

Are Peterborough's Public Spaces Accessible?



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Abstract

The goal of this project is to examine levels of accessibility within public space in the City of Peterborough. We are comparing Sadleir House to other public spaces to highlight the need for Sadleir House to be renovated to improve its level of accessibility.

Inventory checklists along with a user survey analysis helped to determine the need for Sadleir House to make improvements. The majority of respondents felt that there was a sufficient amount of public space within the City of Peterborough, but they also felt that these spaces were not fully accessible to everyone in the community. Based on the results, there is a need for Sadleir House to transform itself into a fully accessible public space. The results of this research will support the case for Sadleir House to make a case towards receiving government funding.

1.0 Introduction

Accessibility is a term that is complex and often misunderstood and is complex. Within the urban landscape there are many spaces that are not accessible to everyone. Accessibility focuses on the physical features of a building to determine whether everyone in a community including people with mobility impairments can access the space in question, it also takes into consideration whether or not a space is hospitable for the public. It is important that public spaces facilitate the needs of every individual within the community. The resources found within public spaces vary from place to place but in order for them to be used by the community, operators of public space must acknowledge the needs of a diverse population. Public spaces provide individuals with many resources including recreational activities, meeting spaces, learning tools, and entertainment. A lack of accessible public spaces means that communication and participation within the community will be hindered.

This project corresponds with the growing needs of the members of OPIRG (Ontario Public Interest and Research Group) and Sadleir House. The purpose of this study was to determine the needs of Sadleir House users. In doing so, the information relating to the needs of the users was compared to information regarding accessibility within other public spaces in Peterborough. Through analyzing other public spaces, we attempt to determine whether there is a lack of accessible public space within the City of Peterborough. The findings will be used as a foundation towards the overall improvement of Sadleir House. The results from this project will be used as a guide towards obtaining financial assistance to renovate Sadleir House to make it more accessible.

Along with Sadleir House four public spaces were chosen along with Sadleir House and assessed based on their physical characteristics as they relate to accessibility. Included with the physical properties, were fees, facilities offered, and programs. The spaces chosen include, Market Hall, Peterborough Public Library, George Street United

Church, and the Peterborough Lion's Club. An inventory checklist was completed and in addition, a survey was distributed to managers and users of Sadleir House and the other four locations. The survey was used as secondary data to examine the opinions of users to enhance the checklist. The questions were designed to be open ended so that users could develop their own thoughts and include additional information on the topic of accessibility and public space. Included in our report is a literature review that highlights the importance of accessibility and the need for accessible public space in the community. In addition, a brief background of Sadleir house as a public building is included.

2.0 Background of Sadleir House



Sadleir House is located on 751 George Street in downtown Peterborough. The building is a designated heritage site. Sadleir House was a part of the Peter Robinson College at Trent University and was named after Dr. Richard Sadleir who was the first college master. In 2002, Trent University sold the property (Collins 2006). When Sadleir House was sold many students at Trent University were upset about losing part of their campus. In 2003 there was an idea of opening a student and community centre that was located in the downtown core of Peterborough (Collins 2006). By 2004 Trent University students were the owners of Sadleir House.

The Peter Robinson Community and Student Association govern the house and operate it as a non-profit organization (Collins 2006). Sadleir House is a cultural and educational facility and is used by the members of the community, student organizations and Trent University students. It offers a common room, meeting rooms, offices, lecture halls and reception facilities. These spaces are available to be used and rented by different community groups. Sadleir House is home to many organizations including OPIRG, Trent Queer Collective, the Arthur, Trent Film Society, Trent Women's Centre, yoga groups, food bank and a free store as well as many others.

As a public space, Sadleir House is accessible in terms of gender, race, class, sexual orientation and financial situation. While it does cover the social needs of the community, it lacks features that would make it completely physically accessible. When the Peter Robinson Community and Student Association became the owners of this building they faced challenges to make it more accessible. Sadleir House is an old building with no elevators or ramps. The house has many staircases and an individual with mobility impairments would not be able to reach any of the upper or lower levels of the building. The previous owners removed the power assisted door mechanism when they vacated the house. The power-assisted button is located on the side of the wall, however, it does not

work which makes this already physically inaccessible house even more inaccessible for individuals with mobility impairments.

The Managers of Sadleir House have a long-term goal of making the building physically accessible but cannot move forward without substantial fundraising. Sadleir House hopes to gain financial assistance to renovate the building and meet the needs of all users. The use of grants is one attempt of gaining assistance that has been identified as a fundraising strategy formulated by OPIRG and Sadleir House managers.

3.0 Literature Review

3.1 Literature Review Introduction

The project entitled “Are Peterborough’s Public Spaces Accessible?” addresses geographical concepts through its focus on accessibility. This term is used as a foundation of design of new buildings within a community. This relates to urban planning, which is an important sub section within the discipline of Geography. Also, disability is a term that within the context of Human Geography concentrates on experience within space.

Accessibility is a traditional part of geography since it addresses the needs and personal experiences of people within a larger society. This project is linked to current geographical debates that include issues surrounding the definition of ‘space’. This issue of space is relevant to geography because the topic must be evaluated, regarding accessibility, before a building can be assigned to a specific area. Therefore, it is linked to urban planning, which is a part of Geography that is fundamental to developing an accessible community. An issue that is discussed within the discipline is the nature of space and the characteristics of the people who act to define space.

The study of disability within the discipline of human geography is relatively new. According to the Dictionary of Human Geography the geographies of disability is “the study of society’s interactions with people that have mental or physical impairments, and the effects of such interactions on the capacities of disabled people to lead independent lives” (Johnson, et al. 2000, 180). Disability relates to our research regarding public space and accessibility in Peterborough. Accessing public space relates to becoming independent, and disability also relates to challenges that individuals face concerning experiences within this space. Similarly, Gleeson (1999) discusses place and space regarding mobility and accessibility issues individuals face on a daily basis. Mobility and accessibility issues need to be addressed for future development of community planning. It is important to note that

accessibility issues do not only focus on physical limitations but the social characteristics of people within the larger society. Staeheli and Thompson (1997) examine public space and how it conflicts with the definition of citizenship. Who is welcome in these ‘public’ spaces? How do race, class, gender, and socio-economic characteristics fit within a definition of citizenship that uses exclusive membership and political status to define who should access what spaces?

