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# Mariners Centre Planning Context Report

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION AND STUDY OVERVIEW

### 1.1. Study Process

The Needs Assessment documents current and future facility requirements for the Mariners Centre to service the Yarmouth region. The assessment documents existing capacity and future need and expectations; and recommends a preliminary long-term facility development plan. The long-term needs assessment plan is identified as preliminary in that further assessment of feasibility of specific development options will need to be undertaken subsequent to the completion of the current study. The Needs Assessment incorporates four phases.

- **Phase One – Planning Context:** documents the current state and establishes the context for the study.
- **Phase Two – Community Engagement:** includes consultation with the general public, stakeholder groups, municipal staff, Wardens and the Mayor to identify future needs, priorities and options for development.
- **Phase Three – Needs Assessment:** identifies community needs and options for facility development.
- **Phase Four – Future Development Strategy:** involves drafting the facility development strategy, review with the study team and a final presentation to the public.

This study is being facilitated by the Mariners Centre General Manager, Gil Dares with assistance from a Study Team which includes individuals from the Mariners Centre Board. The assessment began in early April 2015, with consultation completed in May and June 2015. Analysis and assessment of need is undertaken throughout June 2015 and it is anticipated that a final Needs Assessment Report will be submitted July 2015.

This report constitutes the Planning Context and Community Engagement Report (Phase One and Two of the study). This will eventually become a background report to the final Needs Assessment Report.

### 1.2. Report Presentation

The Planning Context and Community Engagement Report is presented in two sections:

- **Chapter 2.0 – Community Context** (geographic, socio-demographic, population, service trends and infrastructure)
- **Chapter 3.0 – Consultation** (process and results of consultation activities)

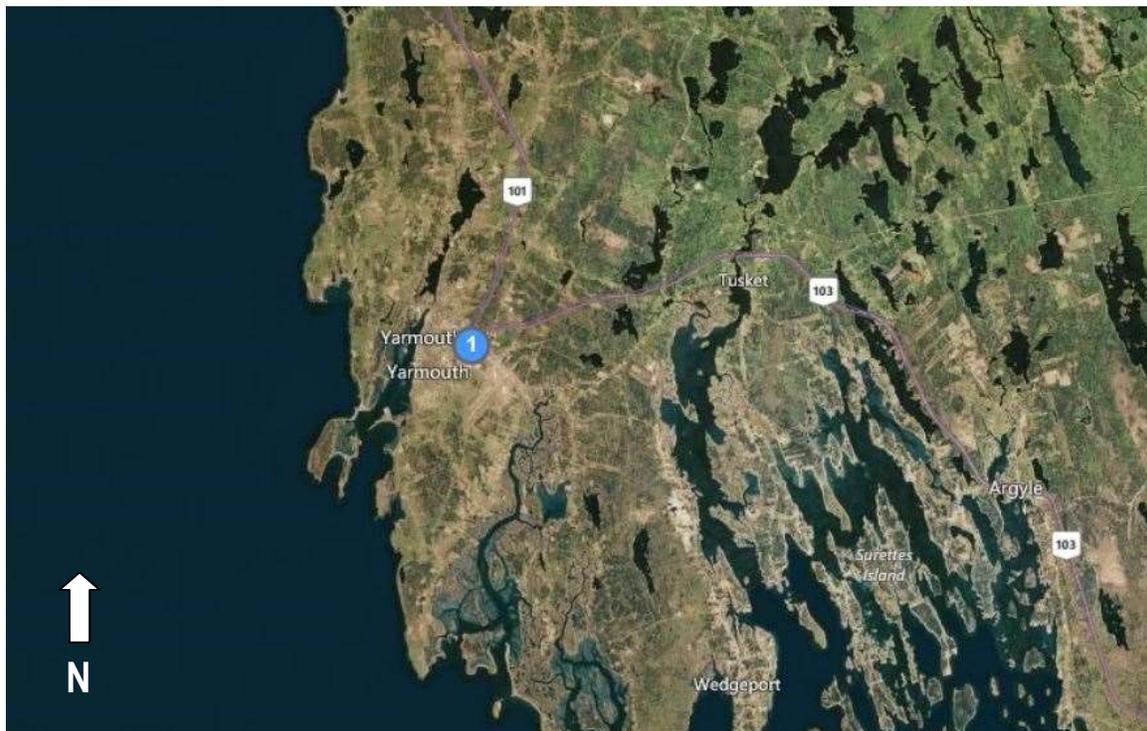
## 2.0 COMMUNITY CONTEXT

Facilities, such as those assessed and envisioned in this report, operate within a broad community context. Leisure facilities should respond to: population and socio-demographic realities of the areas they serve; be consistent with current and anticipated service trends and operational environment. Together these elements are referred to as the “community context”, a critical factor in determining both need and viability of the recommended direction. The sections in this chapter describe population and socio-demographic characteristics of the Yarmouth region; present information on existing indoor facilities, service trends and operational information.

### 2.1. Geographic Context

The Mariners Centre is located on Jody Shelley Drive in the Town of Yarmouth in southwestern Nova Scotia. The Mariners Centre is a regional facility and services the Town of Yarmouth, Municipality of the District of Yarmouth and the Municipality of the District of Argyle as well as other surrounding communities in the southwest region.

Figure 2.1: Map of the Mariners Centre Location



Source: Bing Maps, 2015.

## 2.2. Population and Socio-Demographic Context

The population and socio-demographic information used in this report was obtained from Statistics Canada's 2001, 2006 and 2011 Census Profiles. In 2011 the long-form Canadian Census was discontinued and no longer records certain information (e.g., income and employment) therefore data from the 2006 Census was used in some instances. The Town of Yarmouth, the Municipality of the District of Yarmouth and the Municipality of the District of Argyle Municipal Plans were also reviewed to inform the study. Population projections for the County of Yarmouth were not available for consideration in this study.

The facility is intended to be a regional facility and for this reason, demographic information of the County of Yarmouth was primarily used for this study. The County includes the Town of Yarmouth, the Municipality of the District of Yarmouth, the Municipality of the District of Argyle and Acadia First Nations – Yarmouth 33.

Figure 2.2: Map of the County of Yarmouth



Source: Statistics Canada, 2015.

### 2.2.1. Population Change and Growth Areas

In the 2011 Canadian Census, the population of the County of Yarmouth was 25,275 individuals. The County has a total land area of 2,125 square kilometres, which equates to 12 persons per square kilometre. Table 2.1 and Table 2.2 indicate the population change over a 15 year timeframe between 1996 and 2011 for the County and Province, as well as a breakdown by municipality.

**Table 2.1: Population Change for the County of Yarmouth Compared to the Province**

Census Year	County of Yarmouth				Province of Nova Scotia			
	Total Pop.	Change (persons)	Change (%)	Trend	Total Pop.	Change (persons)	Change (%)	Trend
1996	27,310	-	-	-	909,282	-	-	-
2001	26,843	467	- 1.7	↓	908,007	1,275	- 0.1	↓
2006	26,277	566	-2.1	↓	913,462	5,455	0.6	↑
2011	25,275	1,002	-3.8	↓	921,727	8,265	0.9	↑

Source: Statistics Canada 1996, 2001, 2006 and 2011 Census.

**Table 2.2: Population Change for the Town of Yarmouth, Municipality of Yarmouth & Municipality of Argyle**

Census Year	Town of Yarmouth				Municipality of Yarmouth				Municipality of Argyle			
	Total Pop.	Change (persons)	Change (%)	Trend	Total Pop.	Change (persons)	Change (%)	Trend	Total Pop.	Change (persons)	Change (%)	Trend
1996	7,568	-	-	-	10,722	-	-	-	8,947	-	-	-
2001	7,561	7	- 0.1	↓	10,476	246	- 2.3	↓	8,688	259	- 2.9	↓
2006	7,162	399	-5.3	↓	10,304	172	-1.5	↓	8,656	32	-0.5	↓
2011	6,761	401	-5.6	↓	10,105	199	-1.9	↓	8,252	404	-4.7	↓

Source: Statistics Canada 1996, 2001, 2006 and 2011 Census.

