

Town of Stewiacke Nova Scotia

Physical Activity and Recreation Strategic Plan (2019 to 2024)



Table of Contents

Table of Contents..... i

Message from the Mayor.....ii

I. Introduction1

 The Framework.....1

 Strategy Development Process.....1

 The Need for a Physical Activity and Recreation Strategy2

 Community Survey.....3

 Town of Stewiacke Logic Model in Use..... 5

II. Vision, Mission and Values6

 Vision6

 Mission.....6

 Values.....6

III. Strategic Directions.....7

 Strategic Direction: Infrastructure.....7

 Strategic Direction: Accessibility and Inclusivity8

 Strategic Direction: Seniors9

 Strategic Direction: Children and Youth9

 Strategic Direction: Communication11

IV. Moving Forward.....13



Message from the Mayor, Town of Stewiacke

Several years ago, Stewiacke Council invested in the position of Recreation and Physical Activity Coordinator to help develop and implement a strategic plan of activities and programs for the town's residents. We are proud to say that our Recreation and Physical Activity Coordinator met all the proposed goals, and then some, over the past years. During the last several months a review and update of the plan happened through the hard work of our Recreation and Physical Activity Coordinator, the province and residents collaborating to bring forth a new plan that will take us through the next 5 years.

Our strategic plan will dovetail with the objectives the provincial and federal governments have prioritized to ensure optimization of funding opportunities now and in the future that will benefit all age groups.

As studies show that even minimal recreational opportunities can significantly improve, not just physical health but also mental health, especially loneliness and isolation, it is our hope this new recreational strategy will also help in providing more opportunities for socializing for residents of all ages, thus improving the health of our residents.

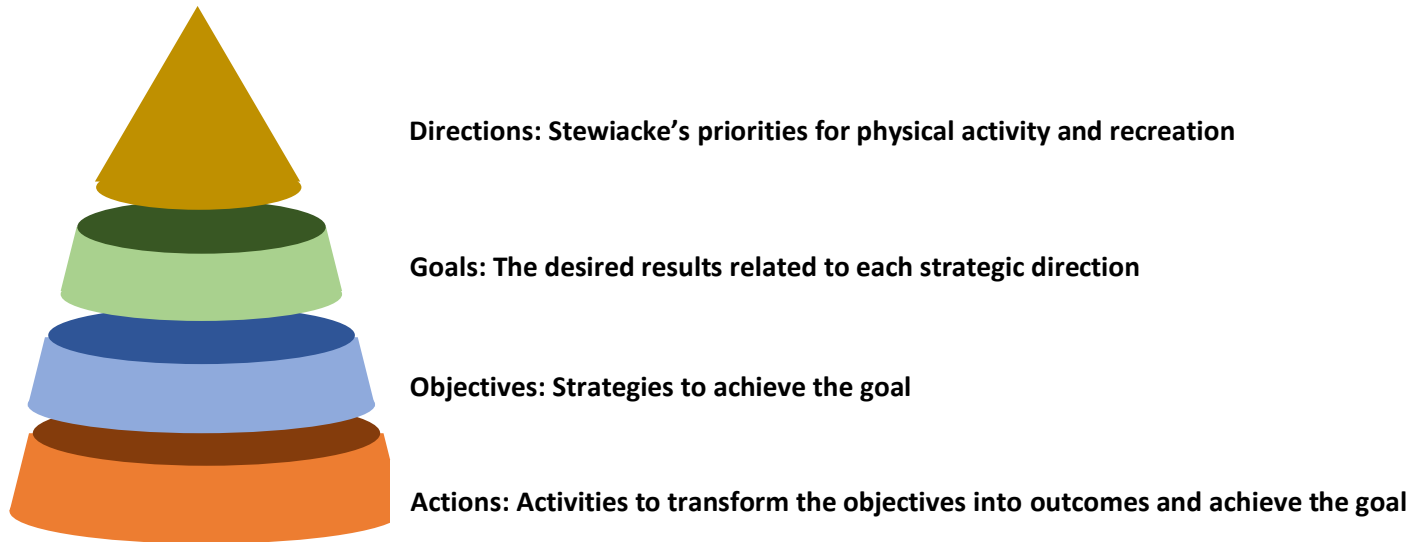
Council would like to offer a big thank you to all involved and congratulations for a job well done.