3.2 Definitions:

The definition of disability is broad but, according to Fine and Asch (1988), disability refers to any person whose physical or mental impairment substantially limits one or more of the person’s life activities, who has a record of such impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment (Rehabilitation Act, 1973). It is important to note, relating to our research, that disability can also be defined in broader terms, to include illnesses due to age, sex, race and class. According to Greed (1999) there are three models of disability, medical, charitable, and social. Permanent disabilities or those related to illness are classified as medical and because of this, they may be confined to a specific place for care. Therefore, interactions are limited within the external community. The second, charitable, emphasizes dependency, embarrassment, and sympathy. The final model emphasizes that the built environment is not accessible for everyone. Therefore, the focus here is not on the individual but, on society’s attitudes. It can be understood that disability is not just physical but has multiple meanings.

The definition of Accessibility used by Pasaogullari and Doratli (2004) is “the freedom or ability of people to achieve their basic needs in order to sustain their quality of life” (Lau and Chiu 2003 cited in Pasagullani and Doratli 2004, 227). Accessibility does not only refer to physical access but also focuses on social equalities. Greed (1999) uses

public transportation to describe the inequalities of accessibility in any given community. Income is a social factor relating to accessibility to necessary public spaces including banks, churches, healthcare, community and recreational activities. Even if public spaces are not a life necessity they need to be accessible to increase use and social interaction among individuals of the community. Capron (2002, 218) states that “accessibility is above all a social right of access to the resources of the city, and its restriction is always aimed at a mainly socio-economic homogenization, if not a racial, religious or demographic one.” This implies that accessibility rights should be given to everyone, including the ‘othered’, not just some. Accessibility also implies, not only physically accessing the building, but acceptance and how open the place is in terms of various uses.

The definition of public space according to Capron (2002) not only recognizes the notion of a simple shared space but extends to that of a sense of place within a specific space. Traditionally public space has been linked to the public/private dichotomy. Private often refers to exclusivity and public refers to inclusiveness. Public spaces often lack financial resources to accommodate the growing demand of the resources the public needs. For example: some public spaces rely on grants and volunteers to operate and maintain their facilities. Without support within the community and the recognition of public spaces as essential, there is no community. The ultimate goal of the creation of public space is to promote a sense of community, focusing on the notion that there must be forms of social interaction within the public realm (Pasaogullari and Doratili, 2004). It’s important to note that public spaces are crucial to the foundations of sense of place within space.

Understanding the importance of public space will allow members of the community to guide planners towards creating spaces that are needed. Access guidelines, such as the City of Peterborough’s, allows community members to work together towards a common goal.

3.3 Research Framework:

Previous research has tended to use interviewing and questionnaire techniques to collect data on accessibility, however, Pasaogullari and Doratli (2004) used a questionnaire in addition to an assessment of accessibility in public spaces. This relates to our methods because we feel that our framework will bring about useful results. The City of Peterborough's 2002 Access Guidelines were developed by the City of Peterborough and encourage members of the community, staff, developers and as well as private, public and government buildings to follow these guidelines when renovating as well as when designing a building. If a building is owned by the City including areas, community centers and parks the City needs to follow these specific guidelines, which create spaces that all members of the community can access without facing any barriers. These Access Guidelines will also benefit our research because they were designed to create a barrier-free environment within the Peterborough community. Included in these guidelines are specific measurements on walkways, ramps, parking spaces, loading zones, handrails, seating for rest areas, washrooms, doorways, staircases, countertops and other items that are used on a daily basis. The Access Guidelines provide detailed information on the specific requirements to create barrier free washrooms. The Ontario Building Code gives actual measurements and dimensions of the specific items that are needed in the washrooms, in regards to this we will be able to determine if the building meets the specific building codes. This information is important to our research, as it helped us in creating an access audit to survey the level of accessibility of Peterborough's public spaces. Included in the City of Peterborough's Access Guidelines is a checklist for users of the community to see if their building is accessible for everyone in the community, and these checklists were incorporated into our research project.

3.4 Previous Studies:

“‘Busy Behavior’ in the ‘Land of the Golden M’: Going out with Learning Disabled Children in Public Places,” is a study that focuses on exclusion of children and their mothers within public spaces (Ryan, 2005). Disabled children and their parents have been limited or restricted from recreational and public activities. Although many legislations and community access plans have been developed to increase accessibility to public spaces, some barriers still exist. These barriers impinge on users feelings of connectedness to their community. This study suggests that the mothers of these children want and need public spaces that are secure, child friendly, flexible, and welcoming. Ryan (2005) states that their negative experiences within public space have allowed them to follow a path of exclusion. Therefore, they do not experience a sense of community, connectedness, or belonging. This reflects the need for public space to be available for everyone’s needs within the community. Social interaction is an important factor for building healthy communities as is also discussed in Pasaogullari and Doratli (2004) article.

Pasaogullari and Doratli (2004) article entitled, “Measuring Accessibility and Utilization of Public Spaces in Famagusta,” is an article that discusses the central role that public places play, both physically and functionally, in urban planning development to create a healthy urban setting. The study focuses on assessing the accessibility and utilization of public spaces within an urban environment. It evaluates the significance of public spaces, determines the variables that are effective in terms of their accessibility and utilization, and assesses the factors affecting accessibility and utilization through a survey regarding the role that public space plays in social interaction. The results list factors affecting inaccessibility which include lack of alternate routes, facilities, safety, proximity to living areas and lack of sidewalks. The study highlights the fact that user characteristics do not affect accessibility or utilization as much as physical or functional characteristics of

the spaces themselves. It is also important to note that users responded by stating that increased public transport would increase accessibility of public spaces. The role of activism is crucial to solving many of these physical or functional barriers.

“Disability Activism and the Politics of Scale,” examines disability activism within Canada (Kitchin and Wilton, 2003). It provides an analysis of how successful the disability movement has been in enacting change. It examines the political structures within Ontario to determine the scale at which political decisions are made that affect the lives of disabled people. This article builds upon research that has focused on the geographies of disability and social movements. The case of Ontario examines the scaling up of activism from the municipal level to the provincial level. Interviews were conducted with activists to collect information regarding their experiences in disability activism and their opinions regarding the municipal disability movement. It discusses the struggles that exist within Ontario to merge spaces of dependence with spaces of engagement but, this may be difficult to accomplish at the local scale if higher powers are preventing collective action of disability groups within their own local environment.

These studies are useful in gaining information concerning our project entitled “Are Peterborough’s Public Spaces Accessible?” They have provided us with an understanding of issues relating to disability which link to our research on both physical and social accessibility.