### 2.2.2. Age Distribution & Characteristics

An analysis of the age structure of the County provides demographic trends that will affect delivery of services and market opportunities in the region. The age breakdown within the County is relatively similar to that of the Province as a whole. There is a slightly lower population of residents between 20 and 29 years of age within the County (9.76%) compared to the Province (12.10%). There is also a slightly higher population of seniors 65 years and older (19.23%) compared to the Province (16.64%).

**Table 2.3: Demographics of Yarmouth County Compared to the Province**

	County of Yarmouth 2006		County of Yarmouth 2011		Nova Scotia 2006		Nova Scotia 2011	
<b>0 to 4 years</b>	1,190	4.53	1,175	4.65	42,040	4.60	43,985	4.77
<b>5 to 9 years</b>	1,470	5.59	1,200	4.75	48,145	5.27	44,425	4.82
<b>10 to 14 years</b>	1,690	6.43	1,415	5.60	56,245	6.16	49,810	5.40
<b>15 to 19 years</b>	1,775	6.75	1,615	6.39	61,440	6.73	57,440	6.23
<b>20 to 29 years</b>	2,815	10.71	2,465	9.76	107,370	11.75	111,540	12.10
<b>30 to 39 years</b>	3,175	12.08	2,715	10.75	115,570	12.65	107,925	11.71
<b>40 to 54 years</b>	6,220	23.66	5,900	23.35	224,630	24.59	215,855	23.42
<b>55 to 64 years</b>	3,550	13.51	3,920	15.52	119,800	13.12	137,385	14.91
<b>65 to 74 years</b>	2,090	7.95	2,595	10.27	73,295	8.02	85,315	9.26
<b>75 and over</b>	2,310	8.79	2,265	8.96	64,915	7.11	68,055	7.38
<b>Total</b>	26,285*	100	25,265*	100	913,450*	100	921,735*	100
<b>Median Age</b>	<b>42.4</b>		<b>45.9</b>		<b>41.8</b>		<b>43.7</b>	

\*Numbers are rounded to nearest fifth by Statistics Canada for age categories. Therefore, population totals shown in Table 2.1 will not match the numbers shown in Table 2.3.

Data Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 and 2011 Census.

### 2.2.3. Dwellings Occupied by Usual Residents

There were an estimated 12,317 private dwellings in the County of Yarmouth in 2011. Of these, 87.6% are occupied by usual residents. This is slightly less than the percentage of private dwellings occupied by usual residents within the Province as a whole (88.3%).

### 2.2.4. Family Structure

There were an estimated 7,715 census families in private households in the County of Yarmouth in 2011. Of the census families in the County, 17% were lone-parent (single parent) families. This is equal to the percentage of lone-parent families within the Province as a whole.

### 2.2.5. Household Income

The median household income in the County of Yarmouth in 2005 was \$50,019 compared to the median household income in the Province of \$55,412. The median household income of single-parent families in the County of Yarmouth in 2005 was \$24,926, compared to the median household income of single-parent families in the Province of \$29,917.

### **2.2.6. First Languages**

The majority of residents in the County of Yarmouth report English as their mother tongue (76.5%) while 20.0% report French as their mother tongue based on the 2011 Census. This is significantly higher than the percentage of residents within the Province that speak French as their mother tongue (3.4%).

## **2.3. Facility and Service Context**

This section of the report describes the Mariners Centre and provides information about other core recreation facilities that will be addressed in the needs assessment. Other key recreation service providers relevant to this current study are also briefly described.

### **2.3.1. Existing Facilities at the Mariners Centre**

The Mariners Centre is owned by the Town of Yarmouth and the Municipality of Yarmouth. The Centre was built in 2001 with an addition to Arena 1 in 2005 to accommodate additional bleachers for a total of 1,400 permanent seats. Another addition to the building was made last year to accommodate a multi-purpose room.

The Mariners Centre consists of two ice arenas (85' x 200' and 85' x 185'), media centre, dressing rooms, public washrooms, administrative offices, a board room, a multi-purpose room, licensed lounge, kitchen / canteen areas and storage spaces. Arena 2 has year round ice, while Arena 1 is used in the summer months for a variety of non-ice activities. The facility hosts a wide range of activities including hockey games and tournaments, skating, concerts, banquets, graduations and community events, meetings and the yearly agricultural and equestrian exhibition organized by the Yarmouth County Agricultural Society.

Table 2.4 provides a summary of the indoor facilities at the Mariners Centre and other locations within the general area that relate to the current study.

**Table 2.4 Indoor Facility Summary**

Facilities	Details
<b>Arenas</b>	2 pads at the Mariners Centre
<b>Curling Rink</b>	Curling rink co-located with golf club in the Town of Yarmouth. The facility has 4 ice sheets
<b>Indoor Pools</b>	Single tank indoor pool at the Y.M.C.A The Rodd Grand Hotel Pool
<b>Fitness Facilities</b>	Y.M.C.A Defining Bodies, Jone's Gym and Figures Fun Fitness for Her are private fitness facilities operating in the Yarmouth area
<b>Gymnasia / Multi-purpose Space</b>	Y.M.C.A gymnasium Mariners Centre multi-purpose room 5 school gymnasia are scheduled by the Town / District Recreation Department There are other schools that accommodate community access but are not scheduled by the Department
<b>Community Halls</b>	8 community halls (Pembroke Hall, Greenville Hall, Port Maitland Fire Hall, Shriners Masonic, South Ohio Hall, Knights of Columbus, Yarmouth Lions Club, and Brooklyn Bright Light Seniors)

### 2.3.2. Key Recreation Service Providers

In addition to the Mariners Centre Staff, there are several other key recreation service providers in the Yarmouth area. Descriptions of the major service providers and a summary of their programmatic offerings are provided in the following paragraphs.

#### Yarmouth Recreation

Yarmouth Recreation provides recreation programming and services for the residents of the Town of Yarmouth and Municipality of Yarmouth. A Recreation Committee gives direction and recommendations to the recreation department. The department is involved in the development of facilities, creating partnerships for access to facilities and assists other organizations in developing recreation facilities. The department maintains and schedules sports fields, trails, community schools and the Milo Aquatic Club on the shore of Lake Milo. The department runs their own recreation programs for all age ranges (pre-school aged to seniors) and also promotes and shares information about other organizations providing recreational opportunities to residents.

#### Argyle Recreation Department

Argyle Recreation offers a variety of programs for residents of all ages and promotes recreation activities occurring in the region. The department has two full-time staff, the Recreation Director and the Active Living Coordinator, and students are hired in the summer months to run the Day

Camp programs and additional recreational activities and events. A Recreation Commission consisting of representatives of the Municipal districts advises the recreation staff. The department is responsible for booking their outdoor sports facilities and also assists the community with school bookings. The department runs day camps, a minor soccer program, seniors programs and a floor hockey league in the summer months.

### **Boys and Girls Club of Yarmouth**

The Boys and Girls Club of Yarmouth primarily utilizes the Beacon United Church and the NSCC Bumidge Campus in Yarmouth. The Club offers programs for children, youth and families as well as day care programs.

