

Accessibility Plan Public Consultation Summary

What we learned.



Background

Public engagement for the City of Peterborough Accessibility Plan was launched during National Accessibility Week in May 2022 and ran until August 31, 2022. Most engagement tools were available through the City’s online public engagement platform, Connect Peterborough. The City offered alternative methods of providing feedback, including hard copies of the survey and an option to communicate by phone or email.

The engagement tools included a long form survey, short form survey, interactive map to identify barriers and an accessible housing ideas forum. The engagement platform included a frequently asked questions section, guestbook, project timeline and project contact information. Comments received from people who engaged with the project were reviewed in detail by Accessibility staff. This document summarizes the public engagement results.

Accessibility Plan Update - Key Dates

May 29, 2022	Launch project during National AccessAbility Week
Summer 2022	Public engagement phase
Fall 2022	Evaluate and organize data
Winter 2023	Accessibility Advisory Committee consultation
Spring 2023	Draft the Accessibility Plan
Fall 2023	Accessibility Plan considered for approval by City Council

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Survey Response Rate

The survey was open for 14 weeks from May 29 to August 31, 2022.

The survey offered a mix of questions on City buildings, public spaces, services, transportation, employment, information and communication.

The survey also acknowledged that people with disabilities have been greatly impacted by the pandemic and included an opportunity for participants to let the City know what we're doing right to help people during the pandemic and how we can make improvements.

The long form survey included form fields for each question to allow survey participants to provide as much detail as possible on their experience with accessibility in Peterborough. The short form survey allowed participants to jump to a section within the full survey to rate City buildings, public spaces and services on a scale of 1 to 5.

Of the 70 surveys completed, most participants (64%) opted to complete the long form survey which allowed them to provide open ended comments. We received 325 open ended comments in total from the survey tool. 645 people visited the public engagement platform to learn more about the next five years of accessibility planning in Peterborough.

In addition to feedback from the survey, a total of 82 pins with descriptions of barriers were submitted through an interactive map tool available on the public engagement platform.

Measuring Progress

Survey participants rated accessibility for City owned buildings, public spaces and City services through both the long form and short form surveys. The City uses the same rating system every 5 years to get a snapshot of overall improvements and to help set priorities for accessibility upgrades.

Compared to the 2017 results, survey participants gave a higher accessibility score in 2022 across every category rated. The highest scores generally align with recent upgrades completed at related City buildings and public spaces.

The City is committed to continued progress, with the goal of making Peterborough more accessible.

Executive Summary

Ratings from survey participants highlighted infrastructure categories in most need of attention are:

- Peterborough Transit Terminal.
- Streets and intersections.
- Sidewalks.

Key themes emerged from the open-ended feedback, highlighting a need to develop a strategy to prioritize accessibility in the following areas:

- Improve sidewalk infrastructure.
- Improve Transit system and stops.
- Create employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

The pandemic highlighted the need to better build in the needs of people with disabilities into emergency planning.

Summary of Feedback

Feedback on City Owned Buildings

Survey participants rated accessibility for City owned buildings through both the long form and short form surveys. The City uses the same rating system every 5 years to get a snapshot of overall improvements and to help set priorities for accessibility upgrades.

[Rating based on a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent)]

Building	2017 Rating	2022 Rating	Improvement
Peterborough Sport & Wellness Centre	3.89	4.21	+ 0.32
Peterborough Public Library	not rated	4.11	n/a
Peterborough Museum & Archives	3.47*	4.11	+ 0.64
Art Gallery of Peterborough	3.47*	3.95	+ 0.48
Fire Stations	3.21	3.75	+ 0.54
Child Care Centres	2.97	3.64	+ 0.67
City Hall	2.99	3.54	+ 0.55
Arenas	3.10	3.53	+ 0.43
Peterborough Marina	2.58	3.49	+ 0.91
Provincial Offences Office (99 Simcoe)	2.81	3.40	+ 0.59
Social Services (178 Charlotte)	2.88	3.39	+ 0.51
Activity Haven	3.03	3.21	+ 0.18
Transit Terminal (190 Simcoe)	2.90	3.11	+ 0.21

* The 2017 list of facilities combined the Peterborough Museum & Archives and the Art Gallery of Peterborough buildings. The 2022 rating system separated the two buildings so people could rate them separately.