4.0 Methods

An inventory of the public spaces within the City of Peterborough was completed, looking particularly at the buildings that offer public spaces similar to Sadleir House. We will be physically visiting each location which includes Market Hall, Lions Club, the Peterborough Public Library, George Street United Church and Sadleir House, to examine features related to physical accessibility. These spaces were chosen because they offered spaces that were available to the public and were similar to the spaces offered by Sadleir House. Features examined included lighting, parking, elevators, washrooms, stairways, main entrances and other rooms used by members of the community. In addition, we assessed the features of social accessibility that include families, gender friendly, costs, hours of operation, and overall user friendly. The inventory data were collected because they allowed us to evaluate the overall social and physical accessibility of each location, independent of one another. Using the same inventory checklist for each location, it allowed us to compare each space to Sadleir House.

A survey was also distributed to all users of Sadleir House. The surveys were also given to the managers of each of the other public spaces and posted on bulletin boards within each specific location. The survey consisted of six questions related to accessibility and public space within the City of Peterborough. The questions in the survey were designed as open ended response questions that allow people to express their thoughts and concerns without being forced to answer in a specific manner. These qualitative data were used to gather information needed to enhance the findings of the inventory data. They also allowed us to expand our ideas of the level of public space within Peterborough beyond our initial perceptions. The survey is significant because it allowed members of the community to express their thoughts towards what may benefit them in the future.

Both the inventory checklist and the survey were conducted between February and March of 2007. The inventory checklist was performed during business hours aside from

Market Hall, which was examined during a scheduled meeting. Each of the other locations was approached as if we were not researchers and part of the general population. This allowed us to gain experience on the level of social accessibility.

The questions on the survey were approved by the Ethics Review Committee of the Department of Geography. The call for participation was directed at those eighteen years of age or older. The identity of the participants in our survey was kept confidential. The survey was organized so that participants e-mailed their responses via e-mail to an e-mail account, created strictly for the purpose of this project. The data obtained from respondents will not be stored longer than necessary

5.0 Observations and Results

5.1 Inventory Checklist Observations and Results

5.1a Peterborough Lions Community Centre

The Peterborough Lions Community Centre is located on 347 Burnham Street in the City of Peterborough. It is located on a bus route and has a bus stop in front of the building. The Lions Club offers spaces for club members and community members. There are three rooms and an outdoor area that are available for rent. There are outdoor washrooms that are open seasonally and the community is able to access them when using the outdoor baseball diamonds located beside the Lion's Club.

The Lions Club in the City of Peterborough has many features that make it physically accessible. The main entrance is wheelchair accessible and includes power-assisted doors. Although there are designated parking spots they are not clearly marked and there is room provided for automobiles to pull up to the main doors. They advertise in their brochure that this space is a wheelchair accessible facility. There are only a few stairs at the back of the building but there is also a ramp to access the deck. Parking is free and it is located on a bus route. There are a variety of free events available to the public but is largely geared to members who pay a standard fee. Overall, this public space is physically accessible but does not completely satisfy issues regarding social accessibility.



**Peterborough Lions Community Centre
Physical Accessibility Inventory**

Area	Accessible?	Other
Parking/Loading Zones		
Signage	No	Needs to be repainted – No wheelchair parking signs
Clearly marked spaces/appropriate sizes	No	Needs to be painted Free Parking
Lighting	Yes	
Walkways	Yes	Paved with ramps
Entrances		
Main Entrance	Yes	Ramp and power assisted Power assist sign very small hard to find
Side Entrance	Yes	Ramp Large door Not power assisted
Back Entrance	Yes (Seasonal)	In the summer ramps are clear from snow and accessible
Lobby	Yes	Community bulletin boards
Signage	Yes	Large
Lighting	Yes	
Path of Travel	No obstacles	
Stairways/Elevators		
Stairways	N/A	
Elevators	N/A	
Exterior of Elevator	N/A	
Interior of Elevator	N/A	
Washrooms		
Men's Washroom	Yes	Men's washroom – spacious and wheelchair accessible
Women's Washroom	Yes	Women's washroom – spacious and wheelchair accessible
Communication		
Telephones	Yes	
Computers	N/A	
Photocopiers	N/A	
Public Service Space		
First Aid	Yes	
Kitchen	Yes	For members and users who rent the facility
Front Desk (Administration)	N/A	

Peterborough Lions Community Centre Physical Accessibility Inventory

Area	Accessible?	Other
Common Spaces		
Hearing Assisted Devices	Yes	Available through the Canadian hearing society
Path of Travel	Yes	Spacious
Sisson Room	Yes	Wheelchair accessible
MacGee Room	Yes	Wheelchair accessible Dance Floor Public Address System Medium Size Room
Swanston Room	Yes	Wheelchair accessible Large Room Dance Floor Different levels of lighting Public Address System
Outdoors	Yes	Wheel chair accessible Ramp Covered deck Fenced in backyard Baseball diamonds Outdoor washrooms (wheelchair accessible) - seasonal



**Peterborough Lions Community Centre
Social Accessibility Inventory**

Area	Yes or No?	Comments
Social Accessibility		
Cost	Yes	Membership by invitation \$80.00 per year
Rentals	Yes	Rent Sisson Room, MacGee Room, Swanston room and on the outdoor deck TV/VCR, flipcharts, overhead projectors included
Gender Friendly	No	Washrooms are designated as men and women
Hospitable	Yes	You cannot access this building unless a member, attending an event or renting the facility
Family	No	Most events are not geared towards children

Other	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance to the blind through the Canadian National Institute for the Blind • Assistance to the hearing impaired through the Canadian hearing society • Diabetes awareness • Drug and alcohol abuse • Sports programs 	
Hours of Operation	Comments
Scheduled meeting for Lions Club members Public outdoor washrooms open in the summer during the day	No specific business hours because the building is used for Lion's Club members and is rented out for community events

5.1b Peterborough Public Library

The Main Branch of the Peterborough Public Library is located at 345 Aylmer Street North in the downtown core of Peterborough. The Library is located near the bus terminal and is on a bus route. Members of the community are able to obtain a library card free of charge. With the library card individuals borrow books, magazines, books on tapes, CD's, CD ROMs and videos. Members are also able to access free internet and join free programs.

The Peterborough Public Library has many features that make it physically accessible. There is a ramp at the front entrance with power-assisted doors. The surface of the pathways, however, makes it difficult for those with mobility issues. There is an elevator inside the main entrance, which allows individuals to access the lower level. There is also a ramp for people to access the children's area on the upper floor. The library also has designated handicap parking spaces outside the main entrance. The library is overall, physically accessible. This space is also welcoming to everyone, including children and families.



