

**Towards All-Age-Friendliness in Mahone Bay:
A Collaborative Study**

by

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Abstract

In the *Now or Never: Urgent Call for Nova Scotians* report, Nova Scotia communities are urged to develop local solutions to address current social and economic trends threatening their future viability. Through the Mahone Bay Age-Friendly Community Committee (MBAFCC), the town of Mahone Bay is proactively addressing some of these trends and currently identifies the need to expand the town's age-friendliness to all ages. Adopting theories and methodologies from Participatory Action Research (PAR) this study works collaboratively with the MBACC to generate community-identified actions that can improve the town's all-age-friendliness. Data were collected from a series of key informant interviews and a community workshop. Results from the interviews and workshop are coded and compiled. Based on findings, the community identified numerous opportunities, some of which include improving wheelchair and stroller accessibility to businesses, and developing alternative housing. The two priority areas are (i) improving communication of existing events and services, and (ii) creating a form of child care within the town potentially in collaboration within the new senior centre.

Key words: all-age-friendliness, age-friendliness, community research, participatory action research, PAR, Mahone Bay, rural, sustainability, resilience.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Problem Definition

Population ageing is cited to be one of the most transformative demographic changes the world will experience in this century (DESAD, 2015). Worldwide the proportion of those 60 years and above is currently 12.3% and is projected to grow to almost 22% by 2050 (UNFPA, n.d.). In some areas, this trend is even more pronounced. In Canada, the percentage of the population aged 65+ was 16.1% in 2015 and is projected to grow to almost 25% by 2036 (CIHI, 2011).

Within Canada, Nova Scotia currently has the highest proportion of seniors at 17.7% and is projected to grow by 86% by 2033 compared to 2007 numbers (Nova Scotia Department of Seniors, 2009; Statistics Canada, 2016). This trend is more pronounced in Nova Scotia's rural communities as they also experience intra-provincial outmigration of youth into urban centers and immigration of seniors (Towns Task Force, 2012). In response to these demographic changes and added economic hardship and high unemployment rates, Nova Scotia communities are urged to develop local solutions to combat these trends (Ivany, R., d'Entremont, I., Christmas, D., Fuller, S., & Bragg, 2014).

In response to world-wide ageing, many communities across the globe have participated in the World Health Organization (WHO) age-friendly community initiative, where an age-friendly community is one that supports seniors to 'age actively', live in security, enjoy good health, and participate fully in their community (WHO, n.d., PHAC, 2016). This initiative takes a positive, proactive approach to planning for this growing demographic. In Canada, there are two major documents that communities look to for

guidance the: *Global Age Friendly Cities: A Guide* and the *Age-Friendly Rural and Remote Communities Initiative: A Guide* (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2011; World Health Organization, 2007).

In 2011, the Town of Mahone Bay followed the *Age-Friendly Rural and Remote Communities Initiative: A Guide* and began their formal commitment to work towards becoming age-friendly (AFMBSC, 2012). As part of this process, the town council, in partnership with a community centre and researchers: created a temporary age-friendly steering committee called the Age-friendly Mahone Bay Steering Committee (AFMBSC), conducted a study to assess the community's age-friendliness, and developed a plan to improve age-friendliness (AFMBSC, 2012). The steering committee, now called the Mahone Bay Age Friendly Community Committee (MBAFCC), is, to this day, meeting regularly and has a strong commitment to improving age-friendliness in the greater Mahone Bay area (Penny Carver, personal communications, November 16th, 2016).

Through the ongoing work of the MBAFCC, many issues identified in the original project have been addressed to further support Mahone Bay's age-friendliness. Moving forward, MBAFCC continues to address issues identified by the community related to age-friendliness. It is due to this proactive nature of the MBAFCC that this study evolved. Based on results from the original report, feedback from community members, and a growing realization for the need to attract young people to move to Mahone Bay, the MBAFCC identified the need to explore the age-friendliness of the town can better expand to all ages. This was first noted during the initial 2011 study when participants indicated the need to incorporate youth to improve the town's age-

friendliness and “look at age-friendly as being for all ages” (Age-friendly Mahone Bay Steering Committee, 2012, pg. 27). Penny Carver, the chair of the MBAFCC, also reported this as a priority of the committee as there is a sense of separation between old and young community members (Penny Carver, personal communications, November 16th 2016). Further indication of this need has surfaced in a community news article titled *A Time to Reach Out* (Appendix I), where in the author describes the prevalence of and risk of choosing sides between retirees or young families, the need to make decisions that support all age groups, and the need for young families in rural areas (Merry, 2017).

1.2 Research Purpose and Question

The purpose of this study is to work collaboratively with key community stakeholders (the MBAFCC) to identify community-generated strategies for improving the town’s all-age-friendliness. To best engage the community in identifying and acting on ways to promote all-age-friendliness, participatory action research (PAR) theory and methodology (Baum, MacDougall, & Smith, 2006) heavily informed this study. As such, the study design was created in collaboration with the MBAFCC which resulted in two key research components: a series of key community informant interviews and an interactive community workshop. To ensure a diversity of perspectives were captured, the MBAFCC aided in selectively recruiting individuals who met the MBAFCC’s diversity criteria. The main research question that guides this study is: “How can Mahone Bay improve its all-age-friendliness?”

1.3 Definitions

To clearly communicate this research, it is important to define recurrent terms:

Mahone Bay Area: Is an area within the District of Lunenburg County in Nova Scotia that comprises of the Town of Mahone Bay and eight other smaller communities (AFMBSC, 2012).

Age-Friendly Community: An age-friendly community is one that supports seniors to ‘age actively’ and live in security, enjoy good health, and participate fully in their community (WHO, n.d., PHAC, 2016). Aspects of age-friendly communities are centered around eight domains: Outdoor Spaces and Buildings, Transportation, Housing, Respect and Social Isolation, Communication and Information, Civic Participation and Employment, and Community Support and Health Services.

All-Age-Friendliness: The term all-age-friendliness is used in this thesis to describe the age friendly features mentioned above that promotes the involvement of people from a range of ages, including youth, families, and seniors. All-age friendliness ideally includes intergenerational activities, but can also include spaces, services, and activities that are used by people of a range of ages at different times.

Active Ageing: Active ageing is “the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age” and is a fundamental concept for the development of age-friendliness (WHO, 2012, pg. 12).

Senior: The term senior, often synonymous with older adult or elder, is a societal construction of “old” age. Quantification of age is commonly understood by characteristics of chronological age, biological functioning, societal status, or psychological capacity (McPherson & Wister, 2008). While specific age thresholds vary from place to place, most Canadian sources define seniors as those 65 and above, as this is the definition Statistics Canada uses.

1.4 Significance

The significance of this study rests in three main components. First, by incorporating PAR theories and methodologies, the community was engaged in the project design. Members of the MBAFCC co-created the research question and methodology, thus ensuring the data gathered is useful and translates into future actions. Second, the methods chosen for this study allowed community members to prioritize key actions, thus providing the MBAFCC and the broader community suggestions for moving forward. Third and more broadly speaking, the focus of this age-friendly project on all ages and the methodology used may have relevance beyond this community to others that face similar challenges, thus contributing to a broader availability of tools and literature.

2.0 Review of Related Literature

2.1 Age Friendly Communities

The concept of Age-friendliness developed as a positive approach to proactive planning for an ageing demographic and stems from the ideas of active ageing. Active ageing is a new positive thought paradigm towards ageing that is grounded in the belief that by helping seniors to age actively, it adds health to years and maximizes the benefits of having seniors in the community (WHO, 2017). It first originated in 1999 from the United Nations' *Year of the Older People* (Barusch, 2013).

In 2007, the World Health Organization (WHO) conducted the first age-friendly study the *Global Age Friendly Cities Program*. Structured around the eight “pillars” of age-friendliness, this program was developed to identify what aspects improve the health, safety, and livelihood of seniors (WHO, 2017). The eight pillars include: outdoor spaces and buildings, transportation, housing, respect and social isolation, communication and information, civic participation and employment, and community support and health services (WHO, 2002). Out of this study developed the *Global Age Friendly Cities: A Guide*, which serves as a framework to help cities around the world become more age-friendly.

Shortly after the initiation of the *Global Age Friendly Cities Program*, the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) adapted the *Global Age Friendly Cities: A Guide* to produce the *Age-Friendly Rural/Remote Communities Initiative*. As almost 25% of Canadian seniors live outside the city, the PHAC recognized the need for this adaption to account for the unique difference seniors in rural and remote areas experience, such as increased physical and social isolation and limited access to health care (PHAC, 2009)

Still structured around the eight pillars of WHO's age-friendly cities program, this guide is meant to serve as a framework to help those interested in improving their communities age-friendliness.

The *Global Age Friendly Cities: A Guide* and *Age-Friendly Rural/Remote Communities Initiative* guide have been used in several Canadian communities. In fact, four of the thirty-five cities in the initial age-friendly cities study were in Canada. These cities include: Halifax, Portage la Prairie, Saanich, and Sherbrooke (WHO, 2007). In the development of the PHAC *Age-Friendly Rural/Remote Communities Initiative: A Guide* ten communities with populations under 5,000 participated. These include: Alert Bay, Lumby, High Prairie, Turtleford, Gimli, Bonnerchere, Port Hope, Alberton, Clarenville, and Guysborough (PHAC, 2011).

Although these age-friendly community programs are promoted by the federal and provincial government, there are several critiques identified in the literature. One is that age-friendly community programs are difficult to evaluate because of their complex nature, diverse benefits, and the shortage of funding (Greenfield, Oberlink, Scharlach, Neal, & Stafford, 2015). Other academics such as Golant further criticizes the age-friendly programs arguing they are attempting to solve too many problems, and incorporate too much diversity resulting in a vague and broad approach (Golant, 2014). Golant instead suggests that such initiatives would be more efficient by focusing efforts on seniors who cannot afford to support themselves and are not part of a pre-existing social net (2014).

Other academics such as Menec et al. disagree with Golant, and point out that age-friendly programs are limited because they do not adequately account for diversity in

the communities or changes over time (2011). Age-friendly community programs may not always incorporate an adequate range of perspectives. As with the original study in Mahone Bay, the researchers mainly consulted seniors and related professionals, and did not explicitly collect data from different cultural backgrounds or age groups (AFMBSC, 2012).

The eight domains of age-friendly community programs have received some criticism. Menec et al. believe the domain of respect and social inclusion ought not be a domain as they view it as the fundamental goal of the entire initiative (2011). In its place, Menec et al. suggest the addition of a social environment domain that incorporates economic equality and social disorder. Despite the test of time, this suggestion and others, the eight domains have hardly changed only adapting minor elements since their development (Plouffe, Kalache, & Voelcker, 2016).

Despite these challenges and critiques, the WHO and PHAC guides serve only as a framework to work within and as such, how each community undertakes the task of becoming more age-friendly will vary (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2011; World Health Organization, 2007). Communities can adapt the methods and questions as needed to suit specific needs, unique situations, or address some of the above-mentioned critiques. For example, when Mahone Bay conducted their original age-friendliness study, they combined the domains of respect and social inclusion with social participation, because they identified a large percentage of overlap (AFMBSC, 2012).