Sincerely,

Wendy Robinson
Mayor
Town of Stewiacke

I. Introduction

The Framework



Strategy Development Process

The Town of Stewiacke developed a physical activity and recreation strategy in 2012 after the Recreation and Physical Activity Coordinator was hired through the Municipal Physical Activity Leadership (MPAL) program. Given that it has been over five years since the plan was developed, coupled with the fact that most of the strategies within the plan had been completed, the Town embarked on a second strategic planning process, supported through Communities, Culture and Heritage.

A working group consisting of representatives from the Town of Stewiacke, the MPAL program, Communities Culture and Heritage and Public Health, Nova Scotia Health Authority was formed in early 2019 to lead the development of the updated physical activity and recreation strategic plan. The strategic plan development process consisted of the following:

- A review of the previous strategic plan to identify strategies completed and opportunities for continued development.
- A review of other relevant strategies including *Let’s Get Moving Nova Scotia* (a provincial action plan for increasing physical activity in Nova Scotia); and the *Shared Strategy for Advancing Recreation in Nova Scotia* to identify opportunities for alignment/synergy.
- A review of findings from a Physical Activity Community Survey completed in 2016 for the Town of Stewiacke

- Development of draft strategic directions and associated objectives and actions for the physical activity and recreation strategy plan (2019 to 2024) by the working group based on the findings from the review of materials (bullets one to three).
- A consultation session with community organizations to obtain feedback into the draft strategic directions and associated objectives and actions, and develop a vision, mission and values for the strategic plan.

The feedback from the consultation session was compiled and used to create a strategic plan report which was reviewed and finalized by the working group. This report provides a brief summary of the evidence for a physical activity and recreation strategy; findings from the community survey; the strategy vision, mission and values; and the strategic directions and associated goals, objectives and actions.

The Need for a Physical Activity and Recreation Strategy

Physical activity, sport and recreation have significant benefits for both individuals and communities such as:

- Improves individual health through chronic disease prevention and management, enhanced growth and development, improved sleep, and improved mental health.
- Improves education outcomes and academic performance.
- Improves social connection by bringing people together and reducing isolation and encouraging civic engagement through volunteering.
- Supports the environment as there are fewer greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions when more people walk or bike as a mode of transportation.
- Economic development by creating walkable and bikeable communities and indoor and outdoor infrastructure which supports tourism and attracts new residents.

Despite these well-known benefits, the majority of Nova Scotians do not meet the recommended 150 minutes of heart pumping physical activity a week (Colley, RC et al, Physical activity of Canadian adults: accelerometer results from the 2007 to 2009 Canadian Health Measures Survey). Very few youth are meeting the recommended guidelines of 60 minutes a day of physical activity most days of the week, and as we age, we become less active (Thompson, A et al, Physical activity of children and youth in Nova Scotia from 2001-02 to 2005-06, Preventive Medicine, 2009 Nov;49(5): 407-9). Socially, volunteerism in Nova Scotia is declining, with fewer people carrying the load (2004 Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating).

Challenges to physical activity are many including more sedentary work environments, community design focused around automobile use, changing family structures and busy lifestyles, and safety fears.

Despite these challenges, there is good news and opportunity! There are many assets in communities across Nova Scotia, including Stewiacke. For example, there is a mature sport, recreation and physical

activity sector with innovative leaders. We are a small province where communities can pool resources and learn from one another.

