

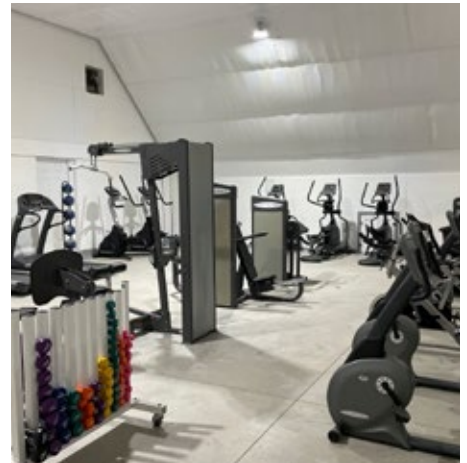
Photo Source: Tourism Nova Scotia /
Photographer: @daveyandsky



Municipality of the County of Cumberland

ACTIVE LIVING AND RECREATION STRATEGY 2024 - 2029

December 2024



An aerial photograph of a rugged coastline. In the foreground, there are dark, moss-covered rocks meeting the water. A wide, sandy beach is visible, leading up to a steep, rocky cliff. The cliff is covered in a dense forest of green trees. In the background, a large body of water stretches towards the horizon under a clear sky. A small yellow structure is visible on the cliffside.

Acknowledgment

The land which we enjoy and provides active living opportunities is in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People. We pay respect to the Indigenous traditional knowledge held by the Mi'kmaq People, and to the wisdom of their Elders past and present which shape the communities we are honoured to call home.



Thank You

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the development of the Municipality of the County of Cumberland Active Living and Recreation Strategy (2024 – 2029).

This document reflects the collaboration between the Municipal staff, council, the Province of Nova Scotia, residents, and community partners.

Building on the valuable insights, lived experiences and community knowledge gathered to inform this planning study, we hope this Strategy will provide direction to foster healthy, active living for residents of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds.







EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Municipality of the County of Cumberland Active Living and Recreation Strategy (2024 – 2029) is aligned with and supports meeting the objectives and goals set out in the Province of Nova Scotia's Let's Get Moving Nova Scotia: An Action Plan. This guiding strategic plan seeks to encourage more movement in the daily lives of Nova Scotians through:

- finding ways to participate in activities that fit into the lifestyles, abilities, and interests of residents, as well as those that are an important part of our culture
- remove barriers that keep some residents from participating
- consider the needs of the less active, aging, and other priority groups

A key component of the Let's Get Moving Nova Scotia action plan is the supporting Municipal Physical Activity Leadership (MPAL) program, a partnership between the Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage and municipalities which cost shares the hiring of an active living coordinator position. A requirement of this program is to create an active living strategy every 4-5 years. The Municipality participates in this program and has created this new Active Living and Recreation Strategy to support a healthy and active community. As well Council has made rural recreation a key priority.

To achieve the stated objectives for the development of a new Active Living and Recreation Strategy for the Municipality, the residents and community partners were engaged to understand their preferences and perceptions of active living and recreation in the Municipality. The study process and inputs which led to the creation of the Strategy included a comprehensive engagement and research program which included:

- Relevant trends influencing active living and recreation provincially and nationally.
- Current and future demographics and population.
- Current programs, services and events offered in the Municipality.
- Relevant policy and planning documents.



What We Learned From Residents...

★ Popular activities

- Trails / walking / hiking
- Pickleball
- Yoga
- Skating
- Swimming
- Gardening
- Visiting beaches

+ + Residents would like to do more of...

- Organized activities
- Programs for all ages
- Special events
- Fitness programs
- Groups hikes

Key barriers to participation

- Lack of facilities
- Lack of programs
- Unaware of opportunities / communication
- Transportation
- Parking at trails

How well is the Municipality meeting needs of residents..



Awful



Badly



Acceptable



Good



Excellent

What We Learned From Youth...

★ Popular activities...

- Outdoor sports
- Indoor sports
- Leisure activities
- Outdoor physical play
- Social activities
- Art activities



Nearly all youth go directly home after school



Key barriers to participation

- Too busy to participate
- Unaware if friends will be participating
- Transportation issues
- Activities wanted not available

The overarching purpose for this Strategy is to remove barriers to participation and maximising opportunities for as many people as possible to live a healthy active lifestyle and improving their quality of life. The Strategy sets out a new vision for active living in Cumberland, which represents what the Municipality would like to achieve through the recommendations of the Active Living and Recreation Strategy.

Active Living and Recreation Vision Statement

Residents of the Municipality of the County of Cumberland have access to recreation opportunities, which foster healthy, active living and which are delivered in an equitable manner that is sustainable and cultivates vibrant communities.

Connecting to the vision, a set of guiding principles are defined within the Strategy, which will help guide the implementation of the recommendations and provide a valued based lens to support decision making.

The Municipality's Active Living and Recreation Strategy is intended to provide a long-term strategy that is used as a guide in fostering active living and the development of services, programs and recreational spaces that will encourage a healthy, vibrant community while supporting growth and development in the Municipality.

 <p>We believe in supporting equity and inclusion for all residents.</p>	 <p>We strive to build strong partnerships and collaborate with the community.</p>	 <p>We make every effort to innovate and make efficient use of resources.</p>	 <p>We will make decisions based on reliable evidence and data.</p>	 <p>We strive to ensure environmental sustainability and will align to current best practices in minimizing environmental impacts.</p>
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The following themes emerged through the planning process and research undertaken in the development of this Strategy. These five themes, introduced below, provide the guiding direction to achieving the stated vision for active living and recreation in the Municipality.

 <p>Collaboration</p>	 <p>Connectivity</p>	 <p>Inclusion</p>	 <p>Awareness</p>	 <p>Sustainability</p>
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

The Active Living and Recreation Strategy will be implemented in phases based on the identified needs of the community, the priorities of Council, and available funding. This planning document has been designed to be a guide for Administration, Council and community members. The aim is to guide the provision of services and spaces to meet the evolving needs of the community in a transparent, equitable and efficient manner.



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INTRODUCTION

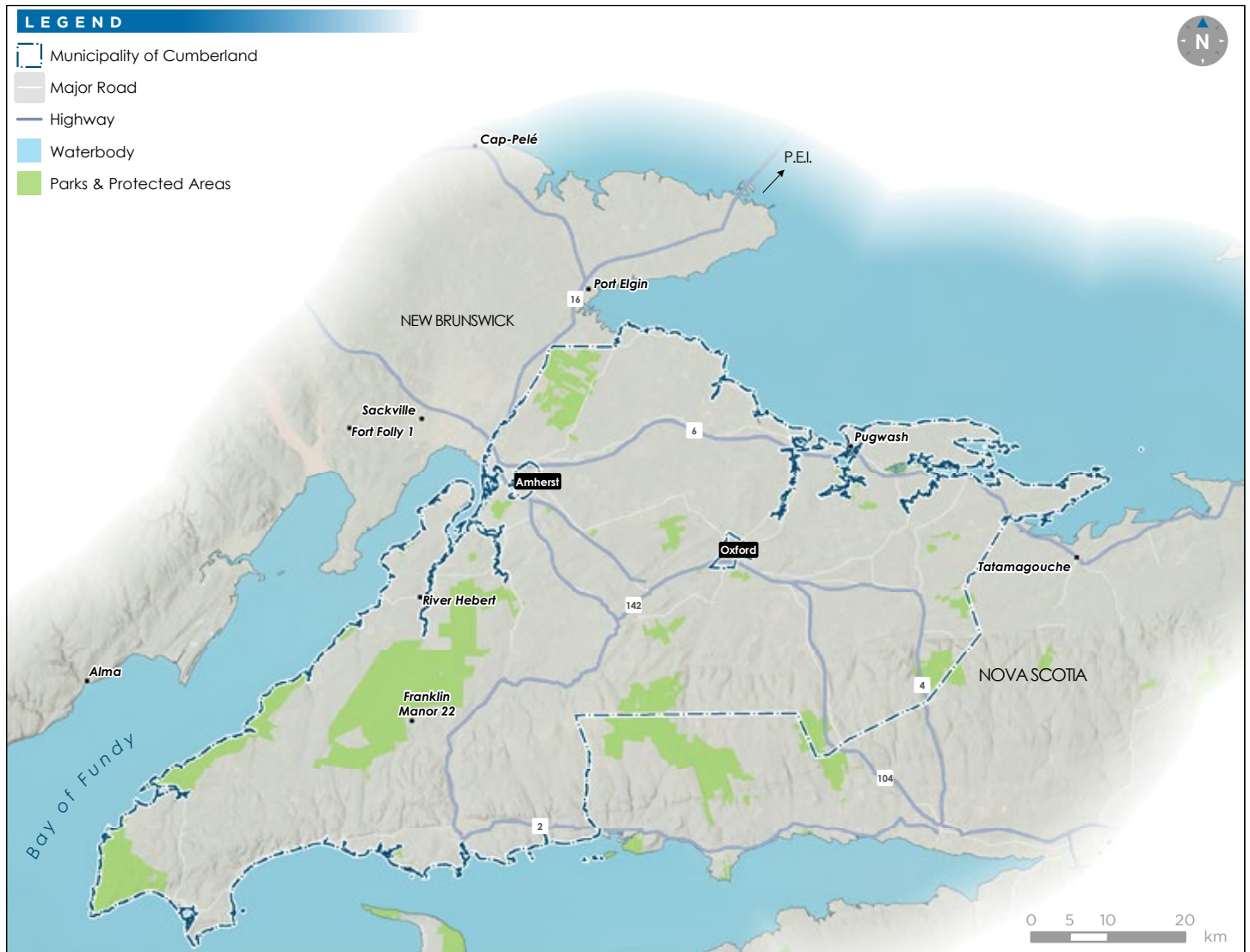
The Municipality of the County of Cumberland (the Municipality) is the local government responsible for providing services to the citizens within the three regions Northern zone (Pugwash), Central zone (Springhill) and Southern zone (Parrsboro), and all the areas in between. Please see Map 1 for the study area.

Lifelong active living and participation in recreation activities fosters an active, healthy, resilient and inclusive community, which recognizes and values the Municipality's support required to provide these opportunities. This Strategy will help to shape active living and the delivery of recreation opportunities throughout the Municipality over the next five years.



Photo Source: Parrsboro Shore by Dennis Jarvis - flickr.com/photos/archer10/

Map 1: Planning Area



Effective planning and service delivery of active living and recreation opportunities will lead to a variety of benefits for the communities throughout the Municipality and its' residents. For example, supporting the promotion of healthy active lifestyles can support aging in place for older adult residents and hosting community events can build a cohesive community that leads to a reduction in sedentary behaviours and actions by youth.

Additionally, recreation facilities and spaces, when properly managed, can also bring about positive environmental and economic benefits to a community. Together the numerous benefits residents derived from recreation spaces and places, justify the public investment in recreation.

Measuring Impact¹, a newly released report produced by the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association and the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute concludes that in total, sport, physical activity and recreation (SPAR) generates \$14B in social impact, \$4B in health and \$37B in economic impact (over \$55B in total) annually across Canada.

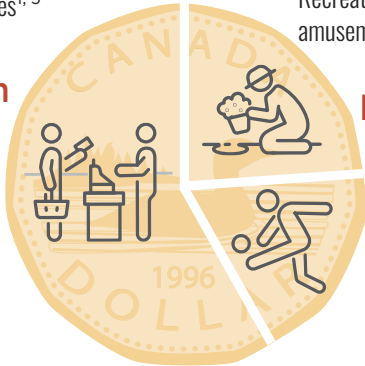
BREAKING DOWN THE VALUES

Given these numbers assess different constructs or concepts, these amounts cannot be added together.

Economic Impact (2022) **\$37.2 billion**

Retail Sales^{1, 3}

\$21.5 billion



Recreation and amusement sector^{1, 2}

\$8.8 billion

Sport sector¹

\$6.9 billion

Economic impact reflected as the annual contribution to Canada's economy from SPAR and retail sales.

Social Impact (2020) **\$13.6 billion**

Value of volunteering⁵

\$13.6 billion

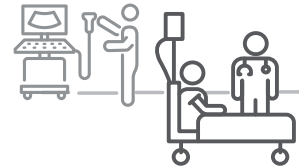


Social impact reflected as the value of volunteering for SPAR-based activities.

Health Impact (2022) **\$3.9 billion**

Direct costs of select non-communicable diseases and depression⁴

\$3.87 billion



Cost associated with pre-mature mortality⁴

\$36.9 million



Health impact reflected as the annual contribution to health care costs for select health conditions related to physical inactivity.

Environmental Impact (2020) **\$42.5 billion**

Recreation and sports facilities⁶

\$33.5 billion



Active transportation infrastructure⁶

\$9.0 billion



Environmental impact reflected as the replacement value of SPAR facilities and active transportation infrastructure.

¹ Value as it relates to the gross domestic product.

² Recreation and amusement sector comprised of golf and country clubs, skiing facilities, fitness and recreational sports, and all other amusement and recreation facilities.