**Peterborough Public Library
Physical Accessibility Inventory**

Area	Accessible?	Other
Parking/Loading Zones		
Signage	Yes	Wheelchair signs and parking signs
Clearly marked spaces/appropriate sizes	Yes	Paid parking One wheelchair space
Lighting	No	Poorly Lit
Walkways	No	Interlocking brick falling apart which made it hard to use
Entrances		
Main Entrance	No	No ramp – Stairs with hand railing No power assisted doors
Side Entrance	Yes	Ramp to side entrance Power assisted door
Lobby	Yes	Chairs, garbage cans and community bulletin boards Spacious
Signage	Yes	Visible
Lighting	No	Poorly lit
Path of Travel	No obstacles, Very Open	
Stairways/Elevators		
Stairways	Yes	Non slip material Handrails Landing area Wide enough for two people Bright
Elevators	Yes	Located close to the side entrance which had power assisted doors
Exterior of Elevator	Yes	Signs including a Braille sign
Interior of Elevator	No	Control Panel was all in numbers and the open door and close door sign was in words instead of symbols -No Braille
Washrooms		
	Yes	Family and Wheelchair accessible washroom – has change table area, large stall, spacious Men’s washroom – spacious not wheelchair accessible Women’s washroom – spacious not wheelchair accessible

**Peterborough Public Library
Physical Accessibility Inventory**

Area	Accessible?	Other
Communication		
Telephones	Yes	Bell Payphone \$0.25 (Downstairs)
Computers	Yes	Printing \$0.25 each 1 wheelchair accessible computer
Photocopiers	Yes	\$0.25 each
Public Service Space		
First Aid	No	Not clearly marked
Kitchen	Yes	Accessible to employees and groups
Food Services	Yes	Natural Blends coffee stand Couches and chairs
Front Desk (Circulation Desk)	No	Hard to access if in wheelchair
Common Spaces		
Seating	Yes	Variety of couches and chairs
Hearing Assisted Devices	No	Not clearly marked Did not see any
Path of Travel	Yes	Very spacious
Path of Travel in Book Aisles	No	Very close together and crowded
Auditorium	Yes	Spacious Community events use this space Wheelchair accessible Downstairs Chairs and tables provided
Board Room	Yes	Wheelchair accessible Downstairs Chairs and tables provided
Healthy Family Center	Yes	Wheelchair accessible Family spaces Child size furniture and adult size furniture educational books and movies Food Free Zone TV and VCR
Children's Department	Yes	Wheelchair accessible Family space Child and adult size furniture Computers for children Age appropriate books, computer games, CDs and movies Large open space for activities Washroom
Main Resource Area	Yes	Wheel chair accessible Not child friendly Computers for public use Books, movies, newspapers, CDs, government documents, and magazines

Peterborough Public Library Social Accessibility Inventory

Area	Yes or No?	Comments
Social Accessibility		
Cost	No	Library card needed, no charge must live in Peterborough
Rentals	Yes	Rent Board Room and Auditorium No additional charge for audio visual equipment
Gender Friendly	No	Washrooms are designated as men, women, wheelchair or family.
Hospitable	Yes	Help desk Friendly staff
Family	Yes	Children's area, family area and family washrooms Family programs

Other	Comments
kids programs teen programs special interest programs march break programs reading clubs adult book clubs Electronic Resources (Internet access) Automated Telephone Service (renew loans)	Free with library card Some spaces are limited
Hours of Operation	Comments
Summer Hours Monday – Thursday 10:30 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. Friday – Saturday 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Sunday 2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Not very accessible for individuals working in the day. Sunday is only open for 3 hours. No early morning hours or late evening hours.
Winter Hours Monday – Thursday 10:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. Friday – Saturday 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Sunday 2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Not very accessible for individuals working in the day. Sunday is only open for 3 hours. No early morning hours or late evening hours.

5.1c Market Hall

Market Hall is located in downtown Peterborough at 336 George Street North. and is located on a main bus route. There is a lack of available parking, options include street parking or other available parking spaces away from the building itself. Market Hall is home to the Market Hall Performing Arts Centre it also offers summer camps to children from the community, community events and dance performances.

The administration is on the upper level and cannot be accessed by the use of the elevator. The main theater, however, can be accessed by the use of the elevator but individuals must go through an entrance at the back of the building. Costs vary and everyone is welcome but it often depends on the event. Overall, Market Hall is not completely physically accessible, but it does offer many events and programs for a diverse range of individuals.



**Market Hall
Physical Accessibility Inventory**

Area	Accessible?	Other
Parking/Loading Zones		
Signage	Yes	City Signs Paid Parking
Clearly marked spaces/appropriate sizes	Yes	City Signs Paid Parking
Lighting	Yes	
Walkways	Yes	Sidewalks
Entrances		
Main Entrance	No	Not power assisted Heavy Two were locked
Back Entrance to Elevator	Yes	
Lobby	No	Spacious Stairwell with railings Not wheelchair accessible
Signage	No	
Lighting	Yes	
Path of Travel	No obstacles	
Stairways/Elevators		
Stairways	Yes	Railings Landing Spacious
Elevators	Yes	Could not see the elevator Located in the backstage area
Exterior of Elevator	N/A	
Interior of Elevator	N/A	
Washrooms		
Men's Washroom	No	Not wheelchair accessible
Women's Washroom	No	Not wheelchair accessible
Wheelchair Accessible Washrooms	Yes	One in the front and one in the backstage area
Communication		
Telephones	Yes	Bell payphone
Computers	N/A	
Photocopiers	N/A	
Public Service Space		
First Aid	Yes	
Food Services	Yes	Bar and snacks
Front Desk (Administration)	N/A	Administration not available to public

Market Hall Physical Accessibility Inventory

Area	Accessible?	Other
Common Spaces		
Hearing Assisted Devices	No	
Path of Travel	Yes	Spacious
Performance Theatre	Yes	Wheelchair accessible Can only sit in the front row
Backstage	Yes	Wheelchair accessible Spacious Accessible washrooms

Market Hall Social Accessibility Inventory

Area	Yes or No?	Comments
Social Accessibility		
Cost	Yes	Depends on the performance and event. Some events free of charge.
Rentals	Yes	Rates: \$30 hr and up \$1700 Weekly productions
Gender Friendly	No	Washrooms are designated as men or women
Hospitable	No	You cannot access this building unless you have an appointment. Public cannot access administration office. Can access building if attending an event or camp program.
Family	Yes	Summer camps

Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer Camps (subsidized available) • Non-profit groups (Kinark, OPIRG)
Hours of Operation
No administrative hours. Appointment only.

