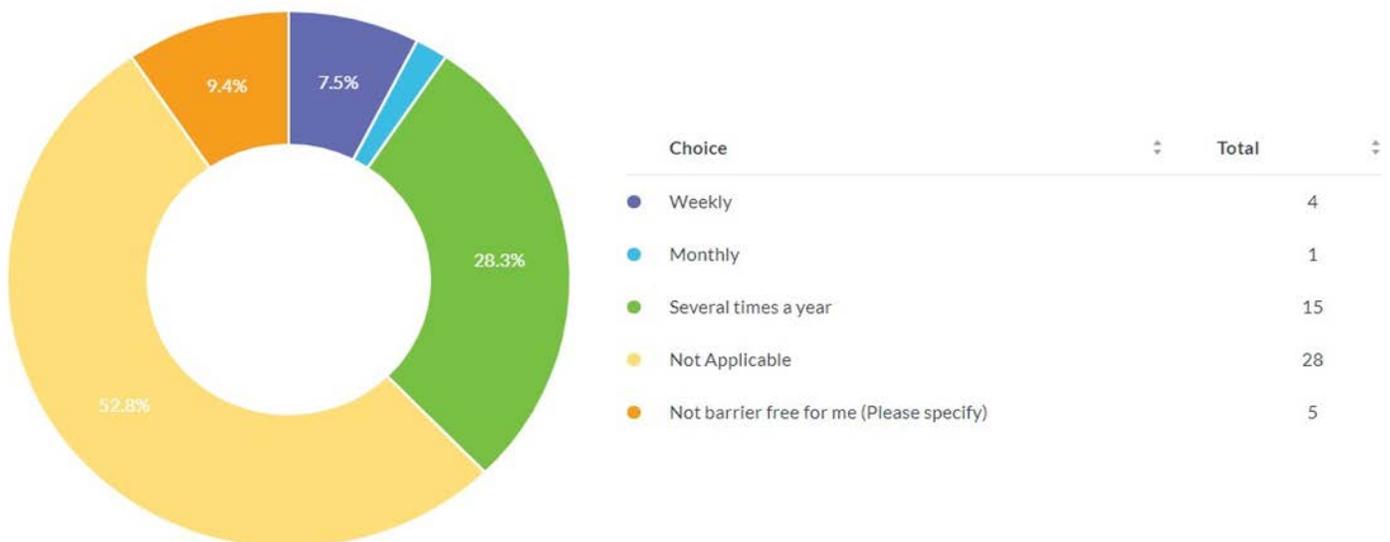


Choice	Total
Resident of the Municipality of Yarmouth	44
Work in Municipality of Yarmouth	10
Business owner in Municipality of Yarmouth	0
Employed or volunteer at an organization that provides services to people with disabilities	9
Family member, friend, or caregiver of a person with a disability	17
Person with a disability	20

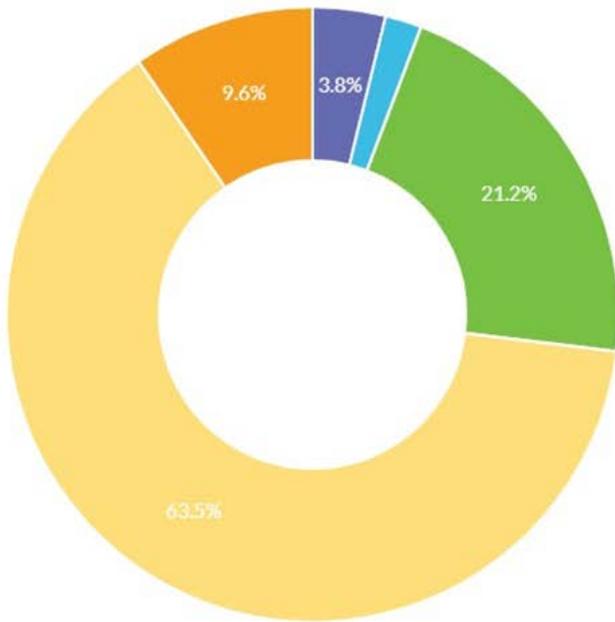
Q2: What community do you live in? (e.g. South Ohio, Carleton, Hebron, etc.)

Port Maitland	7	Chegoggin	2	Kemptville	1
Arcadia	5	Overton	1	Church Point	1
Town of Yarmouth	8	Summerville	1	Rockville	1
Hebron	5	Wellington	1	Tusket Falls	1
Pubnico	2	Carleton	2	Melbourne	2
Sand Beach	1	Raynardton	2		
South Ohio	3	Dayton	2		
Milton Highlands	1	Short Beach	2	Total 56	
Pembroke	1	Deerfield	4		

Q3: How often do you visit or access the Municipality of Yarmouth Administration Building?



