Making a Move

Strategic Recreation Plan

March 2019

We Listen. We Learn. We Grow.

MESSAGE FROM THE WARDEN, MUNICIPALITY OF PICTOU COUNTY

Our Council is proud to announce that we have a new recreation strategy that will guide our direction and activities for the next several years. A big thank you is owed to those who contributed many hours to bringing this project to reality. This includes all those residents who took time from their busy schedules to attend one of the Kitchen Table discussions held in December and January at seven different locations in our rural Municipality.

Also, a thank you to our staff who spent many hours working alongside our consultants to come up with a final plan to present to the committee and Council. Our new strategy is designed to fit "hand in glove" with the new federal and provincial strategies. This only makes good sense as we are all dealing with the same constituents. One objective is to move beyond thinking of recreation as only for one age group to recognize the multiple health benefits of all types of recreation across the age spectrum.

Our Council recently gave special recognition to a young man from Pleasant Valley, Myles O'Brien, who is doing his graduate studies at Dalhousie University in Halifax on the benefits of movement to the health of all, especially as we age. This may seem obvious, but Mr. O'Brien's research, for which he has been recognized by his peers, will put all doubt behind and help to quantify and focus on the direct benefits.

It became obvious at the public consultations that even minimal recreational opportunities can significantly improve not just physical health but also mental health, especially around loneliness and isolation. We are hopeful this new recreational strategy will help in providing more opportunities for social interaction and growth of our many and varied rural communities. It is great to have larger recreational opportunities in central locations in our County, but we must also strive to improve opportunities in our own smaller community gathering places.

As a Council, it is our sincere hope that many of you use this new recreational strategy because no matter how good it looks on paper, it will only work if we have a good supply of motivated and committed volunteers to make it happen. Please consider stepping forward and helping this strategy work to make rural Pictou County an even better place to live.

Sincerely,
Robert Parker,
Municipality of Pictou County Warden

MESSAGE FROM PICTOU COUNTY RECREATION

It is with great excitement that we now have the final report from Phase 2 of our strategic planning process for Pictou County Recreation.

This was a huge endeavour and this report will be used to shape the future of recreation in rural Pictou County. I would like to thank all of the community members that attended our community sessions in December and January and it was so interesting to hear the common themes from throughout the entire Municipality. Following Council's approval, I look forward to implementing this new strategy over the next four to five years and am hoping we will get the same support for implementation of the plan from our community members that we saw during this planning process.

Our vision of ***"enriched individual and community wellbeing through greater participation in meaningful recreation experiences at the community level"*** *reflects our desire to move forward to enhance the support and provision of recreation and physical activity for all residents of Pictou County.*

Our plan and future work will be guided by the *Shared Strategy for Advancing Recreation in Nova Scotia*, which defines recreation as: *The experience that results from freely chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community wellbeing.*

We are facing significant social and environmental challenges; recreation and physical activity have proven to play an integral role in addressing these challenges. Engagement in recreation and physical activity is helping reduce diabetes, anti-social behaviour, social isolation, negative impacts on the environment and obesity. (*Shared Strategy*, 2015) We are looking forward to taking this plan and connecting with Pictou County residents and all the communities that reside within. Continuing collaborations with our community partners will be an essential focus in reaching our goals. The new strategic plan will support individual wellbeing and community wellbeing and ultimately enhance the quality of life within Pictou County.

We believe in the strength of recreational participation within local communities and therefore we invite you to get active with a neighbour or friend or to help coordinate community recreational activities. We all have skills and interests that others would enjoy and it can be rewarding to connect with old and new friends within the community. Once that initial connection is made it is often easier for everyone to be motivated to get out and participate in the activity again a second and third time.

Working in small groups can be an effective way to organize recreation and physical activity at the community level. So, if you are able and motivated to do so, we invite you to gather friends together and invite your neighbours that don't get out often, are new to the community or are seasonal residents to a community recreation program or event. When citizens reach out to others to get engaged in an activity, the bonds within the community are strengthened and all participants have an opportunity to feel healthier in mind, body and spirit.

Through enhanced recreation and physical activity opportunities, we aspire to achieve our goals and we hope you, your friends and neighbours will be enthused about helping people in your community get connected and involved. We can help provide resources, strengthen access to networks and help you connect to others within your community and others within the County.

Thank you,
Cindy Fraser
Recreation Director for the Municipality of Pictou County

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Initiated by the Municipality of Pictou County in the fall of 2018, this report represents the second of two phases. Phase 1 was completed in the spring of 2018. The principle deliverable for the project, as specified in the Request for Proposals, was a strategic, operational plan with an embedded physical activity strategy for Pictou County Recreation. Using the *Shared Strategy* as its foundation, the plan was to be reflective of community needs and aspirations, comprehensive and universal in approach, and suitable for public review.

The planning process included a review of relevant documents such as the *Shared Strategy* and the results of the *County of Pictou, Physical Activity Community Surveys* of 2014 and 2018; regular meetings with the Steering Committee and Ad Hoc Committee appointed by Council; and community and stakeholder meetings that engaged approximately 100 interested community members and representatives of service providing organizations.

Section one of this report provides the background and history for the project, describes the current mandate of Pictou County Recreation, and explains briefly how the planning process was carried out. Additional information related to the information gathering tools used during the process can be found in the appendices.

The community and stakeholder meetings generated a range of findings that focussed on a small number of key areas. Particularly noticeable were the attention paid to: the need for enhanced communications with and engagement of communities; increased capacity of Pictou County Recreation to support communities in the provision of opportunities; and enhanced community and transportation infrastructure. Section two covers this content in greater detail.

Together, sections three and four plot a course for moving forward towards a population that is more engaged, more active and less sedentary living in communities that have greater capacity for engaging their residents through the provision of opportunities and infrastructure. Section three contains the high level elements of definitions, a vision for the plan, a mission for Pictou County Recreation, and the values that provide a foundation for the plan. Section four articulates the five goals of active living and wellbeing, inclusion and access, connecting people and nature, supportive environments and recreation capacity. Section four also identifies 16 objectives and 34 actions that will help to achieve the goals.

Section five provides a recommended approach to implementation over the next five years, focussing particularly on the first three years of implementation. Section six covers the question of tracking progress through monitoring and evaluation activities. Section seven includes the appendices and section eight provides an annotated bibliography of relevant documents, strategies and reports.

1. BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

Project History: Phases 1 and 2

The beginning of this project can be traced to the fall of 2017 when the Municipality of Pictou County adopted the *Shared Strategy for Advancing Recreation in Nova Scotia* as the foundation for future recreation development within the municipality. In December of that year, Municipal Council identified five strategic priorities, one of which was the development of a comprehensive Recreation Strategy.

The Municipality's Recreation Strategic Plan project was undertaken in two stages. Phase 1 was completed in the spring of 2018, culminating in an extensive research report by independent consultant Laura K Duggan. Ms. Duggan's comprehensive report, entitled *Recreation Strategic Plan, Phase 1: Preliminary Research Report and Recommendations*, provided a foundation for the current project.

Phase 2 on this project was begun in the fall of 2018 with the release of a Request for Proposals in September of that year. The competition resulted in the contract being awarded to Frank Gallant of Peak Experiences Consulting of Antigonish County and Rick Gilbert of Rick Gilbert Consulting of Halifax. The initial meeting of the project Steering Committee with the consultants was held on November 5, 2018.

Current Recreation Mandate and Priorities

A complete description of the current mandate and priorities is found in the Phase 1 report. The following is a brief summary of that information.

Pictou County Recreation is a one-person operation. Its function focuses mainly on providing support to community-based organizations that provide a variety of recreational opportunities at the local level. With the exception of children's programs during the summer months, the Pictou County Recreation mandate does not include the direct delivery of recreation programs. Similarly, Pictou County Recreation does not have responsibility for owning or operating recreation facilities, although the Municipality of Pictou County is a partner with other municipalities in owning and operating the Pictou County Wellness Centre.

Recreation Coordinator, Cindy Fraser, is engaged in several important partnerships, including the Highland Region Recreation Coordinators Association (comprised of all municipalities contained within Pictou, Antigonish and Guysborough Counties) and the Municipal Recreation Coordinators of Pictou County Group (comprised of all six Pictou County municipalities) and is an active participant in both organizaions. Until recently, she has also had responsibility for several

communications projects related to recreation and physical activity services within the municipality.

Planning Process

As per the Request for Proposals and the consultants' proposal, the planning process consisted of 14 steps that included:

- A review of existing, related strategic plans, surveys and other documents, including the Recreation Strategic Plan Phase 1 preliminary report;
- Meetings, workshops and communication with the Steering Committee to guide the process, provide input and review draft plans;
- Seven meetings with community members in River John, Alma, Scotsburn, Eureka, Little Harbour, Merigomish and Thorburn; a meeting with staff of partner organizations; and meetings with representatives of two stakeholder organizations – Big Brothers/Big Sisters and Roots House – involving approximately 100 people in total;
- Two meetings with Municipal Council's Ad Hoc Committee to update them on the status of plan development and solicit their input into its content.

The consultation format for the above-mentioned meetings is found in Appendix A. An additional input opportunity was provided in the form of an online SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) exercise which can be seen in Appendix B. Analysis and synthesis of the information gathered from these sources (and from related reports) resulted in the current plan being submitted to the Municipality of Pictou County in March 2019.

2. WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED

Brief overview of Phase 1 report

The Phase 1 report, available for viewing as a separate document, provides a detailed summary of information gathered by the consultant. It is not our purpose to reiterate those findings here, but the following list will provide a small sample of the consultant's findings.

- Pictou County Recreation, led by Recreation Coordinator Cindy Fraser, utilizes a sustainable community development approach to fulfilling its mandate, an approach that will continue to be relevant in the future.

- Key Themes for future development include: Proximity, collaboration, outdoors, active transportation and social connections.

- Recreation, as a component of a strong cross-sectoral approach to providing community services, is in a position to enhance individual and community wellbeing.

- Despite the many acknowledged benefits of an active lifestyle, physical inactivity and sedentary living continue to represent significant health risks to Canadians. Engagement in more active lifestyles can be encouraged through increased accessibility to community-based, low cost, non-competitive, family friendly activities.

- Regional collaborations, including with Active Pictou County, the five Pictou County towns, the Community Health Board, the public education system, the Pictou County Wellness Centre and others, represent opportunities to address many recreation and physical activity challenges.

- The existence of "hubs" within the County offers an opportunity to support further development of sport and recreation opportunities at the community level.

- Highland Connect provides an easily navigable, online resource that provides citizens with information on recreational opportunities and, with additional resources, could be an essential information source for families in Pictou County.

- Aging well, at home, in their local communities, is an imperative for older adults, and a particular challenge in rural communities. Recreation can help older citizens to age well at home through supporting continued engagement in their communities and providing the social supports that many require.

- The *Accessibility Act* (Bill 59) provides an opportunity for a new focus on serving the unique needs of persons with disabilities through initiatives such as employing principles of universal design and accessible equipment loan programs.

- Recreational participation can be an important contributor to good mental health for all population groups through, for example, expanded social networks, a sense of accomplishment, stress reduction, and enhanced coping skills.

Nova Insights Survey (Selected Findings)

***Cautions**:*

- As with any quantitative survey, sampling error can affect the reliability of results. However, with a "very robust sample size" of 559 people out of a small population, the confidence in these results is considered to be very good.
- This survey included all of the municipal partners that are members of Active Pictou County: the Towns of Westville, Pictou, Trenton, and Stellerton and the Municipality of Pictou County.

Selected Findings:

The following represent a selection of key findings from the 2018 survey, often taken directly from the report. Where available, comparisons to the 2014 survey findings are provided.

- With respect to current participation, walking (across all adult ages) and household tasks continue to be the most common activities by a wide margin. Walking is even more common in rural parts of the county.

- When talking about what they wish they could do more of, walking and swimming top the list, and there is a slight increase over 2014, true for both town and rural respondents

- Women were significantly more interested in yoga and pilates than men.

- Most activity levels are similar to 2014. However, canoeing and kayaking have increased in weekly activity.

- "To encourage citizens to participate in their top ranked wish list activity, comments often related to having the time to participate. There are many demands on time, so offering flexible and less structured physical activity opportunities, responding to community preferences, and supporting the integration of physical activity throughout the day may be valuable to help engage community members."

- Strong majorities of respondents say that they have reasonable access to natural waterways, trails, parks, arenas, community centres, indoor pools and recreation clubs.

- "Residents are most commonly active at home. Roadsides lead the second tier of places, followed by beaches, lakes, or rivers, trails, and the workplace. Since 2014, citizens are more likely to be active on trails, and at work, but less active at recreation clubs."