5.1d George Street United Church

George Street United Church is located in the downtown core of Peterborough at 534 George Street North. The church is located on a city bus route with a bus stop located in front of the church. There are many groups that use the space within the church including youth, the homeless, as well as many other community groups. Members of the public can also rent space and use of facilities within the church. Facilities that can be rented include an auditorium, kitchen, sanctuary, and other meeting areas. There is a lack of parking but there are designated handicap spots at the front of the main entrance. There is also an elevator located at the front of the church that allows individuals to access all areas except the top floor. There are many stairs within the church that may pose a problem for those with different mobility issues. This space is physically accessible as well as socially accessible. In addition, a unique feature within the sanctuary is the use of hearing devices.



George Street United Church Physical Accessibility Inventory

Area	Accessible?	Other
Parking/Loading Zones		
Signage	Yes	City of Peterborough Signs
Clearly marked spaces/appropriate sizes	Yes	free wheelchair parking space free 30 minute parking available free parking behind church and across the street in the medical center
Lighting	No	Poorly Lit
Walkways	Yes	
Entrances		
Main Entrance	No	Narrow landing – choice to go upstairs or downstairs Handrails
Sanctuary Entrance	No	Stairs - choice to go upstairs or downstairs Railings Spacious
Side Entrance	No	Stairs - choice to go upstairs or downstairs Railings Spacious
Elevator Entrance	Yes	Need key to operate elevator Small
Lobby	Yes	Chairs, Bulletin boards, first aid kit. Can be accessed by an individual in wheelchair if they take the elevator to the sanctuary
Signage	No	
Lighting	Yes	
Path of Travel	Narrow	
Stairways/Elevators		
Stairways	Yes	Handrails Landing area Wide enough for two people Bright
Elevators	Yes	Need assistance with operating elevator
Exterior of Elevator	N/A	
Interior of Elevator	N/A	

Area	Accessible?	Other
Washrooms		
	No	One female washroom fully accessible Washrooms located all over building wheelchair could get into some of the washrooms but no proper safety rails.
Communication		
Telephones	Yes	
Computers	N/A	Could be arranged
Photocopiers	N/A	Could be arranged
Public Service Space		
First Aid	Yes	Posters and First Aid kits
Kitchen	Yes	Accessible to employees and groups 2 small kitchens 1 large full kitchen
Front Desk (Administration)	No	Hard to access if in wheelchair
Common Spaces		
Seating	Yes	Variety of couches and chairs
Hearing Assisted Devices	Yes	Sanctuary and if required
Path of Travel	Yes	spacious
Auditorium	Yes	Spacious Wheelchair accessible Stage not wheelchair accessible Downstairs Chairs and tables provided
Sanctuary	Yes	Wheelchair accessible but not balcony
First Floor	Yes	Wheelchair accessible Resource Library – religion Dressing rooms Auditorium Common area – spacious, tables and chairs
Second Floor	Yes	Wheelchair accessible Common area – spacious, tables and chairs Den – spacious Nursery for Sunday Worships
Third Floor	No	Not wheel chair accessible Child friendly Sunday school rooms, play rooms and rooms that are rented to the community

George Street United Church Social Accessibility Inventory

Area	Yes or No?	Comments
Social Accessibility		
Cost	No	
Rentals	Yes	Auditorium, Sanctuary, Kitchen and Rooms Additional features at an additional cost: audio systems, projector stands, pianos, security officers
Gender Friendly	No	Washrooms are designated as men, and women.
Hospitable	Yes	Friendly staff
Family	Yes	Children's area Play areas

Other	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Space is available to community groups 	Users: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Space available for Brock Mission shelter • Dream Players (mentally disabled theatre group) • Peterborough Collegiate Vocational High school
Hours of Operation	Comments
Administration: Everyday 9-5pm (flexible)	Church can be open in the evening and on Saturdays for events and room rentals.

5.1e Sadleir House

Sadleir House is located in the downtown core of Peterborough at 751 George St. N. and is located on bus route. Sadleir House is used by many people including Trent University student groups and members of the community. Administrators of Sadleir House are hoping to make the building more physically accessible in the near future. The building has four floors but does not have an elevator. The handicap parking space is not clearly marked and entrances cannot be easily accessed by those with mobility issues. While the building is not child friendly, spaces within the building can be rented by members of the public for a fee. While this space is socially accessible in many ways, it does not contain the features necessary for all members of the community to access all areas.



**Sadleir House
Physical Accessibility Inventory**

Area	Accessible?	Other
Parking/Loading Zones		
Signage	No	Sign for Sadleir House No sign for parking No handicap parking space
Clearly marked spaces/appropriate sizes	Yes	Free parking No marked spaces
Lighting	No	Poorly Lit
Walkways	No	
Entrances		
Main Entrance	No	Power assist button does not work Driveway difficult to access with wheelchair - unsmooth surface
Side Entrance	No	Steps
Lobby	Yes	If you can get into the building
Signage	No	
Lighting	Yes	Windows are very bright
Path of Travel	Wide hallway	Stairs make it difficult for individuals with mobility impairments
Stairways/Elevators		
Stairways	No	Steep Not non-slip Narrow
Elevators	No	
Exterior of Elevator	N/A	
Interior of Elevator	N/A	
Washrooms		
Basement	No	Men's washroom and women's washroom (separate) Very small and narrow Not wheelchair accessible
First Floor	Yes	Men/Women Spacious Wheelchair accessible
Third Floor	No	Not a gender specific washroom Not wheelchair accessible

**Sadleir House
Physical Accessibility Inventory**

Area	Accessible?	Other
Communication		
Telephones	No	No public payphone
Computers	No	
Photocopiers	Yes	Members of OPIRG have photocopy access
Public Service Space		
First Aid	No	Not clearly marked
Kitchen	No	
Front Desk	N/A	
Common Spaces		
Seating	Yes	Variety of couches and chairs
Hearing Assisted Devices	No	
Path of Travel	No	Very spacious, stairs make it difficult for individuals with mobility impairments
Free Store	No	Not wheelchair accessible
Food bank/Library (First Floor)	Yes	Very crowded for a wheelchair Accessible to the members of the community
Sadleir House Office (First Floor)	No	Small Not enough room for a wheelchair
OPIRG office (First Floor)	No	Not wheelchair accessible
Mail Room (First Floor)	No	Not wheelchair accessible
Side Entrance Lobby (First Floor)	No	Not wheelchair Accessible Spacious If made accessible could reach OPIRG office
H. Hobbs Memorial Library (First Floor)	No	Not wheelchair Accessible Large empty room Tables, chairs and lamps located to one side of the room
Second Floor	No	Not wheelchair accessible Many meeting rooms, former Sadleir house dining hall and offices
Third Floor	No	Not wheelchair accessible Offices and a open area

**Sadleir House
Social Accessibility Inventory**

Area	Yes or No?	Comments
Social Accessibility		
Cost	No	
Rentals	Yes	Price based on type of users: Student groups, community groups and individuals and student theatre groups Will negotiate affordable rates Resources available: TV and VCR, overhead projector, flip chart and audio listening equipment (Portable stereo)
Gender Friendly	Yes	
Hospitable	Yes	Welcoming Friendly staff
Family	No	Not child friendly Unsafe (too many staircases)

Other	Comments
Café	
Liquor License	
Accommodation for live bands, theatres, and DJs	
Variety of activist groups	
Student organizations	
Hours of Operation	Comments
Mon-Thurs. 9a.m -9 p.m.	
Friday 9 a.m.-6 p.m.	
Sat. 10 a.m.-4 p.m.	