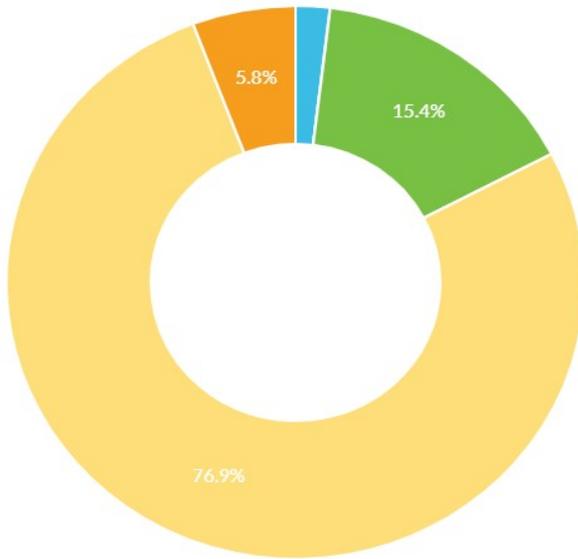
Q4: How often do you visit or access the Hebron Recreational Complex? (ballfields, tennis courts)



Choice	Total
Weekly	2
Monthly	1
Several times a year	11
Not Applicable	33
Not barrier free for me (Please specify)	5

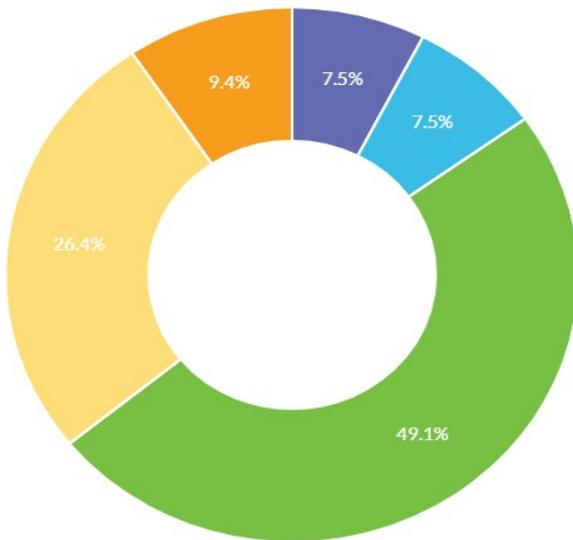
- *I have been once but did not get out of the car.*
- *I'm not familiar with these recreational facilities*
- *Survey should have an option for a couple times a year/summer option*
- *Once in a while for a hike*

Q5: How often do you visit or access the Hebron Rotary Centre?



Choice	Total
Weekly	0
Monthly	1
Several times a year	8
Not Applicable	40
Not barrier free for me (Please specify)	3

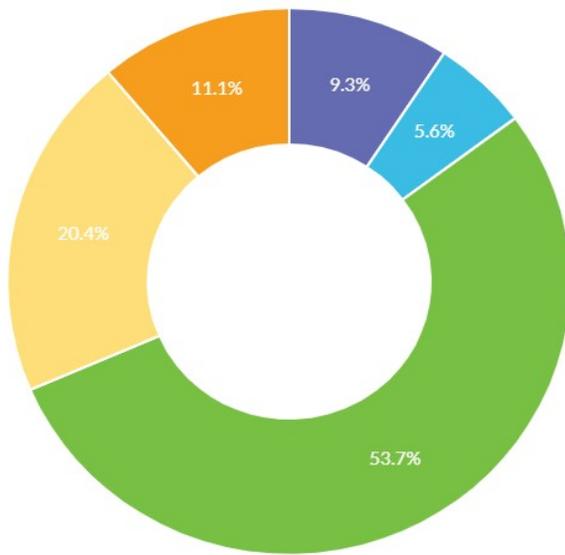
Q6: How often do you visit or access municipally owned trails? (Forchu River, Tkipok Trail, Leif Erikson Trail, Hebron Business Park Connector Trail, etc.)



Choice	Total
Weekly	4
Monthly	4
Several times a year	26
Not Applicable	14
Not barrier free for me (Please specify)	5

- *I use a transport wheelchair and carry oxygen.*
- *My wife walks the trails but I can no longer do so.*
- *Most are impossible to maneuver in a wheelchair or a walker.*

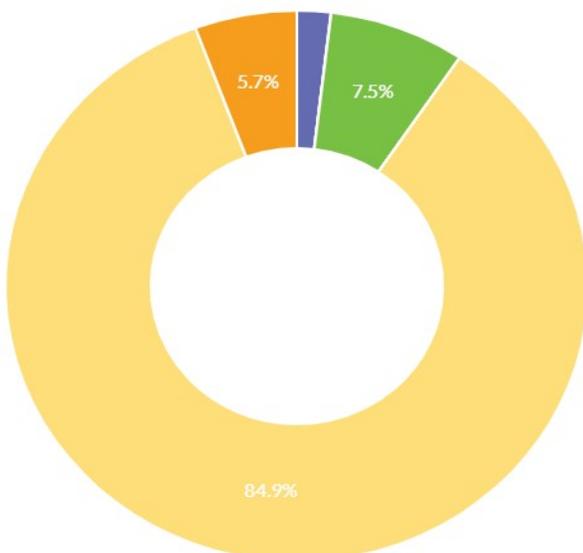
Q7: How often do you visit or access the Cape Forchu Lightstation?