The time is right to renew Stewiacke’s strategic plan for physical activity and recreation by building on what we have accomplished over the last five years and identifying opportunities to help us achieve our vision of *A proud community where the rivers and all people are more active together.*

Community Survey

The purpose of the Physical Activity Community Survey was to inform the development, implementation, and continued evaluation of physical activity strategies in the Town of Stewiacke. The full report is available through the MPAL Coordinator in the Town, with key findings and conclusions presented below.

The following graphic presents a summary of the top activities desired by respondents (wish list), most common challenges to participation in physical activity, potential opportunities, and motivators for active transportation (AT).

Factors influencing engagement in physical activity can vary across age groups and gender. It is important that opportunities, scheduling, and communications be designed with these differences in mind.



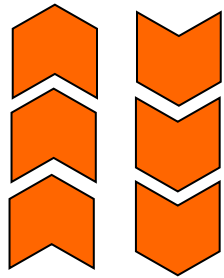
The following conclusions were presented within the report of the survey findings:

1. 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.
2. Some outdoor, seasonal activities are also mentioned as wish list items for increased participation—canoeing/kayaking, snowshoeing, skating.
3. Interventions to support social connections are important. They address significant barriers and garner significant interest among programming concepts.
4. Infrastructure for walking and cycling is a clear need based on identified physical activity challenges in general and Active Transportation facilitators.
5. Time (availability of residents, scheduling of programs) is an important barrier to consider in planning interventions.
6. 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.

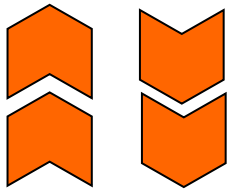
More community members may be engaged by improving accessibility of community-based physical activity opportunities by offering flexible, non-competitive activities that incorporate social interactions.



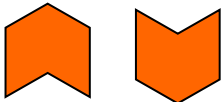
TOWN OF STEWIACKE LOGIC MODEL IN USE



**ALIGNMENT WITH
STEWIACKE
RECREATION
ARCHITECTURE**



**PERFORMANCE
OCCURS HERE**



II. Vision, Mission and Values

Vision

A proud community where the rivers and all people are more active together.

Mission

We contribute to the quality of life of all Stewiacke residents through the provision and facilitation of opportunities for physical activity and recreation.

Values

- Recreation and active living are essential to personal health and well-being.
- Every citizen should have the opportunity to participate.
- We work collaboratively with our community partners to assess and to meet community needs.
- We pride ourselves in providing excellent service.
- Our work is evidence informed, building on what works elsewhere and in the community.
- We build on community assets to tailor our actions for Stewiacke.
- All movement is valuable, from small sessions to longer bouts of activity.

III. Strategic Directions

Strategic Direction: Infrastructure

Goal: Stewiacke has a sustainable and connected network of trails, parks, active transportation routes and recreation facilities.

Objectives

- Support development and implementation of physical environments and facilities to facilitate physical activity and recreation opportunities
- Explore development and implementation of an Active Transportation plan
- Develop and support partnerships to ensure access to indoor and outdoor space for physical activity

Objectives	High Level Actions ¹
Support development and implementation of physical environments and facilities to facilitate physical activity and recreation opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and/or improve the existing trails for all users <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Widen trails • Identify new trail connections as part of an overall connectivity plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Build new trail route that links Mastadon Ridge with the Fish Shack; include Boardwalk along the River • Incorporate physical activity and recreation opportunities within new civic building • Develop and implement a skate park with youth input and engagement • Ensure recreation, sport and physical activity facilities are included in the Town’s 2030 plan for accessibility • Explore creation of an accessible Ball Park (similar to Antigonish) with astro turf
Explore development and implementation of an Active Transportation plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify gaps in connectivity for active transportation and explore strategies to address gaps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Prioritize route for children and youth to travel actively to school • Identify opportunities to expand sidewalks for walking through paving projects including bringing opportunities to Council to incorporate within the paving plan

¹ For each objective, actions have been identified which will be further refined and developed as the Town moves forward with operational planning.