- Rural residents are significantly more likely to be active outdoors at home and less likely to be active on roadsides, than town residents.

- Where outdoor spaces are reasonably accessible, there is a high satisfaction rate, including at home, natural waterways, trails, and parks, especially for those under 40.

- Among the places to be active that residents say are *not* reasonably accessible, the greatest likelihood for increased participation include roadsides, natural waterways, and trails.

***Challenges**:*

- Across categories of challenges the greatest proportions cite aspects of infrastructure, social, and time barriers as affecting their ability to be more physically active. The rank order replicates the finding from 2014, but there has been some decrease in the social and cost barriers.

- Across specific challenges, roadside maintenance for bicycling tops the list of barriers, followed by having someone to be active with. Cost and scheduling have decreased somewhat as barriers, while health issues have increased.

- Not having someone to be active with is a top barrier for women, and more so than for men. Roadside maintenance is also a top barrier for both genders, but again, somewhat higher for women. Roadside maintenance for walking and feeling safe riding a bicycle in the community are also more significant barriers for women than men.

- Roadside maintenance is a more common barrier in rural areas than in the towns.

- Topping the list of infrastructure barriers is the condition of bicycle lanes and spaces at the side of the road. A distant second are roadside spaces for walking.

- Having someone to go with is a significant barrier to increased participation. Having family-friendly opportunities would affect one-in-three citizens.

- Two-in-five say the programs in their community are not of interest to them. Far fewer say they are just not interested in physical activity or it is not of value to them.

- For nearly two-in-five, there is a sense of insecurity in riding a bicycle in the community. Far fewer have that concern about walking, and fewer again have concerns about physical or emotional safety.
- The cost of participating is seen as a barrier for nearly half of respondents.

- Access to information about opportunities for physical activity is a barrier for more than one-in-four citizens. Slightly fewer say they have trouble getting to opportunities, which could indicate a medical or transportation barrier.

- More than two-in-five say they have health issues that affect their participation level, and most of these say these issues are ongoing and long-term.

Opportunities:

- Across specific program ideas for increasing participation, the greatest proportions cite common spaces to meet friends, female-only activities, non-competitive activities, and family-friendly spaces that would encourage them to participate more frequently. There has been little change in the interest in these ideas since 2014.

- Females are more interested than males in non-competitive recreational opportunities.

- Common spaces, family-friendly, and drop-in opportunities would be more influential among the youngest segment of adults.

- Having physical activity champions in the community and recreation staff to coordinate activities could encourage some to participate more often.

- One-in-four women would likely increase participation if there were women's only opportunities.

Community Advice: Given the opportunity to offer advice for increasing physical activity, 31% suggested better roads and sidewalks; 20% mentioned cost and affordability, and 19% cited communication.

Active Transportation:

- Consistent with results from the 2014 findings, the strongest influencers in terms of increasing bicycling are off-road cycling paths, better road conditions, bicycle lanes,

connected paths, better lighting and less traffic. There are only minor differences between men and women.

- The factors that influence bicycle usage are almost the same with rural and urban respondents.

- Well-maintained sidewalks are the main influencer when it comes to encouraging more walking. with trails, lighting, crosswalks, enforcement of rules of the road and connected routes not far behind. Once again, there are few differences between male and female and rural and urban respondents.

***Conclusions**:*

The *Pictou Physical Activity Community Survey* provides a concise overview of its most compelling findings, presented here word-for-word from the report. Not too surprisingly, those findings – and the "community advice" shown above – are similar to results from the community meetings held as a component of the planning process for this Recreation Strategic Plan.

- With walking as the most popular activity for future participation in general as well as for active transportation, there is a significant opportunity to increase activity in this community by prioritizing support for walking.

- Swimming is also mentioned as a wish list item for increased participation, but to a far lesser degree than walking.

- Infrastructure for walking and cycling is a clear need based on identified physical activity challenges and as a facilitator for active transportation.

- Interventions to support social connections are important. They address significant barriers and garner significant interest among programming concepts.

- Time (availability of residents, scheduling of programs) is an important barrier to consider in planning interventions.

- There may be a role for health care providers in supporting participation in physical activity given the proportion who perceive their current health status as a challenge.

Community Engagement Meetings (Key Themes)

The community meetings were a prime source of qualitative data for assessing recreational and physical activity opinions and interests. The following represent a sampling of themes that were repeated most often at the meetings, often regardless of location. It should be noted that these themes are often interrelated and should not be considered to represent stand-alone ideas.

Community Engagement:

Maximizing the community use of schools, community halls and other facilities was offered as one way to get more people involved. Other suggestions included assisting communities with the process of asset mapping and providing hub funding for community centres and navigators. Family gatherings and skill interaction sessions were also mentioned as ways of encouraging engagement.

Increased Operational Support:

Improved promotion, communication and coordination, possibly through a communication strategy, were thought by many to be a key area for increased support for community recreation. A few specific examples included:

- Survey households for level of interest.
- Create a paid community coordinator position to assist community volunteers and provide "navigation" support
- Keep websites up-to-date
- Increase the recreation department's presence at the community level.

Other suggestions made within this theme included to provide a blanket insurance program, create corporate and health partnerships, find ways to reduce costs, allocate funds to communities for instructors and provide free transportation or program funding for seniors' events.

Enhanced Leadership:

In the area of leadership, there was significant interest in engaging youth and students through employment, volunteerism and mentorships. A related idea was to share skills through intergenerational opportunities that brought youth and elders together. There was also interest in new efforts to recruit, train and celebrate volunteers.
Some community members also expressed interest in having assistance with fundraising, especially with respect to grant applications, and there were several calls for a reduction in the red tape associated with the grant application process. There was also a call to expand the role of the recreation department through "strategic, permanent recreation staffing" and the encouragement of innovation through funding and guidance.

Increased Community Opportunities:

Not unexpectedly, there were numerous calls for specific activities and types of programming that would encourage greater participation and engagement in recreation and physical activity. The following list provides examples:

- Accessible equipment loan programs and used gear swaps
- Intramurals and inter-community competitions for fun
- Participation by all age groups and ability levels
- Child care within communities for short term
- Pop-up activities at the local level (all ages)
- Outdoor activities in all seasons
- Community gardens/kitchens
- Challenges and incentives
- Community partnerships
- After school programs
- Affordable activities
- Off-leash dog parks
- Book clubs, cooking classes, tea/coffee clubs, skills exchanges, lifelong learning

Enhanced Infrastructure:

Infrastructure needs of various kinds were also mentioned within the community meetings. Outdoor gathering places (with warming rooms in winter), trails, sidewalks, and bike lanes were mentioned along with ball fields, and community halls. It was also suggested that additional signage and mapping were needed, that existing infrastructure should be utilized and that the community grant program should be retained.