Choice	Total
Weekly	5
Monthly	3
Several times a year	29
Not Applicable	11
Not barrier free for me (Please specify)	6

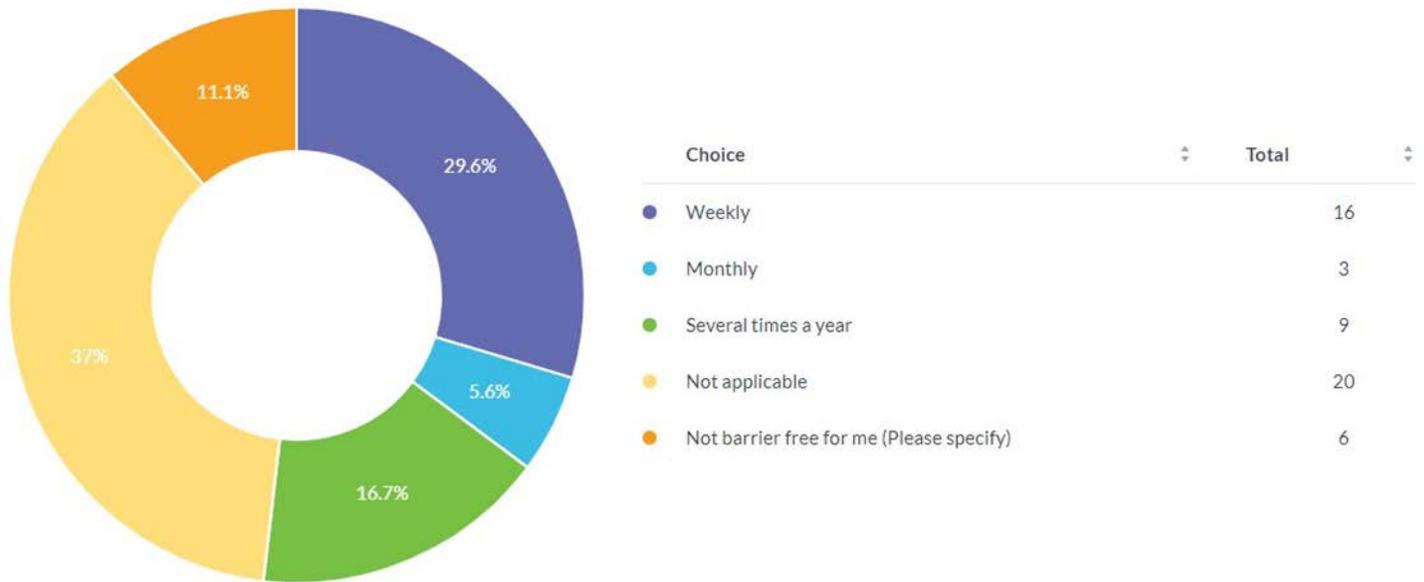
- *I have a hard time accessing this site. Can't use my manual chair at this site to really appreciate the beauty. I only ever get to the rail below the restaurant. I have no way to get my electric chair out there.*

Q8: How often do you visit or access the Hebron soccer field?



Choice	Total
Weekly	1
Monthly	0
Several times a year	4
Not Applicable	45
Not barrier free for me (Please specify)	3

Q9: How often do you access the Municipality of Yarmouth sidewalks? (Kemptville, Carleton, Port Maitland, Hebron, South Ohio, Arcadia, Milton Highlands).



- *Just wish there were more*
- *No sidewalk in Rockville*
- *I wish I had one to use in my area.*
- *There are no sidewalks to use in Dayton, which I would use if they were there.*

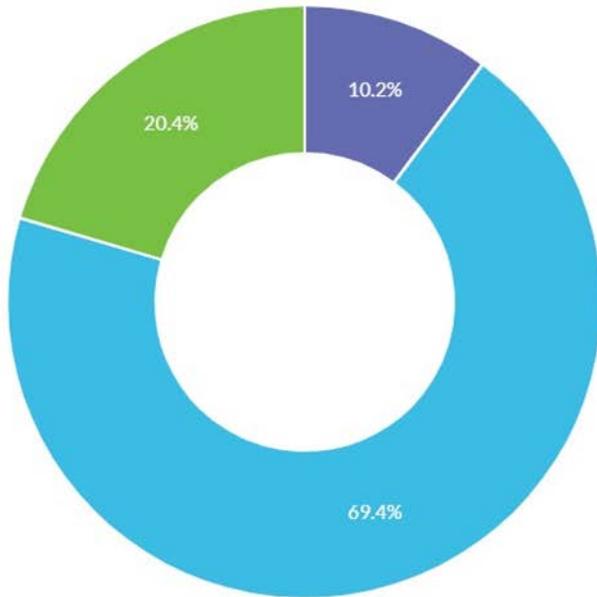
Q10: Have you encountered any barriers to accessing any municipally owned facility and/or building? If so, please describe.