### **The Y.M.C.A. of Yarmouth**

The Y.M.C.A. facility is located in downtown Yarmouth. The facility has experienced some recent upgrades, including a renovated lobby. The existing pool is functional for recreational purposes and swim lessons, but has limitations for sports groups such as swim teams and synchronized swimming due to the pool size (20 yards (18.5 m) in length). As it is a single-tank pool, it also has limitations of water temperature for therapeutic purposes. The Y.M.C.A. holds swim lessons, recreational swims, lifesaving courses, aquatic fitness and is home to the Whitecaps Swim Team.

The Y.M.C.A. also offers a variety of land-based fitness classes as well as fitness equipment. There are several free children and youth programs available including indoor playground in the gymnasium, free swim, Friday Night Fun for children and youth 6 – 16 and pick-up basketball.

## **2.4. Background Documents**

This section summarizes background documents relevant to the Needs Assessment which were reviewed by the consultants to inform the study.

### **2.4.1. Building Condition Reports**

#### **Mariners Centre Aging Building Audit**

The *Mariners Centre Aging Building Audit Final Report* was prepared by Lewis Engineering Inc. in October, 2006. The report details the findings, recommendations and cost estimates as a result of the two stage project which included a facility audit followed by a life cycle analysis. During the audit, consideration was given to owner requirements, physical condition of building and systems, functionality, performance and compliance with all codes and standards. Recommendations are categorized according to priority level; with a suggested timeframe for completion. A number of recommendations are made in the report. In general, the building was found to comply with all barrier free access requirements at that time, mechanical systems were in good condition and meet requirements, and no major electrical system upgrades were needed.

#### **Yarmouth Mariners Centre Energy Assessment**

The *Yarmouth Mariner Centre Energy Assessment* was prepared by I.B. Storey Inc. in January, 2010. The findings outlined in the report result from an energy audit conducted from November 2008 to October 2009. Various recommendations for enhancing energy performance are noted, with a high focus on the refrigeration system. Should the proposed project be completed, the report highlights an estimated cost savings of \$39,000 with a 4.2 year payback after estimated costs of \$167,000.

#### **Yarmouth Golf & Country Club Ageing Building Audit**

The *Ageing Building Audit Final Report* was prepared for the Yarmouth Golf & Country Club. Completed in July, 2011 by CJ MacLellan & Associates, this report outlines the findings, recommendations and cost estimates resulting from site visits carried out in July and August of 2010. The scope of work included visual reviews as well as interviews with maintenance personnel. Recommended upgrades are broken down into three categories: Areas in need of immediate attention, upgrades necessary in the medium term and major expenditures likely required in the long term. The building was constructed in 1969 and has not been significantly upgraded or renovated, with the exception of upgrades to some mechanical components. The findings state that the building is serviceable as is, but does need significant expenditure in the near term including replacement of the ice plant and reinforcement of the roof.

#### **2.4.2. The Town of Yarmouth Municipal Planning Strategy**

*The Town of Yarmouth Municipal Planning Strategy (2008) speaks of recreation service provisions within the Town and cooperation with surrounding municipalities for infrastructure development and service delivery. Council's policies for recreational programming and facility development relate primarily to park development and encouraging / supporting organizations providing recreational programs and services. The Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) includes sections relating to recreational facilities and cultural institutions.*

The MPS states the following:

- *Recreational opportunities and organized sports are valuable components of community life and generate valuable economic spin-offs by attracting new residents, businesses, competitions and tourists.*
- *Many local recreational facilities are not owned by the Town. Saint Ambrose softball field and tennis courts, the Yarmouth Golf and Country Club and the Y.M.C.A. are owned by private organizations or institutions. The Town maintains several important recreational facilities such as the Mariner's Centre, the Milo Boat Club, the Killam Brothers Marina, the Broad Brook Recreational Park, Frost Park, Beacon Park and a number of neighbourhood parks.*
- *The development of private and publicly owned recreational facilities has created a well-balanced, high quality recreational environment with a diversified range of recreational activities, enabling participation by all segments of the population.*
- *The Town supports organizations that provide recreational programs and/or services to the community. Council supports the creation of new recreational facilities particularly at the neighbourhood level with special consideration given to parks and playgrounds.*
- *Council's objectives include encouraging and supporting developments and organizations that provide cultural programs and/or services; and recognizing and promoting cultural institutions as valuable and significant social and educational resources*
- *Cultural institutions in the Town include the Western Counties Regional Library - Yarmouth Branch, the Yarmouth County Museum, the Firefighters Museum of Nova Scotia, the Yarmouth Arts Regional Council (Th' YARC) and the Nova Scotia Art Gallery (Western Branch). These cultural institutions play an important role in providing informal educational opportunities to residents and tourists. The Town intends to support the efforts of Th'Yarc in finding a home for the arts community.*
- *The Town recognizes the health of its community members as an important aspect of maintaining a healthy sustainable community and supports the efforts of the Department of Leisure Services, the Y.M.C.A., and the school system in providing physical activities and programs to all members.*

### 2.4.3. Yarmouth Integrated Community Sustainability Plan

The Town of Yarmouth's *Integrated Community Sustainability Plan* (ICSP) is embedded in the MPS. The ICSP has sections that relate to recreational facilities.

- **Sustainable Heritage, Cultural and Social Developments:**
  - *It shall be the intention of Council to support the conservation and reuse of the Town's building stock*
  - *It shall be the intention of Council to support cultural development through the support of local institutions such as, but not limited to, local museums and art galleries and their development of community programs and services*
  - *Issue: Lack of top notch community facilities. Desired Outcome: A new community arts/theatre production facility, a new Y.M.C.A. facility and a new youth centre*
- **Healthy and Safe Community:**
  - *It shall be the intention of Council to support the enhancement of recreational health promotion and services through the support of organizations and through the support of infrastructure developments such as, but not limited to, active transportation trails; the Y.M.C.A. redevelopment plan; Broad Brook Greenway, the Milo Boat Club and the Mariner's Centre Complex.*
- **Partnerships and Collaborations:**
  - *It shall be the intention of Council to cooperate with adjacent and nearby municipalities in the administration and promotion of Leisure Services and the Mariner Centre joint initiatives*

### 2.4.4. The Municipality of the District of Yarmouth Municipal Planning Strategy

The *Municipality of the District of Yarmouth Municipal Planning Strategy* (2000, consolidated 2013) includes sections on recreation, heritage and culture.

- **Social / Cultural Development Goal:** *To ensure that residents have local access to a range of health care, educational, social, cultural and recreational services and opportunities to improve quality of life and social well-being. Objectives include:*
  - *To cooperate with other municipalities and agencies as well as other levels of government to provide the services and amenities necessary for residents to ensure their physical and mental health, welfare, education and safety*
  - *To encourage and support a variety of volunteer organizations and community based support systems*

- *To encourage the development of community facilities and programs that are more accessible for persons and families with limited financial resources and persons with physical and cognitive disabilities*
- *To work in cooperation with community organizations and government bodies in the provision of recreation and cultural services and facilities*
- *To encourage awareness of Yarmouth's natural, built and cultural heritage through support of facilities, collections and programs of the local museums, historical societies and art councils*
- *To maintain municipal recreational facilities as healthy, safe environments for all users*

The MPS provides information about recreation amenities within districts and hamlets:

- *Hebron Lakes and District institutional uses include Maple Grove and Meadowfield Schools, Hebron Residential Centre, and churches. The Hebron Recreation Complex is immediately adjacent to Maple Grove Education Centre. The new administration building for Yarmouth Municipality is also located in this vicinity adjacent to a newly developed soccer field.*
- *Carleton today is a vibrant rural community with a recently refurbished elementary school, a modern volunteer community fire hall in the core village area. A library and churches are also located in the community.*

#### **2.4.5. The Municipality of Argyle Municipal Planning Strategy**

*The Municipal of Argyle Municipal Planning Strategy (2000, consolidated 2005) provides information about recreation facilities based on specific communities within the Municipality.*