Improved Transportation:

Several needs related to transportation, as a way of bringing people together, were also expressed, including bus services to help people get to opportunities and the utilization of school busses or CHAD.

3. WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE?

Definitions, Vision, Mission and Values

The *Shared Strategy for Advancing Recreation in Nova Scotia* adopted the definition of recreation originally articulated within the *Framework for Recreation in Canada Pathways to Wellbeing*. This new, broader definition provides a unifying idea that we can all build upon, focussing on the outcomes or results of our work rather than on the opportunities we provide. This plan utilizes the same definition.

Definition of Recreation:

The experience that results from freely-chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community wellbeing.

This plan also includes an embedded physical activity strategy for the Municipality of Pictou County. As such, we have adopted this definition of physical activity.

Physical activity is defined as a bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditures.[1]

Vision: *(describes a desirable future state for recreational participation)*

Enriched individual and community wellbeing through greater participation in meaningful, recreation experiences at the community level.

Mission: *(describes the reason for Pictou County Recreation's existence)*
Strengthen the social and physical infrastructure throughout the municipality by supporting, educating and inspiring citizens of all ages to enhance their wellbeing.

Core Values: *(describes the foundation for recreation within the municipality)*

- *Diverse and Innovative Opportunities*
- *Natural Environments*
- *Community, Social Connections and Supportive Relationships*
- *Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility*
- *Sustainable Partnerships*
- *Appreciating Volunteers and Building Community Capacity*

[1] World Health Organization, *Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health*, Geneva, Switzerland, (2004).

4. HOW DO WE GET THERE? (STRATEGIES)

Goal #1: *Active Living and Wellbeing*
To foster active, healthy living and wellbeing through recreation

Theme: Support for Community Engagement
What we have learned

The Nova Insights Physical Activity Citizens Surveys (2014 and 2018) listed walking, in general and for active transportation, as the most popular activity and the one that showed the most promise for increasing physical activity levels. Not surprisingly, infrastructure for walking and cycling was found to be a need.

In the community meetings that informed the preparation of this report, participants expressed interest in a wide variety of indoor and outdoor, structured and unstructured, age specific and "all ages" opportunities. Specific interests included a wide range of activities including intramurals and inter-community competitions; outdoor activities in all seasons; challenges and incentives; Participants also offered suggestions related to how the Municipality could assist participation including by making activities affordable, subsidizing Wellness Centre fees, providing child-care within communities, and providing accessible equipment loan programs and gear swaps.

Let's Get Moving, An action plan for increasing physical activity in Nova Scotia, is the latest, evidence-based plan "to encourage and support Nova Scotians to move more, and sit less, more often." Essentially, *Let's Get Moving* is a plan to get Nova Scotians to include more movement in their daily lives. Although the action plan is written from the perspective of the Government of Nova Scotia, it also influences planning at the municipal level:

> ***"Let's Get Moving Nova Scotia supports programs in our communities that help us find more ways to join in activities that fit our lifestyles, abilities, and interests was well as those that are in an important part of our culture. Remove barriers that keep some people from participating and consider the needs of the less active, aging and other priority groups." Page 2***

These principles are taken into account most specifically in the objectives and actions for goals 1 and 2 of this plan.

How do we get there? Objectives and Actions

Objective 1.1:
To strengthen Pictou County Recreation's leadership role by entering the Municipal Physical Activity Leadership Program (MPAL) as a partner with the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage to:

- **Provide a full time MPAL resource staff person jointly funded by the province and**

the municipality,

- **Enhance coordination and planning to increase the number and variety of available opportunities,**
- **Increase public awareness of those opportunities,**
- **Increase participation and engagement (See Objective 5.1)**

Actions:
1.1(a) Prepare required documentation for entry into the MPAL Program
1.1(b) Connect with established MPAL coordinators in the region/province to learn the best approach to get kick started.

Objective 1.2:
To increase the number and variety of year-round community opportunities for healthy, active living

Actions:
1.2(a) Support community organizations to offer or enhance:

- The variety of recreation, physical activity and movement options available to reach a wider diversity of participants,
- Non-sport, family-oriented activities,
- Structured and non-structured activities,
- Equipment loan programs from the municipal office or community hubs.
-

Goal #2: *Inclusion and Access*

To increase inclusion and access to recreation for populations that face constraints to participation

Theme: Financial, Operational and Logistical Support
What we have learned

Issues related to cost, affordability, and transportation – all of which affect access, inclusion and the degree to which people feel well served by their local government – were raised often at the community meetings. Those concerns were felt most acutely when considering people who are socially or physically isolated, have a disability, are living on low incomes, or are facing other disparities. Possible solutions that were offered – including reducing costs and increasing transportation options – were mentioned numerous times and in numerous communities.

People tend to value and take advantage of opportunities that are closest to home. Where it's not possible to locate opportunities close to where people live, affordable and convenient transportation may be a viable option.

One population group that was mentioned often in community meetings were older adults, who often face a myriad of challenges, including social isolation, access to transportation, lack of information on opportunities and low income.

Youth also represented an important subgroup within this theme. Participants in the community meetings indicated that youth face barriers related to financial resources, transportation, communication, and lack of awareness of their recreation potential and opportunities that are available to them. As with other areas within this report, solutions related to youth concerns ranged from subsidizing programs and improving transportation to providing better information and building stronger partnerships.

It is proposed that the strategy mentioned below be designed to address the challenges of underserved segments of the population, including older adults and youth.

How do we get there? Objectives and Actions

Objective 2.1:
To increase access for underserved citizens through improved transportation that enables participation in community-based recreation and physical activity.

Actions:
2.1(a) Explore options for establishing affordable bus or shuttle services to help people travel to opportunities. Consider the utilization of school busses or CHAD.
2.1(b) Create a community transit/transportation system.
2.1(c) Strengthen the recreational options within each community to reduce the distance people need to travel for recreation and to connect with others.