³ Retail sales comprised of athletic footwear, sporting equipment and recreation vehicles.

⁴ Based on non-communicable diseases which include coronary heart disease, stroke, Type 2 diabetes, breast cancer, colon cancer, hypertension, osteoporosis, depression.

⁵ Calculated using percentage of volunteers in sport, physical activity and recreation and hours spent.

⁶ Based on estimated replacement value of sport and recreation facilities, and active transportation infrastructure in 'very poor', 'poor' or 'fair' condition.

The Need for an Active Living and Recreation Strategy

The Municipality participates in the Municipal Physical Activity Leadership (MPAL) program, a Provincial partnership between the Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage which cost shares the hiring of an active living position within participating municipalities. A requirement of this program is to create an active living strategy every 4-5 years. The Municipality's current guiding document is the Recreation and Physical Activity Strategy, which was adopted in 2018. The focus areas of that Strategy were:

- Active Living
- Inclusion and Access
- Connecting People and Nature
- Supportive Environments
- Recreation Capacity
- Celebration

Currently, the Municipality provides Active Living and Recreation opportunities through:

- Facilities development and maintenance including parks, playgrounds, trails, our campground, sport fields, and the Dr Carson and Marion Murray Community Centre
- Recreation program and special event planning and delivery
- Volunteer capacity building and recognition
- Lending of active living resources
- Granting money to non-profit organizations in the Municipality to achieve their active living and recreation priorities
- Collaborate the use of schools and other indoor spaces to allow for community access/use
- Maintenance and construction of roads and sidewalks for walking and wheeling (Parrsboro & Springhill)
- Land use planning
- Policy development to reduce the costs for community groups to rent spaces

In January 2023, Municipal Council identified "rural recreation" as a strategic priority. In order to build on this strategic focus and the successes of the 2018 Strategy, it was determining that now was an opportune time to create a new Active Living and Recreation Strategy.

The Strategy, through the key themes and goals, seeks to create a vibrant, welcoming, enjoyable, inclusive community for everyone, contributing significantly to a healthier and more resilient society. It recognises the important role that active living and recreation plays across our Municipality whether it is taking place on playing fields, in an arena, a gym, in open spaces or on the trails.

Ultimately, this Strategy aims to bring improvements for everyone, removing barriers to participation and maximising opportunities for as many people as possible to live a healthy active lifestyle and improving their quality of life.

Planning Process

To achieve the stated objectives for the development of the Strategy, the residents and community partners were engaged to understand their preferences and perceptions of active living and recreation in the Municipality. The figure below highlights the study process and inputs which led to the creation of the Strategy. In addition to public engagement, research was also conducted on:

- Relevant trends influencing active living and recreation provincially and nationally.
- Demographics and population.
- Current programs, services and events offered in the Municipality.
- Relevant policy and planning documents.



Figure 3: Planning Inputs





Photo Source: Tourism Nova Scotia /
Photographer: Scott Munn

PLANNING INFLUENCES

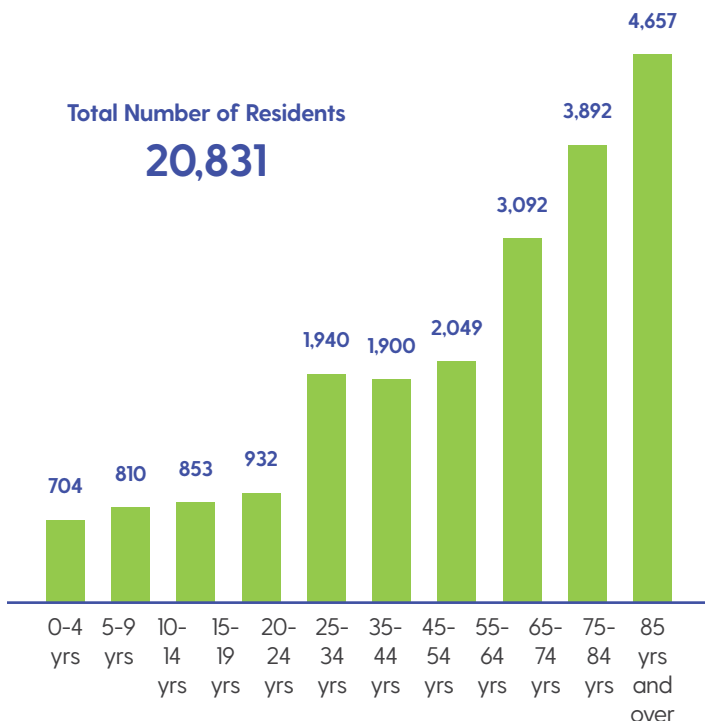
This section provides an overview of the key findings from the research conducted as part of the planning process. These key findings have provided contextual understanding and influenced the development of the strategic foundations and direction of the Active Living and Recreation Strategy.

Community Profile

Understanding the demographics and socioeconomic characteristics of the Municipality is crucial for tailoring the Active Living and Recreation Strategy to the community's needs. This section will analyze population trends, age distribution, income levels, and cultural diversity.

The table below demonstrates the age breakdown for the Municipality (ESRI, 2024). The Municipality's population is older, with predominant age groups being 65 years and older. The median age in the Municipality is 54 years old. Understanding the age composition of the population helps to guide potential age-friendly services.

Table 1 Population by Age in the Municipality (ESRI, 2024)



ESRI (Environmental Systems Research Institute) is a global company that specializes in geographic information systems (GIS) software. ESRI partners with numerous organizations and government agencies to access and integrate their geospatial data, as well as publicly available and user-contributed data. This information is developed to provide an accurate and detailed representation of the local population, economic, and housing characteristics.

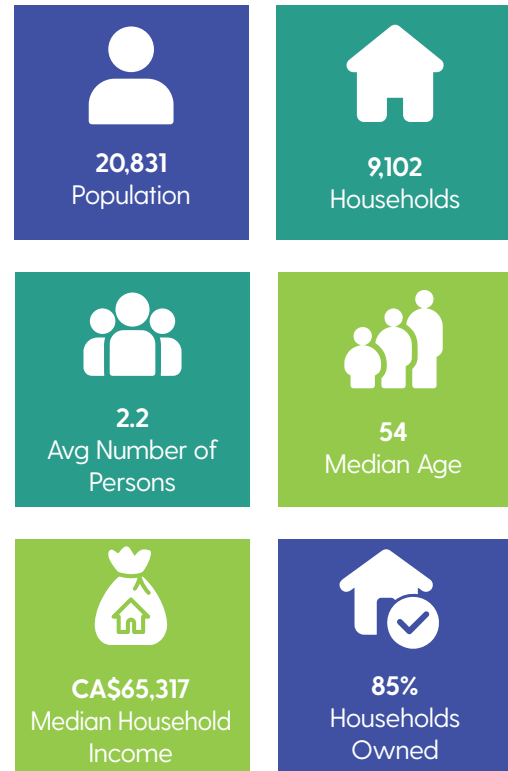
All population demographic data has been provided by Esri's ArcGIS Business Analyst Application. These datasets are based on the 2021 Canadian census at the dissemination area geographic unit. Any projected variables (i.e. 2023 or 2027) are projections based on the 2021 Canadian Census produced by Environics Analytics Data.

Data is sourced from the Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) and the 2021 Canadian Census.

The graphic (Figure 4) outlines key demographic characteristics of the Municipality.

The Municipality of the County of Cumberland has a population of 20,831 and 9,102 households. Households contain an average of 2.2 occupants. The Municipality is predominately made up of married couples (10,420 residents) and there is an average of 0.5 children per household. With 85% of residents own the homes they live in and 15% of residents rent the homes they live in.

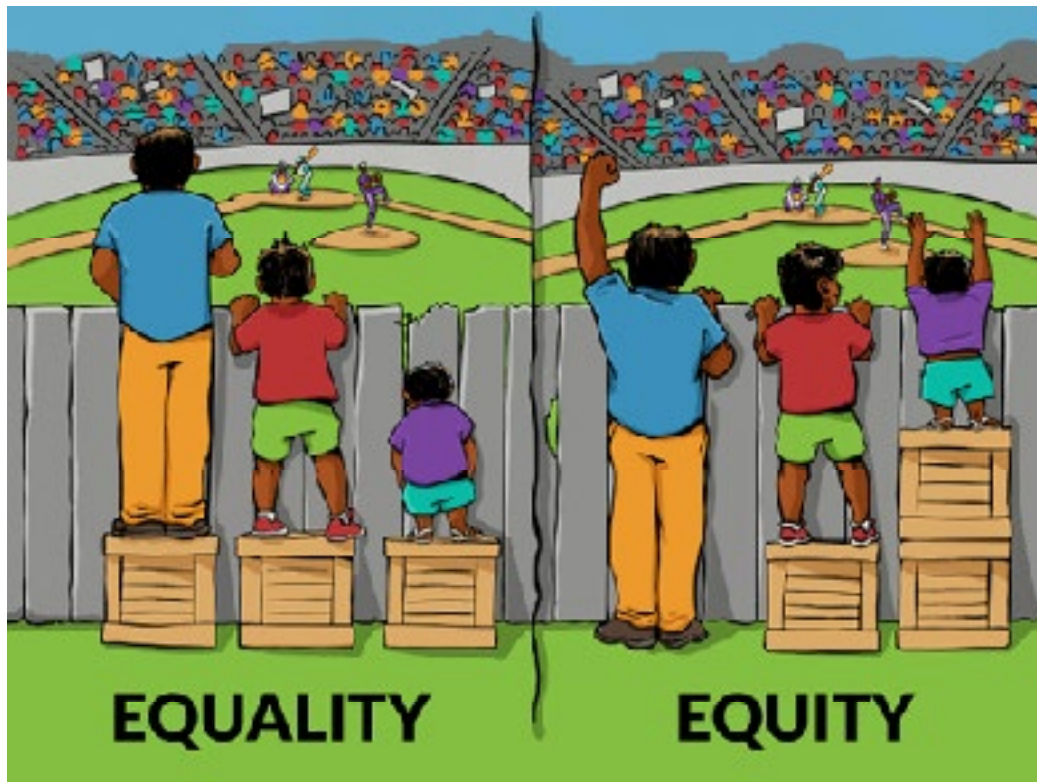
Figure 4: Demographic Indicators (ESRI, 2024)



Applying an Equity Lens to Population Analysis

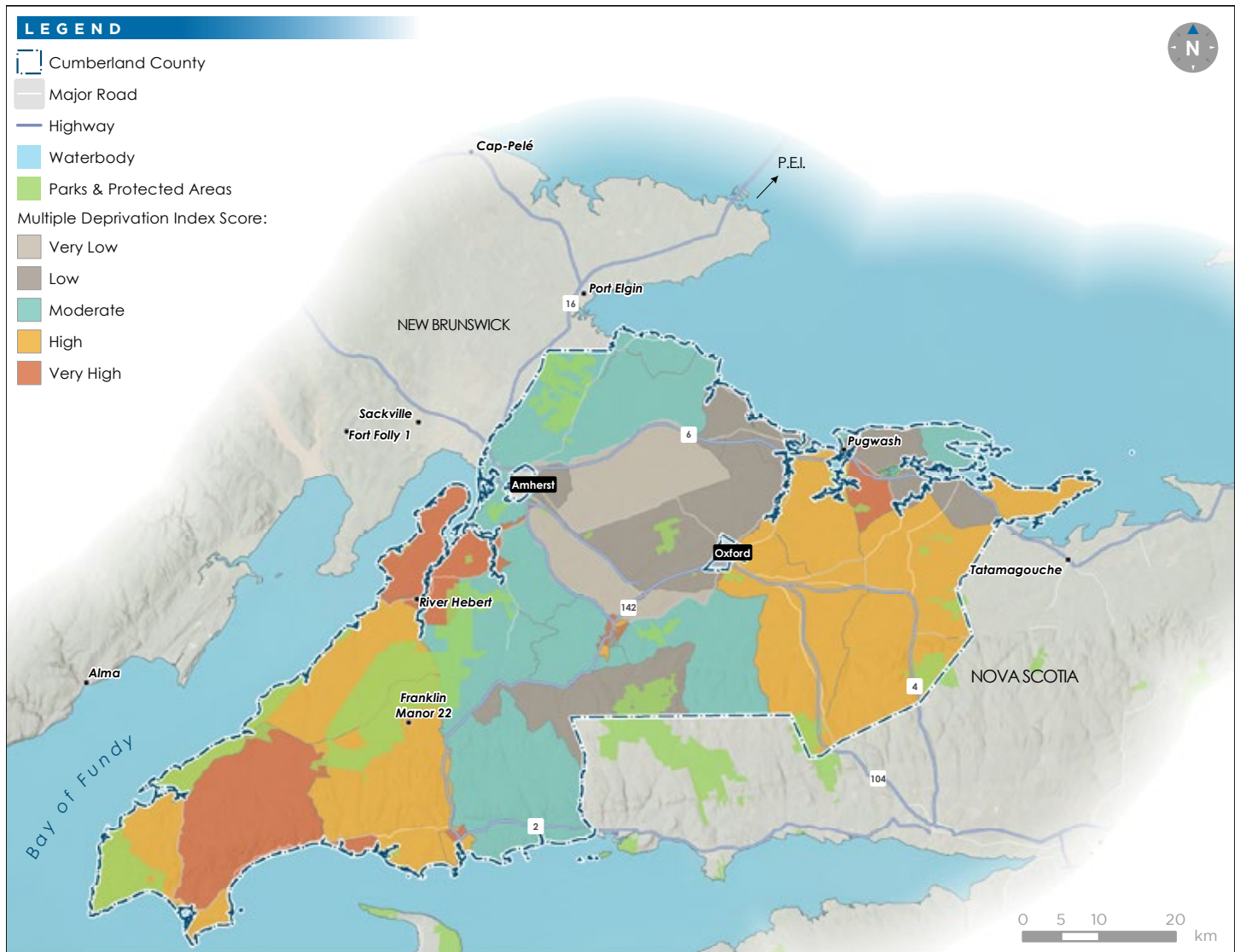
Equity is the acknowledgement that individual rights and opportunities are fundamental and not dependent on identity. It relates to the effort to understand and provide the different levels of support people need to enjoy full, healthy lives. Therefore as it relates to the public investment in recreation, equity is about ensuring everyone receives the appropriate investment for where they are or for needs. Some communities, geographic and social, need more investment because they have been historically underserved.