- **West Pubnico:** *Institutional uses include a church, community hall, two post offices, museum, fire department and service clubs. Recreational facilities are available on an organized level and include ballfields, a summer day camp and a Girl Guide Camp. An 18-hole golf course is located approximately five miles north of the community at Publico Head. The development of a Historic Acadian Village began in the summer of 1998.*
- **Wedgeport:** *Institutional uses include a church, school, two post offices, museum, fire department, two service clubs and a private club. Recreational uses are limited to a combination playground and ballfield and a sports field at the school. A summer day camp is provided at the combination facility while a Girl Guide camp is located east of the Frotten Point Road.*
- **Tusket:** *Institutional uses include a post office, two churches, the municipal administrative centre, a community college and a provincial government office. Of significance is the oldest standing courthouse and jail in Canada constructed in 1805. This building serves as a museum and archives. Recreational uses in the community include two ballfields.*

#### 2.4.6. Municipality of Argyle: Recreation and Physical Fitness Syndication Survey

The 2010, Ipsos Reid survey involved 300 telephone interviews with a randomly selected representative sample of Argyle residents aged 18 years or older. The findings are as follows:

- *Walking was found to be the most common physical activity or exercise that respondents participated in on a regular bases (59%), followed by hockey (11%), jogging / running (8%) and biking / cycling (8%)*
- *Facilities used at least once a month by respondents: arenas (28%), community centres / halls (24%), indoor sport facility rooms (20%), fitness / weight training facilities (16%), sports fields / courts (15%) and swimming pools (12%)*
- *'Lack of places to exercise' (10%) and 'cost / financial issues' (4%) were found to be barriers to participating in physical activity significantly less than other reasons such as 'don't have enough time' (42%), 'weather' (14%) and 'health issues' (12%). 'Not motivated' was also noted as a reason for lack of physical activity (9%)*
- *Overall satisfaction with recreation facilities: 54% satisfied*
- *Common physical activities for children: hockey (33%), dancing (22%), soccer (22%), gym (20%) and jogging / running (17%)*
- *Suggested new recreation programs for children: baseball / softball (12%), Swimming (11%), gym / fitness (8%), soccer (7%). Twenty-two percent said they would not suggest new recreation programs for children*

#### 2.4.7. District of Argyle: Physical Activity Community Survey

Nova Insights Market Research & Consulting conducted a survey in 2014 involving 301 telephone interviews through random digital dialing. The findings are as follows:

- *Walking (top of the wish list for future activity) and swimming (distant second) are of interest to a large proportion of the adult population*
- **Physical Activity Opportunities:** *More family-friendly spaces, more programs for children to participate near their parent during activities, more common spaces to meet friends for activities (especially for females) and non-competitive opportunities among females in particular were found to be the top opportunities to encourage greater participation in physical activity.*
- **Activities:** *Walking and household tasks top the list of most common physical activities by a wide margin. The greatest interest in participating more frequently is in walking. Swimming is a distant second. Interest in increased walking increases with age. Interest in running, team sports, and skating decreases with age. Males are more likely than*

females to be interested in team sports and skating. Females are more likely than males to be active swimming or in fitness classes.

- **Facilities:** There is very high satisfaction with the outdoor spaces. Trails and arenas in the area also gained high satisfaction marks. Young males are particularly likely to provide high satisfaction marks to arenas. The greatest likelihood for increased participation involves sport and recreation clubs. Half or more respondents they would increase their physical activity if they had an indoor pool or a multipurpose recreation centre.
- Family-friendly programs are strongly supported by one third of adults. A similar proportion would expect to increase participation if there were more family-friendly spaces available. There is indication that more opportunities for drop-in sport would increase physical activity. Non-competitive, organized activities could also help (especially among females), but competitive sports are less of a draw (except among 18-39 year olds).

#### **2.4.8. Physical Activity Strategic Plan: Town & Municipality of Yarmouth**

The Town and Municipality of Yarmouth *Physical Activity Strategic Plan* (2014 – 2019) was created by Yarmouth Recreation and Active Yarmouth based on the Department of Health and Wellness Municipal Physical Activity Leadership Program (MPAL). The Strategy focuses on five goal areas: (1) to increase physical activity of females across the lifespan; (2) youth ages 13-18; (3) activity levels in rural communities; (4) increase participation in active transportation as a lifestyle; and (5) community awareness of ongoing opportunities and of the health benefits related to a physically active lifestyle. The findings within the strategy are as follows:

- Overall there was a sense that community members were satisfied with opportunities in the area and that inactivity was linked to lack of awareness and a need for a change in mind set. Only 7% reported being not satisfied at all with opportunities to be active in Yarmouth.
- Household chores, walking, and gardening were the most frequently participated types of physical activity from the list provided.
- The strong prevalence of running and running groups in Yarmouth was noted at each of the meetings. Participants explained running groups are attractive because they are social, offered at convenient times, and designed for beginners.
- Limited access to schools noted as a large challenge to activities for all age groups. Difficulties of renting out gymnasiums as a result of rental policies.
- The addition of an aquatics center or pool was a frequent suggestion throughout the feedback.
- Addressing issues related to transportation and cost was recommended
- To overcome barriers centralized around childcare, it would be optimal to mesh activities for mothers and children, preferably with some type of supervision for children.

## 2.5. Service Trends

The following discussion describes factors affecting participation in various activities and programs that might be accommodated at the core facilities in an expanded Mariners Centre. The anticipated trends in participation are a major consideration in the needs assessment. These trends are provincial and national in scope and to the extent we might expect variations in the Yarmouth area this is discussed in the needs assessment.

### 2.5.1. General Factors Affecting Sport and Recreation Participation

**Macro Trends for Recreation and Culture** – A trend document prepared for the 2011 for the National Recreation Summit noted the following macro trends<sup>1</sup>: (1) time available for leisure has not changed since the 80's when it was anticipated that Canadian Society would have more leisure time; (2) Expenditure on recreation and culture has increased; (3) Economic barriers to recreation and culture have increased; (4) Leisure behaviour is shifting to more informal, individual, self-directed activities; and (5) digital experiences and opportunities are having a significant impact on leisure participation.

**Initiatives Designed to Increase Healthy Activity** – These include provincial, national and local activity plans, active transportation plans, policies to increase healthy food and snack consumption, and the development of targets for health and wellness. This movement has led to significantly greater attention on the development of trails and walking infrastructure including indoor walking infrastructure and a general focus on overall wellness.

**General Physical Activities** – The 2010 the Canadian Community Health Survey found that among the ten most popular physical activities for Canadian adults, most were of this nature: walking, jogging, gardening and yard work, home exercises, swimming, bicycling, and weight training. Nearly 70% of surveyed Canadians reported walking during their leisure time<sup>2</sup>.

- Research has shown that men are more likely than women to partake in moderate physical activity, and that the proportion of individuals who are at least moderately active decreases with age.<sup>3</sup>
- The trend towards increasing personal “wellness” has spurred growing participation in programs supporting holistic health such as yoga, Pilates, and other mind/body centered activities. While private facilities have capitalized on this trend in the past, it is increasingly common for public recreation centres to offer these activities in facilities once used primarily for dance, aerobics, and general fitness.

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<sup>1</sup> Balmer, Ken, ReThink Inc. (2011)

<sup>2</sup> Physical Activity During Leisure Time. Statistics Canada. July 28, 2011.

<sup>3</sup> Canadian Fitness & Lifestyle Recreation Institute (2009). 2008 Physical Activity Monitor: Physical activity levels of Canadians.