- Doorways, ramps, automatic doors
- Having a traumatic brain injury (TBI) which is an invisible disability makes it difficult just to fill in this survey. Screens, music, lights, balance and things visually complex are difficult. Makes it hard just to follow instructions. Not realizing that a soft radio for background noise can make it impossible to concentrate and overwhelming with a TBI.
- Lake Milo building has stairs which I cannot always use, and access to water and kayaks can also be a barrier if I do not have someone to put my artificial leg in a dry place and produce it when I am done. I can no longer hop to get to these areas. I'm sure I am not the only person with this barrier.
- No sidewalks in Milton Highlands past Lakeside Rd. We need the sidewalk extended to at least Green Rock
- Not physically, but I would encourage you to consider that barriers can be digital I that people do not have access to internet because of money or poor connection
- The park and trails are not wheelchair accessible. Ellenwood Park needs accessibility to waterfront. Mats and ramp. Hard for families to get from parked area to picnic area. Cannot join activities with family there. Needs a pedway or mats.
- Working in a home for adults with special needs anywhere I go I am always aware of accessibility issues. There are some buildings that if our residents had to maneuver on their own it would be impossible. I remember going to Yarmouth with my mother to see her dentist Hubert Leblanc and parked in an accessibility spot. Had she been a wheelchair user she wouldn't have been able to get out of the car because the side was approximately 4 inches high. Even with her being able to walk she is 88 years old and sometimes has problems lifting her feet. The sidewalk was in front of the municipal building next to Frost Park.
- Arcadia trail is not wheelchair friendly.
- I never tried to enter these facilities with a wheelchair.
- I rarely go alone as I find the doors are too heavy, and the walking areas are not always level enough to be able to use my walker.

Q11: Have you encountered any barriers in accessing trails, walkways, a/o sidewalks owned by the Municipality? If so, describe the situation below.

- *Port Maitland sidewalk needs to be extended towards Darlings Lake.*
- *The trail behind Maple Grove gets pretty muddy and nasty.*
- *Walking is a bit more difficult in the areas without sidewalks especially in the summer when the recreational ball/soccer parks are busy. Leighton St, Cemetery St and Happy Hollow can be extremely busy during this time and not everyone follows the 50 km rule. I have to say it's been pretty scary at times as there is very little room for the walker when traffic is coming both ways.*
- *Yes, loud music playing in Main Street in Yarmouth can be overwhelming.*
- *Yes. No sidewalk from Lakeside Road to Peterson Road. We need a side walk extension so we*
- *can get to the hospital without walking on the road in speeding traffic.*
- *Pavement is not always level, curbing does not always meet the roadway, impediments on sidewalks present a problem.*
- *Cracks, lips, uneven*
- *Arcadia trail needs a little more grooming and boardwalks are deteriorating in some areas*
- *Dogs running loose and aggressive in the trails by the rec centre. I'm not able to go fast and they are aggressive.*
- *On the Main Shore Road there is not a safe walking space. The shoulder of the road is always grown in and very narrow! The road is heavily used by cars and trucks, and the vehicles are always going too fast to safely pass pedestrians and oncoming traffic. The road shoulder on the Main Shore Road in Chegoggin needs to be made safe for pedestrians from the Overton Road heading toward the hospital as talked about for years.*
- *Some trails are not well groomed and would be hard to access or partake in if someone had mobility issues.*
- *Wheelchair accessibility is a huge issue at Ellenwood. Yes, there is parking but cannot access activities during the year. There is only grass which makes it hard. There should be lower parking open instead of locking upper gate.*
- *I haven't but it would be nice if barriers would be put up on the old railroad tracks that lead from town, so loud motorcycles don't wake people up in the middle of the night. This is the trail that follows Lake Milo along the Milo Stretch. The noise is so loud you can hear it across the lake!*

Q12: Do you participate in any municipal programs or activities? (e.g. recreation programs, municipal meetings, etc.)



Choice	Total
Yes	5
No	34
If so, which programs?	10

- *Municipal meetings recorded*
- *No one has listened in the past. This is the first of this which is great.,*
- *Meetings are interested in Municipal Affairs*
- *Board Member – Housing Authority*
- *Seniors (Dance), Senior Exercise (Mariner’s Centre and Hebron Centre, Swimming (Grand Hotel)*
- *Recreation Activities*
- *I’ll watch council meetings sometimes*
- *Beach cleanups*
- *I have audited the council meetings. Your closed captioning only works about 50% of the time.*

Q13: Have you encountered any barriers in participating in a municipal program or activity? If so, please describe the situation below.

- Do not in person. Only by phone.
- I usually do not participate due to health issues regarding scents
- When swimming at the Grand Hotel I needed to use the stairs to and from swimming pool to shower and to change but made best effort to attend as Yarmouth Recreation arranged free Senior's swim.
- Some issues with the Mariners center yes
- This is a terrible survey. You will not get any meaningful responses through this process.
- Cannot bring members to family events because it's hard to push on grass in a wheelchair. Trails should have more wooden walkways.

Q14: If you have specific barriers accessing municipal services, buildings or infrastructure, please tell us about the specific barrier.

- As I already mentioned, the only barrier I have encountered so far is at Lake Milo.
- Problem is a lack of sidewalks in Milton Highlands area.
- The Hebron Centre is not well planned. You have to park up top and walk into the building. Curbs for walkers, heavy doors. Automatic doors not always working. Not a well-planned way to access the building or offices if using a walker and if you have problems walking any distance.

