



ST. FRANCIS XAVIER
UNIVERSITY



TIP OF THE ICEBERG:

COMPLEXITIES & CONSEQUENCES OF EMERGENCY RESPONSES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

MACEACHEN INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY & GOVERNANCE

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November 1, 2022



Acknowledgements

Dr. Kevin Quigley, Interdisciplinary Study of Evacuating Persons with Disabilities from an Urban Centre Project Lead, Scholarly Director, MacEachen Institute

Jocelyne Rankin, Project Coordinator, MacEachen Institute

Kaitlynne Lowe, MPA student, Dalhousie University/MacEachen Institute

Roseanne Burke, MA Gerontology student, Mount Saint Vincent University

Mary Jane Kelly, BA Honours Sociology graduate, St. Francis Xavier University

Shala Knocton, Research Coordinator, Spatializing Care Lab, St. Francis Xavier University

First Voice community members and subject matter experts





Jurisdiction	Number of Entries in Data Tool
Federal	83
Nova Scotia	116
Halifax Regional Municipality	13
British Columbia	67
Alberta	34
Manitoba	38
Ontario	24
Northwest Territories	28
New Brunswick	37
United Nations/World Health Organization	23
Total	463

Emergency Sheltering Policy Scan

Sites for evacuation shelters (built enviro & infrastructure):

- Arenas
- Postsecondary
- Nursing homes
- Used Google Maps to plot locations and identify potential evacuation sheltering ‘hot’ and ‘cold’ spots in Nova Scotia



Evacuation map

27 views

Last edit was 3 minutes ago

 Add layer  Share  Preview

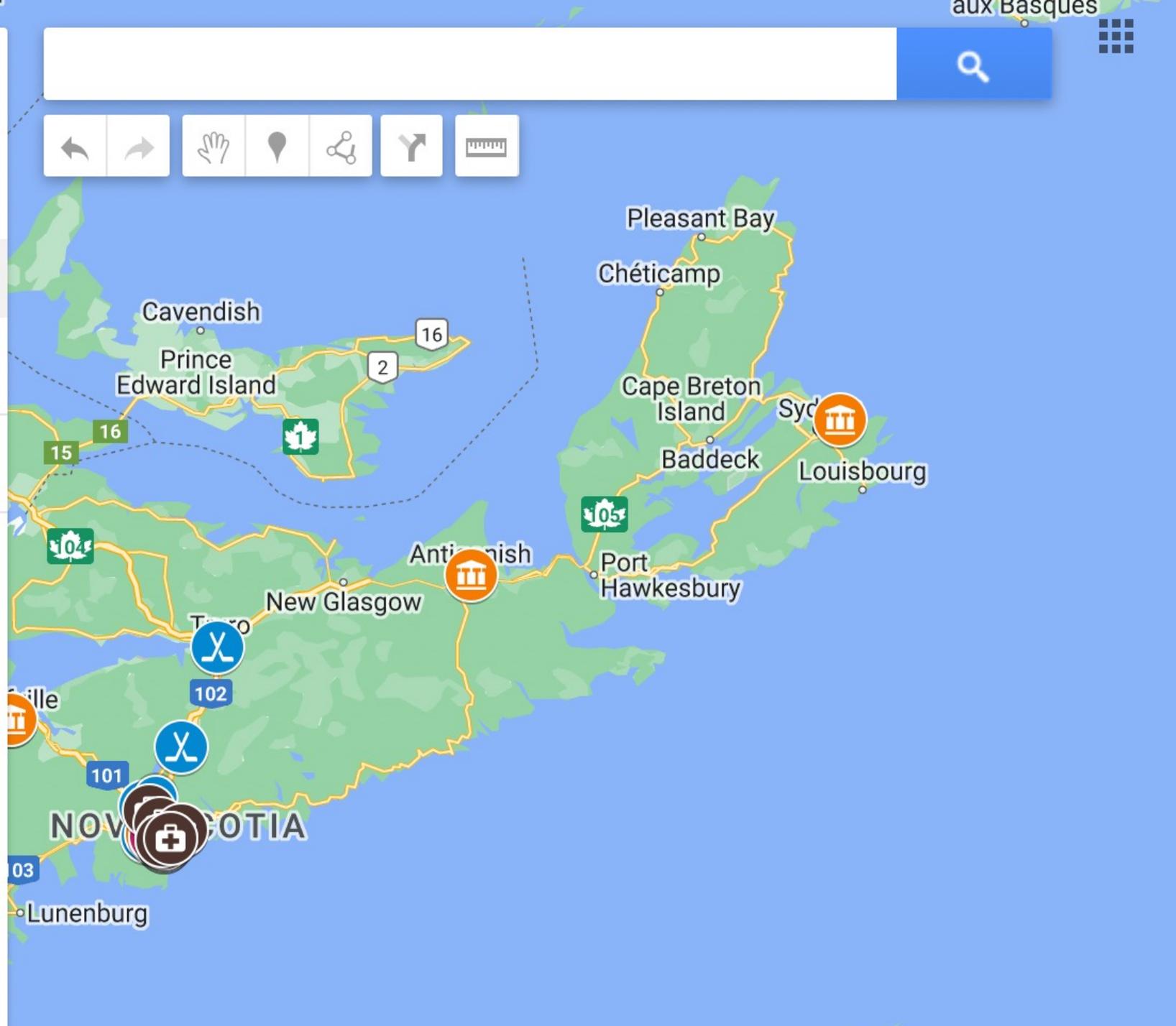
Nursing Homes

NSCC Locations

Arenas

 Individual styles

-  Cole Harbour Place
-  Sackville Sports Stadium
-  East Hants Sportsplex
-  Queens Place Emera Centre
-  Sandy Wickens Memorial Ar...
-  Andrew H. McCain Arena
-  Canada Games Centre





Barriers to Accessibility in Emergency Responses

SECOND CLASS CITIZENSHIP

Utilitarian logic –
'greatest good for
the greatest
number'

Unequal impacts
of emergency
problems and
solutions

Human made
vulnerabilities





Modular unit courtyard

Nova Scotia

Nova Scotia plans review after some generators failed at public housing buildings during Fiona



'We found since the last two storms that in fact the generators in public housing are few and far between'



Jean Laroche · CBC News · Posted: Oct 11, 2022 6:00 AM AT | Last Updated: October 11



Housing Crisis

Where will people go?