**Team Sports** The growth in individual sport and active living opportunities as well as the relative decline in the under 25 population have contributed to the decline in team sports across Canada. In 1992, 45% of Canadians 15 years of age or older reported participating in sports; this had dropped to 26% by 2010<sup>4</sup>. While the decline is not so drastic among younger age groups, sport participation is significantly influenced by age of participant with soccer and hockey the most popular sports among 18 to 24 year olds; hockey and baseball the most popular among those in the 24-44 age group; golf and hockey are the most popular sports played by those 45-64 years of age; and over 50% of individuals 65 years of age or older reported golf as being their choice of sport.<sup>5</sup>

### 2.5.2. Arena Participation

Arena sports will conform to the broader trends indicating a decline in organized sports. However, a number of factors suggest that arena sports – primarily hockey – may experience much more significant declines.

As early as the late 1980s some commentators were predicting a significant decline in the use of Canadian arenas. These early projections of declining participation were primarily based on the then dominance of arena sports by young males and the anticipated aging of the Canadian population. The predicted decline did not materialize as soon as expected in large part due to the emergence of girls and women’s hockey and the growth of adult leagues. National enrolment in hockey has experienced a modest increase in the past decade due to women and adult participation, but the longer term trend is one of significant decline. “Enrolment in Hockey Canada teams is currently 572,000 [2012 data], down more than 200,000 from its peak. And the prospects are grim. In the next decade, some say there could be 200,000 fewer kids playing the game”.<sup>6</sup> A 2011-12 survey of hockey parents by Hockey Canada found that 21% were considering leaving the sport.<sup>7</sup> Particularly troubling is the decline in participation amongst the youngest players. A 2014 study reported no increase in novice registration in Canada’s four largest hockey markets (BC, Alberta, Ontario and Quebec)<sup>8</sup>. Surveys with parents suggest that the younger players may be leaving due to lack of interest or cost, however, health concerns are a significant contributing factor with older players.<sup>9</sup>

Girl’s hockey is now an established sport in many communities and the aging trend is accelerating. Consequently, many communities have seen relatively stable participation in arena sports in recent years.

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<sup>4</sup> Canadian Heritage. Sport Participation 2010. Research Paper. Feb. 2013.

<sup>5</sup> CFLRI 2009 Physical Activity Monitor- “Sport Participation Rates of Canadian Adults”

<sup>6</sup> Toronto Star. Editorial. The Future Looks Bleak for Canadian Minor Hockey. Jan. 2012.

<sup>7</sup> Cited in: Shifting Ice and Minor Hockey’s Tipping Point. Globe and Mail. Sept. 2013.

<sup>8</sup> Canada’s Game? Hockey Losing Ground Among Cash Strapped Families? Jamie Sturgeon. Global News. Mar. 2014.

<sup>9</sup> Cited in: Shifting Ice and Minor Hockey’s Tipping Point. Globe and Mail. Sept. 2013.

Hockey Nova Scotia has reported some growth in the past decade from about 18,000 to 19,000 registrations in the period 2004-05 to 2013-14. The male participation has been stable during this period but there has been a slow growth in female participation.<sup>10</sup>

Looking forward, there are a number of indicators that would suggest that stable participation is an optimistic scenario and modest, perhaps steep, declines are more likely. These include:

- Continued aging with ongoing increases in the proportion of the population in the oldest age categories
- Increasing user fees due to the high cost of building, maintaining and operating arenas relative to many other indoor sports facilities. Increasing energy costs in particular will likely continue to have a disproportionate impact on arena user fees. According to a 2011 survey of parents and volunteers in Canada, 35.7% of respondents indicated that increasing ice costs were the single greatest issue facing their hockey communities and amongst parents who did not register their kids in hockey, 38% said it was because it was too expensive.<sup>11</sup> A more recent study undertaken by the Scotia Bank found that one-third of parents with kids playing hockey say the sport is becoming unaffordable.<sup>12</sup>
- Health and safety concerns highlighted by media reports of injuries in professional contact sports. The Toronto Star editorial cited earlier projects further significant declines in hockey registration if safety issues are not addressed<sup>13</sup>. The editorial cites Canadian research on health injuries and suggests that “fear of injuries is driving young parents and their parents away from the game”. Recent media reports claiming hockey helmets are defective and citing major concussion related law suits in professional sport likely continue to fuel parents’ perceptions that arena sports are risky.
- Expanding indoor recreational opportunities, many at lower costs that will compete with arena sports for the winter market. (e.g. in many communities soccer is now a year round activity)
- While less relevant in Yarmouth, in most major Canadian centres increasing diversity is resulting in residents with a broader range of recreational interest and in many cases less experience with arena sports. Provincial hockey associations in some jurisdictions are addressing this issue with outreach programs, the success of which remain to be seen.

These indicators were perhaps best summarized in a survey of 875 non-hockey playing families in Ontario and Nova Scotia who provided four major reasons for not playing the game: (1) it wasn’t fun, (2) was too time consuming, (3) safety concerns, and (4) affordability.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Hockey Canada. Annual Report. 2014.

<sup>11</sup> “Canadian minor hockey risks stalling as boys enrolment sinks, costs rise”. Rachel Brady. Article in the Globe and Mail. Dec. 5, 2011.

<sup>12</sup> Cited in: Canada’s Game? Hockey Losing Ground Among Cash Strapped Families? Jamie Sturgeon. Global News. Mar. 2014.

<sup>13</sup> “The future looks bleak for Canadian minor hockey” Emile Therien. Article in the Toronto Star. Jan. 4, 2012.

<sup>14</sup> Cited in: Canadian Families Shunning Hockey, Survey Finds. Globe and Mail. August 2013.

All of these concerns are being addressed by national and provincial hockey associations in Canada and the long range impact on participation is uncertain. However, a reasonable projection for the next ten years would be modestly declining participation rates in arena sports. However, the impact of health and safety concerns could be much more significant if studies indicate serious risks or if a major event, such as a lawsuit, is widely publicized. In this scenario, more significant declines in participation could result.

### **2.5.3. Aquatic Participation**

Aquatics share many of the characteristics of other activities which are growing in popularity. These include: ability to participate regardless of age and skill (at entry level); relatively low cost requiring little equipment; and, ability to participate according to one's own schedule (e.g., for lap swim or recreational swim).

Not surprisingly, therefore, recreational and fitness swimming continues to be one of the most popular leisure activities for all ages.

As the population ages and older adults remain active well into their 80's and beyond, demand to participate in this mildly aerobic low impact activity will increase. Reduced impact exercise programs are provided in warm water pools with a water temperature between 32°C and 35.5°C and a consistent depth (approximately 1M)<sup>15</sup>. This form of therapeutic recreation is extremely beneficial for those who are physically challenged due to injury or illness designed to improve quality of life<sup>16</sup>.

Instructional swimming programs continue to experience strong participation among children, whereas leadership and aquatic instructional participation has declined as the population of teenagers' declines. Competitive swimming continues to be strong. Competitive diving and synchronized swimming have both been relatively stable over the past few years. Participation in these programs is limited by the availability of facilities and trained coaches, and typically enjoys success as a result of Canadian athletes in international competition.

Swimming is one of the most integrated sports in Canada, which will likely lead to relatively strong increases in future participation by swimmers with a disability. SWAD (Swimmers with a Disability) Canada continues to pursue high performance swimming opportunities and development initiatives to attract and train athletes. Specialized aquatic programs are increasingly recommended as a form of therapy for older adults and others with acute or chronic conditions (e.g., for stroke recovery, cardiac care, flexibility for arthritis sufferers, etc.).

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<sup>15</sup> Lifestyle Information Network. McCune, Gabrielle. Warm Water Pools-Durham Warm Water Aquatic Program (2009).

<sup>16</sup> Lifestyle Information Network. McCune, Gabrielle. Warm Water Pools-Durham Warm Water Aquatic Program (2009).