Survey participants also provided more detailed feedback on City owned buildings.

Question from survey

Let us know about any barriers at City owned buildings.

Sample responses

“Library after renovations: the outside ramp is dangerous - very small narrow platform no room to turn around and there is a set of steps and I had my back wheels fall off onto the steps. Inside the entire lobby is all grey and very poor for a person in a wheelchair with vision loss. The donation book drop off is completely not accessible. I refused to go back in the library.”

“City hall it is confusing to know which elevator to take. When speaking at council meetings the handi van uses the back entrance and that door is locked.”

“Lower hand sanitizers to their level [people who use mobility aids].”

More detailed feedback on City owned buildings...

“Peterborough marina the wheelchair bathrooms are always out of service.”

“Indoor air quality is poor due to lack of chemical or fragrance policy.” “Need more wayfinding options once inside buildings. Tactile floor markers leading to reception areas, large print and braille options.”

“I can not read the overhead signs indicating the buses [at the Transit terminal]. I have to ask people outside.”

“There needs to be more benches for those who need to take a break from mobility.”

“Plus-size people are often not considered when designing any building. Arena seats are generally too small for plus-size patrons.”

“City Hall: main elevator is really hard to navigate. Braille isn’t properly labelled, so you can’t tell which wing you’re going to. More braille on signage would be better. I can’t really navigate that building independently.”

“Peterborough Museum and Archives could use more seats throughout the tour for rest stops, and fonts on exhibits need to be larger.”

“The Social Services building is difficult to navigate to [when] using accessible parking spaces. Spaces need to be convenient and close to the front of the building entrance.”

“Library - great! Art Gallery - there is a very steep ramp to get into the room we were using. Wellness Centre - great to see the updates that improve mobility accessibility in the facility. The lifts in changeroom, ramp into pool are all great.”

Feedback on City Owned Public Spaces

Survey participants rated accessibility for City owned public spaces through both the long form and short form surveys. The City uses the same rating system every 5 years to get a snapshot of overall improvements and to help set priorities for accessibility upgrades.

[Rating based on a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent)]

Public Space	2017 Rating	2022 Rating	Improvement
Splashpads, wading pools	3.46	4.00	+ 0.54
City parking lots	2.72	3.75	+ 1.03
Parking garages (King, Simcoe)	2.77	3.45	+ 0.68
City trails	3.28	3.44	+ 0.16
Sports fields, courts, skateboard park	2.99	3.37	+ 0.38
City parks and open spaces	3.21	3.25	+ 0.04
Playgrounds (not in school yards)	2.97	3.21	+ 0.24
Public beaches	3.20	3.20	0.00
On-street parking	2.26	2.73	+ 0.47
Streets and intersections	2.38	2.44	+ 0.06
City sidewalks	2.05	2.44	+ 0.39

Survey participants also provided more detailed feedback on City owned public spaces.

Question from survey

Let us know about any barriers at City owned public spaces.

Sample responses

“Sidewalk snow removal is terrible. It’s hard to get out to grocery shop with my mobility scooter the day after or 24 hours after a dumping of snow. I have to drive [my mobility scooter] on the road 9/10x to get to Walmart on Lansdowne which is scary.”

“At some of the cross walks the [timing of] lights are too short to get across and the light changes. At some intersections in Peterborough the walk signal only works if you press the button – confusing. ie/ McDonnell St at Park St.”

“City parks should have a trail around the grass so the wheelchairs don’t need to go into the grass.”

“Playground equipment in parks is not accessible for people with mobility issues. There are no parts of equipment the people with mobility issues can use.”

“Definitely need more ramps. So many [barrier] curbs that wheelchairs need to take a very long way around to get into places.”

More detailed feedback on City owned public spaces...

"[Accessible] parking needs to be easily seen by people that don't use them, like the blue paint some parking spots have around town."

"Curb cuts are lacking. There are not enough, they are often in the wrong place."

"Doors in parking garages are so heavy and need better, more accessible doorknobs or automatic openers."