5.2 Survey Observations and Results:

We received thirty-three survey responses which include two from users of George Street United Church, three from users of Market Hall, four from users of Peterborough Lion's Club, six from the Peterborough Public Library, and eighteen from users of Sadleir House.

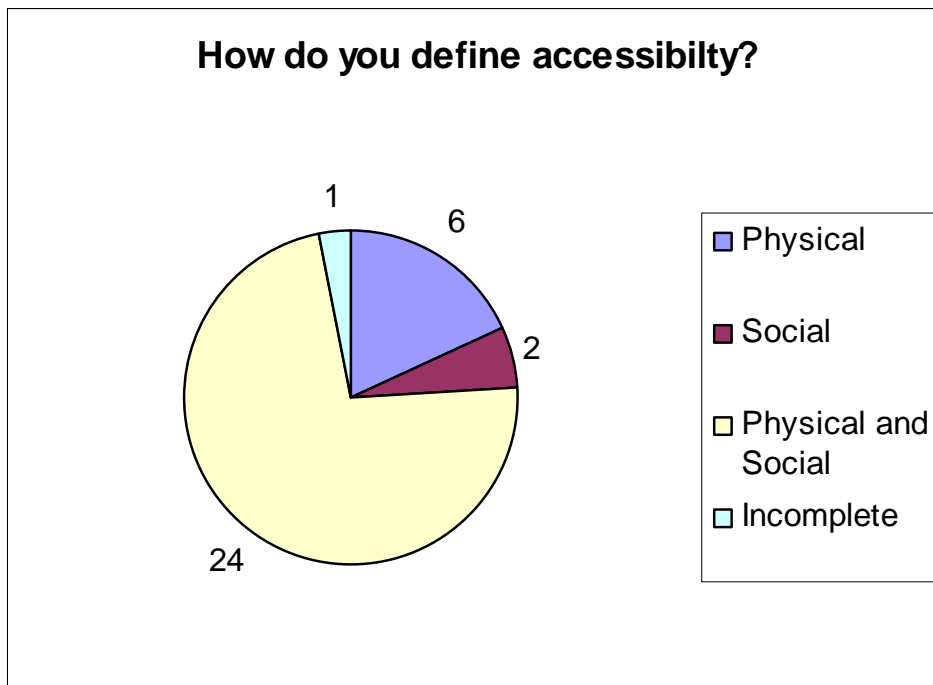


Fig 1.0

Survey responses were separated into categories including physical accessibility, social, physical and social accessibility and incomplete. Fig.1.0 shows that twenty-four respondents interpreted accessibility as relating to physical and social accessibility.

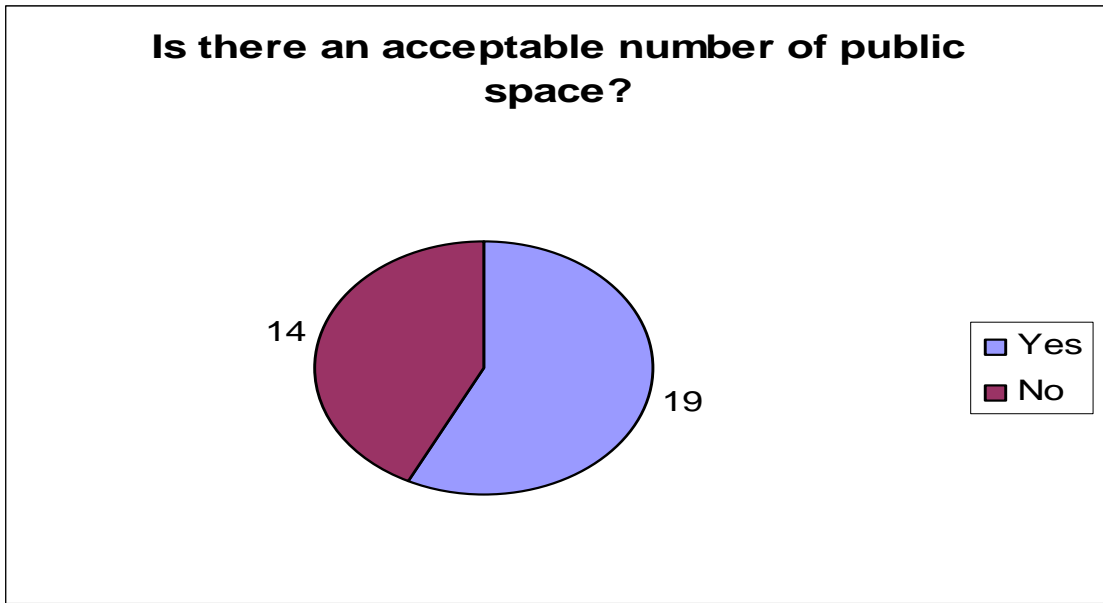


Fig.1.1

Fig 1.1 shows that nineteen users thought that there were acceptable levels of public space within the City of Peterborough. This may have depended on what users considered to be public space (e.g. parks, malls, and lifestyle centers).