Figure 5: Equity in Recreation¹



¹ <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/45-20-0001/452000012023002-eng.htm>

Map 2: Canadian Index of Multiple Deprivation Analysis of the Municipality (StatsCanada, 2024)



Not one factor of identity can determine if a community has been historically underserved, it is important to consider various facets of identity that may indicate communities which are equity deserving in our planning and investment. For the purposes of this study, to understand inequities that may exist throughout the Municipality, the Canadian Index of Multiple Deprivation developed by Statistics Canada was employed. The Canadian Index of Multiple Deprivation allows for an understanding of inequalities through various measures of social well-being, including health, education and justice. The map above (Map 3) illustrates the analysis of the Municipality; areas in dark orange indicate areas of higher deprivation relative to other areas in the Municipality. These areas may warrant additional attention and potential investment to address the unique barriers residents in these areas may face to engage in active living. The Canadian Index of Multiple Deprivation (StatsCanada, 2024) allows for an understanding of inequalities through various measures of social well-being, including health, education and justice. The map above (Map 2) illustrates the analysis of the Municipality; areas in dark orange indicate areas of higher deprivation relative to other areas in the Municipality. These areas may warrant additional attention.

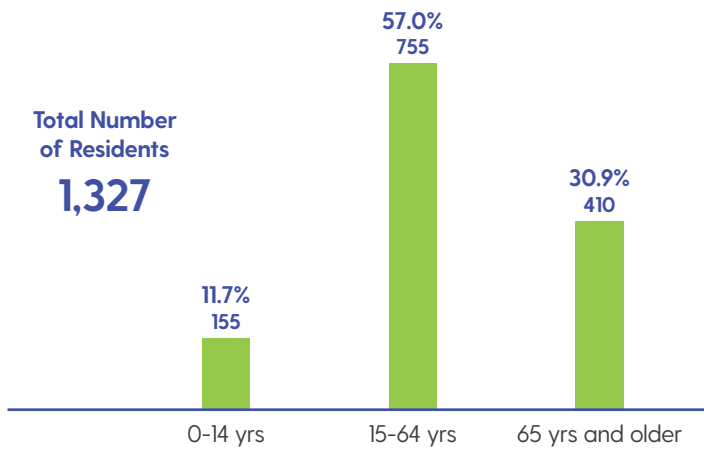
About the Communities of the Municipality

This section provides an overview of population characteristics of the three largest communities in the Municipality: Parrsboro, Springhill and Pugwash; based on the 2021 Census (StatsCanada, 2021).

Parrsboro

Parrsboro is a community located on the Bay of Fundy in the southern area of the Municipality. Parrsboro has a population of 1,327 residents. Parrsboro has a median population age of 56.0. There are a total of 660 households in Parrsboro. The median household income in Parrsboro is \$47,600.

Table 2 Population by Age in Parrsboro (2021)

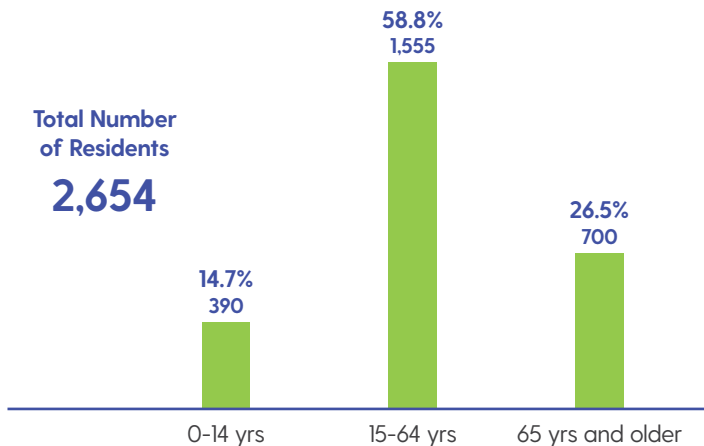


Data is sourced from the 2021 Canadian Census.

Springhill

Springhill is a community located in the central region of the Municipality. Springhill has a population of 2,654 residents. Springhill has a median population age of 50.4. There are a total of 1,361 households in Springhill. The median household income in Springhill is \$51,200.

Table 3 Population by Age in Springhill (2021)

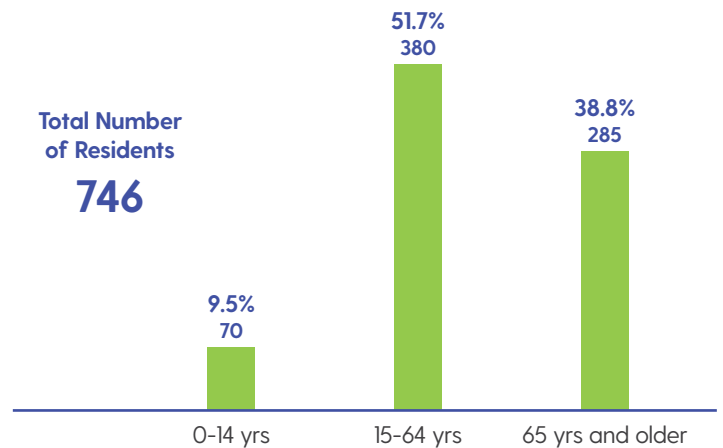


Data is sourced from the 2021 Canadian Census.

Pugwash

Pugwash is located on the Northumberland Strait at the mouth of the Pugwash River. Pugwash has a population of 746 residents. Pugwash has a median population age of 59.6. There are a total of 345 households in Pugwash. The median household income in Pugwash is \$54,400.

Table 4 Population by Age in Pugwash (2021)



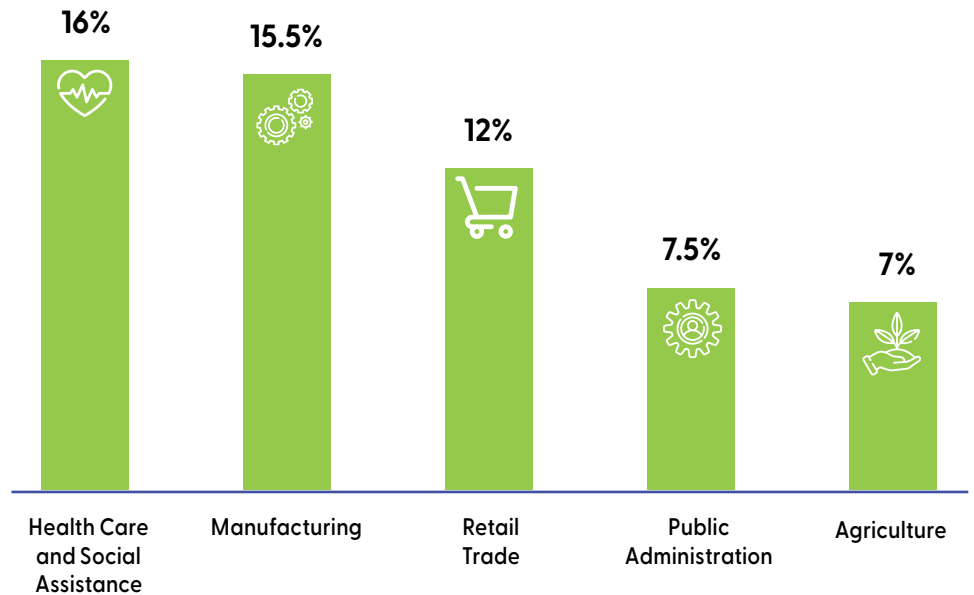
Data is sourced from the 2021 Canadian Census.



Economy and Education

The local economy of the Municipality is diverse, with key industries including health care and social assistance, manufacturing, retail trade, public administration, and agriculture. In 2023, the employment rate in the Municipality was 53% (ESRI). The median household income in the Municipality is \$65,317 which is less than the median household income of Nova Scotia \$74,567 (ESRI, 2024).

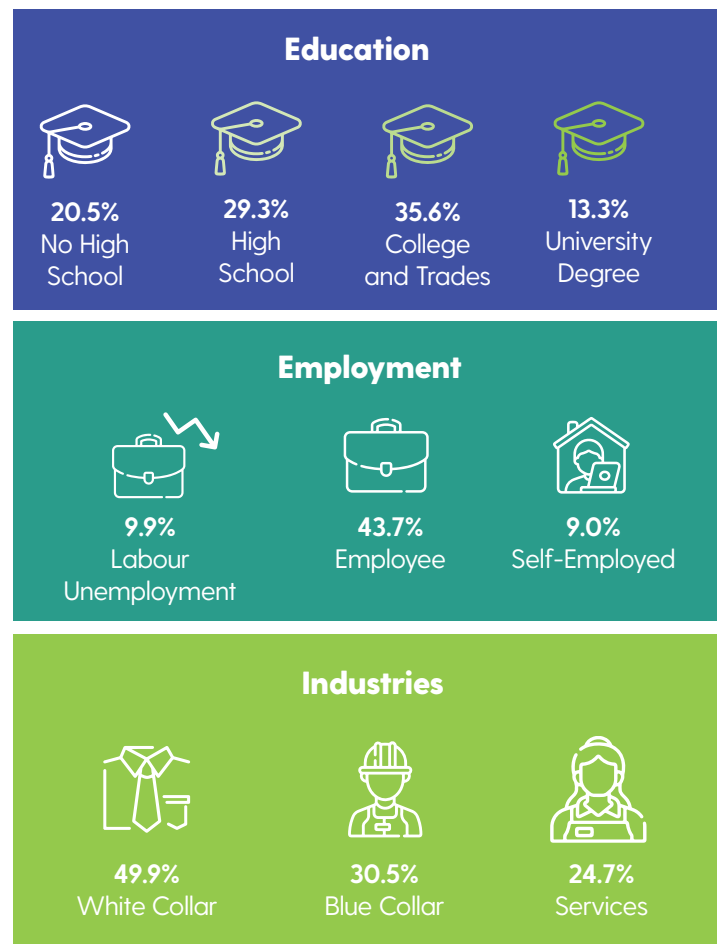
Figure 6: Main Employment Industries (ESRI, 2024)



Understanding the workforce in the Municipality is important in understanding residents' recreation habits and preferences. Hours worked, seasonality of work etc. will impact the time available for residents to recreate and will also influence where and how they choose to recreate. For example, the 2021 Census reported that of the 9,760 residents who identified as part of the work force, nearly 92% (8,965) indicated that their primary transportation method is by car and only 5% indicated that active transportation was their primary method to travel to work.

The Municipality has an expansive educational system, with a total of 11 public schools as well as higher education opportunities through Nova Scotia Community College within the Municipality providing quality education to students of all ages. These include both elementary and high schools. The impact of education levels on participation in recreation can vary depending on several factors, including socioeconomic status, cultural background, geographic location, and personal preferences. However, research suggests that higher education levels (post-secondary) generally correlate positively with participation in recreational activities. The Municipality is committed to providing a nurturing and supportive learning environment for its residents. Figure 7 summarizes key statistics related to education and employment.

Figure 7: Education and Employment (ESRI, 2024)



Recreation and Parks

The Municipality is home to various indoor and outdoor recreation and park spaces in which residents can engage in active living. These spaces are owned and operated by a variety of providers including the Municipality, the Province, and local not for profit organizations. Map 4 displays the recreation and park spaces available in the Municipality. In addition to these spaces, there are also recreation and park spaces in neighbouring communities (such as Amherst and Oxford) that are utilized and valued by residents of the Municipality.