Objective 2.2:
To increase participation by underserved segments of the population in a wide range of recreational and physical activity opportunities through the development and implementation of a comprehensive strategy for underserved citizens, with strong leadership from representatives of those communities. High priority populations include:

- **Older adults**
- **Persons with disabilities**
- **Persons with low income**
- **New Canadians**
- **Women and girls**
- **Youth**
- **Indigenous people**

Actions:
2.2(a) Identify a diverse group of Pictou County citizens and residents who will provide leadership, with Pictou County Recreation, to the process of developing and implementing a strategy for underserved people. Provide these community members with the support required to enable their successful participation.
2.2(b) Work with community representatives to design a planning process for the strategy.

Objective 2.3:
To build an "underserved" component of the Communications and Public Education Strategy (See Objective 5.2)

Actions:
2.3(a) Work with a diverse group of community members from within the Municipality of Pictou County to identify methods, approaches and strategies that will ensure that underserved citizens: a) understand the importance of recreation and physical activity in their lives, and b) receive the information they need to take advantage of opportunities that exist.

Goal #3: *Connecting People and Nature*
To help people connect to nature through recreation

Theme: Enhanced Outdoor Infrastructure
What we have learned

As mentioned previously, residents that participated in the community meetings expressed an interest in low cost, unstructured, year-round activity options that were close to where they live. Some of the ways to respond to those interests could be through the provision of outdoor gathering places, trails, sidewalks, bike lanes and way finding resources like maps and signage. Typically, outdoor facilities such as these are offered at no cost to users, at whatever time is convenient, and without any need to register. Depending on the type of infrastructure, they may be provided through municipal or provincial governments (sidewalks and bike lanes) or through community groups (trails and playgrounds).

How do we get there? Objectives and Actions

Objective 3.1:
To enhance support to community organizations to build, maintain and enhance outdoor infrastructure such as trails, play areas and local parks

Actions:
3.1(a) Ensure that financial support for outdoor infrastructure is included in the Community Grants Program.
3.1(b) Support communities to build creative outdoor playgrounds or enhance natural areas at strategic locations that help to create hub opportunities

Objective 3.2:
To build a "people and nature" component of the Communications and Public Education Strategy (See Objective 5.2)

Actions:
3.2(a) Promote connections to the natural world through educating people of the benefits and encouraging them to get out in nature
3.2(b) Increase awareness of where to find and how to access outdoor opportunities

Objective 3.3:
To develop and implement a way-finding (signage and mapping) program to increase awareness of how to access outdoor recreation opportunities

Actions:
3.3(a) Develop an approach that will bring additional expertise and resources to the project
3.3(b) Develop a strategy and implementation plan

Goal #4: *Supportive Environments*

To ensure the provision of supportive physical and social environments that encourage participation in recreation and build strong, caring communities.

Theme: Increased Community Opportunities
What we have learned

Increased engagement of individuals, families and organizations in the life of the community was a recurring theme in discussions at the community level. Participants in community meetings encouraged the municipality to assist community groups with asset mapping to be more in touch with the "what" and the "where" of community resources and to take steps to maximize the use of schools, community halls and other local facilities.

Community members and leaders understood the benefits attached to community hubs and gathering places that provide a focal point for activity by and engagement of citizens. Community members called for support for community recreation groups to enhance their ability to engage residents and create additional opportunities through:

- Hiring instructors and subsidizing program costs;
- Providing free transportation, especially for seniors;
- Hub funding for community centres and navigators to help citizens connect to opportunities.
- Identifying and developing gathering places close to where people live;
- Creating a paid community coordinator position to assist community volunteers and provide navigation support to community organizations;
- Undertaking household surveys to gauge public interest.

How do we get there? Objectives and Actions

Objective 4.1:
To increase logistical and program support to Community Hub organizations as focal points for enhanced engagement of and participation by residents

Actions:
4.1(a) Develop an incremental approach to providing sustainable funding increases to Community Hubs over the life of the of this plan, for approval by Municipal Council

Objective 4.2:
To increase financial and operational support to community-based organizations

Actions:
4.2(a) Develop an incremental approach to providing sustainable funding increases to community-based organizations over the life of this plan, for approval by Municipal Council
4.2(b) Undertake a periodic, countywide, household survey to gauge ongoing public interest

Objective 4.3:
To increase Pictou County Recreation's role as a resource to community recreation volunteers

Actions:
4.3(a) Support volunteers by developing a strategy that will enhance the recruitment, training and recognition of volunteers.
4.3(b) Increase the staff complement of Pictou County Recreation to provide greater support to community-based organizations.
4.3(c) Create a paid community coordinator position to assist community volunteers.

Enhanced infrastructure
What we have learned

There were numerous calls for additional, mostly outdoor, low cost gathering places where residents could meet for social purposes, physical activity and recreation. The types of gathering places included spaces around community halls, warming huts, trails, fields, sidewalks and bicycle lanes. The supports mentioned by community members included: assistance in creating gathering places where they don't currently exist, better public information (e.g. signage and mapping) about the places that do exist, and maintaining the existing community grant program that assists the sustainability of such spaces.

Another concern expressed by citizens related to existing and new infrastructure was the availability and affordability of insurance coverage by volunteer-based organizations. Insurance programs provided through provincial recreation organizations such as Recreation Nova Scotia and Nova Scotia Trails cover some groups, but this coverage is not universal. This topic would benefit from an investigation that is beyond the scope of the present report.

How do we get there? Objectives and Actions

Objective 4.4:
To incorporate the development and sustainability of existing informal, low cost, outdoor gathering places into relevant municipal community support programs

Actions:
4.4(a) Review and revise (as necessary) existing support programs to include support for community organizations to acquire, develop or enhance natural or built outdoor environments as places to offer a diversity of recreation, physical activity and movement options that reach as wide a variety of participants as possible.

Objective 4.5:
To develop a policy to meet the insurance needs of community organizations, for approval by Municipal Council

Actions:
4.5(a) Examine the need for and feasibility of a coordinated insurance plan for community centres and organizations
4.5(b) Draft a community insurance policy for consideration by Municipal Council

Goal #5*: Recreation Capacity*

To ensure the continued growth and sustainability of recreation in our communities

Theme: Enhanced leadership
What we have learned

As in many rural areas in Nova Scotia, recreation opportunities are only offered as a result of volunteer efforts through: the governance of community organizations; the coordination of programs, schedules and facilities; and the direct leadership, facilitation or instruction required to offer programs. Changes to the nature of volunteerism – including a desire to make short term rather than long-term commitments – offer challenges to communities to sustain an experienced and committed core of volunteers. Participants in the community meetings expressed concerns related to the dependence on volunteers to provide recreation opportunities, volunteer burnout, an aging population and, generally, too few people available to do the required work. Participants also offered suggestions that would address problems related to volunteerism and leadership. Specific efforts to support the work of volunteers, including reducing red tape, facilitating skill sharing among residents, and assisting with fundraising and grant applications, were mentioned.

