



BACKGROUND

The Parks, Recreation and Culture (PRC) Diversity & Inclusion Strategy is a set of guiding principles that will shape how recreation programs and services are delivered to residents. This strategy reaffirms the municipality's commitment to increase inclusion and access as outlined in the East Hants Strategic Plan 2021-2024.

- On October 2019, Council approved the Recreation Services Master Plan, which guides Municipal staff and Council over the next five years for decision making on recreation services within East Hants. The plan outlines a goal to have safe, inclusive and creative recreation activities available for all East Hants residents.
- February 2020, council adopted the Recreation Access Policy which aims to reduce financial barriers for adults, youth and children who wish to enroll in municipal recreation programs/services.
- May 2021, council adopted and approved the East Hants Accessibility Plan - Accessible East Hants, which identifies the municipality's commitment inclusion and diversity.

The Municipality is governed by other legislation and policies that support diversity and inclusion including, the Canadian Multiculturalism Act (1988), Canadian Employment Equity Act (1995), and Nova Scotia Human Rights Act (1989).

PURPOSE

The PRC Diversity & Inclusion Strategy is designed to assist the department in creating a diverse and inclusive environment for programs and services to our residents. This strategy identifies guiding principles, objectives and examples of initiatives.

By removing barriers and utilizing the views of others, residents of East Hants can, and will, develop a strong level of physical literacy and social well-being. The long-term benefits of recreation and leisure activities will situate East Hants as a leader for diversity and inclusion.

DEFINITIONS

- **Accessibility** - Capable of being used or accessed. Often when we talk about accessibility in parks and recreation, we mean that something is, at its basic level, legally accessible to people. Accessibility of playgrounds and facilities, for example, is often determined by Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. Accessible is not the same as inclusive. Accessibility of spaces is an important first step and is often followed by looking at how to make those spaces more equitable and inclusive. ([NRPA](#))
- **Diversity** - Differences in racial and ethnic, socioeconomic, geographic and academic/professional backgrounds; people with different opinions, backgrounds (degrees and social experience), religious

beliefs, political beliefs, sexual orientations, heritage, mental or physical ability, learning style, gender identity and life experience. ([Racial Equity Tools](#))

- **Disability** - a physical, mental, intellectual, learning or sensory impairment, including an episodic disability, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders an individual's full and effective participation in society. ([Nova Scotia Legislator](#))
- **Equity** - The absence of avoidable, unfair or remediable differences among groups of people, whether those groups are defined socially, economically, demographically or geographically, or by other means of stratification. Equity = Fairness and Justice. ([The World Health Organization \[WHO\]](#))
- **Inclusion** - Authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into the processes, activities and decisions/policymaking in a way that shares power, recognizes and celebrates differences, ensures people feel welcome, and makes sure everyone has equitable access to opportunities. ([Racial Equity Tools](#))
- **Under-represented** - Often an effective term when discussing communities and populations. As always, specificity and context guide the best usage, but this term often works well when discussing less-specific groups. Make sure there truly is underrepresentation when using, and when possible, say specifically how people are underrepresented. ([American Heart Association](#))

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Programming & Services

- Strive to provide adaptive and inclusive recreation programming opportunities for residents.
- Prioritize accessible facilities for municipal programs, workshops, and events.
- Utilize the views and ideas of community members and partners for input on recreation programs and services.

Spaces & Places

- Aim to make indoor and outdoor recreation spaces barrier free.
- Incorporate the culture and views of under-represented populations into new and existing recreation assets.
- Identify and promote accessible recreation spaces within the Municipality.

Communication & Promotion

- Use inclusive language (i.e. Person first, universal, gender neutral, strength-based).
- Represent diversity and inclusion in promotional materials (i.e. photos, language, communities).
- Strive to make communication materials accessible (fonts, contrast, content and readability).

Meaningful Partnerships

- Engage underrepresented populations for input and ideas on recreation programs and services.
- Support our community partners/groups to develop inclusion and diversity-based initiatives.
- Collaborate with organizations to reduce barriers and strengthen community recreation.

Policy & Guidelines

- Review and amend existing department policies to contain objectives that contribute towards diversity and inclusion.
- Develop new Parks, Recreation and Culture (PRC) policies when necessary that contribute to increasing/promoting diversity and inclusion.

OBJECTIVES & INITIATIVES

Programming & Services

Guiding Principle	Objective	Example Initiative
Strive to make recreation programming opportunities adaptive and inclusive for residents.	To ensure all children have the opportunity to participate in recreation programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialized Inclusion Staff • Adaptive Equipment Available to Residents
	To decrease barriers to participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreation Access Policy • Program Offerings in different districts
	To develop and deliver specialized program opportunities for all abilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive Swim Lessons offered at the same rate as group lessons.
Prioritize accessible facilities for municipal programs, workshops, and events.	To provide programs, workshops, and events in accessible locations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inventory of accessible facilities in East Hants
Utilize the views and ideas of others for input on recreation programs and services.	To incorporate community input/feedback into program planning design.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pitch a Program • Municipal Surveys/Feedback • Needs Assessments

Spaces & Places

Guiding Principle	Objective	Example Initiative
Aim to make indoor and outdoor recreation assets barrier free.	To make Municipal recreation outdoor spaces and indoor facilities barrier free where appropriate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop accessibility standards for recreation spaces in East Hants
	To increase understanding of accessibility standards and funding opportunities to community groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community groups making improvements that have accessible components
Incorporate the culture and views of under-represented community members into new and existing recreation assets.	To collaborate with diverse community stakeholders for new recreation parks and facilities development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with Sipekne'katik on new park developments
Identify and promote accessible recreation assets within the municipality.	To develop easy to navigate municipal recreation spaces and places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved mapping features - i.e. symbols for accessible features

Communication & Promotion

Guiding Principle	Objective	Example Initiative
Use inclusive language	To utilize inclusive language and communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible website • Use languages such as: person first, universal, gender neutral, strength-based.

Represent diversity and inclusion in promotional materials	To represent diversity in our marketing and communication materials.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use photos and language that represent diversity in our community.
Strive to make communication materials accessible (fonts, colours, content and readability).	To create accessible communication standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessible formats i.e. braille, sign-language, or large print.

Meaningful Partnerships

Guiding Principle	Objective	Example Initiative
Engage under-represented populations for input and ideas on recreation programs/services.	To develop partnerships with under-represented populations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New projects/programs are guided by people with lived experiences.
Support our community partners/groups to develop inclusion and diversity-based initiatives.	To create support tools that assist community groups to be inclusive and diverse friendly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusion Resource Kit Inclusion-based grants Training opportunities
Collaborate with organizations to reduce barriers and strengthen community recreation.	To develop and maintain relationships with community-based organizations and other levels of government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using multi-use funding sources Partner with organization to deliver new programs (Autism NS Swim Lessons)

Policy & Guidelines

Guiding Principle	Objective	Example Initiative
Parks, Recreation and Culture (PRC) policies will aim to contribute to increasing and promoting diversity and inclusion.	To review and amend current policies to reduce barriers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include diversity and inclusion criteria in recreation grants.
	To include developing new policies, as well as revise previously developed policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff use diversity and inclusion lens when developing new policies.

IMPLEMENTATION

This strategy will guide the way recreation programs and services are delivered and will take into account the guiding principles when actioning new and existing initiatives.