Contemporary aquatic facilities often incorporate three tanks to accommodate three separate streams of programming.

- **Traditional Pools:** Aquatic facilities built primarily for competitive use, instruction and fitness are rectangular pools of 25 meters with a minimum of 6 lanes, a deep end and a shallow end. They typically have a cooler temperature (approximately 28 degrees Celsius).
- **Leisure Pools:** Beginning in the 1980's communities began to build free form pools referred to as leisure pools. These pools often had limited deep water, many had limited lanes suitable for fitness swim, and larger pool decks to accommodate longer stays in a recreational setting. They often incorporated fun-oriented apparatus such as slides, Tarzan ropes, ball hoops and nets. Usually pool temperature is in the mid-range (approximately 29-30 degrees Celsius). These pools are attractive for recreational swimming, support activities such as aquafit programs that required fairly shallow (waist-deep) water, and are ideal for early level instructional programs. They are less viable for higher level instruction; do not always support lane swimming or competitive use. Consequently, leisure components are almost always combined with traditional pool tanks that accommodate these activities.
- **Therapeutic Pools:** Therapeutic pools are generally small tanks, fully accessible and often incorporating water jets, in-tank seating etc. The water is warmer (approximately 30-32 degrees Celsius). These pools accommodate therapeutic use by older adults and people with disabilities, as well as parent and tot users and very young swimmers. They are well used for true therapy programs for people with arthritis, fibromyalgia, initial post cardiac care etc.

#### 2.5.4. Gymnasium Participation

**Gymnasium Activities** – Participation in activities such as basketball, volleyball and badminton continues to be popular, particularly among youth and young adults and where there are opportunities for unstructured or more flexible participation. Badminton continues to be a popular drop-in activity for young adult couples and seniors. Racquet sports (including indoor tennis, squash and racquetball) have declined nationally since their peak in the 80's. Squash participation has declined considerably nationally but continues to be popular among university-aged males. Indoor soccer on the other hand has experienced significant growth in association with the growing popularity of soccer in Canada. While smaller communities typically use gym space for winter soccer programs, enclosed artificial turf fields are now common in most major centres.

#### 2.5.5. Multipurpose Space Participation

Well-designed multipurpose space provides virtually unlimited opportunities for community use. With appropriate lighting, flooring and fixtures, and an appropriate relationship to other multipurpose centre facilities (such as change-rooms and the kitchen) these spaces can be used

for a wide range of fitness, sport, arts and cultural programs as well as social and educational events. This also prime rental space and can be a significant revenue source.

### 2.5.6. Curling Participation

While levels of participation are much lower than other sports, curling is a significant winter sport in Canada. The estimated size of the Canadian curling market in 2014 was approximately 710,000 people, or 2.3% of the Canadian population. These curlers are further defined as light curlers (participating once or twice annually), medium (participating 3-9 times annually) and heavy (participating 10 or more times). Light, medium and heavy curlers comprise 42%, 18% and 40% respectively of the total market.<sup>17</sup>

Curling has exhibited moderately declining participation. Research indicates the number of Canadian curlers declined by about 19,000 (from 729,000 to 710,000) between 2008 and 2014. Furthermore, there are significant regional variations in participation with the Prairies accounting for almost 43% of the curling population, followed by Ontario at about 30%.<sup>18</sup>

Aging populations, volunteer burn-out, fewer members to finance older facilities, and slow growth among younger age groups have been obstacles faced by many curling clubs. Other factors including lack of diversity within the sport, and an increasing divide between levels of proficiency (competitive vs. casual) have been challenges to the ongoing viability of curling clubs. In conjunction with national and provincial curling associations, many local clubs are working to address these challenges with new programs and strategies to:

- Maintain affordability;
- Identify curling as a 'life-long sport' (e.g., from 'Little Rocks' for youth to Masters Curling);
- Develop coaching and leadership capacity;
- Respond to modern participant needs with flexible memberships and league play;
- Expand recreational programs;
- Promote the social benefits of club membership; and
- Update curling's traditional image (elite, white, male-dominated) to socially diverse, community places.

The impact of these strategies will be seen in the coming years. However, projecting stable participation in curling is a reasonable, and perhaps optimistic, scenario for the next ten years.

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<sup>17</sup> The Profile of the Canadian Curler. Cited on Curling Canada website. [www.curling.com](http://www.curling.com).

<sup>18</sup> Cited in "Prairies remain bedrock for Canadian curling". Calgary Herald. Feb. 2015.

## 3.0 CONSULTATION

The public engagement activities provide insight to the consulting team, and gave the public and stakeholder organizations an opportunity to express concerns, wishes and needs with respect to facility provisions. Consultation activities included:

- Key Informant interviews to assist the consultants to identify issues, obstacles and opportunities
- A general public meeting to present an overview of the study and provide an opportunity for residents to ask questions, and make comments
- An online community survey and a user group survey
- Briefing documents to stakeholder groups

This chapter provides an overview of these activities and events, and summarizes the primary themes arising from these consultations.

***Please note: the opinions and views expressed in Chapter 3.0 – Consultation Activities are those of the individuals interviewed for this study process and not those of the consulting team. The purpose of this section is to record and summarize input and submissions. Input from different sources can be contradictory. No attempt is made at this point to verify or evaluate the information provided.***

### 3.1. Key Informant Interviews

Key informant interviews were conducted either in person or by telephone. A list of individuals interviewed is provided in Appendix A. Interviews were conducted with 23 key informants as part of the community consultation activities. These were personal interviews with elected representatives, municipal staff, staff from various agencies and organizations and various community stakeholders. In many cases those interviewed provided factual information of relevance to the needs assessment. This input is not summarized here but was used in the needs assessment. However, the key informants were also encouraged to express their opinions on study issues. The interviews were confidential but key themes emerging from these discussions are briefly summarized below.

#### **The Need for Recreation Facilities and Services**

There was a strong consensus on three points with respect to the need for recreational facilities and services in the Yarmouth area. These were the need for a contemporary indoor pool; the need for an indoor walking track and the adequacy of the existing supply of ice time. The pool in particular was mentioned in virtually all of the interviews. The limitations of the Y.M.C.A pool and the need for a modern replacement were strongly stated. An indoor walking track was also frequently mentioned as a required facility in the area. None of those interviewed saw a need for a

third ice surface; however, a few hoped that with renovations to the Mariners Centre it would be possible to enlarge the existing surface that is not NHL dimensions.

There was greater uncertainty about the need for other recreation facilities. A number of those interviewed felt that a gymnasium or an indoor fieldhouse that could accommodate both soccer and gym sports would be a welcome addition to the Mariners Centre. However, others questioned whether a gym was required, given the supply of school gymnasia, and whether the market would support a full fieldhouse. While curling was generally supported, not all felt that a curling rink was a necessary addition to the Mariners Centre.

### **The Mariners Centre as the Location for Future Recreation Facilities**

There was a clear consensus that the Mariners centre was a suitable location for future recreation facilities. It is currently serving the regional market and was seen as the logical location for any future facilities that would attract users from throughout the Yarmouth area.

### **The Regional Market / Regional Facility**

Most of those interviewed felt that new recreation facilities at the Mariners Centre would attract people from the Town, District and Argyle. While this was clearly the case for a new aquatic centre, some were less certain if other recreation facilities would be used by residents in Argyle or the District faced with long commuting time.

Most of those interviewed assumed that any new facilities would be operated as a regional centre with the support of the three municipal units currently financing the Mariners Centre. There was support for this model and recognition that major facilities were only possible in the Yarmouth area through municipal partnerships.