Q15: In your opinion, what are the best ways to create a barrier free municipality?

- *Think that everyone uses a wheelchair or wheeled device to get around. Think that you are unable to walk far and plan out areas in a sensible way with areas to be able to sit out of the way.*
- *All buildings should be inspected with people who are challenged with disabilities so they can access the site first hand.*
- *Sidewalks seem fine and most are new. The trails need boardwalk upkeep.*
- *More sidewalks throughout the Municipality.*
- *Listen to the people who are having barrier issues and remove said barriers.*
- *Install more wheel chair ramps, more accessible parking.*
- *Consult with persons living in the municipality who have mobility issues and find out what their concerns are. Require that new buildings, such as seniors housing and public buildings consider people with handicaps and mobility issues when they are being built.*
- *By engaging and seeking input from those with disabilities.*
- *Careful design of trails and entrances.*
- *Reduce municipality spending and unfair taxes. Real estate taxes in Yarmouth Municipality are extremely excessive. Stop spending. Do not spend money on Yarmouth Town's Mariners Centre.*
- *More sidewalks.*
- *Have enough staff. Don't assume everybody has a computer.*
- *Ensure that municipally owned facilities are accessible to all. Ramp options. Accessible washrooms. Upkeep on trails to ensure there are no barriers.*
- *There's really no barrier for me but I'd like to see it barrier free for everyone so that all are able to participate*
- *Have an Accessibility Advisory Committee and take into consideration all barriers to any one person regardless of age, gender, faith or ethnic group.*
- *We need sidewalks so we don't have to walk in the road!*
- *Hearing from everyone who can provide a perspective and then taking action to address. All visible and invisible disabilities can be difficult to address for only one or two people but by hearing from all the community we can better address them.*
- *Continue to invite input from residents about obstacles - make it easy to report accessibility challenges and make sure the public knows how to report. Also, develop a protocol for addressing accessibility issues. For example, if I have a problem and report, be able to tell me how or if or when it will be addressed.*

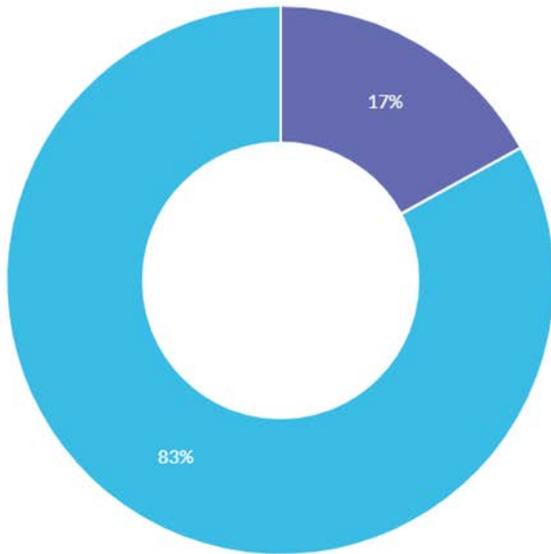
- *Look at it from the lens of someone who experiences a disability. Watching for cracks in pavement or sidewalks that people can trip on, access to buildings and placement of handicap buttons. Audio and visual signage. An openness to change.*
- *As I work with the Town ACC, I try to make sure we include broad spectrum identification of barriers from those with autism to those in wheelchairs.*
- *Have an accessibility advisory committee comprised of people with disabilities. Make better surveys.*
- *Need mats like Port Maitland Beach for Ellenwood.*
- *Creating this survey is a wonderful start. Just by listening to suggestions by others and taking action on them would be great.*
I personally don't have any issues. The only thing I can really think of is the doors to the two laundromats here. Sadly, both are in the town limits so not sure what you can do about that. Neither door opens automatically and one of them opens to the outside so if you're going in with an armful of laundry, you literally have to set it down to open the door.
- *New designs become a requirement.*
- *Remember that there are more disabilities than just mobility. There are many types of physical and emotional disabilities that may impede access. One example is the glass barriers at public points of contact. These are hard to navigate for anyone with hearing difficulties. Even more so now with the use of masks. Another area to watch is sidewalk construction, which the Municipality has been good with for the most part. Never drop the side walk to meet a lower driveway. Always raise the driveway to meet the sidewalk. The only place a sidewalk should drop is at street crossings. And if at a corner where two sidewalks meet with two crosswalks, the curb should be flat between the two, not have a "dividing bump-up" between the two. Have seen this in town and even able-bodied people trip over them. Thank you.*
- *Awareness*

Q16: In your opinion, what is working well in making the municipality barrier free? This doesn't have to be a municipal building, infrastructure or service.