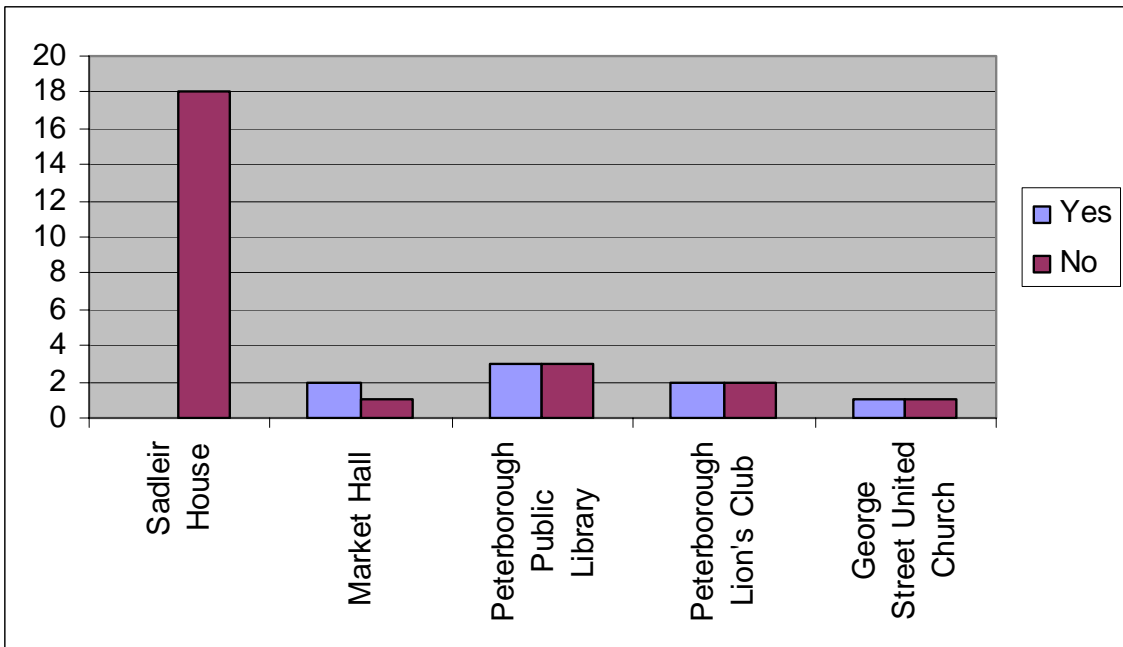


Fig 1.2

Fig 1.2 reflects the responses from the users relating to whether or not each space was accessible to everyone. The graph shows that Sadleir House was found to have

the lowest level of accessibility. Most of the responses from Sadleir House users related to the need for physical accessibility improvements.

Public Space that is accessible in Peterborough?	
Public Spaces	Number of Responses
Peterborough Public Library	11
Schools (including Post-Secondary)	10
Shopping Malls	7
YMCA	6
City Hall	4
Riverview Park and Zoo	4
Parks	3

Table 1.0

Users had a variety of responses to which public spaces they considered to be accessible. The top seven responses are listed in Table 1.0 and the most accessible public space is the Peterborough Public Library.

How to improve Peterborough’s public spaces to make them more accessible?	
Improvements	Number of Responses
Ramps	9
Doors (Power assisted, light weight)	8
Elevator	6
Lighting	5
Parking (paved and accessible)	4
Funding and resources	4
Education	3

Table 1.1

Users had a variety of responses on how to improve Peterborough’s public spaces. The improvements they listed are similar to the items that are listed on the inventory checklist. Table 1.1 shows the top seven responses on how to improve the public spaces. It is clear that most relate to physical accessibility.

5.3 Observation and Results Discussion

Our inventory observations show that Sadleir House has the highest level of social accessibility but has the lowest level of physical accessibility. The Peterborough Library and Peterborough Lion's Club were found to be the most physically accessible. The lack of physical accessibility features within Sadleir House relates to the lack of funding and because it is a historical building with few recent structural updates.

The results from our user survey are important because they reflect the opinions and experiences of the wider community. It is important to include the user's thoughts since public space should satisfy the needs of community members. The survey results show that users feel that there are an acceptable number of public spaces within the City of Peterborough, but that these spaces are not fully accessible. The highest level of response came from Sadleir House users, which reflects the need for renovations.

6.0 Discussion

The purpose of this discussion is to describe the study areas as well as the response relating to the results section. The inventory checklist and the survey were conducted between February and March 2007. This discussion will be broken up into two sections, the first being the inventory checklist and the second being the users survey.

The inventory checklist was conducted on five public spaces within the City of Peterborough, which included Sadleir House, Market Hall, the Lion's Club, Peterborough Public Library and George Street United Church. Sadleir House was the most important building, since the data from the other public spaces were used only in comparison to this space. The data collected from Sadleir House was significant because it could be used to assess the need for renovations. The buildings were accessed by the researchers unannounced except for Market Hall. This may have influenced the data since we were not able to access certain areas of the building to make comments.

Firstly, the inventory checklist was conducted at each location with the purpose of collecting data on their physical and social features, as they relate to accessibility. The interior and exterior of all buildings were examined during regular business hours. In addition, a second exterior examination was conducted during the evening to get a broader picture of accessibility barriers. These barriers are mainly related to lighting and accessible pathways. The checklist included categories such as washrooms, pathways, doors, hallways, parking and meeting spaces. These areas were evaluated based on their level of accessibility as they relate to physical and social accessibility. As mentioned in the results section Sadleir House was found to have the highest level of social accessibility. When we conducted the inventory checklist at this location we found that there were no limitations on our access to any part of the building. We were able to discover the many parts of the building on our own which allowed us to discover features such as gender friendly washrooms, friendly and approachable staff, and space designated for a diverse range of

organizations. The results section shows that the Peterborough Public Library and the Lion's Club had the highest levels of physical accessibility. When we performed the inventory checklist on each of these buildings we found that they were easy to navigate and most importantly, that they included much more signage and features that would be needed by those with physical disabilities.

Market Hall posed the greatest challenge while gathering information for the inventory checklist. We did not feel welcome and could not gain access to some parts of the building. We were not able to walk through unassisted and were told that many areas including the washrooms and the elevator were not accessible to the public, including us, unless there was a scheduled event.

In addition to documenting the social and physical features of each building, brief discussions with administrators and other employees within Market Hall, Sadleir House and George Street United Church occurred. These discussions were helpful because they allowed us to gather information regarding features of the building that we may have overlooked. A brief discussion with a Sadleir House employee allowed us to gain an understanding of what their vision for future accessibility renovations involved. We were able to physically view the parts of the building that they planned on transforming if and when financial assistance was granted.

Secondly, the survey was distributed to Sadleir House users and placed within the other four public spaces. The survey was posted on bulletin boards within Sadleir House and in addition, it was available on the OPIRG website to enable users to have easy access. The responses came through via e-mail to a site created specifically for the research project. The posting of the survey within each location posed a challenge to the number of respondents. The responses from four of the spaces, not including Sadleir house, depended largely on individuals viewing the bulletin boards and taking a hard copy. The hard copy

was necessary for respondents. Since the questions were designed to be open-ended, we assumed that the response would vary greatly. The design of the survey posed as an advantage to collecting data in that the respondents did not feel forced to answer in a specific manner. They were not provoked or encouraged to interpret the questions in a specific fashion. It was clear, however, that respondents interpreted the questions in different ways. In addition, the results show that the highest level of survey responses came from Sadleir House users. This was important for the project, since the other four locations were being compared to the opinions of Sadleir House users relating to sufficient amount of publicly accessible space.