### **The Possible Relocation of the Y.M.C.A**

While not a concern of all of those interviewed, a number of key interviewed noted the possible negative impact if the Y.M.C.A left downtown Yarmouth. Those that were concerned felt this would set back the Town's efforts to revitalize the downtown. However, while some of those interviewed noted that the Y.M.C.A's downtown location was well suited to individuals who relied on its social support services and were within walking distance, most felt that a relocation to the Mariners Centre would have no negative impact and might in fact attract more members.

### **Benefits of Expanded and Improved Recreation Facilities**

A number of the key informants represented agencies responsible for tourism and economic development. These individuals noted the possible benefits of an expanded Mariners Centre. The possibility of hosting additional tournaments, meets and special events was noted, however, the ability to attract and retain residents, businesses and employees who wanted to live in a community with superior recreation facilities was undoubtedly the most significant impact.

The opportunity to promote healthy lifestyles and active living with better recreation facilities was also noted and it was argued that an expanded Mariners Centre would support the objectives of Physical Activity Strategies and Active Transportation strategies that had been adopted by area municipalities.

### **3.2. Public Meeting**

A public meeting was held May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2015 at the Mariners Centre to introduce the general public to the Mariners Centre Needs Assessment. Approximately 35 residents representing a number of community organizations were in attendance. The consultants presented the methodology and goals of the study and introduced the online community survey and residents had an opportunity to ask questions. Attendees were also invited to complete questionnaires which offered an opportunity to provide general comments that could aid in informing the study. Ten participants submitted written comment forms, noting:

- Most important improvements or enhancements to the existing Mariners Centre
  - Larger kitchen; be more multi-purpose and social location 'community centre'; larger lobby; larger parking lot with pad for street hockey area; make arena floor available more for groups
  - Make the facility fully accessible
- Additional recreation, sport and culture facility requirements
  - Indoor walking track; full size pool; batting cage; exercise equipment, fitness classes; multi-purpose fieldhouse; climbing wall for youth; gymnastics centre (would benefit youth in cheerleading, dance, skateboarding); pole barn for agricultural events; indoor playground; cardio room; and space for ultimate soccer
- Other comments
  - Make it affordable
  - Have regional cooperation
  - Consider financials of building new or expansion versus renovating existing facilities
  - Need for more than one recreation location to support sport tourism

### **3.3. Request for Briefs**

There are certain groups within the community that are not regular (i.e. weekly) user groups of indoor recreation facilities, but do play an important part in recreation services for the communities. Instead of being sent the detailed user group surveys, these groups were sent a Request for Brief to provide their input and comments with regards to assessing indoor facility needs within the region. Nine groups were sent Request for Briefs and six groups responded with completed Briefs. A list of groups is found in Appendix B. Following is a summary of responses:

- Are there sport, recreation or cultural activities that residents in the Yarmouth area would like to participate in, but are not doing because of a lack of appropriate facilities? If so, which activities?
  - Horse shows, barrel racing events, dog shows, tug-of-wars, ox hauls, truck pulls
  - Swimming and aqua aerobics; hydrotherapy
  - Climbing wall
  - Curling ice
  - Accessible / easy to use fitness equipment (i.e., resistance machines, cardio equipment)
  - Walking and jogging (especially in the winter months)
  - Indoor field with running track (soccer, football, lacrosse, rugby, field hockey, archery and lawn bowling, soccer baseball, etc.) The indoor field could be used for festival activities such as a potential regional Highland Games or even a Senior Olympics.
  - Swim meets - the current Y.M.C.A pool is too small for competition. No ability to teach or do competitive diving
  - Space for big concerts and productions
  - Providing individuals with a disability the same opportunities to participate in sport, recreation and cultural activities
  
- To accommodate the activities mentioned in Q. 1, are improvements required for existing facilities, or are new facilities required?
  - Improvements and additions to existing
  - A roof over current outside riding ring so groups do not need to go outside of town; additional and covered bleachers for those who wish to come and watch equestrian events
  - New facilities would be required for hydrotherapy, for a climbing wall and for a more accessible fitness gym.
  - Could potentially utilize an existing facility for a walking / running track (i.e., have a changeable court in a school that community members could use evenings and weekends). Indoor track to allow for walking without the concern of uneven surfaces.
  - Lowering rink boards to allow easier transition onto the ice
  
- If new facilities are required, what types of facilities?
  - An additional barn to house more animals and better shower facilities
  - Indoor walking / running track (must be accessible to all ability levels – wheelchair accessible)
  - Full sized pool with shallow and deep ends – for lane swims, public swims, water aerobics (ideally also wheelchair accessible and equipped with chair lift for transfers into the pool). Warm water preferred for hydrotherapy.
  - 25m pool and full recreation center at the Mariners Centre
  - Climbing wall with appropriate safety measures.

- Fitness room with easy-to-use equipment for people of all ages that is more accessible cost-wise than some of the other options in Town.
- Indoor field / soccer pitch
- Appropriate broadcast positions (cameras, announcers and other equipment) are taken into consideration at the planning phase to have ability to record / live-stream events.
- Is the Mariners Centre an appropriate location for these new facilities? Why or why not?
  - Yes, convenient location for the Town of Yarmouth and other surrounding communities as it is a central area between Shelburne and Digby
  - Yes, they have the things currently required such as parking, some structures, riding ring, etc.
  - Yes, the Mariners Centre is a central location for wellness activities, and there is good parking (lots of space and easy to get in and out of the lot)
  - A new facility attached or as closely attached to the Mariners Centre would be ideal.
  - Yes, it is central and easily accessible and there is room for expansion
  - It would be ideal to have the facility closer to the downtown core to accommodate children and families that may lack transportation needed to utilize a community facility.
- Are improvements required for the existing facilities at the Mariners Centre to better serve the community? If so, what types of improvements?
  - Additions to Mariners Centre to accommodate indoor track, swimming facility, larger kitchen for big events
  - Yes, a cover over the outside ring facilities to accommodate weather
  - Seating in the Mariners Centre – there is limited space when sitting, which is difficult for those with physical issues/challenges
  - Plenty of wheelchair accessible seating space
  - Modification to the hockey benches to allow Sledge Hockey players to have easy access to the ice surface. Currently all players stay on the ice surface which is not standard play and has obvious disadvantages. Enhancements to the smaller arena (Arena 2) in regards to heat in the seating area would make it more comfortable for parents to watch their kids play.
  - No broadcasting capabilities from Arena 2, due to the lack of equipment locations and production equipment
  - Better area for food service and possible restaurant. New canteen that provides more nutritious foods to promote health and wellness
- If you believe new or improved facilities are required at the Mariners Centre, do you see any major challenges in pursuing these projects? Do you have any major concerns about pursuing these projects at the Mariners Centre?
  - Cost and funding partnerships (Federal, Provincial and Municipal) for initial construction and on-going maintenance.
  - Declining population

- Challenges of municipal councils
- There is an existing Y.M.C.A pool
- Attitude shifting: for a healthy community we are in need of an inclusive environment that promotes health and wellness as well as increased programmatic opportunities for individuals across the lifespan
- Our community needs to grow and this center is a part of that growth
- How will the community benefit from new or improved facilities at the Mariners Centre?
  - Attract sport and entertainment events which is good for economy
  - Help accommodate the local horse community and provide facilities to ride locally. Keep people in the Town of Yarmouth for a few weekends of the summer. It would help attract riders and bring more people to town.
  - Walking track and fitness centre will give the community a safe, comfortable area to stay active while also socializing
  - Seating changes encourage people to attend longer events
  - Hydrotherapy pool would give community members another option to be active, one which is often helpful to decrease weight-bearing for those with mobility issues, joint problems, etc.
  - Ability to host a variety of Regional/Provincial/National events which would bring people and major economic benefit to our area
  - A more varied slate of activities and opportunities can be held. The economic spinoff to the community is very important
  - A healthy community is a successful community. We need to invest in the health and wellness of our community members if our community is going to grow and thrive
- Please provide any other comments that you feel would assist us in the study or you feel are important to stakeholders.
  - As an organization that uses the whole property, we feel it is vitally important that we remain active when it comes to adding additional infrastructure to the property. An additional structure could prevent the Yarmouth County Agricultural Society from being able to hold an exhibition with the events as they do now
  - Cost is a challenge for engaging recreation and leisure. If cost to participate in activities will be high, it may not be utilized.
  - Need a balance for bariatric as well as senior safety.
  - Access should be at various times of day.
  - Involving MC Media Group in planned facility enhancements or additions will allow for live streaming and recorded coverage of these events.
  - This center is a very important piece of infrastructure; one that our community needs.
  - They do a great job now and with additions and growth can do more.
  - If Yarmouth has a wellness centre, it needs to be reflective not only of physical health but nutritional health as well. The current centre's nutritional offering does not support healthy eating.

