

The Blue Route Hubs Project



Town of Port Hawkesbury

Stage I:

PUBLIC CONSULTATION SUMMARY

October 2020

Prepared by:



Executive Summary

Over the past month, Bicycle Nova Scotia (BNS), with assistance from the town of Port Hawkesbury, have engaged the residents of Port Hawkesbury asking for their input to begin the planning process for developing a network of bicycle-friendly infrastructure throughout the community. Public engagement was conducted via an in-person engagement session on September 30 and an online survey made available from September 11 to October 16. In total, BNS received input from 33 people in the community. From the responses gathered through both methods of engagement, it is apparent that new facilities and upgrades to existing infrastructure are needed; ones that provide better comfort and safety, and that ameliorate the difficult topography of the town. Key destinations that bicycle routes should aim to connect include grocery stores and shopping centers, the community park, the Port Hawkesbury Civic Centre, and the waterfront. When asked to offer ideas of where bicycle facilities should be implemented, frequent suggestions were Granville Street, Sydney Road and Reeves Street.

Introduction

The following document is a review of Bicycle Nova Scotia's (BNS) findings regarding the current issues surrounding bicycle infrastructure and mobility in Port Hawkesbury. Input was gathered from members of the local community through an in-person consultation session, as well as via an online survey. Participants were asked questions to determine what destinations around town are important to them, and what are some of the physical and perceived barriers associated with bicycling and walking in Port Hawkesbury. Additionally, participants were asked to suggest locations where they would like to see improved bicycle facilities, and to include what type of facility they think should be implemented.

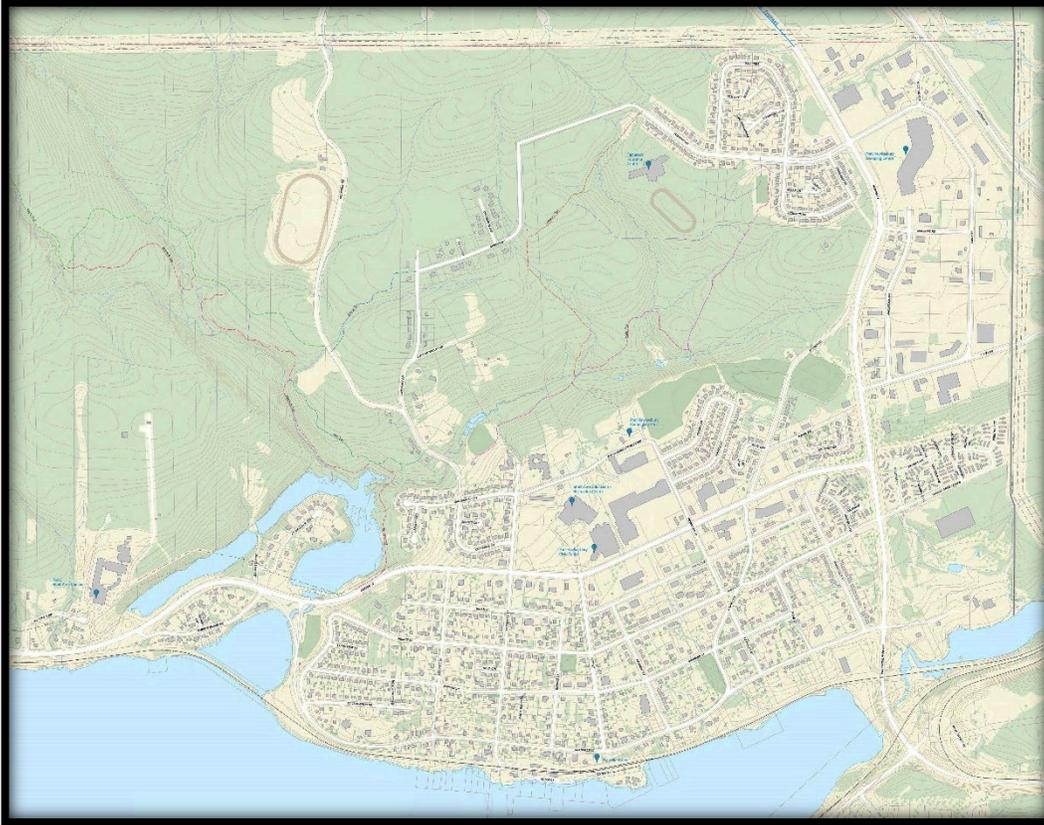
Engagement Methods

In-Person Engagement Session

<u>The Event</u>	
Date:	September 30, 2020 ¹
Location:	Port Hawkesbury Civic Centre
Time:	6:00 pm to 7:30 pm (approx.)
Host:	Bicycle Nova Scotia
Attendees:	11
Age Demographic:	<15 years old – 1 34-64 years old – 8 65+ years old – 2

¹ Rescheduled from original date (Sept. 23) due to inclement weather.