- *Lousy provincial health care spending and outcomes cause residents to have little need for barrier improvement.*
- *Never ramps at doorways.*
- *Permitted use of scooters.*
- *Slow very slow*
- *I think identifying it as an issue that needs to be addressed is good.*

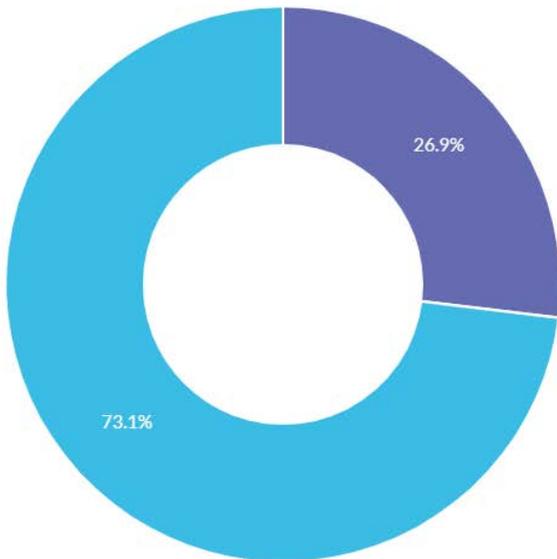
- *Using Mariners' Center for Senior Exercise is great. Being part of opening Mariners at Main is also an excellent move; as being in a pool to swim, pool run and do aquatic exercise is much easier on an elderly body or a body with a physical disability because the buoyancy of the water that produces less impact as regular exercise, Also, there is Yoga and exercising at different levels. And if a Special Needs change room is used just for that; Family rooms would be necessary as young ones don't realize that people with disabilities are not always physically balanced and the children could actually cause serious accidents.*
- *Trails are good and used extensively. Just need some safe sidewalks to get to them. Could also use a bus route to hospital.*
- *This survey is a good start.*
- *The boardwalk on the rec centre trail is great. Sidewalks are a helpful addition.*
- *The very fact that we are taking a look at barriers that may be out there.*
- *The automatic doors are wonderful. Even if you need to push a button to open them, that is easy. Would be nice though if all the doors that have the buttons would work. Seems to be a problem with that at Dayton Red and White.*
- *Just the fact that there is a committee is great. For the most part, in recent years, the Municipality has kept accessibility in mind when new construction is happening. But a closer look at older infrastructure is now needed.*
- *Town transit service, automatic doors, "cleared" sidewalks.*
- *The effort of your senior safety coordinator is appreciated by many seniors.*
- *Haven't given it much thought.*

Q17: Please tell us a little about yourself. Do you use a manual or electric wheelchair?



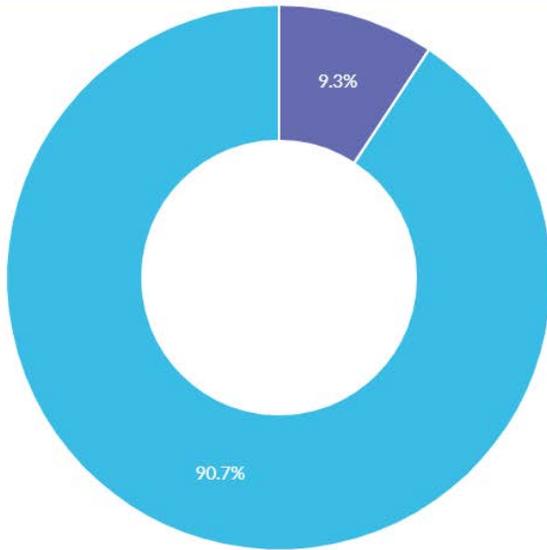
Choice	Total
Yes	9
No	44

Q18: Do you use a walking aid? (a walker, crutches, a cane, or a stroller)



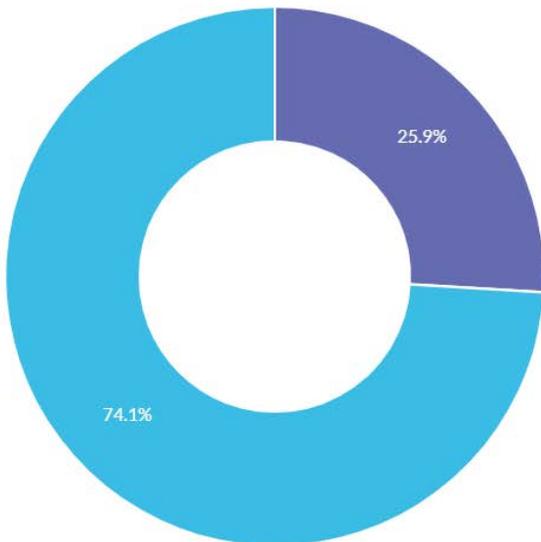
Choice	Total
Yes	14
No	38

Q19: Do you have impaired vision?



Choice	↕	Total
● Yes		5
● No		49

Q20: Do you have impaired hearing?