Map 3: Recreation and Parks in the Municipality of the County of Cumberland

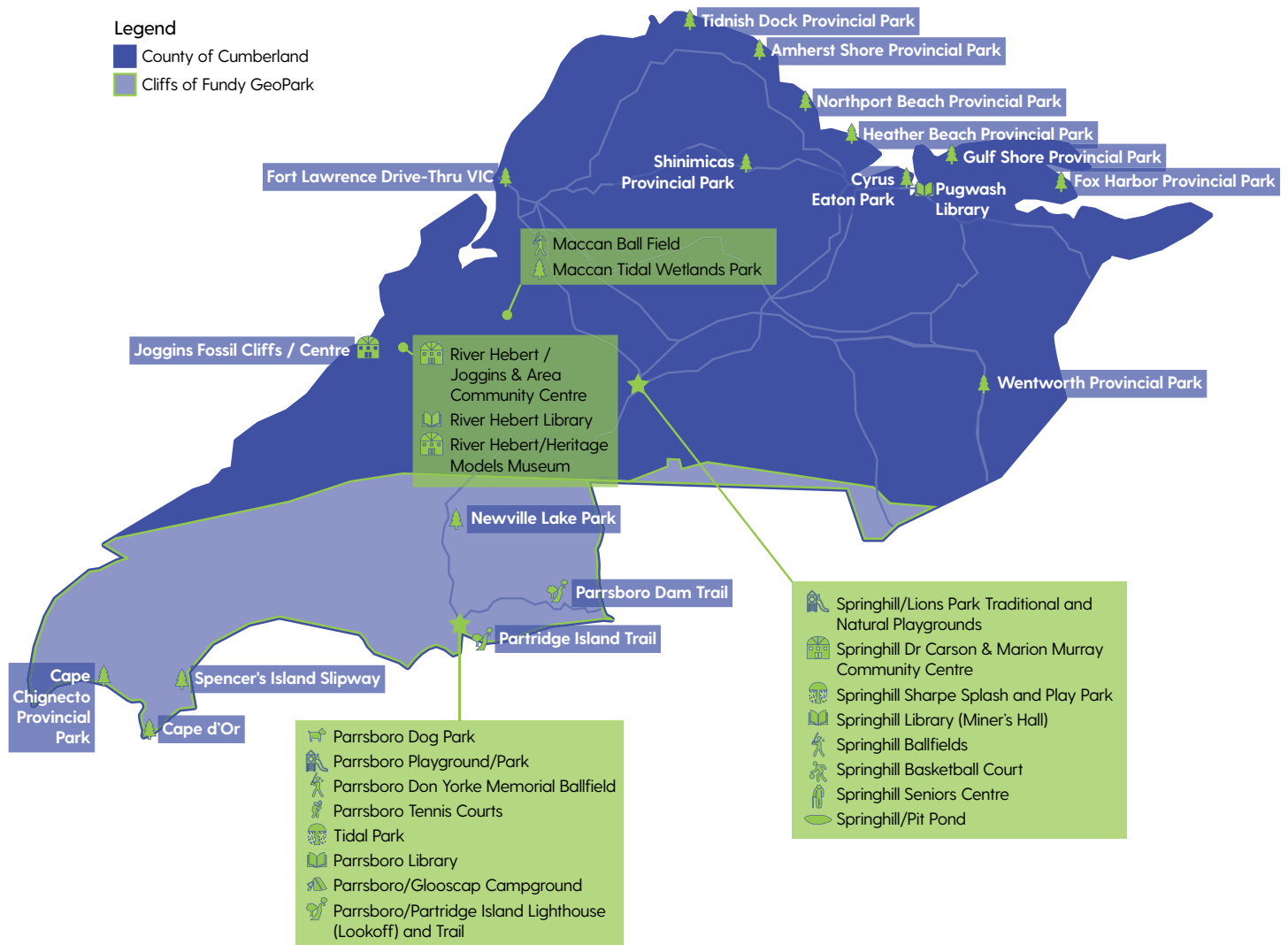


Photo Source: Tourism Nova Scotia / Photographer: Tamara Elliott

Community Organization Supports

The Municipality seeks to recognize and support the important work of community organizations by offering financial assistance to these groups through the Municipal Grant Program¹. This program supports initiatives and programs relating to recreation, health, community, arts and culture that provide benefit to the community.

Additionally the Municipality supports organizations through collaborative processes and services to help foster the capacity of community organizations. These supports include guidance of external funding sources, preferred rates at facilities and spaces, leadership initiatives and opportunities to bring together volunteers to share and exchange information.



¹ Please see the Municipal website for current recipients: <https://www.cumberlandcounty.ns.ca/grants-to-organizations.html>

Community Consultation

To support the development of the Active Living and Recreation Strategy a comprehensive engagement program was employed that included various tactics to capture the perceptions and insights of residents and partners, which included:

- Community Youth Survey
- Community Open House Events
- Community Group Interviews
- Provincial Adult Physical Activity Survey
- Municipal Staff Discussion Sessions

Open house sessions were hosted throughout the Municipality with over 70 residents in attendance.

The community youth survey was distributed through local school to capture insights from youth on active living and recreation participation. In total 308 responses were received.

Discussion sessions were hosted with local community groups and organizations who provide recreation opportunities for residents, and support active living in the Municipality.

Key themes from the community groups / organizations included:

- Need County wide thinking in planning initiatives.
- Focus on long term infrastructure planning to meet community needs.
- Leverage existing community facilities for programming and events.
- Support the building capacity of organizations.
- Communication between Municipality and community groups is critical, needs to be consistent with clear pathways.
- Improve public sharing of opportunities – connect people with opportunities.
- Focus on youth activities and programming.
- Provision of low / no cost programming and financial supports.
- Support amenities for open spaces.
- Multigenerational spaces for programming and events.

The Strategy was also informed by the recently completed Provincial Physical Activity Survey which was fielded from November 2023 - February 2024 and received 118 responses.

The following key themes were identified across the various tactics:

- Residents are generally satisfied with recreation opportunities currently available.
- Community organizations are valued partners in the delivery of recreation programs and events to support active living.
- Attracting and retaining volunteers is a key concern in the delivery of opportunities.
- Communication has been identified as an opportunity for enhancement; including promotion of year around activity should be a focus of future planning.
- The Municipality needs policies and procedures that guide the delivery of recreation need to be reflective of current operating realities and relationships.
- Parks, trails and open spaces are highly valued by residents.
- There is increasing demand for outdoor recreation spaces.
- Need to enhance responsible visitor management resources and guidelines to ensure complementary use of spaces.
- Additional support infrastructure needed for safe participation in outdoor activities.
- Lack of social supports (i.e. someone to participate with) is a key barrier to participation identified.

What We Learned From Residents...

★ Popular activities

- Trails / walking / hiking
- Pickleball
- Yoga
- Skating
- Swimming
- Gardening
- Visiting beaches

+ + Residents would like to do more of...

- Organized activities
- Programs for all ages
- Special events
- Fitness programs
- Groups hikes

🚧 Key barriers to participation

- Lack of facilities
- Lack of programs
- Unaware of opportunities / communication
- Transportation
- Parking at trails

How well is the Municipality meeting needs of residents..



Awful



Badly



Acceptable



Good



Excellent

What We Learned From Youth...

★ Popular activities...

- Outdoor sports
- Indoor sports
- Leisure activities
- Outdoor physical play
- Social activities
- Art activities



Nearly all youth go directly home after school



Key barriers to participation

- Too busy to participate
- Unaware if friends will be participating
- Transportation issues
- Activities wanted not available

Policy and Planning Direction

The Active Living and Recreation Strategy must be rooted in the experience and knowledge of previous local and regional planning exercises such as the Plan Cumberland: Municipal Planning Strategy (2018 / 2022). The Strategy must also incorporate and align with the foundations set within national and provincial planning documents such as the Framework for Recreation in Canada, Parks for All, and the Let's Get Moving Nova Scotia¹. Figure 8 illustrates select policy and planning documents that are influential to this Strategy.

Figure 8: Relevant Policy and Planning Documents



¹ Please see Appendix A for an overview of policies and planning documents review as part of this Study.

An analysis of local and regional policy along with a review of the provincial and national policy and planning documents identified the following key themes as relevant to the future provision of active living and recreation opportunities in the Municipality.

- The public provision of recreation facilities, spaces and services are essential to active living and public health and wellness, supporting fundamental lifelong physical, cultural and social activity participation.
- Multi-sector partnerships to deliver active living and recreation services and programming are essential to foster healthy, active communities and support the well-being of communities and citizens.
- A value-based approach to community partnership management will ensure intended outcomes are met.
- A focus on evidence-driven decision making will support the efficient and responsible use of resources.

Pathways to Wellbeing: A Framework for Recreation in Canada (2015)

This foundational document provides a new vision for recreation and parks in Canada. It provides direction for some common ways of thinking about this renewed vision of recreation that is based key values and principles. The Framework is a call to action for all Canadians, and encourages all sectors to collaborate in the pursuit of five goals and priorities for action:



Goal 1: Active Living

Foster active living through physical recreation.



Goal 2: Inclusion and Access

Increase inclusion and access to recreation for populations that face constraints to participation.



Goal 3: Connecting People with Nature

Help people connect to nature through recreation.



Goal 4: Supportive Environments

Ensure the provision of supportive physical and social environments that encourage participation in recreation and help to build strong, caring communities.



Goal 5: Building Recreation Capacity

Ensure the continued growth and sustainability of the recreation field.

Source: <https://www.cpra.ca/framework>

Sector Learnings

Strategic planning for the long-term future of active living and recreation spaces and opportunities must account for how current sector trends will influence the provision of opportunities and resident demand throughout the Municipality. Though there are many trends and sector learnings to be aware of, the following provides an overview of the essential sector trends and leading practices that have been considered in the creation of the Strategy¹.

General Trends Influencing Active Living and Recreation

- A general aging of the population; longer periods of retirement.
- Integration of physical literacy in programming.
- Growing recognition of the importance of physical health and wellness activities in managing chronic disease and supporting mental health.
- Expectations of equity and accessibility throughout daily lives and activities.
- Technology developments and impacts.
- Changing employment structures and work hours.
- Multi-sector partnerships to leverage funding and expertise.

Trends in Facility Development

- Need to facilitate lifelong participation.
- Multi-use spaces that are community hubs and allow for multiple activities and user groups.
- Blending indoor and outdoor spaces.
- Leverage event hosting to support recreation facility development.
- More sustainable and eco-friendly infrastructure.
- Supporting active living for older adults.
- Relevant and engaging programming for youth, including leadership development opportunities.
- Co-participation and multigenerational programming.



¹ For a more fulsome discussion of relevant trends please see Appendix B for broader societal factors that will influence the future delivery of active living and recreation opportunities.

Photo Source: Tourism Nova Scotia / Photographer: Patrick Rojo



Trends in Parks and Trails Development

- Accessible trails and parks.
- Unstructured recreational opportunities in parks.
- Connected multi-use trail systems to support active transportation.
- Asset management strategies for parks.
- Support amenities to allow for year-round use.
- Inclusion of naturalized areas to support wildlife movement and habitats.
- Increased signage.
- Use of technology to support park and trail use and planning.

Trends in Municipal Active Living and Recreation Planning and Service Delivery

- Measuring outcomes (benefits) versus outputs (financial return) to determine performance.
- Flexibility in the times when people seek out recreational opportunities.
- Greater demand for outdoor recreation opportunities.
- Regional collaboration to provide recreation and parks opportunities and leverage resources.
- Managing aging infrastructure is a key concern for most municipalities.
- Indigenous placemaking².
- Implications of climate change on the delivery of recreation programming and services.
- Supporting accessible and inclusive environments.
- Planning for future expansion capability.
- Event hosting and the tourism industry as a means of economic development.
- Desire for activities to be affordable.
- Growing popularity of unstructured activities.

²Indigenous placemaking refers to creating space – physically, and in process and policy – for ceremony, teaching, and community.



STRATEGIC FOUNDATIONS

Recreation spaces and opportunities, which foster and support active living, are highly valued services by residents, community groups and visitors of the Municipality. It is important to note that the provision of recreation services and spaces is not formally legislated by the Province; there are no guidelines or parameters municipalities must adhere to related to investment in facilities, spaces, or programs. To ensure the Municipality is getting the most out of its investment in recreation, it is important to state strategic intentions such as what outcomes an investment should lead to and guiding principles that will direct and shape the action of Council and Administration. The following vision statement and principles have been developed to explain what the Municipality is trying to achieve with its investment, either directly or indirectly through partnerships.

The vision helps to shape organizational culture and provides direction on how to best move active living and recreation into the future. It is meant to answer the question, *Why does the Municipality invest in active living and recreation?*

The vision for active living and recreation defines the Municipality's aspirations for the future. It represents what the Municipality would like to achieve through the objectives and actions of the Active Living and Recreation Strategy.