Moving forward in their commitment to age-friendliness, MBAFCC is addressing one of Menec et al.'s criticisms on age-friendly programs through this study. As this study is looking to identify how Mahone Bay can become all-age-friendly, it is

extending the age-friendly framework to account for the diversity in age within the community.

2.2 Mahone Bay and the Age-Friendliness Study

In 2011, when Mahone Bay first made their commitment to becoming age-friendly, the town was experiencing a disproportionately older population (AFMBSC, 2012). While this is not inherently a negative trend as seniors contribute to the community in many positive ways (see Keating & Hopper Cook, 2001 for an overview of current Canadian discourse on ageing), there was an interest in identifying ways to better care for this population by becoming more age-friendly (AFMBSC, 2012).

After receiving funding from the Department of Seniors, the town council was guided by the *Age-Friendly Rural and Remote Communities Initiative* to: (i) establish a temporary age-friendliness advisory committee, called the Age-friendly Mahone Bay Steering Committee (AFMBSC) (ii) make a public commitment to work towards becoming more age-friendly, and (iii) plan a course of action to address issues raised by seniors in the community (AFMBSC, 2012). To complete this last step, the advisory committee collaborated with the Mahone Bay Centre and Dalhousie researchers Dr. Heidi Lauckner and Dr. Robyn Stadnyk to gather the perspectives of seniors in the community. Using methods outlined in the guide, perspectives of seniors and related professionals were gathered using several focus groups and key informant interviews, the results of which are detailed in the MBAFCC's *Age-Friendly Mahone Bay Final Report* (AFMBSC, 2012).

As this thesis claims to follow up the 2011 study, it is important to gain an understanding of the contents in the original report, of which four core content areas informed the current study: (i) the community profile, (ii) research methods, (iii) results under *Respect, Social Inclusion and Social Participation*, and (iv) study limitations.

The community profile in the report gives a snapshot of the area's history, current demographics, and cultural values in 2011. This data provides valuable insight and background information crucial for outside researchers to develop meaningful research questions and methods.

The research methods used in this study were developed around multiple focus groups with seniors and several interviews with individuals identified to be key informants (AFMBSC, 2012). This study adopted the latter of these two methods into current study design for two reasons: one, to gather in-depth information from a range of individuals identified by the MBAFCC, and two, to use a method that is familiar with the MBAFCC.

The results relevant to this thesis are those found under the *Respect, Social Inclusion and Social Participation* section of the report. Participants of the original study provided three categories of results: existing age-friendly features, age-friendly barriers, and recommendations for improvement. Based on these results, the report outlines that participants felt they were respected, socially included and had many opportunities to participate in the community (AFMBSC, 2012). Existing age-friendly features outlined in this section include the friendliness of community members, the close-knit feel of the town, and all the activities organized by the Mahone Bay Centre, the town, and the churches. Barriers to respect, inclusion and participation include issues of transportation,

lack of events for the diversity of the community, and the division that some felt between long-time residence and “come-from-aways” as well as towards disabled, ethnic, and young portions of the population (AFMBSC, 2012). This disconnect from youth and younger people was expanded upon in the suggestions for improvement; participants identified that youth ought to be included in the discussion on all matters of age-friendliness in the community, and activities should be developed accordingly (AFMBSC, 2012).

Some of the limitations and gaps stated by the authors include the small sample and homogeneity of participants, which resulted in perpetration of views from financially well off, actively engaged, female seniors. The views from other portions of the demographic, such as lower income, less engaged, or male counterparts, may not have been adequately represented, potentially skewing results (AFMBSC, 2012).

Taking into consideration the original study’s limitations, results under *Respect, Social Inclusion and Social Participation*, along with Menec et al.’s diversity criticism of age-friendly initiatives, the current study will actively seek perspectives from multiple generations.

2.3 All-Age-Friendliness vs. Intergenerational Inclusivity

In the early stages of this study the phrase “all-age-friendliness” and “intergenerational inclusivity” were used interchangeably. As the study developed, the term “all-age-friendliness” was determined to more accurately describe the focus of the study. Since the term “all-age-friendliness” is not prevalent in existing literature but overlaps with the ideas of intergenerational inclusivity, it is important to discuss their

similarities and differences. The following paragraphs attempt to clarify the application and meaning of all-age-friendliness in the context of this study.

The term “intergenerational inclusivity” is one of many terms used to describe the study of, and into, the benefits of relationships between individuals of different ages on a personal and community scale. Newman and Hatton-Yeo have attributed the rise in the study of intergenerational relationships and programs to the change in nuclear family relations (2008). Newman and Hatton-Yeo explain that due to the shift in economic streams, rise in two-working parent and single parent families, and job availability, there is a growing geographical disconnect between the young and old (Newman & Hatton-Yeo, 2008). To fill this social gap Newman and Hatton-Yeo argue that intergenerational programs attempt to satiate the loss of “social growth, learning and emotional stability” normally experienced in familial relations between grandparents and grandchildren (Newman & Hatton-Yeo, 2008, pg. 32).

In 1978, Powell and Arquitt summarize earlier prominent literature surrounding intergenerational programs and noted the increase in publications in the 1970’s. Their search found that intergenerational programs, i.e. programs intending to connect non-biologically related children and seniors, tended get rid of, or soften negative stereotypes of seniors (Powell & Arquitt, 1978). Later works, as can be seen in the previously cited Newman and Hatton-Yeo, outline further benefits of intergenerational programs such as increasing education, social capital, and empowerment (Newman & Hatton-Yeo, 2008).

Other works in the topic of intergenerational inclusivity are more closely related to this studies definition of all-age-friendliness as they extend beyond the benefits of intergenerational relations and social programs, to policy and infrastructure implications.

For example, Ritzdorf (1987), from the perspective of a planner, writes of several zoning adaptations that can be adopted to balance the needs of all generations in American communities. Some of these include: permitting home occupations, preventing rental discrimination towards young families, and encouraging more daycare and small family care homes in all residential and business zones.

The meaning of all-age-friendliness is along these lines of supporting the needs of all generations. The term all-age-friendliness is used in this thesis to describe age friendly features that promotes the involvement of people from a range of ages, including youth, families, and seniors. All-age friendliness ideally includes intergenerational activities, but can also include spaces, services, and activities that are used by people of a range of ages at different times. All-age friendliness then promotes the opportunity for intergenerational activities, which can then have positive effects. A further distinction between all-age-friendliness and intergenerational inclusivity, is that not all all-age-friendly features are intergenerational as multiple generations may not always interact when using the same place at different time. For example, a community centre may be all-ages by having programs for different ages, but only a few of those programs may be intergenerational.

2.4 Participatory Action Research

PAR can be most broadly understood as a new emergent paradigm of research that seeks to reconnect knowledge making in the research and the academic world to the world of human experience (Chevalier & Buckles, 2013). It promotes the belief that Academia ought to serve the common good by conducting research that serves society, produces meaningful change, solves social problems, and ideally democratizing the knowledge making process” (Chevalier & Buckles, 2013). Drawing from critical theory,

constructivism, and work from Paulo Freire, Kurt Lewin, and the Trivostock Institute, PAR has developed into a framework that guides research to be rigorous, meaningful, and leads to critical action for a better world (Chevalier & Buckles, 2013; Baum, MacDougall, & Smith, 2006).

In addition to the theoretical aspects of PAR, there is a methodological component which mutually enforces its theories by providing researchers with tools to meet the goals of its theory. PAR methodology is designed to incorporate the communities under research with the study process so much so that they become the researchers, subverting the traditional researcher-object relationship thus shifting the modes of power and knowledge (Baum et al., 2006). PAR methodological guidelines are flexible in that they allow qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches, however, they must be based on cycles of critical self-reflective inquiry (Baum et al., 2006).

PAR is now being applied in a variety of fields such as health professions, occupational therapy, and intergenerational studies (see Olshansky et al., 2005; Cockburn & Trentham, 2002; Kaplan et al., 2006). According to Kuehne, PAR incorporates several characteristics that make it well-suited methodology for human research but also specifically for intergenerational studies (1999). For example, PAR provides an approach to research that is designed to positively influence communities. Kuehne also outlines other distinct benefits of PAR in relation to intergenerational studies, some of which include: an increased chance research will be relevant to the communities understudy; an ability to adopt an asset-based approach to community building; the ability to use a

variety of research methods; and, its effectiveness at ensuring cultural appropriateness (Kuehne, 1999).

Although PAR is applied in a variety of fields, it has some important criticisms. Cornwall and Jewkes caution that PAR is rarely as smooth as suggested by theoretical texts, and is not the simple alternative to conventional research (1995). Working with community groups is time consuming, non-linear, and otherwise inefficient, as communities may not want to participate or be in control over the research (Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995). Even if there is community interest and participation at one phase of the research, that may change (Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995). They do however note that researchers can ameliorate some of these issues by not overpromising research to the community to prevent the raising of false hopes (Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995).

While this is not an intergenerational study, PAR still provides an effective framework to inform study design for many of the same reasons Kuehne listed. Taking into consideration some of the criticisms of PAR listed by Cornwall and Jewkes, this study aims to minimize some of these issues. To strike a balance in complete community involvement and the timeliness of the study, community participation was sought at critical points in the research process. For example, during several meetings with the MBAFCC the research topic, study goals, and general methodology were agreed upon. The research team was responsible for drafting a detailed study plan with specific methodologies to bring back to the MBAFCC for feedback and incorporate any changes suggested. Additional community involvement occurred when the broader community was part of the research process during the community workshop.

3.0 Research Methods

3.1 Rationale for PAR and Qualitative Design

The main purpose of this study is two-fold: firstly, this research aims to conduct research in such a way that identifies ways of improving all-age-friendliness in Mahone Bay. Secondly, this study aims to conduct research in a way that leads to meaningful action projects. To meet these objectives, PAR theory and methodology inform the study design to promote the distribution of knowledge and power, enhance community participation and action, and enable the research to positively influence communities (Baum et al., 2006; Kuehne, 1999). Specific steps taken to incorporate PAR methodology include the continual feedback and discourse with the MBAFCC around the design of the study and broader community involvement in data collection and analysis.

As previously mentioned, within PAR methodology qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods can be employed. However, this study mainly employs qualitative research techniques, as they allow for an inquiry into the relationships and connectedness of variables, and not just their classification (Murray, 1998).

3.2 Process Design

Adherent to PAR guidelines, we sought early and continual incorporation of community member in-put to maximize community involvement and improve study design (De Chesnay, 2014). The study commenced by contacting the MBAFCC to affirm their interest and incorporate their feedback into the study. Dr. Lauckner, a member of this committee and part of the research team, made this initial connection, affirmed the

committee's interest, and proceeded to act as a liaison between the MBAFCC and the primary researcher until it was appropriate for the two parties to communicate directly.