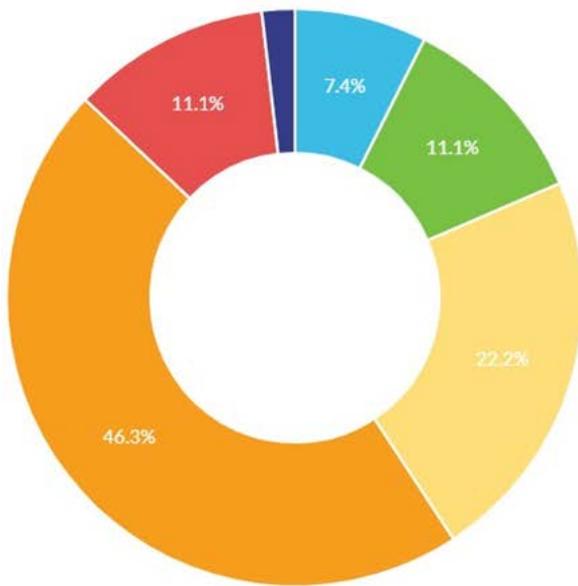


Choice	↕	Total
● Yes		14
● No		40

Q21: Is there anything else you feel comfortable sharing with us with respect to accessing municipal facilities?

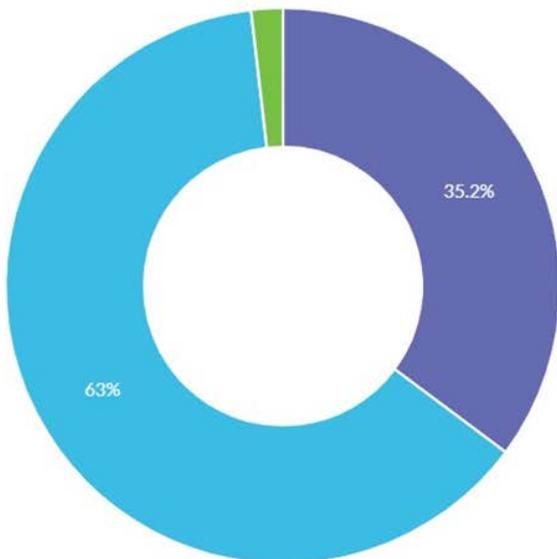
- *I was a care giver to my husband who was in a wheelchair and that is when I discovered that some buildings in Yarmouth were difficult to access without outside help.*
- *Taxes are too high.*
- *More sidewalks would be nice or widening of the areas where there aren't any*
- *Sometimes when using a wheelchair or walking aids in winter; it is almost impossible to get over a frozen uneven area. This might also be dangerous for a person who has a sight impairment.*
- *In order to access them we need them!*
- *Appreciate the opportunity for input.*
- *As previously mentioned, access to safe walking space, while so close to Yarmouth Medical Center and Town of Yarmouth access.*
- *I have had no issues other than COVID issues*
- *Family members are marginalized and made to feel unwelcome because of lack of accessibility at Ellenwood*
- *As I stated earlier, blocking motorcycles and 4 runners from the trails would be great. Too much noise at all hours and they go way too fast and can hurt those walking on the trails.*
- *Don't go overboard*
- *Not every facility needs to be perfect but there must be equal alternatives if one facility is not able to be made accessible over another.*
- *Extending sidewalks and trails is a positive thing. Glad there are projects this year.*
- *I use the Port Maitland sidewalk 365 days a year, it not being cleared of snow and ice is a barrier for me being able to get out and keep my mental health. I am hopeful snow removal and ice control will remain a priority.*
- *In a perfect world, it would be nice to see wider shoulders along Hwy 340. Many people walk the 340 and most drivers are speeding above the 90 km max.*
- *Sidewalk expansion joints should not have a dip in it. Being in an electric wheelchair it hurts my back. I saw new sidewalk expansion joints. They look like it was cut with a cement saw. These do not make my wheelchair bounce.*
- *I have visual difficulties with depth perception. I also have mobility issues and find uneven sloping walkways to be extremely difficult to use.*

Q22: What is your age?



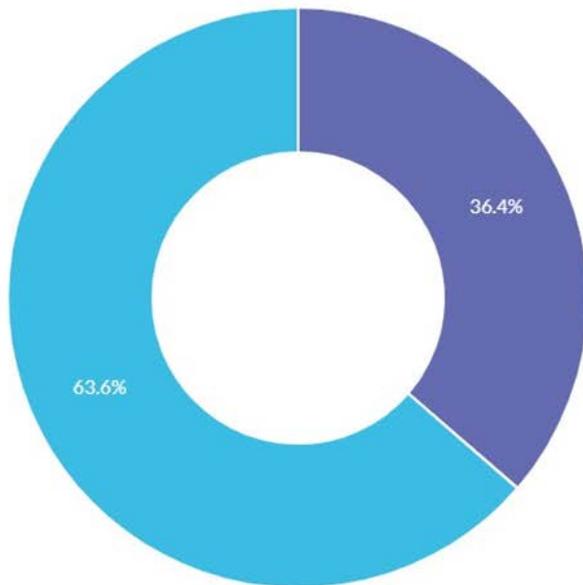
Choice	Total
0 to 15	0
16 to 30	4
31 to 45	6
46 to 60	12
61 to 75	25
76 to 85	6
86 +	1
Prefer not to answer	0

Q23: What gender do you identify as?



Choice	Total
Male	19
Female	34
Prefer not to answer	1
Other	0

Q24: If you prefer, please tell us about your ethnicity in the space provided.