The Cumberland of future generations will be one of prosperity, inclusiveness, and a high quality of life. The rural and small-town lifestyles and close-knit communities that residents value will be preserved and strengthened. Young people will find that Cumberland provides many opportunities to make a livelihood and to put down long-lasting roots in the community. Residents will feel a strong support for, and commitment to, public life. Local businesses and community initiatives will flourish. The cherished natural areas and scenic landscapes will be preserved in their diversity.

Vision Statement, Plan Cumberland (2018)

Vision Statement

Residents of the Municipality of the County of Cumberland have access to recreation opportunities, which foster healthy, active living and which are delivered in an equitable manner that is sustainable and cultivates vibrant communities.

Guiding Principles

These guiding principles connect the vision to the strategic directions and recommendations, providing a foundation for implementing the Strategy in the future.



We believe in supporting **equity and inclusion** for all residents.



We strive to build strong **partnerships and collaborate** with the community.



We will make decisions based on reliable evidence **and data**.



We make every effort to **innovate** and make **efficient use** of resources.



We strive to ensure **environmental sustainability** and will align to current best practices **in minimizing environmental impacts**.



Photo Source: Cumberland County, NS by Jimmy Emerson, DVM [flickr.com/photos/auvet/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/auvet/)



STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The Municipality's Active Living and Recreation Strategy is intended to provide a long-term strategy that is used as a guide in fostering active living and the development of services, programs and recreational spaces that will encourage a healthy, vibrant community while supporting growth and development in the Municipality.

The following themes emerged through the planning process and research undertaken in the development of this Strategy. These five themes, introduced below, provide the guiding direction to achieving the stated vision for active living and recreation in the Municipality.

5 Strategic Themes:





Collaboration

Objective: Coordinate with partners and volunteers to work together to innovate and support active living and recreation opportunities.

The Municipality has a strong representation of community groups, volunteers and partners that organize and deliver highly valued recreation opportunities. Partnerships and collaboration create opportunities to provide innovative programs as well as share unique perspectives and solutions; however, support and leadership is needed to build capacity of community groups who support and provide programs and events that foster active living. Therefore, the Municipality will support the capacity building of community groups and volunteers, along with increased collaboration between these groups and the Municipality, which will position all to contribute to meeting the needs of communities throughout the Municipality.

Recommendations

- 1.1 Continue to support community groups through programming and event planning guidance, funding and resource support and capacity building resources.
- 1.2 Explore opportunities to increase promotion and recognition of volunteer opportunities.
- 1.3 Foster strong relationships and partnerships between the Municipality and recreation community groups / societies, and other community focused organizations.
- 1.4 Adopt the program planning framework to assess the appropriate service delivery approach for Municipal supported program opportunities (Appendix C).
- 1.5 Work with community and provincial partners to reduce sedentary behaviour of residents.
- 1.6 Organize training opportunities to support community organizations.



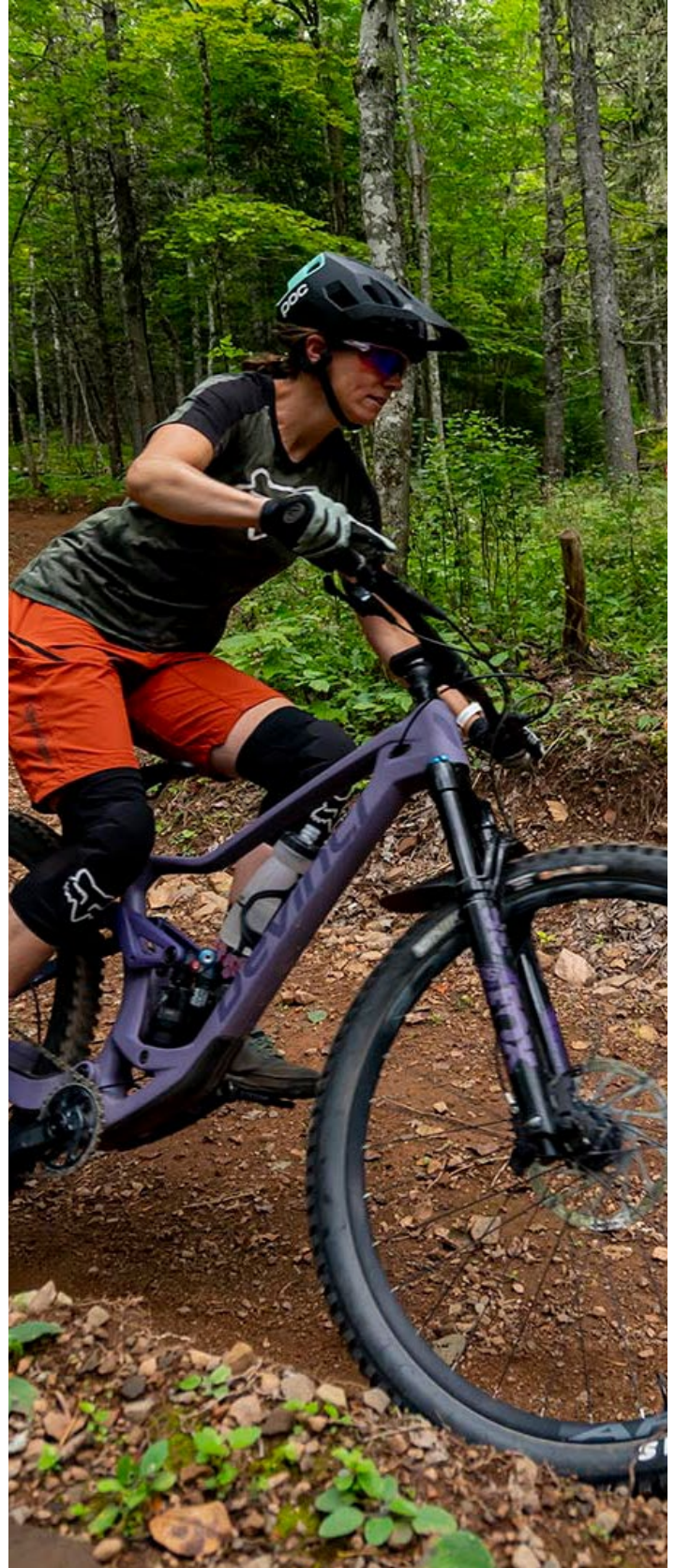
Connectivity

Objective: Ensure safe and functional access to recreation opportunities and support active transportation infrastructure with a focus on accessibility.

The Municipality will focus on providing a physical environment with appropriate infrastructure that supports residents seeking to add more movement to their lives through walking and wheeling. Attention should be placed on creating safe environments that encourages residents of all ages and abilities to incorporate walking and wheeling¹ and cycling into their daily lives.

Recommendations

- 2.1 Work with the Municipality's Public Works Department in the prioritization, design and enhancement of sidewalks, pathways and trails to increase opportunities for walking and wheeling and cycling.
- 2.2 Review current wayfinding resources employed throughout the Municipality, focus on consistency with signage and digitization of publicly available maps.
- 2.3 Improve accessibility of municipal parks and trails.
- 2.4 Ensure there are adequate support amenities to support active transportation, such as bike racks and benches.



¹ 'Walking and wheeling' represents the action of moving as a pedestrian, including someone walking unaided, walking with an aid such as a cane, and someone using a wheeled mobility aid, including wheelchairs, mobility scooters, or walkers.



Inclusion

Objective: Make active living and recreation opportunities available for all regardless of social or economic factors.

Active living and recreation play a critical role in the health and wellbeing of individuals. Certain populations face barriers to participation that must be addressed in order to deliver full access to all residents; barriers to participation can be experienced by persons with disabilities, newcomers to Canada and people from diverse cultures, persons from low-income backgrounds, Indigenous peoples, women and girls, and the LGBTQIA2S+ community. Investment of resources should continue to be directed at programs and services that will improve the quality of life and health outcomes of residents, through addressing the multiple factors that may hinder physical activity and a healthy lifestyle.

Recommendations

- 3.1 Continue to focus on decreasing social and economic barriers to participating in structured and unstructured recreation opportunities.
- 3.2 Leveraging existing grant programs and explore new funding opportunities to ensure community needs are met.
- 3.3 Review existing and established policies that ensure facilities, spaces and programs are accessible and inclusive for all.
- 3.4 Provide training to staff and community leaders related to equity, inclusion and access.



Awareness

Objective: Build awareness of opportunities for active living and recreation opportunities throughout the Municipality.

Increasing awareness of opportunities is a critical factor in increasing active living and participation among residents and communities. This theme also includes celebrating the unique heritage and culture of communities throughout the Municipality. It is important to foster resident engagement and year-round participation in recreation opportunities. Promoting to residents and visitors the recreation opportunities available in the Municipality and region will enhance the benefits and positive outcomes.

Recommendations

- 4.1 Integrate active living and recreation into the Municipal communications plan.
- 4.2 Increase public awareness of active living and recreation opportunities.
- 4.3 Develop a map to highlight opportunities to participate in active living and recreation throughout the Municipality, publish digitally and print.
- 4.4 Continue to promote the benefits of healthy, active living.





Sustainability

Objective: Ensure that public resources are used efficiently, and investment is directed in a manner that maximizes benefit to all.

The Municipality must be responsible with investment to support active living and the provision of recreation opportunities to ensure future sustainability (economic and climate ready). Proactive facility and asset management planning will continue to be important to address future needs. As well the local recreation (and parks) system has a role to play in environmental sustainability, ecological resilience, climate adaptation and mitigation.

Recommendations

- 5.1 Support the future sustainability of outdoor recreation through the creation of a Municipal Parks and Trails Master Plan.
- 5.2 Align with the development plans from regional neighbours (Amherst, Oxford) to avoid duplication of service and seek coordination and collaboration where possible.
- 5.3 Ensure opportunities for active living are incorporated in Land Use By-Laws and into any future development agreements.
- 5.4 Establish facility use agreements between the Municipality and key organizations to allow use of facilities for recreation purposes. Example: Chignecto Central Regional Centre for Education.
- 5.5 Adopt the project prioritization framework to direct future capital planning in recreation initiatives (Appendix D).



DELIVERING THE STRATEGY

The Municipality will continue to work with existing community partners and other levels of government to support the implementation of this Active Living and Recreation Strategy. The Municipality will also pursue new partnerships to leverage the required knowledge and resources to benefit the residents and meet the desired outcomes of this Strategy. Effective delivery and implementation of this Strategy will require clear and accountable structures, up to date and reliable data and analysis, innovation and collective leadership. This Strategy has been created based on community consultation and a comprehensive research program, and insights gained from this process that have underpinned the recommendations will continue to inform and influence the delivery of the objectives and actions contained within.

It is anticipated that the Municipality's Active Living and Recreation Strategy will be implemented in phases based on the identified needs of the community, the priorities of Council, and available funding. As stated at the beginning of the Strategy, this document has been designed to be a guiding document for Administration, Council and community members. The aim is to guide the provision of services and spaces to meet the needs of the community; it does not commit the Municipality to any specific action outlined in the document. It is a living document that will most importantly provide direction and strategic foundations to guide future decisions, however the objectives and actions contained within will need to be situated within the current realities of the Municipality before acted upon.





APPENDIX A

POLICY AND PLANNING DOCUMENT REVIEW

Various policy and planning documents were reviewed at the municipal, regional, provincial, and national level. These documents contain important strategic objectives, directions and insights that may be helpful in informing the Active Living and Recreation Strategy for the Municipality. The tables below do not present an exhaustive review of documents that may be important for the Municipality to consider, but rather, summarize and highlight those most relevant to recreation planning.

Local Recreation Related Policies and Planning Documents

Key Themes

- Enhancing community health and wellbeing
- Ensuring equitable access and use of recreation facilities and spaces.
- Upholding health and safety procedure and best practice in recreation operations.
- Approaches to recreation fee setting.
- Approaches to supporting community initiatives through grants.

Policy or Plan	Purpose	Relevance
Recreation and Physical Activity Strategy (2018)	The strategy serves as a consolidation of the three physical activity strategies of the former Town of Springhill, the former town of Parrsboro and the Municipality of the County of Cumberland. The aim of the strategy is to achieve increased health outcomes for municipal residents through providing physical activity and wellbeing opportunities.	<p>Community health and well-being is one of six strategic priorities for the Municipality. This strategy represents the commitment to meeting this priority.</p> <p>The following focus areas guide the strategy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Active Living 2) Inclusion & Access 3) Connecting People & Nature 4) Supportive Environments 5) Recreation Capacity 6) Celebration <p>Each focus area is accompanied by strategic goals and associated actions. The goals and actions provide useful insight into the recreation programs and activities that are prioritized by the Municipality, who is responsible for their delivery and over what timeframe.</p>

Policy or Plan	Purpose	Relevance
Municipality of the County of Cumberland Ice Allocation Policy (2020 amended 2024)	The policy provides consistent guidelines for all users of the ice surface at the Richard Calder Arena.	The policy provides guidelines information on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The length of the ice season (Sept to April). • Prime and non-prime time designations and rates (\$). • Ice allocation process/timeline.
Municipality of the County of Cumberland Fees Policy (2018 amended 2024)	The policy sets out the fees that the Municipality charges for various applications, permits and services.	The policy provides some fee information for the Dr, Carson & Marion Murray Community Centre including rental rates for the meeting room, teen centre, hospitality room, kitchen, and the entire facility.
Municipality of the County of Cumberland Grants Policy (2015)	The policy provides guidelines for how grants are awarded, identifying roles and relationships, and criteria for the awarding of grants.	The policy outlines the Municipality's approach to funding community programs that directly impact municipal goals. It covers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The purpose for offering grants to community organizations. • General criteria for the grant programs. • Roles and relationships of staff, councillors, and community residents. • Budget and allocation processes. • Evaluation processes to ensure continued alignment of grant recipients with municipal goals and priorities.
Grant Program Guidelines (2024)	The policy provides guidelines for the grant program offered by the Municipality.	The policy provides insight into: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is eligible to apply for grant funding. This may include organizations offering recreation programs and services. • The types of projects and initiatives that are supported. • The application procedure and requirements. • Application review and approval process. • Payment of grant funding.