With continual input from the MBAFCC the final iteration of this study was designed around two key components: key informant interviews and an interactive community workshop. The purpose of the key informant interviews is to allow the primary researcher to gain a deeper understanding of what makes Mahone Bay unique, to collect several in-depth perspectives on all-age-friendliness in Mahone Bay, and to inform the design of the interactive workshop. The purpose of the interactive community workshop is to collect diverse perspectives on all-age-friendliness in Mahone Bay, share preliminary findings from interviews, to establish priority action areas, and to engage the broader community in the research, as suggested by participatory action research methodology, to set up the community for forward moving action and change (Baum et al., 2006).

3.3 Role of the Primary Researcher

The role of the primary researcher, Alice Main, is to act as a consultant, an instrument for data collection, and meeting facilitator. During process design and throughout the project the primary researcher acted as a consultant by maintaining communication with MBAFCC to incorporate continual feedback and share findings. The primary researcher was responsible for developing recruitment materials for both the key informant interviews and interactive workshop, conducting the interviews, co-facilitating interactive workshop, and transcribing, processing, and sharing data.

3.4 Role of the MBAFCC

The role of the MBAFCC is to contribute local knowledge to the process design, aid in recruitment for both the key informant interviews and interactive community workshop, and provide funds and resources to book a space for the community workshop. Specifically, the MBAFCC is responsible for initiating contact with interview and workshop participants through forwarding recruitment emails.

3.5 Key Informant Interviews

The primary researcher in coordination with the MBAFCC determined the study population for the interviews by identifying criteria that they believe to provide relevant, valuable, and diverse perspectives. These criteria include: a primary affiliation to Mahone Bay, knowledge on matters of age friendliness, and the ability to offer a unique perspective based on either professional history, family dynamic, community involvement, or time spent in the community.

Following research ethics approval, recruitment for the interviews began with members of the MBAFCC contacting potential key informants by email or face-to-face interactions (see Appendix A for interview recruitment materials). These committee members were coached prior to initial contact in how to communicate with potential participants to mitigate the social pressures to participate. Interested participants gave their permission for the MBAFCC to share their contact information with the primary researcher. Beyond this point the MBAFCC had no other contact with the interview participants. This recruitment method was chosen to preserve participant anonymity by allowing to individuals to accept or decline the without other community members' knowledge.

In coordination with the MBAFCC, the interviews were designed with open-ended questions as they are considered to be more effective at exploratory research and limits researcher bias (Creswell, 2013). To avoid weather-related interferences, key informant interviews were conducted and recorded over the telephone as it removed the risk of delay in data collection. Following the semi-structured interview guide (Appendix E), a total of six audio-recorded telephone interviews were conducted between January 31st and February 10th. Each interview began with a discussion of the intent and purpose of the study followed by verbal consent to participate and to be audio recorded.

3.5 Initial Data Analysis Procedures

Upon completion of each interview, the primary researcher transcribed, de-identified, and coded all recorded data. Recordings were transcribed by conducting a targeted transcription process whereby the primary researcher wrote out key quotes and paraphrased ideas. Next, all data were stripped of identifiable information to preserve anonymity of the participants. Data were aggregated and manually coded using Bryman's four stages of coding (Bryman et al., 2009). Main themes were summarized to present at the interactive workshop and were shared with the MBAFCC in a final summary to allow for feedback and discussion of preliminary results.

3.6 Interactive Community Workshop

Based on interview participation, the study population for the workshop was adapted to ensure a diversity of perspectives were represented and to target perspectives identified as missing or lacking. Specific diversity criteria were developed by the MBAFCC to aid in recruitment, they include:

1. Parents with Kids under 12
2. Parents with Kids 12+
3. Youth aged 16 - 20
4. Young Adult aged 20 - 30
5. Born here, left, returned
6. Retired
7. Lived here Long time
8. Recently moved here
9. Live outside but "Affiliated"
10. Active in community
11. Less active
12. Business owner

Recruitment for the interactive workshop was undertaken by the MBAFCC through emailing individuals that met the above listed diversity criteria. With the goal of having a number of participants representing a diversity of perspectives, about 80 community members were invited by a blind carbon copy recruitment email (Appendix B).

The format of the 3-hour community workshop developed from World Café methodology, which helps participants engage in dialogue around critical questions, to build personal connections, and to promote shared learning (Fouché & Light, 2011), addresses four key questions:

1. What is your vision for an all-age-friendly Mahone Bay?
2. What is already happening that makes Mahone Bay all-age-friendly?
3. What are some actions we can take to build upon this?
4. What is a priority?

With the generous financial support of the MBAFCC, a space was booked at the Mahone Bay Centre for the evening of February 22nd with a back-up reservation for February 23rd in preparation for inclement weather.

The primary researcher and two assistants, Dr. Georgia Klein and Dr. Heidi Lauckner, facilitated the workshop following the workshop schedule (Appendix D). As

described in this schedule, participants were stepped through the informed consent process and were asked to fill out a self-identifying diversity checklist to gauge the diversity present. Once this was complete, the town Mayor, David Devenne, and the MBAFCC Chair, Penny Carver, gave an opening welcome.

Data was collected by the means of participant notes and written responses to the 4 core questions (Appendix F, G, and H), and researcher observations. The last question of the workshop serves as one part of the data analysis as participants were asked to determine what action areas are most important to act on.

Additional analysis in the workshop occurred when the primary researcher shared preliminary themes from the key informant interviews and sought community feedback.

3.7 Interactive Community Workshop Analysis

Data analysis for the community workshop is conducted in two ways. First, by asking participants to prioritize previously identified action areas: using two colour-coded stickers, participants were asked to rank their first and second choice (Appendix H). First choices (red) were given a weighting of two, and second choices (green) were given a weighting of one. Using this method, community priority action areas were identified and ranked. Additional data analysis occurred after the workshop by compiling the results of workshop data, consisting of researcher observations and participants' answers to the questions, to the interview themes.

3.8 Final Analysis

Key themes and action items identified from the interviews were cross-referenced with the data generated from the community workshop. This allowed

the researcher to identify areas of overlap and provide more depth to the many suggestions brought up in the community workshop.

4.0 Findings

Combining the key informant interviews and the community workshop, data was collected from a total of 29 community members.

For the interviews, efforts to ensure the collection of perspectives met the diversity criteria set by the MBAFCC: At least one interviewee out of six is identified as having an affiliation with Mahone Bay as a resident, business owner, or organization; is identified as having a young family, teen children, or were identified as “single/youthful middle aged”; identified as being new to Mahone Bay, a long-time resident, or a medium-time resident. Other diversity considerations cannot be discussed here as they would isolate potential key informants and breach our confidentiality agreement.

For the community workshop, a total of 23 participants, not including the Dalhousie facilitation team participated in the community workshop. The optional self-identifying checklist assisted in identifying demographics:

Category:	RSVP'd:	Attended:
Parents with Kids under 12	7	4
Parents with Kids 12+	1+	1
Youth aged 16 - 20	2	2
Young Adult aged 20 - 30	1	1
Born here, left, returned	2	2
Retired	6	5
Lived here Long time	17	8
Recently moved here	7	7
Live outside but "Affiliated"	4	2
Active in community	20	9
Less active	3	4

Business owner	9	9
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To communicate research findings, data from the interviews and workshop are compiled and broken down into three main sections which describe: what community members think an all-age-friendly Mahone Bay looks like, what is already happening to promote all age friendliness, and what can be done to improve it.

4.1 What Does an All-Age-Friendly Mahone Bay Look Like To You?

During the workshop, participants were invited to share ideas with the other participants at their table and write down their “visions” on sticky notes. Results were read and discussed with the larger group, and notes collected at the front of the room. Some individuals misinterpreted the question, which resulted in the sharing of some action items, such responses have been moved to the appropriate section. The relevant responses include:

- Having health care
- Having a licensed day care
- Home based businesses
- Safety
- Healthy community
- Appropriate/affordable housing
- Transportation
- Jobs for young people
- Diverse population (age, gender, race, ability, culture, religion)
- Town Wi-Fi
- Community spaces
- Community garden
- Access to wild space
- Space and programs for youth

4.2 What is Already Happening in Mahone Bay to Promote All-Age-Friendliness?

Participants identified examples existing all-age-friendly features of Mahone Bay that fell into the categories of transportation, business and employment, programs and events, physical infrastructure, and social capital.

Transportation. Participants identified two existing social services and two businesses which ameliorate transportation needs. The Victorian Order of Nurses (VON) and Seniors Helping Seniors organizations not only help seniors with errands and other transportation needs, but will also extend support to other community members in need if the services are available. In addition, the grocery store and pharmacy both have delivery services, which seniors and others in need of aid may utilize.

Business and employment. Participants mentioned that the HUB, young businesses, established businesses, and casual business mentoring were all-age-friendly. The HUB, an internet co-working space, invites other businesses into town which makes it easier for all ages to find employment. The combination of young and established businesses is identified as all-age-friendly as it improves the economics of the town and has given rise to the informal business mentoring occurring between established and new entrepreneurs in Mahone Bay.

Programs and events such as the Meet the Neighbour's Potluck, legion brunches, bridge clubs, trivia night at the pub, free swing music in the summer, badminton at Mahone Bay Centre, quilting groups, art classes, After the Bell Program, the teen and senior tech help, and Thursday nights at the Gazebo in the summer, were mentioned to be important in increasing and consolidating all-age-friendliness of the community. Of these programs and events, the Meet the Neighbours Potluck, Trivia night at the pub, the Mahone Bay Centre programs, and the teen and senior tech help were predominant in the interviews as being beneficial to the town's all-age-friendliness.

Physical infrastructure. Participants identified that Mahone Bay has numerous existing all-age-friendly infrastructure. One participant described Mahone Bay that has

almost all the “critical infrastructure” of a town, such as: a grocery store, pharmacy, post office, clinic, and schools. In addition, other participants identified that the parking is accessible and all-age-friendly.

Outdoor recreation. Mahone Bay has many outdoor recreational activities that were identified to be all-age-friendly. These include: snowshoeing, fat biking, tennis, soccer, and walking trails as they cater to a variety of age groups.

Social Capital. Participants most commonly describe Mahone Bay as a friendly welcoming town. It is mentioned that this translates into much of the existing all-age-friendliness, as community members are very pleasant to all ages. This, in addition to the high rates and high social value of volunteerism, give the community many levels of social capital to tap into. One participant explained that Mahone Bay has one of the largest volunteer bases in Lunenburg county and that almost everyone in the town volunteers at one or more of the town’s festivals and events. Related to volunteering, another participant expressed their gratitude that it is easy to affect change. A couple of participants explained that if you have an idea or want to change something, there is most times limited “red tape” and other community members willing to support you in your endeavours.

4.3 What Can be Done to Improve Mahone Bay’s All-Age-Friendliness?

When asked how Mahone Bay can improve its all-age-friendliness, participants made a number of suggestions which are categorised into the following themes: transportation, housing, business and employment, programs and events, communication, physical infrastructure, and social capital.