"Sidewalks are poorly maintained, uneven. Terrible in winter. Large piles of snow at intersections in winter make it hard to get around."

"Intersections are dangerous for pedestrians. Drivers try to beat the advanced lights and go through too quickly with no regard when the lights change."

"Many city sidewalks are in disrepair or uneven."

"Patios on Hunter Street, Charlotte Street are very difficult to navigate with low vision. Sandwich boards on sidewalks block [clear pathways]."

"There are many areas of the city where sidewalks do not exist. Many sidewalks are in need of repair. New intersections are good. There are many that need upgrading to make them accessible. All intersections should have voice activated crossing signals."

"Very few playgrounds have anything available for children in wheelchairs. Parks are frustrating."

"Sometimes the push buttons for walk signs at intersections do not work."

"Most playgrounds are not accessible. Some have accessible swings but you have to get over wood chips or sand to get to it."

"More audible signals should be prioritized at intersections – training session on TV, social media, website about how to use them."

"Park surfaces need to be firm and non-slip (such as the [rubber] surface used at the splash pad at the Zoo or Roger's Cove). Sand and wood chips mean that wheelchairs cannot go."

"More accessible parking is required in city parking lots (our accessible vehicles do not fit)."

"Sometimes city sidewalks and streets (and cafes) are cluttered and without a clear path or walkway in the downtown area. Often, these areas are not clearly marked which creates difficulty for people who have vision loss to navigate."

"Still too many spots without cut out curbs."

Feedback on City Services

Survey participants rated accessibility for various City services through both the long form and short form surveys. The City uses the same rating system every 5 years to get a snapshot of overall improvements and to help set priorities for accessibility upgrades.

[Rating based on a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent)]

City Service	2017 Rating	2022 Rating	Improvement
Peterborough Public Library	3.23	4.02	+ 0.79
Art Gallery, Ptbo Museum & Archives	3.35	3.79	+ 0.44
Last municipal election	2.98	3.47	+ 0.49
Child care services	2.81	3.46	+ 0.65
Arenas	2.85	3.45	+ 0.60
Social services	2.98	3.36	+ 0.38
Leisure programs	2.88	3.34	+ 0.46
Service counter customer service	2.94	3.26	+ 0.32
Business services	2.97	3.23	+ 0.26
Waste management	2.99	3.15	+ 0.16
Public consultation and engagement	2.75	3.00	+ 0.25
Enforcement (POA, parking)	2.63	3.00	+ 0.37
Mayor, Councillors	2.57	2.98	+ 0.41

Survey participants also provided more detailed feedback on City services.

Question from survey

Let us know about any barriers to City services.

Sample responses

“I wish there was an option for people [with disabilities] who don’t drive who have things to take out to Pido Road to the [Peterborough household hazardous waste] depot.”

“More day camps are needed for non verbal, autistic and special needs people.”

“Allow individuals on ODSP to purchase the discounted bus pass at Lansdowne Place where bus passes are sold. The bus terminal can be overwhelming for people on the autism spectrum.”

More detailed feedback on barriers to City services...

“Many individuals [involved with] enforcement do not understand disabilities and therefore need lessons regarding how to communicate with individuals with disabilities, and respect.”

“The Memorial Centre does have a wheelchair section and elevator, however there are limits to the seating available in these areas. Hopefully this is considered when the new arena is designed. People with disabilities can only choose one area and cannot necessarily go with a large group and still participate.”

“Often counters are at a height that is not accessible for everyone including folks who use wheelchairs.”

“Leisure Programs – it would be ideal if additional change rooms were available (that include an accessible change table, lift and accessibility features). Often there is a line up to access the one accessible change room by various disability organizations.”

Feedback on Transportation

Survey participants were asked about their experience with the transportation options they use in Peterborough. Participants were able to select up to 9 transportation options including an open ended “other” field. Summary of responses:

- 93% use sidewalks (most participants), highlighting the importance for the presence of sidewalks and the need for good quality accessible sidewalk infrastructure.
- 66% use trails.
- 66% use personal vehicles.
- 39% use conventional transit
- 23% use specialized transit (accessible van service)
- 5% use on-demand transit.
- Most open-ended comments were related to transit issues.