Local Policies and Planning Documents

Key Themes

- Setting the land use vision for the Municipality and outlining land development regulations.
- Addressing the accessibility needs of municipal residents.
- Understanding how poverty is being experienced in the Municipality and reducing barriers to accessing community services including sport and recreation services.

Policy or Plan	Purpose	Relevance
Municipality of the County of Cumberland Municipal Planning Strategy (2018) updated 2022	The strategy sets out the land use vision for the Municipality.	The strategy provides useful context about the demographic characteristics and growth projections of the Municipality, as well as issues faced by the Municipality such as climate change, a shrinking and ageing population, and public health issues.
Municipality of the County of Cumberland Land Use Bylaw (2018) updated 2024	Outlines the municipal approach to land development in the Municipality.	Land Use Bylaw lays out the specific requirements for development in Cumberland. The Bylaw informs the provision of recreation as it sets direction for a variety of planning initiatives through specific direction such as setback distances, to permitted land uses and carries out the goals and visions of the Municipal Planning Strategy.
Accessible Cumberland Joint Accessibility Plan (2022 updated 2024)	<p>This plan is a joint approach to accessibility between the Municipality of the County of Cumberland, the Village of Pugwash, and Village of River Hebert.</p> <p>The purpose is to identify, prevent and eliminate accessibility barriers to infrastructure and services within the Municipality</p>	The policy outlines results of community consultation with county residents affected by disability. These residents identified improvements to library buildings, service buildings, parks and trails, and sports and recreation as top priorities where accessibility improvements are needed. This information can help to inform recommendations and outcomes of the Active Living and Recreation Strategy for the Municipality.
Intermunicipal Poverty Reduction Advisory Committee Strategic Plan (2023)	<p>This plan is a joint approach to poverty reduction between the Municipality of the County of Cumberland, the Town of Amherst, and the Town of Oxford.</p> <p>The purpose is to outline short-, medium- and long-term goals and actions to reduce the number of people experiencing poverty in the region and the impact of poverty in the region.</p>	<p>The policy provides useful statistics about poverty in Nova Scotia and provides insight into key areas in which poverty is being experienced such as food security and housing.</p> <p>Understanding how poverty is being experienced in the region and the regional approach to poverty reduction is important context to inform the development of the Active Living and Recreation Strategy for the Municipality. It highlights the need to consider affordability in the delivery of recreation opportunities.</p>

Regional and Provincial Policies and Planning Documents

Key Themes

- Acknowledging the diversity of experience in recreation and the necessity to provide for the needs of all recreation participants.
- Enhancing physical activity levels of residents of Nova Scotia through removing barriers to participation in recreation and sports.
- Setting the provincial direction and vision for recreation in Nova Scotia.
- Outlining anti-racism aspirations for the recreation sector in Nova Scotia.
- Guidance on how to provide recreation programs and services for those experiencing mental health challenges.
- Specific recommendations to improve resources for mental health in the Municipality following the April 2020 Mass Casualty event.
- Identified need for increased recreation opportunities to support the mental health of residents of the Municipality following the April 2020 Mass Casualty event.
- Understanding how child poverty is being experienced in Nova Scotia and reducing youth barriers to access for sport and recreation services.
- Understanding regional population demographic characteristics.

Policy or Plan	Purpose	Relevance
<p>Let's Get Moving Nova Scotia. An action plan for increasing physical activity in Nova Scotia. (2021)</p>	<p>The purpose of the plan is to support residents of Nova Scotia to become more active and include more movement in their daily lives. The Plan identifies strategies to reach Nova Scotians where they learn, work and live and provides a new definition for movement.</p>	<p>This plan reflects the goals and priorities of the government of Nova Scotia in relation to Active Living and Recreation.</p> <p>The plan includes several goals and actions that aim to support increased physical activity within communities by removing the barriers that prevent participation in physical activity.</p> <p>These goals and actions may help to frame the Active Living and Recreation Strategy for the Municipality.</p>
<p>Shared Strategy for Advancing Recreation in Nova Scotia (2015)</p>	<p>Recreation Nova Scotia and the Active Living Branch of the Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness partnered to develop a shared strategy for the advancement of recreation across Nova Scotia.</p> <p>The purpose of the strategy is to clarify a shared vision and priorities that reflect the aspirations of the recreation sector.</p>	<p>The strategy sets out key priorities that frame the provincial direction of recreation. The Active Living and Recreation Strategy for the Municipality should align with these priorities.</p>

Policy or Plan	Purpose	Relevance
<p>Recreation Nova Scotia Anti-Racism Charter in Recreation (2022)</p>	<p>The Anti-Racism Charter in Recreation acknowledges and seeks to address the harm and exclusion caused by racism in recreation.</p> <p>The charter provides guidelines for the recreation sector to address, combat, and prevent systemic racism within the sector.</p>	<p>The charter outlines ways that organizations can reflect on how their current practices might perpetuate racism in recreation.</p> <p>The charter outlines the commitments that signatories of the charter agree to uphold. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge & Address Racism • Provide Ongoing Training & Educational Opportunities • Build Racially Representative Communities • Design Equitable & Inclusive Opportunities <p>The charter also provides guidance on how to implement these commitments.</p> <p>Aspirations for anti-racism in recreation are important to consider in recreation planning. This anti-racism charter provides guidance for what to focus on and incorporate.</p>
<p>Recreation Nova Scotia Recreation for Mental Health Guidelines (2017)</p>	<p>This document serves as a guide for recreation staff who support programming for adults. The aim is to set specific guidelines for how recreation staff members can support the recreation experiences of adults, and especially those with mental health challenges.</p>	<p>Specific guidelines are provided for recreation staff to assist in the development and/or enhancement of a welcoming environment in recreation settings, specifically for adults with mental health challenges.</p> <p>The guidelines are underpinned by three principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreation Matters • People Matter • Being Welcoming Matters <p>A set of 10 guidelines are provided along with suggestions on how to implement. These guidelines are important to consider when developing the Active Living and Recreation Strategy for the Municipality. This will ensure the diverse recreation needs of those with mental health challenges are considered and planned for.</p>
<p>Final Report of the Joint Federal/Provincial Commission into the April 2020 Nova Scotia Mass Casualty.</p>	<p>This is the final report in a series of reports that form the inquiry into the April 2020 Mass Casualty in Portapique, Nova Scotia.</p> <p>The report provides a series of recommendations for provincial, territorial, and federal government for how to address the aftereffects of the event and how to move towards prevention/elimination of future mass casualty events.</p>	<p>The report contains a specific recommendation relating to the Municipality which is to address the unmet need in the Colchester, Cumberland, and Hants counties for mental health, grief, and bereavement supports arising from the April 2020 Mass Casualty.</p> <p>This is important context to inform how recreation in the Municipality can be planned and delivered to support the mental health needs/challenges of municipal residents.</p>

Policy or Plan	Purpose	Relevance
<p>Community Development and Resiliency: MCC PHAC Funding and Opportunity Northern Region General Overview (2020)</p>	<p>This report outlines the commitment of the Fundy Region to address a specific recommendation from the Mass Casualty Commission to address the need for mental health, grief and bereavement support in the Northern Region following the April 2020 Mass Casualty event in Nova Scotia.</p>	<p>This report acknowledges the public health emergency in the Colchester, Cumberland, and Hants counties due to an unmet need for mental health, grief, and bereavement supports arising from the April 2020 Mass Casualty.</p> <p>Resources from the Public Health Agency of Canada have been allocated to help address this gap. However, the report states that additional resources are required to provide residents with enhanced opportunities in recreation, sport, culture, and art focused activities.</p> <p>This identified need for increased recreation opportunities is important context for recreation planning in the Municipality. It also highlights the need for a focus on recreation programs and services that support mental wellbeing.</p>
<p>Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives - Nova Scotia: 2023 report card on child and family poverty in Nova Scotia</p>	<p>This report card outlines current child poverty statistics in Nova Scotia and the main contributing factors. It also provides a series of recommendations for how to end child poverty in Nova Scotia.</p>	<p>The report card contains statistics on child poverty in Cumberland and how it has increased over time.</p> <p>The report card outlines recommendations for eliminating child poverty.</p> <p>Specific recommendations relating to recreation include for local governments to provide barrier-free access to community sport and recreation services.</p>
<p>Shared Strategy for Trails in Nova Scotia (2019)</p>	<p>The Strategy provides a framework, principles, priorities and guidance for the development and maintenance of a system of trails in Nova Scotia.</p>	<p>The broad framework, specific goals and actions, along with the long term outcomes can serve as a “playbook” for organizations as they plan and develop connected network of trails in their communities.</p>
<p>Nova Scotia Accessibility Directorate (2018)</p>	<p>The Government of Nova Scotia’s Accessibility Directorate is responsible for administering the Accessibility Act and advancing disability issues within government.</p>	<p>Provides toolkits, guides and webinars to help municipalities and organizations improve accessibility and comply with the Accessibility Act in Nova Scotia.</p>

National Policies and Planning Documents

Key Themes

- Providing rationale for investment in parks and recreation including fostering active lifestyles, fostering inclusion and accessibility in recreation, connecting people to nature, and building capacity in the sector.
- Educating about indigenous sport history and participation.
- Reducing barriers and improving service delivery.
- Collaboration, partnership and expanding efforts in new sectors.

Policy or Plan	Purpose	Relevance
Framework for Recreation in Canada (2015) updated 2024	Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA) Guiding document that establishes a vision for the delivery of recreation in Canada and five goals to guide recreation providers.	Provides a good starting point for recreation planning and a foundation for alignment with other communities and levels of government, bolstering the case for provincial and federal investments in recreation. Goals include supporting active living, inclusion, and access, connecting people with nature, creating supportive environments, and building sector capacity.
Truth and Reconciliation: Calls to Action Report (2015)	To redress the legacy of the residential school system in Canada, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) developed 94 Calls to Action to support reconciliation in Canada.	Several calls to action speak directly to sports and recreation, including promoting education on Indigenous sport history and participation, amending policies and programs to ensure inclusivity, and identifying opportunities to connect health goals and initiatives with efforts to promote reconciliation through recreation.
Let's Get Moving (2018)	Federal strategy focused on building on existing efforts to increase the physical activity levels of Canadians. The strategy presents topics to address sedentary behavior challenges.	Topics identified include creating spaces and places that are supportive and accessible for physical activity to be part of daily life, expanding public engagement efforts, and on developing multi-sectoral partnerships to achieve shared outcomes.
Canadian Sport for Life Long Term Development (2021)	Canadian Sport for Life (CS4L) promotes quality sport and physical activity by focusing on Long-Term Athlete Development and Physical Literacy in Canadian communities.	Long-Term Development in Sport and Physical Activity is about ensuring that all people can access quality opportunities that are safe and inclusive, well-run, and developmentally appropriate. Physical Literacy is about motivation, physical confidence, knowledge, and understanding needed to take responsibility for engaging in physical activity for life.
Parks for All (2017)	Developed by the CPRA, this document presents a vision for parks in Canada to support healthy environments and people, as well as four strategic directions to support service providers.	Strategic directions include collaboration (partnerships, expanding efforts in new sectors, strategizing beyond parks boundaries), connecting (raise awareness, facilitate experiences, share stories), conservation (expand and enhance parks and ecosystem services), and leadership (set examples for others, build capacity, maintain systems and resources to support leaders).
Canada Sport Policy (2012)	Federal policy first developed in 2002 that sets a direction for all levels of government, institutions, and organizations to realize the positive impacts of sport participation.	Underscores the importance and ability of sport systems to deliver benefits to communities and identifies amenities that provide benefits to citizens related to sport participation and physical activity.



APPENDIX B

SECTOR LEARNINGS

The following provides a review of trends that were deemed relevant to the creation of this Strategy and considered in the development of the strategies contained within.