Transportation was identified to be a barrier to the town’s all-age-friendliness as it impacts a wide range of age groups, particularly seniors, young families with one car, and individuals who cannot drive or do not own a car. It was explained that for seniors, transportation barriers still inhibit them from taking part in various activities despite the strides that have been taken to provide seniors with transportation options, such as the VON and Helping Hands. Since these services operate on a traditional Monday to Friday 9-5 schedule it “presents a barrier to folks who may just want to go to a card game or may just want to go visit a friend in the evening”. For young families, one participant mentioned that they are often having difficulties with transportation if they only own one car. For example, when one of the parents need to take the car for work or it is otherwise unavailable, these families still need to get to afterschool activities outside of the town. For individuals without cars it was identified as similarly inhibiting since they have few affordable options.

Specific suggestions to improve transportation include: a car rental service, shuttle bus service to Bridgewater once or twice a week, a local taxi or Uber service, and an expansion of hours for the VON or Helping Hands to include some evenings and weekends. To move forward, it was identified that the current taxi bylaw needs to be adapted to accommodate any form of local taxi service. To address this, an immediate “next step” was suggested: hosting a transportation event to gather ideas for improving transportation in the town and forming a committee to act on the results.

Housing was identified as an area for improvement for people interested in moving to Mahone Bay and current residents who inhabit large houses. Participants described that there are limited opportunities for affordable, low risk, or alternative

housing and an improvement to this area was identified to benefit a wide range of ages. One participant explained, “My parents live outside of the community and they are wanting to come back to the community and get rid of their large house and get into something that is easier to maintain or to rent but there are not many options.” Other participants identified that there are likely many young families that would love to live here but who are deterred by high housing prices.

Suggestions mainly revolved around adapting existing buildings but also included building new infrastructure. Participants identified that for seniors who own big old houses, maintaining it is likely a labour intensive and risky endeavor. A solution to this was proposed by a participant: “What would be nicer would be to take those large and gorgeous, but undoubtedly impossible to heat and live in homes and redesign them into apartments or condos and make them livable.” Another suggestion surrounding these houses included allowing a young family to live in with the seniors to supplement the costs and maintenance of the house in exchange for subsidised living costs. This would provide young families the opportunity to live in an affordable home in a safe community.

The suggestions surrounding new infrastructure included expanding the new senior housing to become life-long housing, and building some tiny homes. According to a couple participants, the town is currently looking to expand the options for senior housing. One participant suggested that the town should expand this to become life-long housing and not exclude younger generations. Another opportunity to improve housing for all ages is building tiny homes. A participant described that because tiny homes could

be rented or sold for much less than a full-sized house, having tiny home options would attract young people to move into the town.

While there are many ideas for improving housing, it was cautioned that for many of these changes, bylaws would need to be adapted particularly in reference to the alternative housing. A couple of participants described that to have a co-housing situation where a home owner rents out part of their home to another person or family, housing bylaws will need to be changed. This also applies to converting the large homes into condo or apartment style housing.

Business and employment. Securing employment was identified as a barrier to all-age-friendliness specifically for young people or families interested in moving to Mahone Bay, and to youth who live in the area. Some suggestions for improving employment opportunities for young people and families include the continuation of businesses like the HUB, for the town to assist people in setting up home-based businesses, to set up a town-wide Wi-Fi network, and to set up a business mentoring program. In supporting the HUB, participants agreed that it would help newcomers work for or set up their own internet based businesses, thus enabling young people to move to Mahone Bay and earn a living. Setting up a town wide Wi-Fi network was described to aid not only new start-up businesses, but existing ones as well. A couple of participants explained that when they first arrived in Mahone Bay, it took them almost a month before they could get Wi-Fi installed in their homes, so they had to “poach” free internet from downtown businesses whilst sitting in their cars doing work. Other participants mentioned that by having a town-wide Wi-Fi, it would also provide businesses an opportunity to advertise to visiting tourists and locals alike. In reference to the business mentoring

program, several participants identified the opportunity for existing business owners to mentor new entrepreneurs in town to facilitate more people and more business coming into Mahone Bay. While it was identified that this happens informally, participants agreed that it would be beneficial to amplify and formalize this to encourage newcomers to set up businesses.

Participants identified that employment opportunities for youth are sparse. Two participants explained that if youth wanted to work while in school, the only opportunities results in forfeiting their weekends as there are no jobs available during the week in the evenings. Suggestions for improving their employment opportunities include creating a “Take Your Child to My Work Day”, and allowing for economic growth and subsequent employment increase by supporting local businesses. The “Take Your Child to My Work Day” was proposed to allow youth the opportunity to experience a variety of occupations that may differ from that of their parents. Additionally, participants believed youth would have more opportunities for employment if small businesses were assisted to expand beyond the one-employee-threshold.

Programs and events. Participants identified several opportunities for improving the all-age-friendliness of programs and events and in turn, the use of programs and events to improve the all-age-friendliness of the town. Two popular ideas for improving programs and events include adapting the timing of events and offering child care. It was identified that many existing events and services are inaccessible to children in school or those who work more traditional 9-5 hours. A specific example are events at the Mahone Bay Centre: it was described that many events run at 2:00 pm. which only works for retired individuals because working adults are often occupied until 4 or 5 pm, and school

gets out at 2:10 pm. Adapting the timing of events, or offering additional programs and events during the evenings and weekends, could increase accessibility for all ages. Providing child care at such events and programs was also identified as improving the accessibility for all ages, and thus promoting its all-age-friendliness. Participants describe the difficulty for young families to attend events and programs because they need to “scramble to find child care”, or bring their children. The former of these options is made additionally difficult because of lack of formal child care in town, and the latter is also difficult for evening programs and events as they often straddle supper- and bed-time. An additional suggestion was to host more community events with a no-alcohol policy. This was identified to be friendlier for young families, adults who do not drink, and those under the age of 19.

Three suggestions were made to improve the all-age-friendliness of the town using programs and events: first, open some form of child care. Participants explained that due to lack of child care, young families drive out of town to employ those services. The two other suggestions include running more intergenerational programs and having two “Meet the Neighbour’s Potluck” once a year. Intergenerational programs were described as programs that connect people of all ages such as children, youth, and seniors. Participants identified this as beneficial because “they like spending time together” and there are successful examples of such programs in the town. One example given by a participant is the technology day the kids group had at the senior centre. At this event, youth helped seniors with their technology issues which was very helpful for the seniors, but turned out to be the kids’ favourite event of the year. The third suggestion was to have the “Meet the Neighbours Potluck” twice a year. Participants describe this as

an amazing way to welcome newcomers into the community. One participant even identifies this as one of the two factors that helped them to settle into the town almost immediately after moving.

Communication. Participants directly and indirectly identified the lack of communication about existing events, programs, and services. Participants directly mentioned that improved communication channels would improve the ability for all ages to access events, programs, and services. In the words of one participant, “There’s so many things for people to get involved in to feel like they’re part of the community. But you have to be able to find out about it.” Two key informants mentioned that information was not accessible to them because it either isn’t posted in a central location or information is targeted and only advertises for a particular segment of the population. Some suggestions to improve this identified by a combination of key informants include creating a central billboard or a community newsletter advertising information on all events and services happening in town.

Communication between generations was identified as an area for improvement. One key informant explained that the community members need to be careful not to silo their thinking. They gave an example: “There’s a new movement to bring a new nursing home into Mahone Bay, which is fabulous, but I also think we need to understand that that has to be done in a way that does not negatively impact our young people so that we are paying attention to both sides.” This example also refers to another observation by the primary researcher and some participants made: the separation between young versus older community members. In addition to this, there was also a distinction between the long-time residents versus “come from aways”. While these separations are not

inherently negative, it is important to be aware of the social distinction and how it may impact social relations and decisions moving forward.

Physical infrastructure: Key informants identified several suggestions related to the physical infrastructure of the town. First, they identified the need to maintain its critical infrastructure which includes maintaining the town’s health services, school, grocery store, post office, etc. to ensure all ages can live in and be supported by Mahone Bay. Second, they identified the need to fill two age-related infrastructure gaps: creating a nursing home, and creating some form of child care. Key informants identified that the town is currently in the process of creating a nursing home. As mentioned in the previous section, while this is a positive step for the town, one key informant wanted to ensure it was not being done in a way that negatively impacted the young people in the community. A couple key informants identified the opportunity to combine the senior centre with the other piece of social infrastructure that it “desperately needs”: child care. One person explained: “I'd really love to see a collaboration between the nursing home, a daycare and somewhere where the teenagers can hang out right in one building. I think that's the way it's going in Scandinavia and I think that's the way should we should do it here because they really love hanging out together.”

Other suggestions include: improving wheelchair and stroller accessibility to businesses, improving or getting a physical recreational facility that is accessible and the right size, and creating more spaces within town where all ages can relax and “hangout”. In relation to this last point, several specific suggestions include: create some form of “non-rushed zone” in the Mahone Bay Centre, like the recreational facility in

Bridgewater, create a community garden, have more coffee shops or outdoor spaces where all ages can ‘hang out’, and to invite the farmers market back.

Social Capital. While participants explained that there is lots of social capital within the town of Mahone Bay, it was also cautioned that because of the small population, there are fewer people to draw resources from. One participant explained that some community members feel over worked or burnt out and that sometimes efforts to support or improve the community occasionally result in only aiding a few people. Two suggestions to improve this are to invite more people to settle into Mahone Bay, and to “tap into” the recently retired senior population. One participant explained that they believe the town is “leaving some talent at the table”. The same participant explained that when they first moved into town, a community ambassador named Al Brian came knocking on their door and immediately signed them up to volunteer on a committee. This participant described this as one of the main actions that helped them to feel welcome and a part of the community as it: “completely change the way that I settled into the town because then I was automatically on a committee with a whole bunch of different people of all ages and involved in the biggest thing that happens the town every year. And it was all thanks to Al Brian.”

4.4 What is a Priority?

During the community workshop, participants were asked to rank the identified action areas into the first and second priority. Based on the weighting of the first choice and second choices, where participants' first choices were given a weighting of two and second choices were given a weighting of one, the priorities ranked and weighted are:

- 1) Improve communication of events, 32
- 2) Child care/day care, 20
- 3) Change housing bylaw, 6
- 3) Expand Parks and rec department to include other events, 6
- 4) Host a transportation evening/adapt bylaw/create app for local taxi, 2
- 4) Cross walk safety and reviewing traffic flow at the monument, 2
- 5) Get community Wi-Fi, 1
- 6) Shift timing of events/programs, 0
- 6) Better use of waterfront for events, 0

5.0 Discussion and Recommendations

Data collected from both the interviews and workshop suggest two things: first, that the topic of all-age-friendliness is of high interest and is relevant to the current needs of the community. Second, Mahone Bay is well positioned to accomplish many of the changes identified by the community.