A sub-theme related to volunteerism included an interest in cross-generational efforts to engage, train and mentor youth and young adults as community volunteers, and provide students with employment opportunities to help maintain recreation facilities.

There was also a call for Pictou County Recreation itself to be a stronger presence at the community level, supporting the work of communities in essential areas such as a) coordination, communication and volunteer recruitment and b) development and fostering innovation at the community level. Expanding the staff complement of the department was felt by some to be a necessary means to a stronger community presence.

How do we get there? Objectives and Actions

Objective 5.1:
To strengthen Pictou County Recreation's leadership role by entering the MPAL Program as a partner with the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage to:

- **Provide a full time MPAL resource staff person jointly funded by the province and the municipality;**
- **Enhance coordination and planning to increase the number and variety of available opportunities;**

- **Increase public awareness of those opportunities;**
- **Increase participation and engagement (See Objective 1)**

Actions:
5.1(a) Prepare required documentation for entry into the MPAL Program
5.1(b) Connect with established MPAL coordinators in the region/province to learn the best approach to get kick started

Objective 5.2:
5.2 To promote participation and community engagement by developing a Communications and Public Education Strategy

Actions:
5.2(a) Increase awareness and presence of Pictou County Recreation at the community level
5.2(b) Enhance awareness of existing programs, services and opportunities
5.2(c) Create a public education program to motivate and change attitudes
5.2(d) Promote connections to the natural world through educating people of the benefits and encouraging them to get out in nature
5.2(e) Increase awareness of where to find and how to access outdoor opportunities
5.2(f) Work with representatives of underserved segments of the population to identify unique methods, approaches and strategies that will ensure that underserved citizens: a) understand the importance of recreation and physical activity in their lives, and b) receive the information they need to take advantage of opportunities that exist

Objective 5.3:
To support volunteerism by developing a strategy that will enhance Pictou County Recreation's role as a resource to community recreation volunteers
Actions:
5.3(a) Continue to support the provision of recreation opportunities at the community level through an enhanced Community Grants Program
5.3(b) Support volunteers through recruitment, training and recognition initiative

5. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Goals and Objectives	Actions	Year of Implementation
Goal #1: Active Living and Well-Being		
1.1 To strengthen Pictou County Recreation's leadership role by entering the MPAL Program as a partner with the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage	1.1(a) Prepare required documentation for entry into the MPAL Program	**ONE**
	1.1(b) Connect with established MPAL coordinators in the region/province to learn the best approach to get kick started.	**ONE**
1.2 To increase the number and variety of year-round community opportunities for healthy, active living	1.2(a) Support community organizations to offer or enhance: * The variety of recreation, physical activity and movement options available to reach a wider diversity of participants, * Non-sport, family- oriented activities, * Structured and non-structured activities, * Equipment loan programs from the municipal office or community hubs.	**TWO**
Goal #2: *Inclusion and Access*		
2.1 To increase access for vulnerable citizens through improved transportation that enables participation in community-based recreation and physical activity	2.1(a) Explore options for establishing affordable bus or shuttle services to help people get to opportunities. Consider the utilization of school busses or CHAD in that process.	**THREE**
	2.1(b) Create a community transit/transportation system	**FOUR**
	2.1(c) Strengthen the recrea-tional options within each community to reduce the	**ONE AND TWO**

	distance people need to travel for recreation and to connect with others.	
2.2 To increase participation by underserved segments of the population in a wide range of recreational and physical activity opportunities through the development and implementation of a comprehensive strategy for underserved citizens, with strong leadership from representatives of those communities.	2.2(a) Identify a diverse group of Pictou County citizens and residents who will provide leadership, with Pictou County Recreation, to the process of developing and implementing a strategy for underserved people. Provide these com-munity members with the support required to enable their successful participation.	**ONE**
	2.2(b) Work with community representatives to design a planning process for the strategy.	**ONE**
2.3. To build an "underserved" component of the Communications and Public Education Strategy – See Objective 5.2	2.3(a) Work with a diverse group of community members from within the Municipality of Pictou County to identify unique methods, approaches and strategies that will ensure that underserved citizens: a) understand the importance of recreation and physical activity in their lives, and b) receive the information they need to take advantage of opportunities that exist.	**ONE**
Goal #3: *Connecting People and Nature*		
3.1 To enhance support to community organizations to build, maintain and enhance outdoor infrastructure such as trails, play areas and local parks	3.1(a) Ensure that support for outdoor infrastructure is included in the Community Grants Program.	**ONE AND TWO**
	3.1(b) Support communities to build creative outdoor playgrounds or enhance natural areas at strategic locations that help to create hub opportunities and other gathering places	**ONE AND TWO**

3.2 To build a "people and nature" component of the Communications and Public Education Strategy – See Objective 5.2	3.2(a) Promote connections to the natural world through educating people of the benefits and encouraging them to get out in nature	**TWO**
	3.2(b) Increase awareness of where to find and how to access outdoor opportunities	**TWO**
3.3 To develop and implement a way-finding (signage and mapping) program to increase awareness of how to access outdoor recreation opportunities	3.3(a) Develop a partnership approach that will bring additional expertise and resources to the project	**THREE**
	3.3(b) Develop a strategy and implementation plan	**THREE**
Goal #4: *Supportive Environments*		
4.1 To increase logistical and program support to Community Hub organizations as focal points for enhanced engagement of and participation by residents	4.1(a) Develop an incremental approach to providing sustainable funding increases to Hub Communities over the life of this plan, for approval by Municipal Council	**ONE AND TWO**
4.2 To increase financial and operational support to community-based organizations	4.2(a) Develop an incremental approach to providing sustainable funding increases to community based organizations over the life of this plan, for approval by Municipal Council	**TWO**
	4.2(b) Undertake a periodic, countywide, household survey to gauge ongoing public interest	**THREE**
4.3 To increase Pictou County Recreation's role as a resource to community recreation volunteers	4.3(a) Support volunteers through developing a strategy to enhance the recruitment, training and recognition of volunteers.	**ONE AND TWO**
	4.3(b) Increase the staff complement of Pictou County Recreation to provide greater support to community based organizations.	**TWO**