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Event Itinerary</u></p> <p>BNS began the engagement session with a brief presentation to introduce the Hubs Project and explain the purpose of the study.</p> <p>This was followed by an open discussion, where attendees were encouraged to ask questions and voice their concerns and ideas regarding the project and the current state of bicycling in Port Hawkesbury; comments are presented later in this report.</p> <p>Following the discussion, a mapping exercise took place, where attendees were encouraged to visit three different tables stationed around the room to answer three questions posed by BNS (see Data section for questions).</p>	<p>To respond to these questions, attendees were given stickers and sticky notes to attach to the maps on the location they felt best answered the question.</p> <p>To finish off the public engagement event, before leaving, attendees were asked to use one of the four iPads to fill out the online survey.</p>
<p>Online Engagement</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Survey</u></p> <p>A digital survey was created to provide a second method for gathering input from the residents of Port Hawkesbury. Participants were asked to answer a series of questions related to social demographics and bicycling in Port Hawkesbury.</p> <p>Promotion for the survey was done via both Port Hawkesbury and BNS’s social media accounts (i.e. Facebook and Instagram) as well as announcements done by local media outlets, the Reporter (newspaper) and the Hawk (radio).</p> <p>In total, 31 people responded to the survey, nine of which were in attendance for the public engagement event.</p>	



The Data

The following is a breakdown of the input BNS received from the residents of Port Hawkesbury, from both the public engagement session held on September 30, 2020 and the online survey.



In-person

During the public engagement event on September 30th, attendees were encouraged to ask questions, and voice concerns and ideas they had regarding the Hubs project and the state of bicycling in Port Hawkesbury. The following is list of questions and comments voiced during the open discussion portion of the event:

Questions

- Will planning focus on infrastructure for experienced riders or less experienced “weekend warriors”?
- Does having a 100 series highway (Hwy 104) as the primary access to many of the local key destinations present unique design constraints compared to other towns in Nova Scotia of similar size?
- With the recent influx of active transportation construction in Port Hawkesbury, how close (percentage) is the town to being granted “Blue Route” status? How much more time and money are needed?

Comments

- Blue Route suggestion: Granville Street heading east and Reeves Street heading west.
- Separated/protected bike lanes are a must.
- Discontinuity of the new multi-use path at NSCC, heading west, is unsafe for the families living off Charles MacLean Road.
- Promotional and educational events are needed to encourage bicycle use.

After reviewing the information provided during the mapping exercise, the following is what event attendees felt are key destinations in Port Hawkesbury, barriers that deter people from cycling in town, and locations where they believe better infrastructure for cyclists and pedestrians is needed.

Q1. Where are your regular destinations? What locations do you feel best show off Port Hawkesbury?

- Schools – NSCC, Tamarac EC & SAERC.
 - Shopping – PH Centre ^(BR), Causeway Centre ^(BR) & Canadian Tire.
 - Services – RBC Royal Bank, Post Office ^(BR) & Town Centre.
- Recreation – PH Civic Centre, Community Park ^(BR), Oaklee Ball Field & Yacht Club ^(BR).

Q2. Locate barriers that might prevent someone from biking/walking. (Identify the barrier).

- Steep hills leading from Reeves St. down to Granville St.
- Unsafe conditions when trying to cross the four lanes of traffic on Trunk 4.
- Painted shoulder along Trunk 4, west of town, is too narrow.

- No shoulder along Granville St. (west end) and MacQuarrie Dr. Extension, near Community Park.
- Parked cars along Granville St.

No connection between Charles MacLean Rd. and the new multi-use path.

Q3. Locate three areas where you would like to see better bicycle infrastructure (on-road/off-road). (Identify the type of facility).

- Protected connection from Charles MacLean Rd. to new multi-use path.
- Improvements to intersections at Embree Island Rd./Trunk 4/NSCC, Trunk 4/Granville St., and Granville St./Sydney Rd.
- Separated facilities along Granville St. and Reeves St.
- Connect Langley Ct. to the new multi-use path.
- Facilities needed to climb Reeves St. hill at west end of town.
- Wider shoulder/sidewalk along Pine Ridge Dr.

Connect Cairdeil Estates to the west side of Trunk 4.

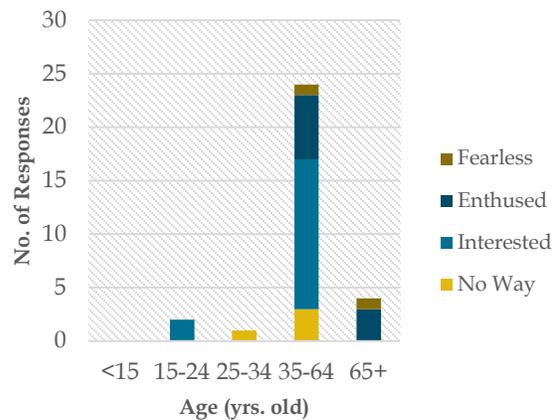
Online

Thirty-one people, 84% of which reside in Port Hawkesbury, responded to the online survey created by BNS. The following section presents the data pertinent to the develop of a proposed minimum grid bicycle route network. Due to the low number of responses, several of the survey questions did not gather enough response to formulate accurate conclusions.

Demographics

Of the 31 people who filled out the survey, 77% were between the ages of 35 and 64 years old. When paired with the participant’s confidence level while riding a bicycle, over half (58%) ascribed to being an “interested but concerned” rider, and another 25% felt they were “enthused and confident.”