The community's interest in the process was clearly visible through the high levels of participant engagement. For example, during interviews almost everyone was enthusiastic about the topic and every participant expressed many ideas to contribute. During the workshop participants were engaged throughout the entire workshop, so much so that it required creative efforts to gently draw conversations to a close to move on to the next phase of the workshop. Moreover, participants lingered up to 30 minutes after the closing of the workshop talking about the study and the ideas discussed. This nicely demonstrates the relevance of bringing diverse groups together in a dialogue which will be maintained beyond the limits of the workshop, and fosters further action. Significance and relevance of project and topic was accented by the town's leadership introducing the study and remaining throughout the entire three-hour workshop. This, combined with the views expressed in *A Time to Reach Out*, the observations made by the MBAFCC, and some of the comments from participants, suggests that there is momentousness and motivation to address the actions proposed by community members to improve the all-age-friendliness of the community.

During both, the interviews and the workshop, it was clear that Mahone Bay is well equipped for forward moving action and change. Not only does Mahone Bay have many existing aspects currently supporting all-age-friendliness, the community has

resilient social resources that are made up of agents of change. In working with the MBAFCC the research team experienced openness and enthusiasm to collaborate on evidence-based research with the university, and an eagerness to make Mahone Bay more supportive and welcoming for all ages. The well-developed social capital of the town, namely the willingness to volunteer and give back to the community, makes the community well prepared moving forward.

While Mahone Bay may be well equipped to move forward towards their vision of all age friendliness, this study synthesizes several recommendations:

Identify “low hanging fruit”. To retain momentum and encourage further discussion on the topic of all-age-friendliness in Mahone Bay, it is important to identify and act on the “low hanging fruit”, i.e. easily actionable propositions. The identification of these low hanging fruit can be done by the broader community or the MBAFCC, but should result in a list of actionable items that can be completed in immediate next steps. Sharing the accomplishment of these items through various media channels will help carry forward momentum and encourage further engagement with the community.

Act on priority action areas. Acting on the two identified key priority areas is beneficial in two ways: first, any progress towards improving their all-age-friendliness will be of benefit to the community, and second, it may further engage the community as action on these areas shows the community the MBAFCC is responsive to community input.

Leverage community resources: As previously mentioned, many participants identified that Mahone Bay has many social resources such as high levels of volunteerism, and community spirit and willingness to change. This, in combination with

the existing social buy-in to these all-age-friendly ideas, assures that the community is well set up for change.

Be aware of diversity considerations. While this study took steps to improve the diversity of participants to address some of the original study's limitations, attention should be brought to assure more diversity. For example, only participants over the age of 16 were recruited for this study, and only two participants represented the 16-20 age range. If a larger number of youth or even children were involved in the study, results would likely be different. Moving forward, it is recommended to continue to actively seek diversity on matters of all-age-friendliness to capture the views of all ages and community perspectives particularly youth. Other diversity indicators that can be considered moving forward include gender, cultural, and ethnic diversity.

Be aware of potential barriers. Over-tapped social resources and climate change are two potential barriers to take into consideration. Over-tapped social resource may result in a limited number of or low commitment of community members willing to contribute to such a cause. If this is the case, the topic will need to be personally important for them to invest time and effort. Climate change is a broader barrier to the all-age-friendliness initiative. While the ideas of all-age-friendliness may improve the town's social resiliency, in the face of climate change and sea level rise, Mahone Bay is likely to face very real barriers to improving the town's all-age-friendliness when critical pieces of the town's infrastructure are compromised (see Manuel, Rapaport, Keefe, & Krawchenko, 2015).

6.0 Conclusions

The motivation for this study stems from the growing recognition that rural Nova Scotia communities need to combat population decline and encourage the immigration of youth and young people, and the interest of the MBAFCC to be responsive to the changing needs and views of age-friendliness and their community. To address this, the MBAFCC identified the need to examine how the community can expand its age-friendliness to all ages. To assist the MBAFCC in this, the research team worked collaboratively with the committee to identify community-generated strategies for improving the town's all-age-friendliness. The results of the study indicate many aspects of the community are already all-age-friendly but there are numerous valuable suggestions made by community members that will assist in the realization of a vision of an all-age-friendly Mahone Bay community. The contents of this thesis will provide the MBAFCC with specific suggestions to act on and recommendations to take into consideration. Moving forward, it is the research team's hope that the community of Mahone Bay and the MBAFCC will benefit from the findings of this research and continue down the path to a more socially, economically, and environmentally resilient community.

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8.0 Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Recruitment Materials

Dear ____,

Thank you very much for agreeing to help recruit for this interview! Below I have written an introduction of the research and a summary of what people will be asked to do including the study risks. Attached you will find letter going over the study in more detail. I invite you to share this email the individuals listed in our previous communications by forwarding a copy of the below email in a private message to each participant (to ensure their privacy). Please make it clear that this is completely voluntary.

Thank you very much for your help! If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Have a great day,

Alice Main,

Tel: 902-412-1675

alice.main@dal.ca

Dear potential participant!

I am inviting you to participate in a follow up study on the Mahone Bay Age-Friendliness initiative. As part of an undergraduate honours program in Sustainability at Dalhousie University, I am carrying out a study to learn what members of the Mahone Bay community think about social inclusion and civic participation for all generations.

I have invited the members of the Age Friendly Community Advisory Committee to share this email with you to invite you to act as one of six unique key informants. If you agree to participate in this study, you would be asked to answer several semi-structured questions in an hour-long recorded telephone interview. All questions that will be asked of you are related to age friendliness and how it can extend to all ages. Some questions may include:

- How or where do you see age-friendliness in your community? How do you see this applying to all ages?
- What aspects of Mahone Bay already translate age friendliness to all ages? What are ways to improve this?
- What are some key barriers and opportunities to extend age friendliness to all ages in Mahone Bay?
- What is the most important aspect of intergenerational age friendliness to you? To your community?

Data collected from all the interviews will be de-identified and aggregated. After initial analysis, results will be presented to the community in an interactive workshop in February for further analysis.

We do not foresee any risks in partaking in this study, however there is a chance you may feel social pressure to participate. To mitigate this risk the research team will keep your choice to participate or not to participate confidential. Additionally, all data collected will be stripped of any identifiable information and you will be assigned an alias name to ensure that you will not be identified in anyway in our analysis and reports.

Participation in this study is totally voluntary. You are welcome decline any questions or stop the interview at any time, and you can request to remove your data from in this study any time up until February 15th. Because after this date all data will be aggregated and all identifiable information connecting you to the data will be gone.

I have attached a copy of a letter of information about the study that gives you full details if you are interested in learning more.

This study has been reviewed and cleared by the Dalhousie Research Ethics Board. If you have any ethical concerns or questions about your rights as a participant you can contact: Research Ethics, Dalhousie University at (902) 494-1462 or email: ethics@dal.ca (and reference REB file # 2016-4048).

Thank you so much for your time and consideration! If you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask me.

Alice Main,

Undergraduate Student,

Dalhousie University, Halifax Nova Scotia

Tel: 902-412-1675

alice.main@dal.ca



Project title: Towards All Age-Friendliness in Mahone Bay: A Collaborative Study

Lead researcher:

Alice Main, Undergraduate Student, Dalhousie University, College of Sustainability
Contact information: email: alice.main@dal.ca, telephone: 902-412-1675

Other researchers:

Georgia Klein, Professor and student supervisor, Dalhousie University, College of Sustainability
Heidi Lauckner, research advisor, Dalhousie University, School of Occupational Therapy

Introduction

We invite you to take part in a research study being conducted by Alice Main, a student at Dalhousie University as part of a continuation of the Mahone Bay Age Friendliness Initiative. Choosing whether or not to take part in this research is entirely your choice. There will be no impact on the services you receive or your social standing if you decide not to participate in the research. The information below tells you about what is involved in the research, what you will be asked to do and about any benefit, risk, inconvenience or discomfort that you might experience.

Please ask as many questions as you like. If you have any further questions regarding the study please direct them to Alice Main at (902) 412-1675 or alice.main@dal.ca. If you have any ethical concerns about your participation in this research, you may contact Research Ethics, Dalhousie University at (902) 494-1462, or email: ethics@dal.ca (reference REB file # 2016-4048).

Purpose and Outline of the Research Study

The goal of this study is to identify projects that can help Mahone Bay improve social connection between all generations to increase citizen engagement and connectivity within the community. This study looks to identify:

- What aspects of Mahone Bay already enable social connection between generations,
- What an ideal community of involved and socially connected generations look like, and,
- What steps can be taken to become this ideal community

All data collected from your interview will be de-identified and compiled with other interview data for presentation and analysis by community members in a community workshop in mid-February, the location to be determined.

Who Can Take Part in the Research Study?

You may participate in this study if your primary affiliation is with the Municipality of Mahone Bay, are above 16 years old, and can communicate in English or provide your own translator.

What You Will Be Asked to Do

You will be asked to participate in an hour-long audio-recorded telephone interview scheduled at a time convenient to you. In this interview, you will be asked several semi structured interview questions such as:

1. How would you define “age friendliness”? How do you see this applying to all ages?
2. What aspects of Mahone Bay already translate all-age-friendliness? What are ways to improve this?
3. What is the most important aspect of all-age friendliness to you? To your community?

4. What are some key barriers to extending age friendliness to all ages in Mahone Bay? Opportunities?

Possible Benefits, Risks and Discomforts

Participating in this study may not benefit you, but we might identify some key barriers and develop some effective projects to address them. It is our hope the community of Mahone Bay will see benefits of this study moving forward.

There are minimal risks associated with this study, however since we are recruiting through connections of the Mahone Bay Age Friendliness Advisory Committee, there is a chance that there may be some social pressure to participate in this study (or not to). However, your choice to participate or not to participate will remain confidential with the research team.

Compensation / Reimbursement

There will be no compensation or reimbursements provided for this study.

How your information will be protected?

Privacy: Steps will be taken to ensure others outside of the study do not know you participated. Any reports written about the study will be written in such a way that third parties are not aware of who has been recruited.

Confidentiality: When you first contact us about participating in the study, you will be assigned an alias name. Your name and any other personal information (such as contact information) will be kept on one file that will be locked in Dr. Lauckner's office. The assigned alias will be used in any written documentation of the study and will be untraceable to you. This means that ***you will not be identified in any way in our reports.*** The researchers will not tell anyone your name. The original interview collected from you will be stored in a locked file and any electronic copies will be deleted after the data has been aggregated. This aggregated data will be stored on a password-protected computer so only the research team will have access to it.

Data retention: Information that you provide to us will be kept in a locked cabinet in Dr. Lauckner's office for one year. After this time, all files will be destroyed by Dr. Lauckner.

If You Decide to Stop Participating

You are free to leave the study at any time. If you decide to stop participating at any point in the study and you can also decide to have your data removed up until February 15th. After that time, it will not be possible for us to remove it because data will already be anonymized and combined with other data collected from the other interviews.

How to Obtain Results

If you would like to see a summary of the results please contact Alice Main and she we will send you a pamphlet with research findings upon completion of the study.