The amount of responses from each of the locations varied. The results show that the highest level of response, besides Sadleir House came from library users. A lack of survey responses from the other three locations posed a challenge for survey analysis. There was not enough information gathered from these locations to make an accurate conclusion on the user's perception relating to the level of accessibility.

7.0 Conclusion

Accessibility, as it relates to public space is a complex and often misunderstood topic. Creating spaces that are accessible for everyone regardless of their physical or social impairments is crucial for building healthy communities.

Public spaces in the City of Peterborough lack many of the features that would make them more accessible. Through the promotion of accessibility within public spaces, members of the community would be provided with more opportunities to be active in the community. It is important to pay attention to the needs of users and the potential improvements that could be made. Many of these improvements rely heavily on increased funding. It is clear, however, that members of the community highly value public space and the importance of making them accessible to everyone.

Through the distribution of accessibility surveys and the observations made from the inventory checklist, public spaces within the City of Peterborough lack the necessary qualities related to universal accessibility. The results from the surveys include a variety of ways in which public space could be improved to meet the needs of community members. The opinions of those that use the space are crucial to developing and promoting accessibility. As mentioned in the results section, it is important that attention be given to the opinions of the users of public since changes affect the wider community.

Our methodology allowed us to gain a broader understanding of the issue of accessibility and allowed us to recognize potential problems within public space. It was, however, difficult to analyze the surveys since the answers were so diverse. It was also difficult to collect enough responses in order to make a case for particular public spaces. This problem may have been solved if interviews or focus groups had been conducted to ensure that users from every space provided information. In addition, focus groups would have allowed for discussion to ensue which may have helped to flesh out certain issues or raise overlooked concerns.

We conclude that because Sadleir House was found by most users to be physically inaccessible it makes a good case behind the need for Sadleir House to perform renovations to make improvements that address this problem. In addition, the results also show that the other four public spaces are not fully physically or socially accessible. This also helps to emphasize the need for Sadleir House to make adjustments to provide a niche within the community, functioning as a fully accessible public space.

We suggest that this piece of research be used as a starting point for further analysis. Future research should examine different public spaces within the community besides the ones chosen in this study. It is clear, however, that there is a need for improvements to be made and the issue of accessibility is one that needs to be acknowledged as it relates to public space.

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Appendix

Appendix A – Survey

Accessibility...Does it concern you?

We are fourth year Trent University students conducting an Honours research project on accessibility and space within the City of Peterborough. We want to give members of the community a chance to voice their opinions on this topic. Please e-mail us with answers to these questions or any other concerns and ideas you may have.

E-mail: apeterborough@yahoo.ca

How do you define accessibility?

Do you feel that the number of public spaces within the City of Peterborough is acceptable?

Do you feel that public space in Peterborough has acceptable levels of accessibility?

Do you feel the **Lion's Club** is accessible to everyone? (Adults, children, families, age, gender, race, class, sexual identity, people with hearing, visual or physical impairments)

What other spaces within Peterborough do you think are accessible?

How would you improve public spaces in Peterborough to make them more accessible?



Researcher Contact Information: Trisha Pearce and Amanda Reid can be reached through the Geography Department at Trent University (email: geography@trentu.ca or phone: 748-1011, ext. 1440). This call for participation is directed at those 18 years of age or older. This research has been approved by the Ethics Review Committee of the Department of Geography.

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How do you define accessibility?

Do you feel that the number of public spaces with the City of Peterborough is acceptable?

Do you feel that public space in Peterborough has acceptable levels of accessibility?

Do you feel the **Sadleir House** is accessible to everyone? (Adults, children, families, age, gender, race, class, sexual identity, people with hearing, visual or physical impairments)

What other spaces within Peterborough do you think are accessible?

How would you improve public spaces in Peterborough to make them more accessible?



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How do you define accessibility?

Do you feel that the number of public spaces with the City of Peterborough is acceptable?

Do you feel that public space in Peterborough has acceptable levels of accessibility?

Do you feel the **Peterborough Public Library** is accessible to everyone? (Adults, children, families, age, gender, race, class, sexual identity, people with hearing, visual or physical impairments)

What other spaces within Peterborough do you think are accessible?

How would you improve public spaces in Peterborough to make them more accessible?



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How do you define accessibility?

Do you feel that the number of public spaces with the City of Peterborough is acceptable?

Do you feel that public space in Peterborough has acceptable levels of accessibility?

Do you feel the **George Street United Church** is accessible to everyone? (Adults, children, families, age, gender, race, class, sexual identity, people with hearing, visual or physical impairments)

What other spaces within Peterborough do you think are accessible?

How would you improve public spaces in Peterborough to make them more accessible?



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E-mail: apeterborough@yahoo.ca

How do you define accessibility?

Do you feel that the number of public spaces with the City of Peterborough is acceptable?

Do you feel that public space in Peterborough has acceptable levels of accessibility?

Do you feel the **Market Hall** is accessible to everyone? (Adults, children, families, age, gender, race, class, sexual identity, people with hearing, visual or physical impairments)

What other spaces within Peterborough do you think are accessible?

How would you improve public spaces in Peterborough to make them more accessible?



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Appendix B – Inventory Checklist

Accessibility checklist 2007: Building Name _____

Parking/loading zones	
	Signage
	Clearly marked spaces/appropriate size
	Lighting
	Location
	Walkways
Entrances	Doors(power assisted)
	Lobby
	Hallways
	Signage
	Path of travel
	Vestibules
	Lighting
	Seating

Administration	
	Offices
	Ticket sales
	Signage
	Amenities
	Counter design
	Other
Communication	
	Telephones
	Computers
	Photocopiers
	Other

Stairways/elevators	Stairways
	Railings
	Size
	Surface
	Colour contrast
	Lighting
	Elevator
	Location
	Operation
	Design (size)
	Signage
	Lighting
	Lettering(large and contrasting)
	Control panel(Braille)

Common spaces	
	Seating
	Hearing assisted devices
	Path of travel
	Other
Public service space	
	First aid
	Kitchens
	Food services
	Resource services (circulation desk)
	Other
Washrooms	
	Doors/hardware
	Signage
	Sinks/toilets
	Stall size
	Accessories (dryer/soap/paper towel)
	Child facilities

Others	

Social Accessibility

Costs	
Gender friendly	
Hospitable	
Family	
Hours of operation	
All user friendly	

Appendix C – Ethics Committee Application

Appendix D - Survey Data