Objectives	High Level Actions ¹
Develop and support partnerships to ensure access to indoor and outdoor space for physical activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to build the relationship with the school to help ensure community use of schools for physical activity • Partner with Fisherman’s Association to explore sharing access of land near accessible boat launch • Explore partnership with Municipality of Colchester to promote access to the park for Stewiacke residents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Create user friendly access point for swimming ○ Create great access point for boats/kayaks • Strengthen partnership with Canoe/Kayak NS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Offer Come Try-Its ○ Organize loan programs • Strengthen relationship with Indian Brook

Strategic Direction: Accessibility and Inclusivity

Goal: An accessible and inclusive Town that provides access for all.

Objectives

- Develop and implement an accessibility plan
- Develop and implement a plan to reduce financial barriers to recreation
- Develop and implement a plan to address transportation barriers to recreation programs

Objectives	High Level Actions
Develop and implement an accessibility plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct an accessibility audit of current facilities to identify gaps and create an accessibility plan • Use an accessibility lens when improving or building new spaces (indoor and outdoor) • Train staff to complete assessments of infrastructure re: accessibility
Develop and implement a plan to reduce financial barriers to physical activity and recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote kids sport and jump start to families to assist with the costs of registration fees • Create a pot of money to help cover fees for day camps for those who cannot afford the program
Develop and implement a plan to address transportation barriers to recreation programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote car-sharing in the newsletter • Create space at seniors’ programs to help coordinate rides • Develop a volunteer-based transportation program for those who do not have access to a vehicle or ability to drive

Strategic Direction: Seniors

Goal: Seniors in Stewiacke have opportunities for daily movement and social connections.

Objectives

- Support walking for seniors in the Town through programming, physical infrastructure, and promotion
- Explore other opportunities (beyond walking) to support seniors to be physical activity and facilitate social well-being

Objectives	High Level Actions
Support walking for seniors in the Town through programming, physical infrastructure, and promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support indoor walking at the community centre in winter, senior fitness classes, and seniors social club <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Restart the walking club in the community centre including recruiting a champion in the community to support it • Develop and implement the pedometer use program • Continue to partner with the library to support the walking club • Train staff to support walking programming for seniors (e.g., Nordic pole walking)
Explore other opportunities (beyond walking) to support seniors to be physical activity and facilitate social well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with the age friendly grant to conduct a needs assessment to identify opportunities for physical activity • Explore working with health providers and the Health Centre to encourage seniors to incorporate physical activity into their daily lives (e.g., physical activity prescription, walk with a doc) • Support the incorporation of physical activity into senior social gatherings (e.g., card parties, walking break during art class, pedometers and tracking in the walking group, etc.)



Strategic Direction: Children and Youth

Goal: Stewiacke’s children and youth contribute to and take part in a variety of recreation and physical activity opportunities.

Objectives

- Continue to offer physical activity and recreation opportunities, expanding based on community need, partnership and funding opportunities
- Develop and implement indoor and outdoor spaces for physical activity for youth
- Partner with the pre-primary programming to explore how to support children in the early years through outdoor play and physical activity
- Build/develop community youth leaders to support physical activity and recreation

Objectives	High Level Actions
Continue to offer physical activity and recreation opportunities, expanding based on community need, partnership and funding opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue After School programs and explore expansion to pre-primary • Expand summer sports programs to other ages such as for children under four • Develop and implement low or no cost family events with a physical activity focus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Offer geo-caching, strategically engaging youth and aligning with Maritime geo-caching events ○ Offer open gym times at no cost for various ages ○ Develop an equipment lending program for families • Create opportunities for unstructured physical activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Implement play boxes in outdoor locations to encourage unstructured play for children and families ○ Offer pop up play events to encourage unstructured play for children and families ○ Provide loose parts to encourage unstructured play for the school and pre-primary
Develop and implement indoor and outdoor spaces for physical activity for youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement a skate park • Promote the 7-mile square as a bike trail to increase uptake • Explore equipment lending programs (e.g., bikes, canoes, kayaks) • Offer training programs for children and youth to use canoes, kayaks