Question from survey

Tell us about your experience with the transportation options you use.

Sample responses

“Accessible transit can be very frustrating to schedule.”

“Community buses should start earlier and end later, similar to a regular bus. Shelters need to be added to major areas, upgrading all bus stops with cement pads, accessible access for wheelchair users.”

“Our experiences were pretty good with my class this spring, we traveled with two students in strollers, 1 student who was blind and one with severe behaviour challenges, drivers were amazing, helpful and patient with our students. It was frustrating when routes were cancelled but that was due to Covid which is understandable. I signed up for the alerts though and one of our buses was cancelled with no email alert, only noted on Twitter which I wasn't using as I assumed I would get an alert.”

“Each bus stop should have access to a bus map.”

“Incredibly disruptive to have the transit routes changed in the past couple of years. Accessible van service is great. One thing that's helpful is the update for how far away the van is – especially helpful in the winter.”

“Buses are often late and require long waits outdoors (hard on those with chronic pain, fatigue, the elderly, etc.). Once boarded, they have poor air quality due to chemical and fragrance cleaning and personal products. I no longer attempt to use public transit, costing me much more to get around.”

“[buses] are either too early or really late, the transfer system is not great especially since I am totally blind and sometimes have to cross the street to get another bus which is not near lights or I have to walk several blocks.”

“380 plus bus stops are not accessible, bus stops in the mud.”

Feedback on Employment

The City is committed to building a barrier-free work environment that embraces the spirit of inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility. Survey participants were asked employment related questions to help us become a more accessible employer.

Questions from survey

- 1. How could the City of Peterborough make the job application process more accessible?**
- 2. How could the City of Peterborough be a more accessible employer?**

Sample responses

“Make sure applications can download to a cell phone too.”

“Make sure all websites, apps, forms, etc. are accessible for screen readers. Please hire persons who use screen readers to test all applications prior to launching them. Do not assume it is accessible without testing it first.”

“Provide part time jobs to individuals with development disabilities in areas their strengths would allow.”

“Ensure all people with disabilities know they are welcome to work for the City of Peterborough. This could be seen in an ad showing how people with disabilities could work in the field.”

“The job interview process is a social process. This means that for any individual with a social deficit (i.e., acquired brain injury, autistic spectrum disorder, attention deficit disorder, etc.) this process is very difficult to navigate, or it becomes a barrier to employment altogether, meanwhile this individual may very well be the best person for the actual job involved. Perhaps adding other options, such as an observation of job skills, or a skills demonstration, would be more accessible than relying solely on the interview and referral process.”

“More part time jobs for students and vulnerable people”.

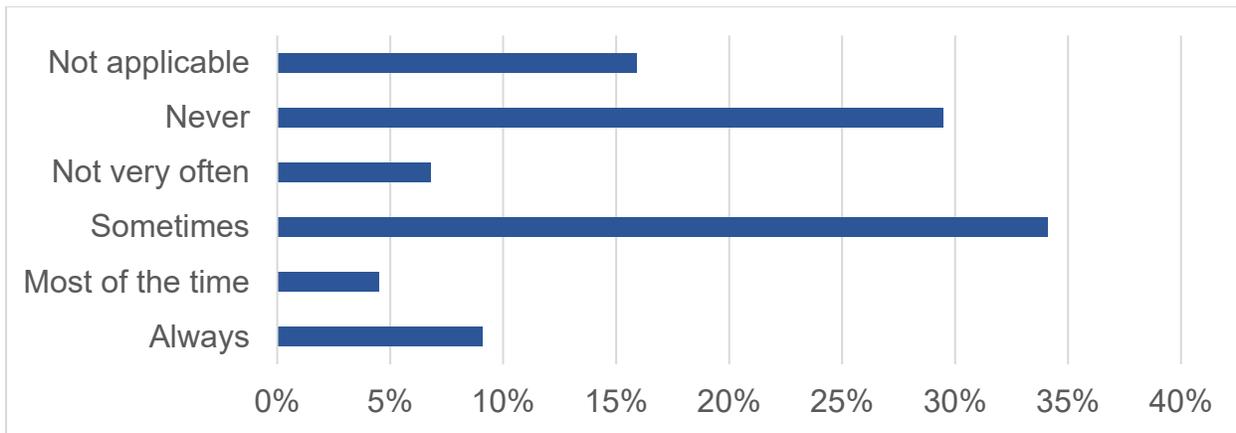
Feedback on Information and Communication

Survey participants we asked if they need some form of support to see, hear, speak, read or understand information. Summary of responses:

- 48% need some form of support.
- 34% need support sometimes.
- 9% need support always.
- 5% need support most of the time.