Infrastructure Trends and Leading Practices

Aging Infrastructure

Managing aging infrastructure is of key concern for Canadian municipalities, including recreation amenities that are vital to the delivery of important community programming. Many municipalities are facing difficult realities related to sustaining current service levels for their residents. The Canadian Infrastructure Report Card (CIRC) assesses the condition of municipally owned infrastructure; the Report Card (a nationally conducted study) was first released in 2016. A follow-up report was completed in 2019. The Report Card assessed several infrastructure categories, including an analysis of the state of culture, recreation, and sports facilities in Canada.

Both reports reveal several concerns and issues that will impact the delivery of recreation over the next number of years. Approximately 30-35% of facilities are in fair condition or worse and a large proportion is more than 50 years old. While the condition of individual facilities varies, it can be assumed that a collection of facilities many decades old will require significant capital investment (or replacement) compared with much newer facilities. The categories in the worst condition (i.e., more than 30% are in fair, poor or very poor condition) include single-pad ice arenas, outdoor pools and wading pools, indoor 25-metre pools, indoor curling rinks and tennis courts.

Canadian Infrastructure Report Card Key Findings

- The Report Card demonstrates that Canada's infrastructure, including sport and recreation facilities, are at risk of rapid deterioration unless there is an immediate investment.
- The average annual reinvestment rate in sport and recreation facilities is currently 1.3% (of capital value) while the recommended target rate of reinvestment is 1.7% – 2.5%.
- Almost 1 in 2 sport and recreation facilities are in 'very poor', 'poor' or 'fair' condition and need repair or replacement.
- In comparison to other municipal infrastructure assessed in the Report Card, sport and recreation facilities were in the worst state and require immediate attention.
- The Report Card indicated that the extrapolated replacement value of sport and recreation facilities in 'poor' or 'very poor' condition is \$9 billion while those in 'fair' condition require \$14 billion.

LEED/ Sustainable buildings

Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design or LEED® is an international symbol of sustainability excellence and green building leadership. LEED's proven and holistic approach helps virtually all building types to lower carbon emissions, conserve resources, and reduce operating costs by prioritizing sustainable practices. Canada is one of the top Countries in the world for LEED certification. Additional practices for sustainable buildings include building with repurposed materials, utilization of LED lighting, and renewable energy resources such as solar panels, and reducing water use through waterless urinals or rainwater basins.

Planning for Multi-Use Spaces

Recreation facilities are being designed to accommodate multiple activities and to encompass a variety of different components. The benefits of **designing multi-use spaces include the opportunity to create operational efficiencies, attract various users, and procure multiple sources of revenue.**

Providing the opportunity for all family members to take part in different opportunities simultaneously at the same location additionally increases participation levels, convenience, and satisfaction for residents.

Creating spaces within a facility that are easily adaptable and re-configurable is another growing trend observed in many newer and retrofitted facilities. Most sport venues are now being designed and constructed in such a manner that staging, seating, and wall configurations can be easily changed or removed as required to host various community and cultural events.

Integrating Indoor and Outdoor Environments

A relatively new concept in recreation and leisure infrastructure planning is to ensure that the indoor environment interacts seamlessly with the adjacent outdoor environment. This can include ideas such as public event spaces, indoor/outdoor walking trails, indoor/ outdoor child play areas, and indoor/outdoor public art. Although there are a number of operational issues that need to be considered when planning indoor/outdoor environments (e.g. cleaning, controlled access, etc.) the concept of planning an indoor facility to complement the site it is located on (and associated outdoor amenities included) as well as the broader community parks and trail system is prudent and will ensure the optimization of public spending on both indoor and outdoor recreation and culture infrastructure. Integrating indoor and outdoor environments can be as "simple" as ensuring interiors have good opportunities to view the outdoors.

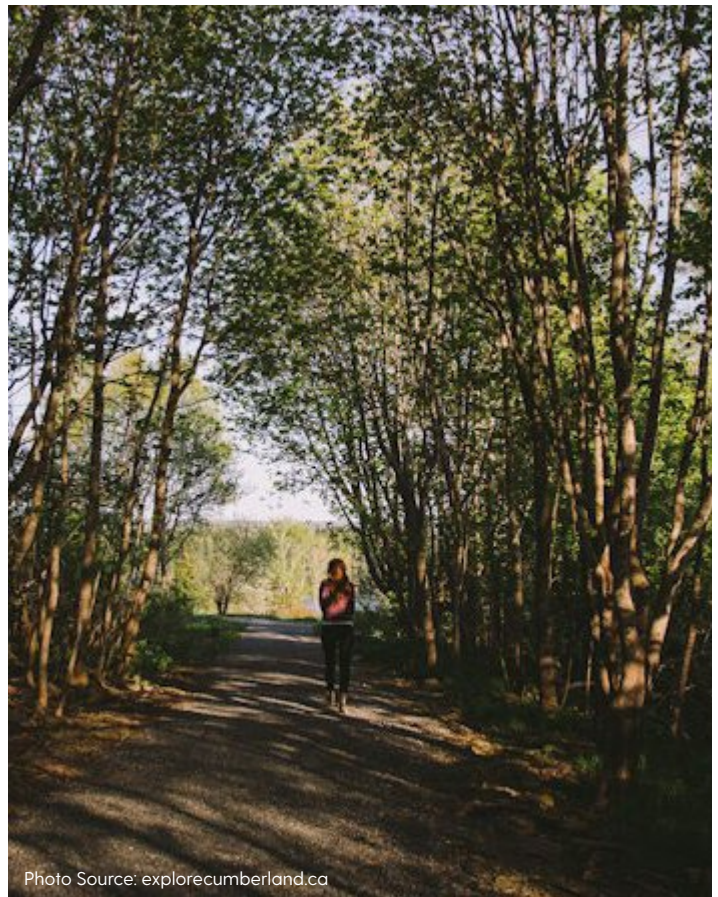


Photo Source: explorecumberland.ca

Activity / Participation Trends

Demand for Spontaneous and Unstructured Recreation

There is growing demand for more flexibility in timing and activity for leisure pursuits. **People are now seeking individualized informal pursuits that can be done alone or in small groups, at flexible times, often near or at home.** This trend does not eliminate the need for structured activities but suggests that planning for the general population is as important as planning for more traditional structured-use environments. Research on teenage activity preferences in Wales suggests that access and lack of opportunity hinder youth activity levels. Creating a voucher-type program where researchers provided teenagers with funds to pay for preferred activities, researchers found that teenagers gravitate towards fun, unstructured and socially oriented activities such as trampolining, laser tag and going to water parks. Top-down policy approaches are likely ineffective when it comes to increasing youth activity levels, as many teenagers prefer more flexible, spontaneous opportunities.

Spontaneous recreation is broadly characterized as physical activities in which the activities, nature of participation and timing of participation are freely chosen and do not require registration for programs or leagues. Examples of spontaneous recreation activities include walking, running, children playing, skateboarding, and other pick-up sports, games, and activities.

Recreation consumers have a greater choice of activity options than ever before. As a result, service providers are now required to ensure that they are approaching **service delivery fluidly** and in such a way so to be able to quickly adapt to meet community needs. Many municipalities have also had to make hard decisions on activities they are able to directly offer or support, versus those that are more appropriate to leave to the private sector to provide.

Parks and Greenspace for Spontaneous Recreation

The **value of the local parks and green spaces should not be understated** in times of crisis. A 2020 study conducted by National Recreation and Parks Association¹ found that 83% percent of adults agree that visiting their local parks, trails and open spaces is essential for their mental and physical wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic. Nearly 60% responded that it is very or extremely essential to exercise in parks and green spaces to relieve stress and remain healthy during the COVID-19 crisis. Given the strong connection communities feel to their local green spaces, recreation and parks will be key to social recovery and in the maintaining of community bonds and relationships.

While structured programming and user groups are often the primary consideration when planning for future parks and field spaces, in recent years there has been a **growing demand for passive or “spontaneous” recreation in community parks year-round.** This demand can only be expected to grow because of the COVID-19 pandemic event and related restrictions to organized play/sport. While designated fields and parks can accommodate spontaneous and “pick up” activities, barriers to using these spaces often exist including residents being unaware if a space is booked by an organized user group, physical barriers such as fencing that restricts access, and seasonal limitations such as snow removal and lacking support amenities (shade, warming hut).

¹ <https://www.nrpa.org/publications-research/park-pulse/the-essential-need-for-parks/>

To ensure spontaneous opportunities exist for residents, many municipalities are actively encouraging the use of parks and greenspace for casual and “pick up” activities. In addition to encouraging physical and social activity, encouraging these activities in public greenspaces can result in broader benefits, such as:

- Increased utilization of parks and open spaces.
- Reduction in deviant/anti-social behaviour through increased resident value and regular use.
- Increased opportunities for multi-generational recreation, sport, and physical activity.

Several municipalities have had success encouraging this practice in the following ways:

- Communicate and promote (through traditional and social media platforms) that unstructured activities are permitted in parks and open spaces.
- Installation of washroom facilities, shade barriers and warming stations.
- Regular, year-round maintenance.
- Signage in park spaces which promotes spontaneous recreational and spontaneous sport.



Community Innovation: City of Edmonton Green Shack Program

The City of Edmonton's (AB) 'Green Shack' program is an innovative approach for activating parks spaces in summer months. 'Green Shacks' (small shipping container-styled structures) are placed at parks and playgrounds throughout the City, with program leaders assigned to each location. Program leaders facilitate a variety of games, sports, crafts, music, drama and special events programs that are free-of-charge for children and youth to attend, blending scheduled and spontaneous activities throughout the summer months. The Green Shack program runs from early July to late-August each year, helping to enhance park safety, encourage spontaneous and guided youth activity and providing free, supervised activities for young Edmontonians.

Physical Literacy as Key to Human Development and Health

Physical literacy has become an increasingly prominent concept in the field of sport and recreation in the past few decades. It likens the idea of physical ability to language literacy, in which children, youth and adults follow a development path. The physical literacy model is composed of the basis of knowledge, awareness, **behaviours and understanding needed for healthy active living and lifelong participation in physical activity.**

Canada, along with the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand, pioneered major initiatives in education, community, and public health to increase physical participation and performance using the physical literacy model. The concept of physical literacy was adapted and popularized by the (Canadian) Sport for Life movement, which was included in the Canadian Sport Policy 2012 as a foundation for sport participation. As a result, many Canadian municipalities are now including physical literacy within their own community sport strategies and policies such as the City of Mississauga Sport Plan, 2013 and the Richmond Sport for Life Strategy, 2010.

A 2018 report on the state of children's physical literacy in Canada presented the findings of a national research study of over 10,000 children, aged 8 to 12, from 11 cities across the country participated in the study from 2014 to 2017². The study found that **nearly two-thirds of Canadian children haven't achieved an acceptable level of physical literacy.** The findings were based on daily step counts and questionnaires about physical activities. These findings indicate that more needs to be done to ensure children are physically literate in Canada, and as such the concept of physical literacy will continue to be an important component within the Canadian recreation sector.

Physical literacy can be described as the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding to value and take responsibility for engagement in physical activities for life (International Physical Literacy Association, 2017)



²<https://www.capl-eclp.ca/2018/10/02/canadas-first-state-of-the-nation-report-on-childrens-physical-literacy/>

Physical Activity and Older Adults

A major trend within recreation and leisure service delivery is greater focus on providing programs and services for aging populations. The **Canadian population is aging steadily and there will be larger cohorts of Canadians aged 65+ than ever before.** This growing population has created a tremendous demand for unique recreation services to meet the needs of older adults. Regular physical activity contributes to the prevention and management of chronic diseases, as well as a host of other health issues older adults face. It also has been shown to reduce the risk of falling and bone fractures as people age, can help prevent or lessen a variety of physical limitations, stave off depression and improve mental well-being, and can significantly help older adults maintain their independence and enjoy daily life.



The World Health Organization (WHO)'s Global Guidelines of Physical Activity for Adults 65 Years and Older

- 1) Older adults should achieve at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity aerobic physical activity throughout the week or at least 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity throughout the week or an equivalent combination of moderate- and vigorous-intensity activity.
- 2) Aerobic activity should be performed in bouts of at least 10 minutes duration.
- 3) For additional health benefits, older adults should increase their moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity to 300 minutes per week or engage in 150 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity per week, or an equivalent combination of moderate- and vigorous-intensity activity.
- 4) Older adults, with poor mobility, should perform physical activity to enhance balance and prevent falls on 3 or more days per week.
- 5) Muscle-strengthening activities, involving major muscle groups, should be done on 2 or more days a week.
- 6) When older adults cannot achieve the recommended amounts of physical activity due to health conditions, they should be as physically active as their abilities and conditions allow.