Questions

We are happy to talk with you about any questions or concerns you may have about your participation in this research study. Please contact Alice Main (at 902 412-1675, alice.main@dal.ca) or Georgia Klein (at (902) 494-4031, georgia.klein@dal.ca) at any time with questions, comments, or concerns about the research study.

Interested in Participating in an interactive workshop?

If you are interested in participating further in this study we welcome you to come to the second component: an interactive workshop. The interactive workshop will be held in mid-February. To learn more or to sign up, please contact Alice Main at 902-412-1675 or alice.main@dal.ca

Appendix B: Workshop Recruitment Materials

Hello ~

You are one of 25+ people receiving this message by blind copy because your name was suggested as someone who would have ideas about Mahone Bay's recent population growth and its emergence as a vibrant multi-age community. The town's Age Friendly Community Committee has initiated a research process to better understand these developments and to develop ideas about what might be done to influence positive change. We hope you can help with this!

We're asking you to do 2 things:

1. [Attend an evening discussion about Mahone Bay as an all-age friendly community on Wednesday, February 22.](#) See attached invitation for details. Kindly RSVP Penny on or before Friday, Feb 17th. penny.carver@townofmahonebay.ca

2. Send us names of others who have good ideas about this issue so we can balance and complete our invitation list. Please include email, text or messaging contact and indicate which of the following categories your names fit:

- *Parents of kids under 12*
- *Parents of kids over 12*
- *Youth age 16-20 ****
- *Young Adults ****
- *Went Away & Returned*
- *New Resident*
- *Long-time Resident*
- *Lives in MODL but attached to town by work or volunteer activity*
- *Retiree*
- *Active in Community*
- *Not engaged in community ****
- *Business owner*

Thanking you in advance and hoping to see you on the 22nd (We'll let you know if we must use the Snow Date - February 23rd). See below a letter from Alice Main, our researcher.

Penny and Simone

Penny Carver and Simone Chia-Kangata
Councillors, Town of Mahone Bay
Chair and Vice-Chair, Age Friendly Community Committee

* * * * *

Dear potential participant,

We are writing to invite you to an exciting and informative evening event on Wednesday February 22nd. [At 5:30 p.m. that evening we are inviting you and other engaged community members to partake in meaningful discussion around all-age-friendliness and intergenerational inclusivity](#) in Mahone Bay. This event is part of a joint action research project

put on by the Age Friendly Community Committee and Dalhousie University. Local food will be provided for filling mouths and stomachs for the 2-2.5-hour workshop.

Please have a look at both attached documents. The first is our formal invitation with the major details such as date, time, location, and topics to be covered. The second is the consent form with detailed information on the study and your participation. There is no need to sign this consent form, it is just for your information. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask me.

As a precaution, we have set up an alternate snow date for the next evening (Thursday the 23rd) if the weather is too bad to get together. We will be in touch through email if this is the case.

Thank you so much for your time and I hope to see you on the 22nd!

Alice Main,
Undergraduate Student,
Dalhousie University, Halifax Nova Scotia
Tel: 902-412-1675
alice.main@dal.ca

How can we Support Mahone Bay as a Thriving Multi-Age Community?



What makes Mahone Bay age friendly for everyone?

How can we continue to attract all ages to come here?

What's working, what needs improvement?

Please join us for a friendly evening of ideas and conversation while we share some locally prepared food.

We'd like your ideas on how to make Mahone Bay a great place to live for people of all ages. We hope to identify key action areas for the community.

22 FEB

Location:
Mahone Bay Centre

Time:
5:30-8:00 p.m.

Have your say!

This action research project is a joint initiative between Dalhousie University and the Mahone Bay Age Friendly Community Committee.

Contact Alice Main for more information:
alice.main@dal.ca



Project title: Towards All Age-Friendliness in Mahone Bay: A Collaborative Study

Lead researcher:

Alice Main, Undergraduate Student, Dalhousie University, College of Sustainability
Contact information: email: alice.main@dal.ca, telephone: 902-412-1675

Other researchers:

Georgia Klein, Professor and student supervisor, Dalhousie University, College of Sustainability
Heidi Lauckner, Assistant Professor and research advisor, Dalhousie University, School of Occupational Therapy

Introduction

We invite you to take part in a research study being conducted by Alice Main, a student at Dalhousie University as part of a continuation of the Mahone Bay Age Friendliness Initiative. Participation in this research project is entirely your choice. There will be no impact on the services you receive or your social standing if you decide not to participate in the research. The information below tells you about what is involved in the research, what you will be asked to do, and about any benefit or risk you might experience.

If you have any further questions afterwards regarding the study please direct them to Alice Main at (902) 412-1675 or alice.main@dal.ca. If you have any ethical concerns about your participation in this research, you may also contact Research Ethics, Dalhousie University at (902) 494-1462, or email ethics@dal.ca and reference REB file # 2016-4048.

Purpose of the Research Study

The purpose of this community workshop is to gather a diverse group of other engaged and motivated community members to talk about intergenerational inclusivity in Mahone Bay. The community workshop will provide an opportunity for these community members to partake in meaningful conversation about the benefits, challenges, and opportunities of age-related inclusivity in Mahone Bay. Initially participants will be invited to validate, clarify, and broaden information gathered from informal and formal interviews based on their own experiences. In this community workshop, 30-40 involved and engaged citizens from the Mahone Bay area will gather to:

- Identify where and how Mahone Bay is expressing intergenerational inclusivity and potential barriers
- Identify key action project or action areas to amplify the benefits of an “all-age-friendly” community

Who Can Take Part in the Research Study

You may participate in this study if you live in the Municipality of Mahone Bay, are above 16 years of age, and can communicate in English or provide your own translator.

What You Will Be Asked to Do

You will be asked to meet for one 2-3-hour group meeting at the Mahone Bay Centre. In this meeting, you and other participants will be asked to participate in a few of individual and group brainstorming activities.

Compensation / Reimbursement

To thank you for your time, we will be providing snacks and beverages during the session. Otherwise there will be no compensation or reimbursements provided for this study.

How your information will be protected?

Privacy: Steps will be taken to ensure others outside of the study do not know you participated, however we cannot guarantee that other participants will not identify you outside of the study. Other participants in the interactive workshop will be asked to respect your privacy and by sharing your involvement or repeating what you have contributed during the workshop. Any reports written about the study will be written in such a way that third parties are not aware of who has been recruited.

Confidentiality: When you first contact us about participating in the study, you will be assigned an alias name. The assigned alias will be used in any written documentation of the study and will be untraceable to you. This means that *you will not be identified in any way in our reports*. The people who work with us have an obligation to keep all research information private. Also, we will use the alias (not your name) in our written and computer records so that the information we have about you will not be traceable to you. The researchers will not tell anyone your name. Any data collected from the interactive workshop will be stored in a locked file and any electronic copies will be stored on the researcher's password-protected computer. Any forms of the aggregated data will also be stored on the researcher's password-protected computer and only the research team will have access to it. In the rare instance that we see or suspect abuse we are obliged to break this agreement and contact legal authorities.

Data retention: Information that you provide to us will be kept in a locked cabinet in Dr. Lauckner's office or will be on the researcher's password protected computer for one year. After this time, all files will be destroyed.

If You Decide to Stop Participating

You are free to leave the study at any time. If you decide to stop participating at any point in the study you can leave at any point and you can also decide to have your data removed from the study up until February 15th. After that time, it will not be possible for us to remove it because data will already be de-identified and processed.

Possible Benefits, Risks and Discomforts

Participating in this study may not benefit you, but we might identify some key barriers and develop some effective projects to address them. It is our hope the community of Mahone Bay will see benefits of this study moving forward.

There are minimal risks associated with this study but since it is a group interview in your community, it is very likely that you will have personal connections with other individuals in the study. There is a possibility that differences of opinions may lead to social discomfort or that your identification will not remain confidential outside of the study. However, the research topic does not touch on sensitive personal content and participants will be reminded after the study to keep the identification of others private.

How to Obtain Results

If you would like more information after participating, include your contact information at the end of the signature page or contact Alice Main at alice.main@dal.ca.

Signature Page

Project Title: Towards All Age-Friendliness in Mahone Bay: A Collaborative Study
(REB file # 2016-4048)

Lead Researcher: Alice Main, College of Sustainability Dalhousie University

I, the research participant have read the explanation about this study. I have been given the opportunity to discuss it and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I have been asked to take part in an action research workshop that will occur at the Mahone Bay Centre, and that the workshop will be documented. I understand direct quotes of things I write may be used without identifying me. I agree to respect the privacy and confidentiality of other participants by not sharing what individuals have said during the workshop. My participation is voluntary and I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time until February 15th. I am over the age of 16. I agree that direct quotes may be used from the interactive workshop without identifying me. I consent to participate in this study.

Participant Name

Signature

Date

Appendix C: Interview Guide

Hello. May I please speak with [insert participant's name here]? I am Alice Main calling for our telephone interview. Is this still a good time? [If yes, continue, if no, ask to arrange another time]

Before we begin, I would like to go over what this study is, what your role is, how your participation will be confidential, and how the information today will be treated. I am summarizing what is written on the letter of consent that was attached to the recruitment email initially sent to you. Please feel free to interrupt me with any questions you have.

This study is most generally looking at all-age-friendliness/age related inclusivity in Mahone Bay and how it can be amplified. If you give your consent to participate, we will partake in a recorded telephone interview where I ask you a series of questions. This should not take longer than an hour. If we approach the hour mark I will check in with you and see if you would like to continue. With that being said, you can choose to leave this interview at any time.

To protect your confidentiality as a participant in this study, all the information we collect from the interviews will be de-identified - meaning any information that could be used to identify you will be taken out or replaced with fake place-holders (such as fake names). The de-identified data from this interview will be added to the data from the other interviews before it is used to inform the second part of our research.

Do you have any questions?

[If yes, answer questions, if no continue]

I will now be asking for your verbal consent on three things, please respond verbally “yes” or “no”.

Do you agree to have this interview audio-recorded? [Yes No]

Do you agree to let researchers quote this interview without identifying you? [Yes No]

Do you agree to participate? [Yes No]

[if all yes, then proceed]

Thank you very much! Now we get started! I will be asking you a series of open-ended questions. Please take your time, there is not right or wrong answer we are interested in your genuine opinion!

1. Why do you choose to live and/or spend time in Mahone Bay?
 - Prompt: What do you like about it? What do you not like?
2. What are some of your favourite aspects of Mahone Bay?
3. What factors make you feel comfortable and connected in this community?
 - Prompt: What factors about Mahone Bay work well for you?
4. What will support you to thrive in this community?
5. What has been your experience of the community's friendliness (inclusiveness?) for you (for your age group) (for you and your family)?
6. How does that (refer to response in #1) affect your life here?
7. How important is that to you?

8. Does it contribute to your sense of community or your reasoning to live here?
9. What suggestions would you have to make Mahone Bay more friendly/inclusive for all ages?