Partner with the pre-primary programming to explore how to support children in the early years through outdoor play and physical activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide resources, training and support to pre-primary staff to help facilitate outdoor play • Explore the development of a before and after school program for pre-primary
Build/develop community youth leaders to support physical activity and recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner to support youth training in first aid, quality sport and recreation • Explore mentoring opportunities for youth • Identify and provide schools with resources or training to support playground leaders

Strategic Direction: Communication

Goal: Citizens and visitors are well informed of opportunities and benefits of daily physical activity and recreation in the Town.

Objectives

- Promote recreation and physical activity opportunities in the community to the Town and broader municipality
- Ensure that messages related to physical activity and recreation support the inclusion of physical activity into daily life

Objectives	High Level Actions
Promote recreation and physical activity opportunities in the community to the Town and broader municipality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use podcasts and other technology to promote the community including recreation opportunities and the physical environment (tidal waters, trails) to community members and others (visitors) • Explore having the current Town website accessible (voice recognition, etc.) • Partner with the library to promote physical activity and recreation opportunities • Expand promotion of physical activity and recreation to other communities beyond Stewiacke <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Partner with Indian Brook to promote physical activity opportunities ○ Disseminate the newsletter to other communities • Identify existing communication avenues (e.g., community newsletters, Town FB/Twitter accounts, etc.) to promote physical activity messages

Objectives	High Level Actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update signage within the community directing people to physical activity and recreation opportunities.
<p>Ensure that messages related to physical activity and recreation support the inclusion of physical activity into daily life</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the provincial social marketing campaign that encourages people to include small sessions of movement into their daily routines • Integrate these messages into existing and new physical activity and recreation initiatives, indoor and outdoor spaces, signage, etc. (e.g., electronic sign in front of new Town Hall, include hashtags on signage).



IV. Moving Forward

Moving forward, the Town of Stewiacke will continue to work with the many partners who have contributed to the development of the strategic plan to support its implementation. A more detailed operational plan will be developed to identify timelines, accountability, responsibility and indicators of success for the objectives and actions.

To help ensure successful implementation of the strategic plan, key enablers have been identified including:

- **Leadership** from the Town of Stewiacke and partner organizations. While the MPAL coordinator has an important role to play in guiding the work, Council and partners need to champion the actions within the strategic plan. The strategic plan was developed through a collaborative process that engaged stakeholders from within the community and the actions reflect the shared work. Shared responsibility to support implementation of the strategic plan will help to ensure success. A Recreation Advisory Committee will be formed to support the development of the operational plan, guide the implementation process including continuing to engage community members and supporting communication.
- **Resources** including human, financial and physical are key enablers for the implementation of the strategic plan. Based on the actions and priorities identified, resources will be dedicated and sought to support implementation of the plan.
- **Accountability** is another key enabler to support implementation of the strategic plan. As noted above, an operational plan will identify indicators of success, which are the foundation for monitoring implementation of the actions and success of the strategic plan. Through ongoing tracking of the actions, adjustments can be made to continually improve the implementation process. In addition, risk assessment will be incorporated into priority setting and decision making, including the development of risk mitigation strategies as required. Annual reports will be produced to track progress and share success.
- **Communication** with our partners and community will be critical as the strategic plan is implemented. Effective communication will help to build shared responsibility for the strategic plan and to celebrate and build on achievements.

Many people contributed to developing this strategic plan. The contributions made by partners in the community have been invaluable. The ongoing support and contributions of all these individuals will be essential in helping to move the strategic directions and associated objectives of the strategic plan forward and help to ensure the vision and goals are achieved.