Source: <https://www.who.int/dietphysicalactivity/physical-activity-recommendations-65years.pdf>

Figure 9: Motivating Factors for Older Adult Physical Activity



Today older adults are expected to live longer and live a more active life than generations past. This will present growing opportunities and user demands for creative, innovative programming and spaces for older adults. However, contradictory to these anticipated trends is a 2018 Statistics Canada report¹ that highlighted as older Canadians are becoming less and less physically active over time. The report revealed a slow decline in overall activity levels among older adults. Participation rates of women aged 65 and older in active pursuits declined from 77% in 1986 to 69% in 2015. Over the same period the average time spent by senior men and women on physical activity declined by 35 and 40 minutes per day, respectively. Forty-four percent (44%) of men aged 65 and older participate in physical activities, along with 39% of women. This may indicate a need for recreation programmers to reassess the types of opportunities and experiences they offer older adults.

¹ <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/180321/dq180321a-eng.htm>

Service Delivery Leading Practices

Data Collection

Recreation and parks departments are increasingly utilizing data to understand user behaviors, needs, preferences, and desires. According to the National Parks and Recreation Associations Survey NRPA survey of parks and recreation professionals, more than 90% of respondents (in leadership roles) identified data collection and analysis as important or very important for activities such as master planning, capital investments, programming, and support staff. However, not every municipality is collecting data and no two municipalities collect data using the same methods. Respondents identified facility usage data, program utilization data, demographic trends, crime data, and school enrolment as important data sources for decision-making.

In terms of methods for collecting data, surveying residents and users is the most common approach. For facility usage, some municipalities have staff manually count visitors and others use automated methods such as scanning user cards. Other departments that may be collecting useful data include public works or utilities, police and fire departments, and transportation departments. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) are also becoming frequently used within the sector to understand where users live, what amenities are available to whom and to identify gaps and opportunities geospatially.

Equity and Inclusion

Recreation facilities and spaces, parks and trails should be welcoming environments for all peoples – regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, income, age, ability, or sexual identity. Efforts are occurring across Canada to ensure that recreation facilities and parks embrace everyone. Deliberate planning and concrete actions are needed to ensure spaces minimize potential barriers and equity and inclusion challenges. The direction for this deliberate action is set in strategic plans such as this Strategy.

The diversity of the region can only be expected to increase in future years; as such, we must consider how policies and practices will contribute to building bridges between socio-cultural and ethnic gaps and address barriers to participation. Equity is about creating fairness, and providing citizens with access to spaces, facilities, services and supports that they require to meet their needs.

Recreation providers are in an excellent position to improve the lives of those who have been oppressed through the delivery of services and **programs that are thoughtfully designed to empower and provide a sense of self-determination.** A first step in creating and fostering equity is to facilitate inclusion. Inclusion is about providing a voice to all; it involves the conscious practice of activity engaging people of different backgrounds and experiences. These processes require the acknowledging of our history and reflections on power and privilege. Such experiences and reflections should result in the valuing differences and recognizing that each person has a valuable contribution to society.

Figure 10: Program Innovation to Engage Girls in Physical Activity

TIPS FOR ENGAGING AFRICAN CANADIAN SECOND-GENERATION¹ TEEN GIRLS IN COMMUNITY SPORT



Developing sport programs that meet the needs of second-generation teen girls from a variety of backgrounds is key to engaging this growing population of Canadian youth in sport.



These recommendations are based on interviews conducted by Amina Haggar, MA Candidate under the supervisor of Dr. Audrey Giles with the University of Ottawa, with eleven sport coordinators and coaches involved in the City of Ottawa's Community Centre Basketball League (CCBL). Haggar's research is on the experiences of second generation African Canadian girls in community sport and is relevant to ethnoculturally diverse families in low-income community settings.

This research was partially funded by the SIRC Match Grant program.

¹ Second-generation refers to Canadian-born children who have at least one parent born outside of Canada.

² Multicultural Health Navigators often work with community health centres or related spaces. Reach out to a community health centre in your area to learn more.

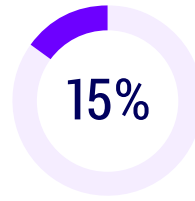
When working to build inclusion and equity, it is important to frame the planning of programming and services as working towards collective benefit for all; this can include strategies such as writing policies and procedures in plain language, so they are easy to understand by all communities and creating welcoming facilities that all people feel safe in! **Creating fairness within the parks and recreation sector, and our broader society, should be something that motivates all providers and participants.**

¹ <https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2015/december/racial-equity-in-parks-and-recreation/>

The Rally Report 2022², Canadian Women & Sport provides insights into “Designing Sport with Girls in Mind”. One significant barrier for girls’ participation in sports is body confidence. Low body confidence amongst girls becomes particularly relevant during adolescence. From body changes, social and cultural pressures, inadequate uniform options, and unsupportive coaching practices, there are sizeable impacts impacting girls’ participation.

The Report identifies four key actions that can be taken.

- 1) Sport organizations to train coaches and activity leaders in gender equity so they understand and can meet the unique needs of girls.
- 2) Sport organizations to train administrators and staff on why and how to apply a gender equity lens to everyday decision-making.
- 3) Board members to become gender equity champions.
- 4) Funders and government to provide long-term consistent investments in gender equity with clear progress targets.



of adolescent girls are dissatisfied with their appearance and body and this limits their sport participation.

Racialized girls, girls with a disability, and those who identify as 2SLGBTQIA+

**EXPERIENCE
HIGHER LEVELS OF
BODY CONFIDENCE
CHALLENGES.**



**Despite these challenges, girls know the benefits of sport:
60% of girls told us that engaging in sport and physical activity
helps them develop positive body image.**

Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples

The 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission: Call to Action Report identified sport and recreation as tools for social development to improve the health and well-being of Indigenous peoples and communities (Calls to Action 87 – 91). The platform of Reconciliation in Canada challenges the recreation sector to do more than an acknowledgment of territorial land or of the Calls to Action within the Truth and Reconciliation Report; it is an opportunity to learn about the land Canadians reside on, the traditional peoples and cultures, and to foster new relationships that will lead to healthier individuals, communities, and balanced partnerships. Reconciliation is an ongoing process that must occur in a respectful manner recognizing Indigenous cultural traditions and protocols to enable a positive move forward with Indigenous communities.

Ensuring that Indigenous peoples have the same opportunities, platforms, and support to tell their own stories in their own way and share their perspectives, traditions and cultures is important, as is ensuring that Indigenous voices are included in planning and development for the future of the cultural sector.

Celebrating and Recognizing Volunteerism

Volunteers play a central role in the development and delivery of recreation opportunities and experiences, including the operations of programs, facilities and the management of parks and trails. Everyday residents offer their time and resources to take action to make their community a better place to live, work and play. They are coaches, officials, and instructors; they serve on boards, event organizers; they are important community leaders. However, with **increasing demands on individual's time, there has been a slight decline in volunteerism across Canada.**

There has also been a change in how people are willing to volunteer – moving from a willingness to commit long durations to serve on boards towards a desire for much shorter one-off volunteerism (e.g., Canada Day event volunteer, park clean up). As such it is important to continue fostering volunteerism, including facilitating opportunities for youth to volunteer who, according to recent Stats Canada research, had the highest rate of formal volunteerism participation across all generations. **Formal recognition of volunteers is a way both of expressing the gratitude of the community and of presenting role models to the people.** This could be achieved by profiling volunteers to highlight their contribution and value within the broader community and regional channels, which would support future recruitment and encourage retention of current volunteers, by increasing volunteer satisfaction because of appropriate recognition.

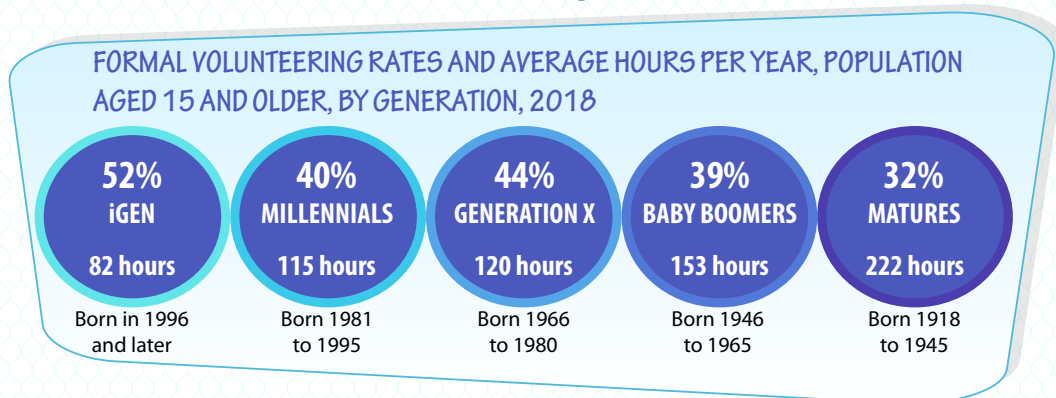
Figure 11: Volunteering in Canada (StatsCanada, 2018)



VOLUNTEERING BY CANADIANS IN 2018

In 2018, **over 24 million people volunteered** formally (i.e., for an organization), informally (on their own), or both formally and informally, accounting for 79% of Canadians aged 15 and older. **They dedicated approximately 5 billion hours to volunteer activities**, equivalent to over 2.5 million full-time year-round jobs.

Among all generations, **iGens were the most likely to engage in formal volunteering, at 52%, but Matures contributed the most average hours** to formal volunteering activities.



AVERAGE HOURS OF FORMAL VOLUNTEERING PER YEAR, POPULATION AGED 15 AND OLDER, BY ORGANIZATION TYPE, 2018

Among formal volunteers, more hours were dedicated to hospitals and religious organizations.

Hospitals




Religious organizations



Sports and recreation



Arts and culture

In 2018, more Canadians engaged in informal volunteering activities. Close to 23 million people volunteered on their own, while about half (12.7 million) devoted time to volunteering activities mediated by organizations such as hospitals.

Note: Formal volunteering is when people volunteer for and on behalf of organizations, while informal volunteering is engagement in activities on one's own (e.g., picking up groceries for a neighbour).

Source: Hahmann, Tara. 2021. "Volunteering counts: Formal and informal contributions of Canadians in 2018." *Insights on Canadian Society*. April. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 75-006-X.

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Canada



APPENDIX C PROGRAM PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Figure 12: Program Planning Framework





APPENDIX D

PROJECT INVESTMENT PRIORITIZATION CRITERIA

Criteria	Description	Scoring			
		3	2	1	0
Public Availability	How available is the project for general / public to use?	There is a high likelihood that the project would be available for general use and / or spontaneous use.	There is a moderate likelihood that the project would be available for general use and / or spontaneous use.	There is a low likelihood that the project would be available for general use and / or spontaneous use.	There is a no likelihood that the project would be available for general use and / or spontaneous use.
Community Development	Does the project contribute to building community connections and social capital in the County?	There is a high likelihood that the project will build community connections and social capital in the region.	There is a moderate likelihood that the project will build community connections and social capital in the region.	There is a low likelihood that the project will build community connections and social capital in the region.	There is no likelihood that the project will build community connections and social capital in the region.
Partnerships	What is the potential of the project to attract partnerships in its development and / or operation?	The project has a high likelihood of partnership potential.	The project has a moderate likelihood of partnership potential.	The project has a low likelihood of partnership potential.	The project has no likelihood of partnership potential.
Public Support	What is the level of local support or demand for the project?	The project has a high likelihood of public support.	The project has a moderate likelihood of public support.	The project has a low likelihood of public support.	The project has a likelihood of no public support.

Criteria	Description	Scoring			
		3	2	1	0
Service Level	Does the project enhance recreation opportunities and / or services?	The project has a high likelihood of enhancing recreation opportunities And / or series in the region.	The project has a moderate likelihood of enhancing recreation opportunities And / or series in the region.	The project has a low likelihood of enhancing recreation opportunities And / or series in the region.	The project has no likelihood of enhancing recreation opportunities And / or series in the region.
Equitable Distribution	Does the project support or contribute to recreation opportunities being distributed throughout the Municipality to provide equitable and inclusion opportunities for the population? (current and expected)	The project contributes to equitable services throughout the Municipality and inclusive opportunities for current and future populations.	The project contributes to equitable services throughout the Municipality and inclusive opportunities for current populations.	The project somewhat contributes to equitable services throughout the Municipality.	The project does not contribute to equitable services throughout the Municipality.



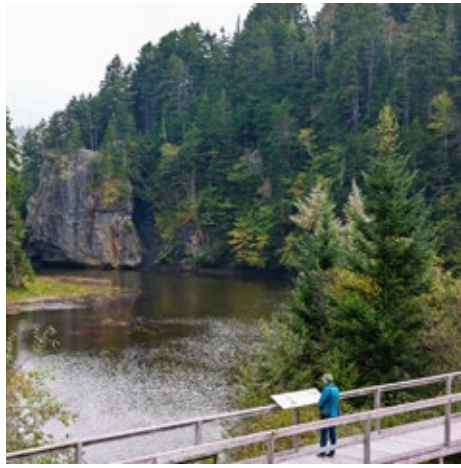


Photo Source: Tourism Nova Scotia /
Photographer: @daveyandsky

