



# RECREATION SERVICES MASTER PLAN OVERVIEW



EAST HANTS

OCTOBER 2019



**WHY** The East Hants Recreation Services Master Plan is a working document that offers strategic direction to Council and Municipal staff on future decisions pertaining to recreation services within the Municipality. The purpose of this plan is to identify and address issues in recreation service delivery, infrastructure and volunteerism, and offer recommendations to Council for the future development and provision of Municipal recreation services over the next five years. This Master Plan aligns with the *Framework for Recreation in Canada*, the *Shared Strategy for Advancing Recreation in Nova Scotia* and *Let's Get Moving Nova Scotia*.

## MASTER PLAN GOALS

### 1 *Recreation for All: Safe, inclusive and creative recreation activities available for all East Hants residents*

Every resident of East Hants has access to and can participate in inclusive structured and unstructured recreation activities. Through participation in recreation activities, residents of East Hants can, and will, develop a strong level of physical literacy and social well-being. The long-term benefits of recreation activities will situate East Hants as a leader for inclusion and accessibility.

### 2 *Communication and Collaboration: Connect the community to innovate, work and learn together*

East Hants has a long history of dedicated not-for-profit community groups who organize and deliver recreation programming. By increasing communication and collaboration between mutual recreation community groups and with the Municipality, the recreation sector within East Hants will be better positioned to provide forward-thinking, community-driven solutions.

### 3 *Build Community Capacity: Support and empower community groups*

Volunteers form the backbone of recreation services in East Hants. Building on the foundation of existing efforts and best practices in community development, East Hants can strengthen and equip not-for-profit recreation partners to effectively advance their missions, ultimately enhancing the quality of recreation services to East Hants residents.

## MASTER PLAN STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

This plan proposes the following strategic directions to help build the plan's implementation to align with the master plan goals:

### 1 Ensure appropriate, equitable and impactful recreation programs and opportunities are provided in East Hants

### 2 Enable residents to be aware of and engaged in recreation opportunities

### 3 Optimize current and future investment in recreation facilities

### 4 Build capacity in the recreation community

## RECREATION VISION STATEMENT

*East Hants is an engaged Municipality where residents are active for life. East Hants is a place where all residents are able to access and participate in a wide variety of recreation opportunities.*

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## Step 1: Previous Engagement Review

In recent years, the Municipality of East Hants conducted surveys such as the Community Goals Survey and the Parks & Open Space Survey. This existing information helped inform the Recreation Services Master Plan.

## Step 2: Roundtable Stakeholder Meetings

To better understand the service delivery network for recreation programming in East Hants, staff from the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department conducted a series of 21 roundtable meetings with various key recreation stakeholders.

## Step 3: East Hants Recreation Survey

The East Hants Recreation Survey was created with a focus on the delivery of recreation services and programs throughout East Hants. The purpose of the survey was to understand the changing recreation landscape, and areas in which the Municipality needs to improve. The survey attracted responses from 321 East Hants residents.

## Step 4: Open House Sessions

For the fourth stage of community engagement, the Department of Parks, Recreation & Culture hosted three Open House sessions. The purpose of these sessions was to share the progress of the Recreation Services Master Plan with the public and obtain more feedback, comments, and address any concerns.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

1. There is need for more variety and availability of structured and unstructured recreation programs.
2. Communication needs to be improved between the Municipality, not-for-profit (NFP) community groups and private recreation providers.
3. Up-to-date information on recreation, leisure, and volunteer opportunities in East Hants is needed.
4. Collaboration between facility operators and recreation providers is required.
5. Additional structured and unstructured recreation opportunities are needed for residents outside of the Corridor.
6. Potential volunteers are unable to find volunteer opportunities in East Hants.



# SERVICE DELIVERY

Each community within the Municipality of East Hants has different recreation needs. For this reason, the current partnership model that prioritizes not-for-profit (NFP) community group involvement is most effective.

While the Municipality does provide some direct

programming (i.e. swimming lessons, summer day camps), the majority of recreation services and programs are organized and facilitated by various NFP community groups. The majority of NFP community groups in East Hants are operated entirely by volunteer community members, and require substantial time-commitment.

## KEY FINDINGS: SERVICE DELIVERY

1. Community development support can help NFP community groups through empowerment, funding and facilitation.
2. There are three stages in a NFP community group lifecycle and each stage requires different support.
3. Compared to similar municipalities in Nova Scotia, East Hants residents receive less spending on recreation.
4. Roundtable discussions revealed need for a Community Development Coordinator to directly support NFP community groups.
5. There are opportunities for NFP community groups to connect with each other and work toward common goals.
6. Formal partnership frameworks can foster strong and sustainable recreation networks.