	4.3(c) Create a paid community coordinator position to assist community volunteers	**THREE**
4.4 To incorporate the development and sustainability of existing informal, low cost, outdoor gathering places into relevant municipal community support programs	4.4(a) Review and revise (as necessary), existing support programs to include support for community organizations to acquire, develop or enhance natural or built outdoor environments as places to offer a variety of recreation, physical activity and movement options that reach a wide diversity of participants.	**ONE**
4.5 To develop a policy to meet the insurance needs of community organizations, for approval by Municipal Council	4.5(a) Examine the need for and feasibility of a coordinated insurance plan for community centres and organizations	**TWO**
	4.5(b) Draft a community insurance policy for consideration by Municipal Council	**THREE**
Goal #5*: Recreation Capacity*		
5.1 To strengthen Pictou County Recreation's leadership role by entering the MPAL Program as a partner with the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage to: (See Objective 1.1)	5.1(a) Prepare required documentation for entry into the MPAL Program	**ONE**
	5.1(b) Connect with established MPAL coordinators in the region/province to learn the best approach to get kick started	**ONE**
5.2 To promote participation and community engagement by developing a Communications and Public Education Strategy	5.2(a) Increase awareness and presence of Pictou County Recreation at the community level	**ONE AND TWO**
	5.2(b) Enhance awareness of existing programs, services and opportunities	**ONE AND TWO**
	5.2(c) Create a public education program to motivate and change attitudes	**ONE AND TWO**

	5.2(d) Promote connections to the natural world through educating people of the benefits and encouraging them to get out in nature	**ONE AND TWO**
	5.2(e) Increase awareness of where to find and how to access outdoor opportunities	**ONE AND TWO**
	5.2(f) Work with representa-tives of underserved segments of the population to identify unique methods, approaches and strategies that will ensure that underserved citizens: a) understand the importance of recreation and physical activity in their lives, and b) receive the information they need to take advantage of opportunities that exist	**ONE AND TWO**
5.3 To support volunteerism by developing a strategy that will enhance Pictou County Recreation's role as a resource to community recreation volunteers	5.3(a) Continue to support the provision of recreation opportunities at the community level through an enhanced Community Grants Program	**ONE AND TWO**
	5.2(b) Support volunteers through recruitment, training and recognition initiatives	**ONE AND TWO**

6. TRACKING THE PROGRESS AND RESULTS OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

MONITORING

Monitoring, also known as surveillance, is the systematic tracking of important milestones that indicate that progress is being made towards achieving a goal or objective. With this initiative, the community physical activity surveys conducted by Nova Insights in 2014 and 2018 provide essential data that can be monitored over time (by continuing to repeat the survey) to determine if progress is being made. The essence of monitoring is to pay attention to how things are going.

EVALUATION

"Evaluation is a systematic determination of a subject's merit, worth and significance, using criteria governed by a set of standards."[2] Evaluation can either be *formative*, determining the value or success of the plan during its implementation, or *summative*, determining if a plan or process has achieved its stated goals at its completion. The essence of summative evaluation is to determine if, at the end of a project, you have achieved success. Monitoring is a basic tool for summative evaluation.

EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

Purpose:
The purpose of this evaluation will be to determine the Municipality of Pictou County's degree of success in implementation of the Recreation Strategic Plan. The essential question will be, is the municipality, in collaboration with its community partners, working effectively towards implementing the actions identified in the plan and, in turn, is it making progress towards achieving the plan's objectives and (ultimately) its goals.

Expertise:
Who will conduct the evaluation? The usual choice is between doing the evaluation internally, using staff resources, versus hiring an external consultant. Benefits of the former include lower costs, taking advantage of positive relationships with community members and, potentially, building staff competence in a new area of expertise. The benefits of the latter include the potential to have a more expert (and therefore more credible) evaluator and building a sense of objectivity into the evaluation process.

Timing:
When will you conduct the evaluation? Ideally, some evaluation data is collected before, or at the outset of, the planning process to provide a baseline comparison for data collected in later stages. However, most projects of this nature do not begin their evaluation before the process begins. Alternatives for timing include:

- Yearly, perhaps as a component of an annual report to the community;
- Bi-annually, to allow more time for progress to be achieved and greater ease in detecting change;
- Once, near the end of the "life" of the plan.

[2] Sarah del Tufo, *What is Evaluation?* The Evaluation Trust (2002), via Wikipedia

For the purposes of this plan, it is recommended that an annual evaluation process be conducted as an integral component of the Communications and Public Education Strategy mentioned earlier. Integrating information gathering and information sharing processes will help to:

- Raise public awareness of Pictou County Recreation and its work;
- Build and maintain public support for the plan and its implementation;
- Recruit volunteer community members to be engaged in the–implementation. (See Objective 5.2)

Components:
How would a formative evaluation process be conducted? There are numerous options for conducting formative evaluations of municipal/community plans. These include: informal community meetings such as those conducted in developing this plan; annual or bi-annual household surveys; and meetings or workshops with stakeholders from the municipality, surrounding municipalities, partner organizations and community groups. It is not necessary to collect the same information in the same manner each year, but an annual "conversation" with residents of the municipality can send important messages such as:

- This recreation plan is important to the municipality
- Your opinions are important to us, and
- Yes, we will respond to what we learn through this evaluation.

Questions:
What questions would we ask in conducting a formative evaluation? Very informally, the most basic of questions to ask in a formative evaluation is, "How are we doing so far?" You could ask a general question like that in an informal community meeting, but you might also consider asking more specific questions. For instance, you could ask questions about people's awareness of: Pictou County Recreation; the Recreation Strategic Plan; or any of the provisions of the plan. More specifically yet, you can ask about specific actions, what people think about those actions and any progress being made on their implementation.

7. APPENDICES

A. Pictou County REC Plan Community Consultation Format

Community Consultation Questions

1. What needs to change?

2. What are some of the problems and challenges we are trying to solve?

3. What are some of the windows of opportunity?

4. What are some of the barriers we are currently facing?

5. What is important to YOU with regards to recreation?

6. What are some big ideas/innovation?

Identify - Draft Key Goals or Strategies

B. SWOT Assessment (Pictou County Recreation) Input Form

Thank you for taking the time to fill in the **Pictou County Recreation** SWOT strategic planning online assessment feedback form to assist in the creation of a new strategic plan for the municipality's recreation department. By providing us your feedback, you are providing helpful input that will be used during the upcoming strategic planning sessions. The information you share will stay anonymous to any individual but not confidential, as it will be fed back to council, the steering committee, management and recreational staff during the various planning sessions throughout the community.