Choice	Total
Prefer not to answer	16
Ethnicity	28

- *French Acadian*
- *Caucasian*
- *Acadian*
- *English, Scottish, French*
- *White (Canadian)*
- *English, British*
- *White, Metis, Scottish*
- *White*
- *Canadian of English/Irish descent*
- *English*
- *French Canadian*
- *White Anglo Saxon – English man from Great Britain originally*
- *European descent*
- *British*

Q25: Other comments:

- *As I have mentioned in this survey, I have an artificial leg and I do not always use a wheelchair, crutches or walker but most often do use my artificial leg. I also suffer from PTSD and have a Circulatory Disease which is why I like to keep active when I am able. I also enjoy seeing others being able to enjoy life without barriers. One barrier I keep bumping into no matter where I have lived; is the attitudinal barrier. Sometimes a person will judge you on your disability and believe you are not as knowledgeable as you really are. My thought for me is, "My brain was not in my foot when I lost it in the accident." Just a little humor. You get to know me and I'll tell you; "You know someone who actually has one foot in the grave, because I was Catholic and at that time, body parts were buried not cremated." Hope I have helped.*
- *WE NEED SIDEWALKS!*
- *Thank you for making this possible to share concerns on access.*
- *Keep up the good work*
- *The municipal building does not give adequate representation of its community with the flag rules.*
- *I get most of my exercise walking in the woods near my home and swimming in my lake, so I am not well-informed about accessibility in the municipality as a whole. However, my friends who are not as agile appreciate the ride from the parking lot to the restaurant at Cape Forchu.*
- *Sidewalks and streets are poorly maintained and very painful for anyone that has "back" issues and is in an electric wheelchair. Cobblestone sidewalks are very uncomfortable to travel on. Pot holes and cracks make it too difficult to travel on the roads.*
- *We would like to have sidewalks completed from Scott Road to Dayton Red & White. Thank you.*
- *Access to shopping, medical appointments, etc. Please consider doing a survey on transit. Taxis very often can be expensive especially for those on a fixed income.*
- *Great job conducting the survey to seek input on how to make Yarmouth barrier free.*
- *Yarmouth town is inaccessible. Parking, sidewalk curbs.*
- *I believe this is a very important subject though it doesn't affect me at the moment it certainly affected the ability to make my way in the town with my husband in a wheelchair three years ago. Perhaps some improvements have been made and you are on the right track to improve the situation. Thank you.*

- *Sidewalks and streets are poorly maintained and very painful for anyone that has "back "issues and is in an electric wheelchair. Cobblestone sidewalks are very uncomfortable to travel on. Pot holes and cracks make it too difficult to travel on the roads.*
- *We would like to have sidewalks completed from Scott Road to Dayton Red & White. Thank you.*
- *Access to shopping, medical appointments, etc. Please consider doing a survey on transit. Taxis very often can be expensive especially for those on a fixed income.*
- *Not barrier free - I am speaking in the case of my late husband, Pierre Ferron who was in a wheelchair at the end of his life and I had problems getting him in and out of the CJLS/Tim Horton building. There is no wheelchair button to open the door so I had to ask for help off the street!*

Appendix D

Community Engagement Questions

The Province of Nova Scotia's Accessibility Act came into effect in 2017. The Act aims to create an accessible Nova Scotia by the year 2030. As part of this goal, the Municipality of Yarmouth has created an Accessibility Advisory Committee which will provide advice to municipal council on accessibility issues within the Municipality. The Municipality is currently working on a 3-year plan to work toward achieving this goal. The plan will outline what is currently being done, as well as what needs to take place for the near future. To assist with the development of this plan, the Accessibility Advisory Committee is looking to communicate with various organizations and individuals in the community who may have an interest in this issue.

"Disability" is defined in Nova Scotia's Accessibility Act 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."

Standards are being developed by the province in the following areas:

- **Built Environment** – Making buildings and shared spaces accessible to all. Includes municipal buildings, sidewalks, trails, parks, playgrounds, fields and courts, etc.
- **Transportation** – Making it easier for everyone to get where they need to go.
- **Employment** – Making the municipality an accessible workplace, and supporting people with disabilities in finding and maintaining meaningful employment.
- **Communications** – Ensuring all people can receive, understand, and share the information provided by the municipality.
- **Goods and Services** – Ensuring that people with disabilities have equitable access to the goods and services provided by the municipality.

Please consider the following questions:

1. From your experience working with your clients, what are some of the largest barriers that impact their daily life? (or "In your experience what are some of the largest barriers that impact your daily life?")
2. What would make it easier for the clients you support to participate more fully in society? (or "What would make it easier for you to participate more fully in society?")
3. The themes we are look at are accessibility of (1) the built environment, (2) transportation, (3) employment, (4) communications, and (5) goods and services. Do you have any comments specifically related to accessibility of any of those areas?
4. Do you have any additional feedback or input around the issue? Is there anything else you may want to share that did not come up in the previous questions?
5. Do you have any specific feedback regarding services offered or properties owned by the Municipality (in whole or in partnership)?