## EXAMPLE INITIATIVES: SERVICE DELIVERY

<b>Strategic Direction:</b> <i>Ensure appropriate, equitable and impactful recreation programs and opportunities are provided in East Hants</i>			
	Goal 1: Recreation For All	Goal 2: Communication & Collaboration	Goal 3: Build Community Capacity
Community Recreation Survey every 5 Years	✓	✓	
Increase Municipal Recreation Programs	✓	✓	✓
Training for Recreation Leaders	✓		✓
Evaluate Existing Grant Programs	✓		✓
User-Fee Framework	✓		
Community Development Coordinator	✓	✓	✓
Performance Management Criteria for Partnerships	✓	✓	✓
Recreation for All Policy	✓	✓	✓
<b>Strategic Direction:</b> <i>Enable residents to be aware of and engaged in recreation opportunities</i>			
Community Recreation Directory	✓	✓	
Community Recreation Program Template	✓	✓	





# INFRASTRUCTURE

During the development of the Recreation Services Master Plan, a few key municipally-owned facilities and amenities were identified. Facilities including the new East Hants Aquatics Centre offer pay-per-use recreation programming, while the municipally-owned parks and natural trails offer unstructured recreation opportunities at no direct cost to the user.

Community recreation groups are responsible for the majority of recreation programming and facility operation in East Hants. While some offer programming and leisure activities, the primary function of many of these organizations is to provide, maintain, and operate a variety of recreation facilities and outdoor amenities.

## KEY FINDINGS: INFRASTRUCTURE

1. The majority of available structured and unstructured recreation facilities are operated by NFP community groups.
2. Many recreation spaces are currently inaccessible and the main barrier to upgrading to meet accessibility standards is the cost.
3. Facilities that require renovations enter into an under-funded infrastructure cycle which sees a decline use in facility and decrease in revenue.
4. Joint Use Agreements enable use of facilities for additional recreation time provided by the Municipality and community groups.

## EXAMPLE INITIATIVES: INFRASTRUCTURE

Goal 1:  
Recreation For All

Goal 2:  
Communication & Collaboration

Goal 3:  
Build Community Capacity

<b>Strategic Direction:</b> <i>Optimize current and future investment in recreation facilities</i>			
Recreation Facilities Master Plan	✓	✓	
Facility Condition Assessment Tool	✓	✓	✓
Support Community Facilities to meet Accessibility Act	✓	✓	✓
Community-Owned Recreation Facility Inventory	✓	✓	
Evaluate Existing Grant Programs	✓	✓	



# VOLUNTEERISM

Volunteers in East Hants play a central role in the development and delivery of structured and unstructured recreation activities, programming, and facility access.

Located throughout the municipality, community recreation associations, volunteer fire departments, and NFP

community organizations work to ensure that the residents of East Hants and surrounding area can engage in physical, cultural, or social activities in a meaningful way.

## KEY FINDINGS: VOLUNTEERISM

1. Similar to national statistics, residents of East Hants lack the time, or are unaware of volunteer opportunities.

2. Social/cultural, sport and recreation, and arts and culture sectors account for 38% of volunteers in East Hants.
3. Volunteers matched with a specific NFP association volunteer more hours than those who are not affiliated.

4. Volunteer hours are being spent on applying for grants and seeking funding rather than achieving NFP goals.

## EXAMPLE INITIATIVES: VOLUNTEERISM

**Strategic Direction:**  
*Build capacity in the recreation community*

Goal 1:  
Recreation For All

Goal 2:  
Communication & Collaboration

Goal 3:  
Build Community Capacity

Volunteer Training & Assistance	✓	✓	✓
Volunteer Expo Event	✓	✓	✓
Community Volunteer Opportunity Directory		✓	✓
Volunteer Engagement Strategy		✓	✓



# CONCLUSION

East Hants is fortunate to have an engaged recreation community positively contributing to the quality of life for East Hants residents. The implementation of the Recreation Services Master Plan will enhance the recreation service delivery, infrastructure and volunteerism reality for all East Hants residents.

Following Council's adoption of the Recreation Services Master Plan, an implementation plan will be developed that identifies key initiatives reflected in the municipal budget and departmental workplans.

The Master Plan steers the Municipality towards a more formally collaborative role in the provision of recreation programming, infrastructure, and in the support of our strong and dedicated community volunteers. The implementation of this Master Plan will position the Municipality of East Hants as a leader in providing Recreation Services.