That concludes the planned interview questions, is there anything else you believe I should know or a question that I should have asked?

Is there anything else you would like to add?

That was great! Thank you so much for taking the time out of your day to talk with me. Do have any interest in receiving a summary of the results from the study or participating in the second half of the study - an interactive workshop?

[If yes continue, if no thank them and end the call]

The workshop will be held at [enter location and date here] and will take 2-3 hours. We will be discussing findings from the literature, from the pooled data from the interviews (with nothing to identify you as the participant), and from other individuals' personal experience. Soon I can send you a consent form for more information about participating in the project. It will give you information about the project and the risks and benefits of participating. You don't have to sign the form and send it to me—I will just be providing it for your information. We will sign the form at the beginning of the interactive workshop. Would you like me to email that or send it by mail?

Appendix D: Workshop Guide

All-Age Friendliness PAR Community Workshop

Date: February 22nd 2016
Location: Mahone Bay Centre
(Time 2.5 Hours)

Alice Main, Undergraduate Student, College of Sustainability, Dalhousie University (alice.main@dal.ca)
Dr. Georgia Klein, Professor, College of Sustainability, Dalhousie University (georgia.klein@dal.ca)
Dr. Heidi Lauckner, Professor, School of Occupational Therapy, Dalhousie University
(heidi.lauckner@dal.ca)

Meeting Objectives:

- To engage community members in critical dialogue around all-age-friendliness in Mahone Bay
- To identify the strengths of Mahone Bay's all-age-friendliness and opportunities for improvement
- To identify and prioritize action areas based on their feasibility

Number of Participants: 10-40

Tasks to Complete Before Day of Event

Alice and Georgia:

- Graphic facilitation template
- Agenda template
- Ask Heidi about what extra data could be collected (in regards to taking notes on the process to inform methods/data)
- Prep of findings to be shared with group

AF Committee:

- Organize food for event
- Look into hiring a graphic facilitator
- Send reminder email to participants

Materials to Bring and Prepared Day Of:

Alice and Georgia:

- Graphic facilitation guide for the meeting
- Agenda
- Flipcharts
- 80+ red dot stickers
- 80+ green dot stickers
- 40+ markers
- Large paper roll
- Butcher paper
- 70+ copies of signature page
- 40+ copies of letter of consent
- Cow Bell

AF Committee:

- Pick up and bring food for the event
- Bring cups, utensils, napkins, plates etc.
- Open conference room for set-up

Schedule

Timing	Activity	Notes	Materials
4:00 – 5:00 (1 hour)	Set up	<p>AF Committee: Gain access to room to let Alice, Georgia, and Heidi into the room to set up for 4:00 p.m.</p> <p>Alice, Georgia, and Heidi (and others willing to help): Set up conference room tables with butcher paper, markers, and sticky notes. Tape up graphic facilitation guide and agenda. Set up food table with local treats, set up registration table with letters of consent and a contact sheet. Make and put up signs directing people to the location if necessary.</p>	Keys to room, butcher paper, lager piece of paper, flip charts, food, eating utensils
5:00 – 5:30 (30 mins)	Meet and Greet	<p>Purpose: Time for participants to arrive, get food, and socialize</p> <p>Alice, Georgia, and Heidi (and others willing to help): Welcome participants, introduce the informed consent process, invite them to make and don a name tag, invite them to add their email to the contact list for more information about the study, direct them to the food and beverages, explain any housekeeping business (if necessary).</p>	Name tags, 10 pens, 3 markers, letters of consent, signature page, contact page
5:30 – 5:45 (15 mins)	Welcome and Agenda Review	<p>Purpose: welcome participants, review of meeting purpose and agenda, and go over informed consent.</p> <p>Everyone: Encourage participants to settle into available seating for 5:30.</p> <p>David Devenne: Initial welcome to introduce the AFC committee.</p> <p>Age Friendly Committee: Welcome participants briefly, link this project to committee priorities, introduce Alice, Georgia, Heidi, and other helpers.</p> <p>Alice: Thank MBAFCC, thank participants for coming, explain briefly about the project development, tonight’s objectives, agenda (including time-management strategies), and housekeeping items. Invite participants to introduce themselves to their neighbours, then lead a short ice breaker.</p> <p>Ice breaker: Invite participants at their table to share one thing you all have in common of things you do in Mahone Bay. Once they have identified one thing they have all done, ask them to identify something that they do that is different from everyone else at their table.</p> <p>Un-named helper(s): Hand out letters of consent and signature pages to individuals who don’t have a copy, and collect signed signature pages</p>	~70 letters of consent, ~70 signature pages, pens.

Timing	Activity	Notes	Materials
5:45 – 6:00 (15 mins)	Ideal scenario/ Rich picture/ What is your vision?	<p>Purpose: Identify what participants vision is for an all-age-friendly Mahone Bay</p> <p>Timing breakdown: 2 minutes to communicate instructions, 3 minutes' self-reflection, 5 minutes talking with table-mates, 10 minutes sharing with room.</p> <p>Alice: Explain that for this exercise participants will work at their respective tables using the markers and paper available to write down or draw their vision is for an all-age-friendly Mahone Bay on the sticky notes provided. Invite participants to place the sticky notes onto the sheet of paper on the table. Give participants one minute to choose an individual at their tables to communicate one common theme or idea from their table. If we are ahead of schedule we can circle around again.</p> <p>Graphic facilitator: Collect ideas spoken from table leads and begin to fill the template as appropriate</p> <p>Un-named helper(s): During discussion, circulate the room to see if the conversation is flowing and on topic. After a table has shared their information, collect sheets of paper and bring them over to graphic facilitator.</p>	Sticky notes, large sheet of paper, markers
6:00 – 6:20 (20 mins) Watch time!!	Resource mapping/ What is already happening?	<p>Purpose: To identify what is already happening in Mahone Bay that is moving to this collective dream we just identified?</p> <p>Timing breakdown: 2 minutes to communicate instructions, 5 minutes first round, 5 minutes second round, 8 minutes sharing with room.</p> <p>Alice: Explain the format of the exercise: at the tables, participants are to discuss what is already happening in Mahone Bay that is working towards being an all-age-friendly community. Each table will need to designate a host (someone who will be the designated lead and scribe) who will facilitate the discussion, take notes, and stay at the table for the next round of discussions, and report back to the group.</p> <p>Explain the timeline: Two rounds of five minute discussions. After the first round, everyone except the host will get up and switch tables.</p> <p>After the exercise is complete, get one person from each report back and answer one of the following questions: “What did you notice as you circulated?” or, “Do you have any new insights or conclusions or questions about what is already going on in our community?”. Option to facilitate a discussion about what people notice after</p>	Nothing new

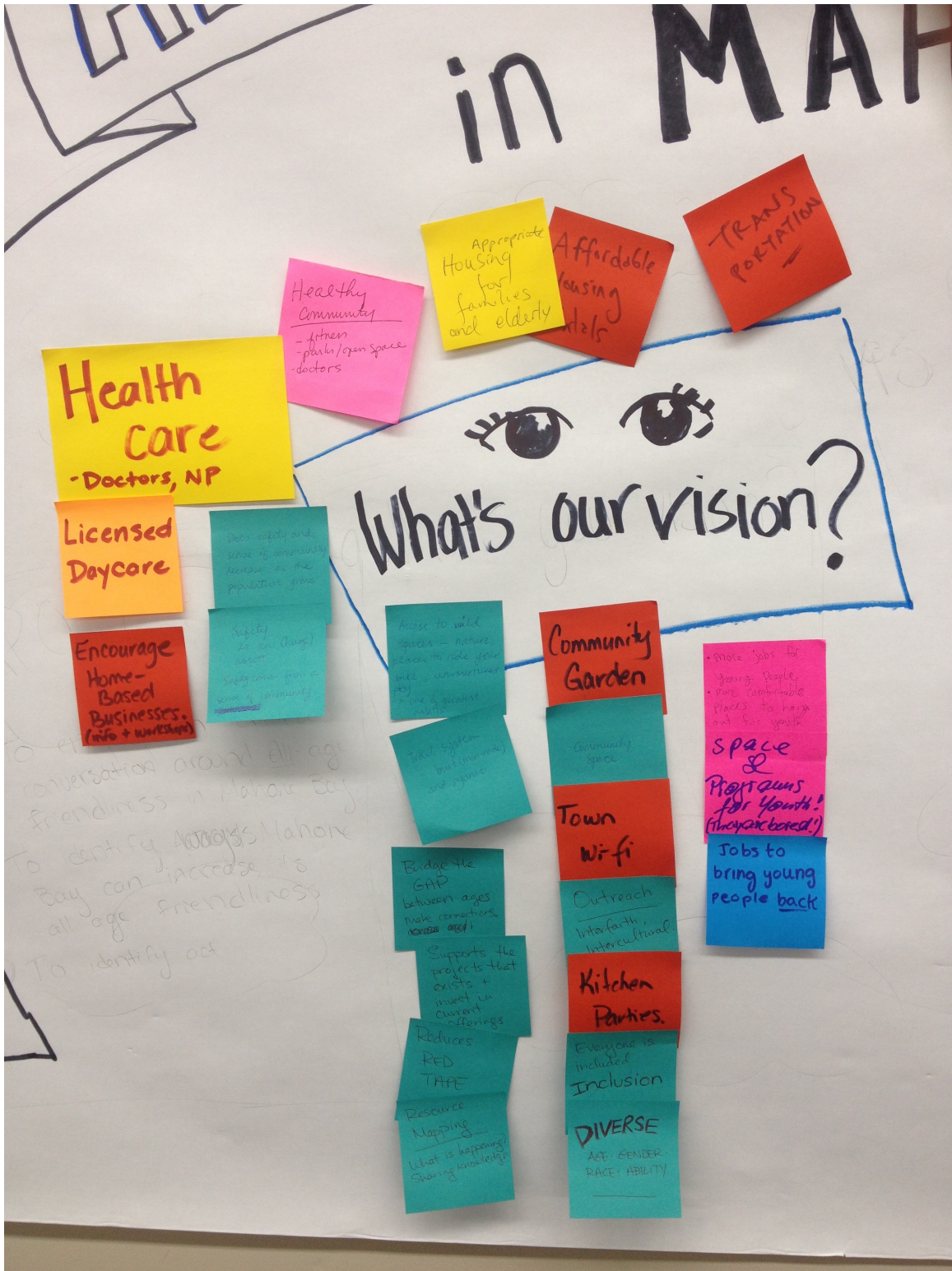
Timing	Activity	Notes	Materials
		<p>resource map (they might see potential links that aren't being made, big gaps or that there is a lot going on and people just don't know about it) if there is time.</p> <p>Un-named helpers: Circulate the room to ensure conversation is flowing and on-topic</p>	
6:20 – 6:40 (20 mins)	What actions could be taken to get us closer to this vision of all-age-friendliness building upon what we already have?	<p>Purpose: To identify barriers to becoming more all-age-friendly</p> <p>Timing breakdown: 2 minutes to deliver instructions, 13 minutes' discussion with table-mates, 5 minutes sharing with room.</p> <p>Alice: Explain that in this next exercise, participants will discuss amongst their peers at the tables guided by the question: How can we build upon/learn from what is already happening or make new connections? List other prompting questions if needed: Are the possibilities for working together for all ages? Are there potential connections/links that could be strengthened? Consider possible actions to further strengthen all age friendliness of <i>existing</i> events/attitudes/policies/infrastructure/etc. If the conversation is petering out and there is still flexibility in our timeline, shift to a world café style by asking participants to assign a table host, and switch to a new group of people. Once the conversations peter out the second time, or we hit the 13-minute mark, ask the table leads to share 3 things they discovered to the group. Circulate until there is nothing else to share.</p>	Sticky notes
6:40 – 6:55 (15 mins)	Break	<p>Participants take a break to mingle, grab more food, and use the restroom etc.</p> <p>Put up large pieces of paper with key themes/ideas from interview and blank large pieces of paper for new key themes/ideas for the next exercise</p> <p>If we are short on time, the facilitation team can classify workshop data into categories/clusters/buckets on the wall for discussion after the break.</p>	<i>Put out stickers</i>
6:55 – 7:10 (15 mins)	Prioritizing exercise	<p>Purpose: To ask participants to rank and prioritize the actions we identified that may increase all-age-friendliness in Mahone Bay</p> <p>Timing breakdown: 2 minutes to communicate instructions, 5 minutes to mingle around the room and talk about the actions with other participants, 8 minutes talking with neighbours</p>	Nothing new