Type of Cyclist by Age



Barriers

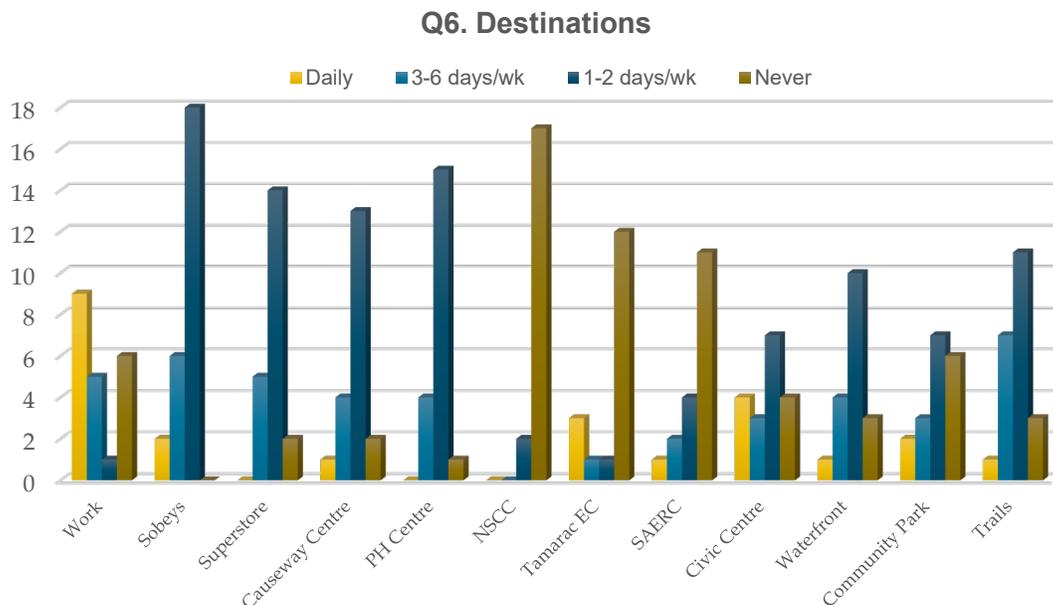
To understand the physical and perceived barriers that are present in Port Hawkesbury to ensure that a route design meets the needs of its users, the survey asked participants to choose from a list of predetermined concerns that they could potentially have regarding bicycling and the town's current infrastructure (Q15), as well as asking what would entice them to bike and walk more often (Q18). The following image presents the three most popular responses, with safety receiving the greatest response. Lesser concerns and requests are listed to the right.



Note: font size indicates how often the term, or an equivalent term, was used.

Destinations

To understand which destinations around town are most frequented by residents of Port Hawkesbury, Q6 asked participants to indicate how often they traveled to certain predetermined locations related to education, shopping, recreation, and other services. The following table shows the frequency with which survey participants visit the locations.



<p><u>Infrastructure</u></p> <p>At the end of the survey, participants were asked to provide their ideas about where they think bicycle infrastructure should be located (Q17). Several participants suggested that improvements should take place on Granville Street, Reeves Street, and Sydney Road.</p> <p>Note: font size indicates how often the roadway was suggested.</p>	 <p>Q17. Are there any roads or locations where you would like to see bicycle-friendly infrastructure?</p>
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 <p>Q7. What type of physical features do you feel create a welcoming and aesthetically pleasing atmosphere in public spaces?</p>	<p><u>Aesthetic Features</u></p> <p>Question 7 of the survey asked participants to select what physical and visual features they felt create a welcoming and aesthetically pleasing atmosphere to understand what features might be used in facility designs to encourage their use. The figure to the left illustrates the six most common answers.</p> <p>Note: font size indicates how often the feature was selected.</p>
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<p>Analysis</p> <p>Upon review of the data collected during the public engagement session and through the online survey, there were no major surprises. Due to the low number of responses, it is difficult to overlay the data onto the entire population of Port Hawkesbury. However, having done research prior to engagement with the public, the responses from participants follow trends within the realm of bicycling and bicycle infrastructure.</p> <p>On average, people of this age demographic have families and account for a major portion of the workforce. Keeping with this idea, the data shown in the “Destinations” section shows key destinations in the town include grocery stores, shopping centers, and recreation facilities; therefore routes within the proposed network should consider the connection of these frequently visited locations. It should be noted that although survey data indicates that educational institutions are not frequently visited, response from the portion of the population that would attend these places (i.e. ages 6 to 20) on a regular basis is largely</p>
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underrepresented. Connections to these locations should also be considered when formulating a plan for a minimum grid to cater to the younger population.

From the responses related to barriers and infrastructure, it can be concluded that safe and comfortable bicycle facilities along the major roadways throughout Port Hawkesbury (e.g. Granville Street, Reeves Street, Sydney Road, etc.) are what is most desired. Therefore, these areas will be given the most attention when devising a network. Also, when developing conceptual designs for the network, input regarding aesthetic features will be considered to create designs that will attract users.