Question from survey

Do you need support to see, hear, speak, read or understand information?



To help the City get a sense of priorities for communication supports, survey participants were asked what supports and formats would allow them to access information. Summary of key supports people need:

- 33% need large print.
- 26% need text-to-speech software.
- 23% need easy to read, simple language.

Survey participants were also asked to provide feedback on how we communicate. There was consistent feedback from participants on the need to reach staff by phone.

Question from survey

How could the City improve how we communicate in person, by phone, email and social media?

Sample responses

“There needs to be more access to City staff by phone as many people who are seniors or have a disability do not have access to a computer or even know how to use one.”

“Please remember that phone service is so important.”

“Make sure that a phone number option is on the front page of all city websites.”

Miscellaneous Feedback

Survey participants were able to provide detailed comments about other types of barriers in Peterborough and make recommendations on what else we can do to make Peterborough more accessible.

Question from survey

What else can we do to make Peterborough more accessible?

Sample responses

“Chemical, fragrance, indoor air quality policy needs to be created and enforced.”

“Trails clearing: using a flat-blade plow, but the trails are built with a crown so the centre tends to get cleared but the sides of the trail don't; my scooter gets stuck regularly.”

“Women (myself included) do not feel safe walking downtown by themselves. Add a disability to this (which slows you down) and it gets even scarier.”

“We need to be more assertive in insisting on a higher best-practices standard. Accessibility was tossed to the side for many things during covid. Aggressively investing in universal design will pay dividends in the years to come.”

“This is a good survey, as long as you are serious about implementing changes to make the city more accessible.”

“Often we are ill, tired and in pain and trying to advocate for our needs is frustrating and time consuming and we get passed around to different departments... which just adds to our frustration.”

Pandemic Related Feedback

The City acknowledged people with disabilities have been greatly impacted by the pandemic and asked survey participants to provide feedback.

Question from survey

Let us know what we're doing right to help people during the pandemic and what we're doing wrong.

Sample responses

“Keep the mask wearing in the winter months for inside businesses.”

“The changes to transit [during] covid were a disaster... [affecting] accessible bus stops downtown. Drivers unable to deploy the ramp out flat on pavement instead were deploying the ramp on a steep pitch on the road.”

“Virtual platforms need to remain in place as adjuncts to in-person events in order to include as many of those for whom returning to “normal” is not an option. Now that these measures have been removed to return to in-person events, the people who can not return are far more isolated than ever before.”

“Hearing impaired people - you can't hear people behind a mask and plexi-shield. Install speaker/mic systems wherever possible.”

“Buses and taxis should be masked. Remote meetings are good.”

“City of Peterborough seems to have done a great job assisting those with disabilities during the pandemic.”

“So important to provide phone-in service. I need a mask exemption and have struggled to get service when they were required.”

“Not all people with a disability are able to wear a mask so maintaining this by the employees will help keep them safe.”

“The library is now having story times in parks. This is an excellent example of how we can make use of our lovely outdoor spaces and include some people who are not necessarily loud in their isolation but appreciate being included.”

Next Steps

The City will review the survey results with the Accessibility Advisory Committee and seek their feedback on the data received.

The experiences from the public and the Accessibility Advisory Committee members serve as valuable firsthand knowledge on what is needed to make Peterborough more accessible. Staff will use the feedback to inform priorities for accessibility improvements over the next five years in Peterborough.

The City of Peterborough is committed to demonstrate leadership for accessibility in the community. Our goal is to meet the diverse needs of all people and follow the principles of dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity. We will strive to achieve an inclusive environment for our facilities, goods, services, employment, information, and transportation.

Thank you for helping us to better understand the experiences of people with disabilities.

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