Timing	Activity	Notes	Materials
		<p>Alice: Share findings from the interviews. Explain some of the similarities and differences with attention to key themes, the actionable items/identifies and some of the strategies people suggested. Invite participants to <i>add</i> to the strategies they already generated and begin posting/clustering the strategies to the clusters from the interviews and new clusters identified by the workshop. Ask participants to think of which actions are most attainable/possible/probable, ask them to rank accordingly. Explain that after 5 minutes participants should finish ranking, and stand next to their top priority once we signal the time is up.</p>	
7:10 – 7:20 (10 mins)	Wrap up and next steps	<p>Purpose: Summarize meeting outcomes</p> <p>Alice: Call participants to attention, communicate that we are running to the end of our time, we will take a few minutes to wrap up. Thank participants for their time, attention, and input. Ask people to share one thing they might do (someone they will talk to, information they will share, and event they will go to) based on this workshop.</p> <p>AF Committee: Any closing remarks</p> <p>Alice: Thank AF Committee, Georgia, Heidi, and other helpers, Adjourn meeting</p>	N/A
(unknown)	Clean up and debrief	<p>Collect all items that could be used as data and take pictures of them (flip charts, graphic facilitation page, stand-alone sheets etc.)</p> <p>Clean up space</p> <p>Lock room and return keys</p> <p>Debrief</p>	Broom, dust pan, rags, post workshop treat ☺

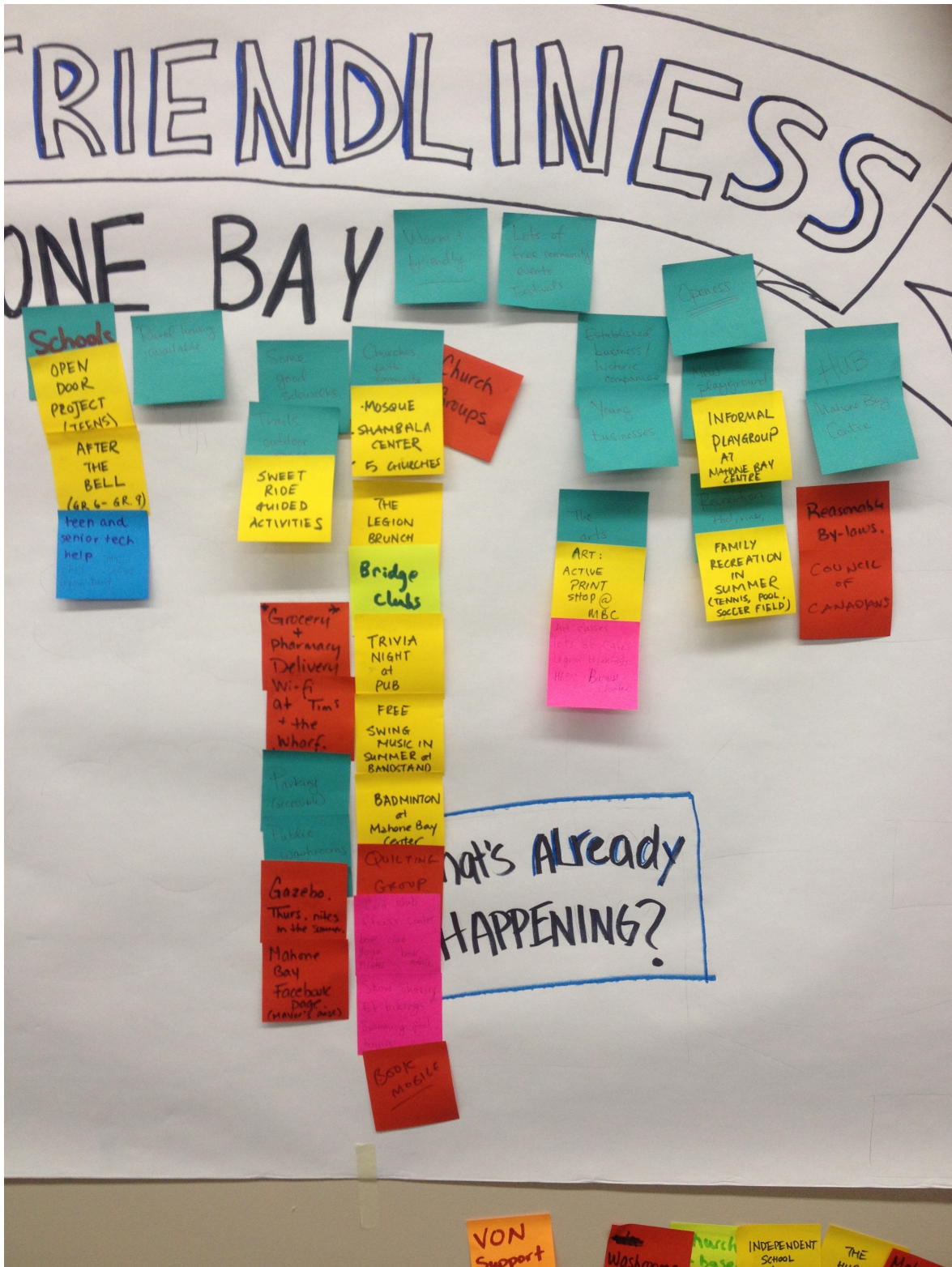
Appendix E: Workshop Setup



Appendix F: What's Our Vision?



Appendix G: What's Already Happening?



Appendix H: Action Areas and Priorities



A time to reach out

I love the new Mahone Bay playground. It says to me, "families are welcome to live here!" It's the Mahone Bay equivalent of a neon sign inviting people like me to settle. My wife and I have three kids and have chosen to stay in this area because of the community of young families who live here. I used to describe the phenomenon as "instacommunity" — we move into the area, add water, stir a bit and boom! — community.

Therefore, it was with a mixture of sadness and exasperation that I heard the story from the Mahone Bay mayoral debates. At the debates one of the candidates said he did not want Mahone Bay to become a "grey haired ghetto" to which the reply from one audience member was "what's wrong with a grey haired ghetto?" The room of around 150 people dissolved into laughter, apart from the small group of parents who had managed to find babysitters and came to participate in the event.

Here's what is wrong with Mahone Bay becoming a retirement community. It excludes me and my family. It does not include my friends with kids, the school my kids go to, the sports team they play on, their ability to stay in the area, the business (HUB South Shore) I founded, which is rooted in supporting independent young working parents — you get the picture. The blunt truth is that our communities and our economy need young people and especially young families. To me, the "silver economy" is a flawed idea because it misses the most fundamental tenet of a successful community: multi-generational living.

This idea that we must somehow choose between our young and old to have a successful economy or vibrant communities on the South Shore feels very dangerous to me. The inevitable outcome is an expanded

rift between generations and communities divided by the stances they are forced to take. Mahone Bay should not be a retirement town, no more than it should be a haven for young families — it should be both! It is in the diversity of generations that we will find not only our economic strength but our health and well being.

A brief Google search turned up multiple benefits of inter-generational living for seniors, young people and the community at large. These range from improved physical and mental health, a sense of belonging in community to preservation of cultural traditions and increased collaboration between organizations and institutions. What is your experience of the benefits of multiple generations working and living together?

My children's grandparents live in the U.K. and U.S. so we do not have the regular contact I would like — though Skype does help. However, we have friends whose grandchildren live in Australia and other parts of Canada who love to spend time with our kids. The connection not only gets my kids engaged with loving, kind and caring seniors, so they are comfortable when they see their grandparents but also builds a family of choice where we live. It is quite incredible to live so far from home yet feel so at home.

All that said, I believe the most dangerous thing we can do right now is choose a side: old or young, retirement community or young professionals, local or not local. The list goes on. Thinking your perspective is the right one is dangerous in a time of constant change — you become rapidly obsolete and look over your shoulder to find no one is with you. To get through the inevitable and increasing uncertainty of 2017 we are going to need all of us, all of our perspectives. Only by connecting our range of opinions across generations will we see a bigger picture that allows us to

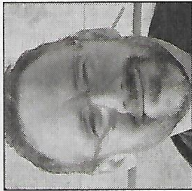
make smart, strategic choices for future generations. We will need the life experience of our elders and the groundbreaking vigour of our young people.

Leveraging the potential of an inter-generational community requires a new approach to leadership in our local government, in our schools, in our institutions and in our families. A leadership that creates the conditions for multiple perspectives to come together and figure out their own solutions. This is different to what we have been raised on as "leadership" — to know the answer, to have clarity on next steps, to be the expert, to be the light to follow, to be the hero. What I am suggesting here is a leadership that is about unleashing the potential of others, rather than claiming the limelight as your own.

We need genuine engagement of diverse voices around critical issues that impact our communities and our region. This must be coupled with regional and municipal government that is willing to hold itself accountable to those engagement outcomes. This will create a momentum rooted in shared ownership as well as build greater confidence in the governing institutions. This same pattern of engagement and dialogue must play out in our organizations, schools and families if we truly aspire to build a place where we all want to stay and that can attract others we need.

This is not the time for choosing sides, becoming more fundamentalist and attempting to hold it all together. This is the time to reach out, engage others across generations and difference and, as Sitting Bull said in 1877, "put our minds together and see what kind of life we can make for our children."

Tim Merry is a change leader who works locally and internationally to support change in communities, organizations and society. He is a co-founder of the Hub South Shore and founded the Split Rock Learning Centre, a youth drop-in centre in Yarmouth. www.timmerry.com



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Change Ahead

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