“... some communities’ ‘untold suffering’ will vastly exceed that experienced by others. Some communities have been facing ‘untold suffering’ for multiple generations”

(Maynard & Simpson, *Rehearsals for Living*, 2022)

New figures show Nova Scotia paramedics leaving job in record numbers



EHS says it is working hard to replace them, but there are fears vacancies are outstripping new hires

 [Tom Ayers](#) · CBC News · Posted: Nov 17,



Ambulances line up outside Cape Breton Region say that's one reason paramedics are leaving th

Nova Scotia

Paramedics' union says N.S. ambulance system is 'in failure'



'We're getting sent all over the province now, and we go from one call, to the next call, to the next call'

[Jean Laroche](#) · CBC News · Posted: Feb 16, 2022 2:52 PM AT | Last Updated: February 16



Health System Crisis

Who will be the helpers?

- System and health human resource strains
- Inaccessibility of ambulances
- Finch Report (2019)
- Ambulance fees (\$147 for Nova Scotians with a health card; \$110 for 'mobility challenged' (sic); \$1100 for non-Canadians and new Canadians) (reported 2021)
- 123 ambulances, 63 station locations
- Emergency, Urgent, Interfacility calls
- Limited coverage in some areas
- Policy barriers to 'treatment in-place'



Stuck in Survival Mode

Making a Move in MULTI-CRISIS Moments

Community Resilience

- Map distribution of volunteers, information, resources
- Anticipate challenges
- Social needs of the community
- Act proactively to stressors and risk events in daily life
- Dependencies on buildings and infrastructure
- Collaborative planning and implementation





Considerations

Emergency Responses should be Place-based, Coordinated and Adaptive

Local context/local knowledge

Civil society and volunteers

Shift 'survival thinking' from 72 hours to 7 days

Responsible and responsive residential property owners

Water, food, generators, gas delivery

Service and companion animals

In-person interpreter services province-wide

Access to home and medical care

Medical equipment and medications

Imagine persons with disabilities as parents with 'dependents'

Equity lens (disability, race, gender and citizenship status)





Emergency Response Triage

Evacuation Shelters

- Comfort stations
- Accessible transportation
- Attendant care

Sheltering-in-Place

- 'Go-to' emergency response
- Knowledge about best practices limited (stock up!)
- Self-sufficient for 72 hours
- *How do accessibility standards apply?*

In case of disaster, display sign this side out in front window of house or vehicle if you **DO** require assistance.

HELP

For use in a disaster such as earthquake, fire, flood or storm.

PrepareYourself.ca

In case of disaster, display sign this side out in front window of house or vehicle if you **DO NOT** require assistance.

OK

For use in a disaster such as earthquake, fire, flood or storm.

PrepareYourself.ca



Nova Scotia Accessibility Act

Built Environment
Standard
Recommendations

Education Standard
Recommendations

Accessibility Plans
and Advisory
Committees

IMPLEMENTATION INSTRUMENTS

Policy: a statement of intent by an institution/organization.

Regulations: a legal requirement for a specific undertaking, it could new regulation or amendment(s) to existing regulations such as the NS Building Code.

Administrative Order: an order for an undertaking, which could be a prescribed process within a specific administrative unit such as the provincial government.

Guidelines: a recommended approach or course of action.

Financial Incentives: this may include grants, tax rebates, or other measures to encourage compliance.

Support Programs: an initiative to support the implementation of the standards, an example would be a training program for those implementing the standard.





Network of Networks Approach

Tap into existing partnerships to understand community realities and needs

- **MedicAlert Connect**
- **Nova Scotia Power**
- **Disability Support Program in Department of Community Services**
- **Continuing Care services in the Department of Health and Wellness**
- **Accessibility Directorate**
- **Social services agencies**
- **Non-government organizations**
- **Advocates and disabled people's organizations**
- **Building managers**
- **Access-a-Bus/community transportation services**





Universities and Colleges and Sheltering

- NSCC fully funded by provincial Government
- Prescribed public sector bodies under the Accessibility Act
 - Cohort 1: Accessibility Plans
 - Enhance and action relationships with municipalities and libraries
- Designated sheltering sites
 - Centralized resources
 - Accessible environments
 - Routine time lags in decision-making during crises
 - Poor track record with students with disabilities, who are Deaf or neurodivergent
- Missed opportunities to mobilize research communities on emergency planning and response committees (multi-disciplinary)





Improving Emergency Responses for PWDs: Community-Research-Government Collaborations

- **Time from problem identification to action**
 - **Community: yesterday**
 - **Government: tomorrow**
 - **Research: 17 years (!)**
- **Research can play a role in supporting solutions focused community-government collaborations**
- **Community determined priorities/Research evidence/Government decisions**
- **COVID-19 Insight: evidence syntheses (rapid research that meets conventions)**
- **‘Learning systems’: internal system data and lived experience integrated with evidence**





Thank You!

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SPATIALIZING CARE LAB