Thank you for your time and input into the SWOT assessment.

Strengths: (Internal to the organization) Please list up to five (5) strengths. Ex. summer programs, grant supporting process, staff, etc.

Weaknesses: (Internal to the organization) Please list up to five (5) weaknesses. Ex. seasonal programs, access to equipment, limited programs for seniors, etc.

Opportunities: (Elements in the environment that the organization could use to its advantage) Please list up to five (5) opportunities. Ex. stronger equipment loan program, rural community program support, more programs for people with disabilities, etc.

Threats: (Elements in the environment that could cause trouble or problems for this organization) Please list up to five (5) threats. Ex. limited funding, size of the rural areas the department is serving, population decline, etc.

Future Directions: Please define important directions (vision themes/ideas) for the Pictou County Recreation Department that would assist in advancing the organization. Please list up to five future directions.

Big Thinking: What unconventional, creative, constructively disruptive or out of the box ideas do you have that you think we should explore? List 2-3 Key Ideas.

Feel free to add any other comments or suggestions:

8. REFERENCES/ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Canadian Sport Policy (2012)
Endorsed by the Federal, Provincial, and Territorial Ministers responsible for sport, physical activity and recreation, the Canadian Sport Policy vision is for

"A dynamic and innovative culture that promotes and celebrates participation and excellence in sport."

One of the policy's five goals, Recreational Sport, is especially relevant to providers at the municipal and community levels. The policy also identifies four general contexts for sport: introduction to sport, recreational sport, competitive sport, and high performance sport.

"Recreational Sport: Canadians have the opportunity to participate in sport for fun, health, social interaction and relaxation."

Physical literacy, defined by Physical and Health Education Canada (2010) as "…the ability of an individual to move with competence and confidence in a wide variety of physical activities in multiple environments that benefit the healthy development of the whole person" is referred to in the policy and is also a topic of growing interest at the municipal level.

Nova Insights Physical Activity Citizens Survey (2018)
The *Physical Activity Citizens Survey* is commissioned by the Nova Scotia Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage and carried out by Nova Insights. Its objectives are:

- To further the development, implementation, and continued evaluation of physical activity strategies in municipalities and Indigenous communities across Nova Scotia
- To provide local data to inform the strategies on physical activity – and the extent to which these align with physical activity opportunities in the area.
- To inform Communities, Sport and Recreation policy and decision-making.

In Pictou County, Nova Insights has conducted the survey in 2014 and 2018. A summary of results is found in Chapter 2.

Shared Strategy for Advancing Recreation in Nova Scotia (2015)
The *Shared Strategy*, as it has become known, is based on the national guiding document, *A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015 Pathways to Wellbeing. Pathways to Wellbeing* provided the original source of the definition of recreation and the goals for the *Shared Strategy* and provided inspiration for the vision, values, priorities and areas of focus. Endorsed both by the Province of Nova Scotia and by the Municipality of Pictou County, this plan is strongly influenced by the *Shared Strategy for advancing Recreation in Nova Scotia.*

Parks for All – An Action Plan for Canada's Parks Community (2017)
Parks for All is the result of collaborative action between the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association and the Canadian Parks Council. It is a national document that calls for a collaborative approach to continuing to address the traditional parks mandate of "conserving lands and waters while connecting Canadians with nature." The following are a few relevant quotes from "A Message From the Canadian Parks Community" (page 2):

> "OUR COMMON BELIEF IS THAT PARKS IN ALL FORMS—from city green spaces to wilderness areas—are essential to a long-term vision of success for everyone in Canada. Parks for All means to bring together parks professionals, their many partners, and engaged citizens under the shared goal of healthy Nature and healthy people….
>
> Parks offer natural solutions to many of our current environmental and societal problems. They sustain animals and make room for healthy ecosystems that self-regulate and help control the climate, supplying plentiful, clean water and food to all species. **They provide spaces that can inspire creativity and energize us through play and recreation**."(Our emphasis)

Nova Scotia Cultural Action Plan (2017)
Recreation and the arts are inextricably linked, as illustrated by references to recreation in two "actions" within the *Nova Scotia Cultural Action Plan*. Under the heading "Excellence in Stewardship", the *Cultural Action Plan* commits to:

> "Work with community partners to implement the Shared Recreation Strategy to foster active healthy living, and increase inclusion and access to recreation for all Nova Scotians." and
>
> "Work on the development of a Trails Strategy for Nova Scotia, aligning with growing use of trails."

Shift, Nova Scotia's Action Plan for an Aging Population (2017)
Shift is the Province's response to the "massive population shift" that is underway in this province. Its vision – "Together, Nova Scotians value, promote, and support older adults and their contributions to our province" – recognizes the importance of older adults to our communities.

All three of *Shift's* goals have direct implications for this plan. In the first goal – Value the social and economic contributions of older adults – there is a strong recognition of the value that volunteering by older adults can bring to the community through their efforts, skills and experience, and to the individuals by reducing or preventing social isolation and loneliness.

The second goal – Promote healthy, active living – is directly related to the goals of this plan. Specific references under the second goal include reducing the impact of poverty on health and promoting physical activity and regular exercise. The latter imperative is based on an understanding that active living: can help older adults maintain their independence longer; helps to prevent chronic diseases including obesity, diabetes, circulatory diseases and dementia; and promotes good mental health. Walking is cited as one of the best methods of promoting mental and physical health in older adults.

The third goal – Support aging in place, connected to community life – is also closely related to the findings and direction of this plan. Social isolation is cited as one of the most serious considerations for supporting happiness and wellness into the elder years.

Let's Get Moving Nova Scotia (2018)

Let's Get Moving is one of the most recent and most relevant (to this plan) provincial government reports. It is, in its own words, "…a plan to encourage Nova Scotians to include more movement in our daily lives." It supports programs that:

- Help us find more ways to join in activities that fit our lifestyles, abilities, and interests, as well as those that are an important part of our culture
- Remove barriers that keep some people from participating, and
- Consider the needs of the less active, aging, and other priority groups.

Goals and actions are focussed primarily at the provincial level, but Goal 3 – Advance quality community leadership – recognizes the importance of planning and action at the community level.

Goal 4 – Enhance opportunities and address inclusion – also includes important considerations for decision makers and community builders at the municipal/ community level.