### **3.4. Community Survey**

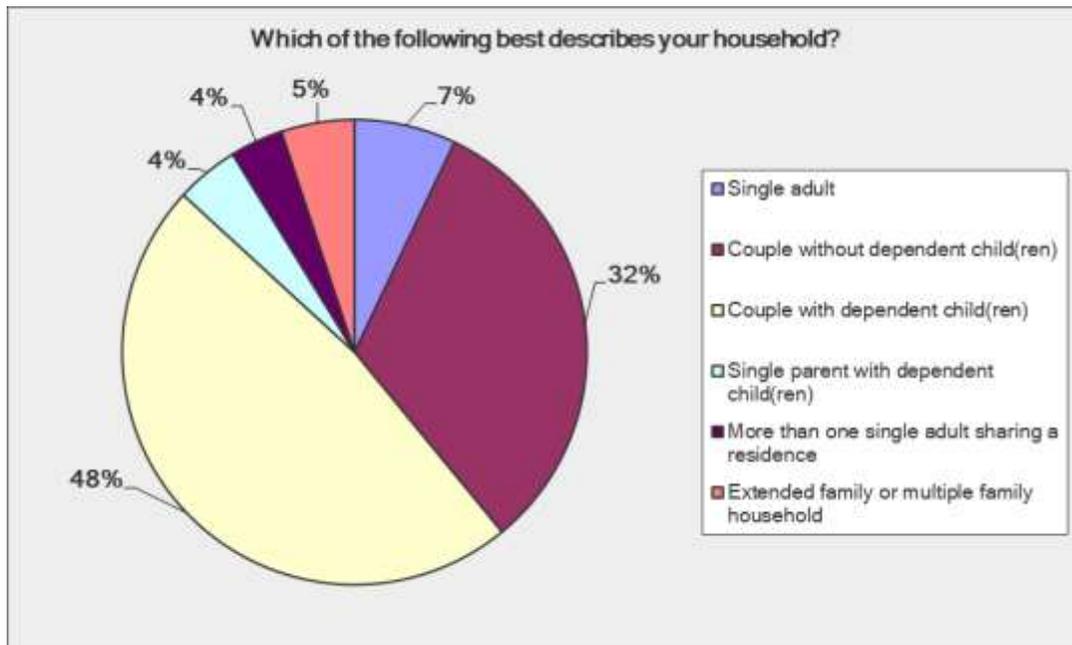
An on-line community survey was available to residents of the Yarmouth region via a link on the Town of Yarmouth, the Municipality of Yarmouth and the Municipality of Argyle's websites as well as the Mariner Centre's website. The on-line community survey is not statistically valid, as it does not represent a random sample. The responses to the survey indicate that respondents were not necessarily reflective of the population as a whole – which would only be possible with a random sample. Consequently, the views expressed by survey respondents may not accurately reflect those of the community at large, and this will be considered when interpreting these results for the needs assessment. Nonetheless the online survey does represent an opportunity for those interested in making their opinions known to do so. There was an extremely strong response from throughout the study area so the survey succeeded in providing an opportunity for many residents to be heard. Respondents were asked a variety of questions regarding their current use of facilities. Respondents were also asked to identify their recreational needs and the best ways to provide those needs. The main findings of the surveys have been summarized in the following paragraph.

#### **Respondent Demographics**

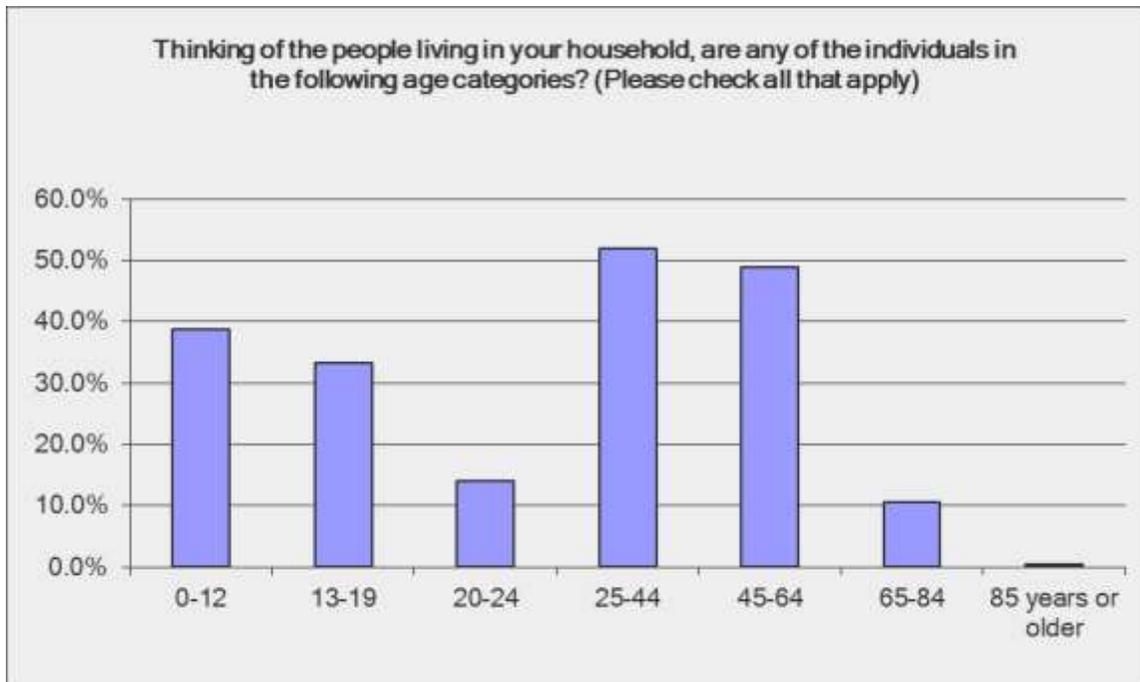
There were 465 residents that responded to the community survey. These respondents represent their households for a total of 1,268 individuals. The average household size was three individuals. Close to 50% of the respondents represent couples with dependent children. Over 40% of respondents were from the Municipality of the District of Yarmouth and approximately a quarter of respondents were from the Town of Yarmouth (27%) and a quarter of respondents were from Argyle (24%) with the majority of respondents living in the Yarmouth Region for more than 10 years (88% of respondents).

The survey cannot be considered a random sample or statistically valid survey, as respondents self-selected to partake in the online survey. With that being said, the survey does provide a fairly good cross-section of responses from the partnership municipalities which appropriately reflects the community. The amount of survey respondents living within the Town of Yarmouth and the Municipality of the District of Yarmouth is nearly identically to the percentage of residents in Yarmouth County within those municipalities based on the 2011 statistics. Slightly less residents from Argyle responded to the survey (24%) then the percentage of Yarmouth County residents that reside in Argyle (approximately 32% based on 2011 statistics).

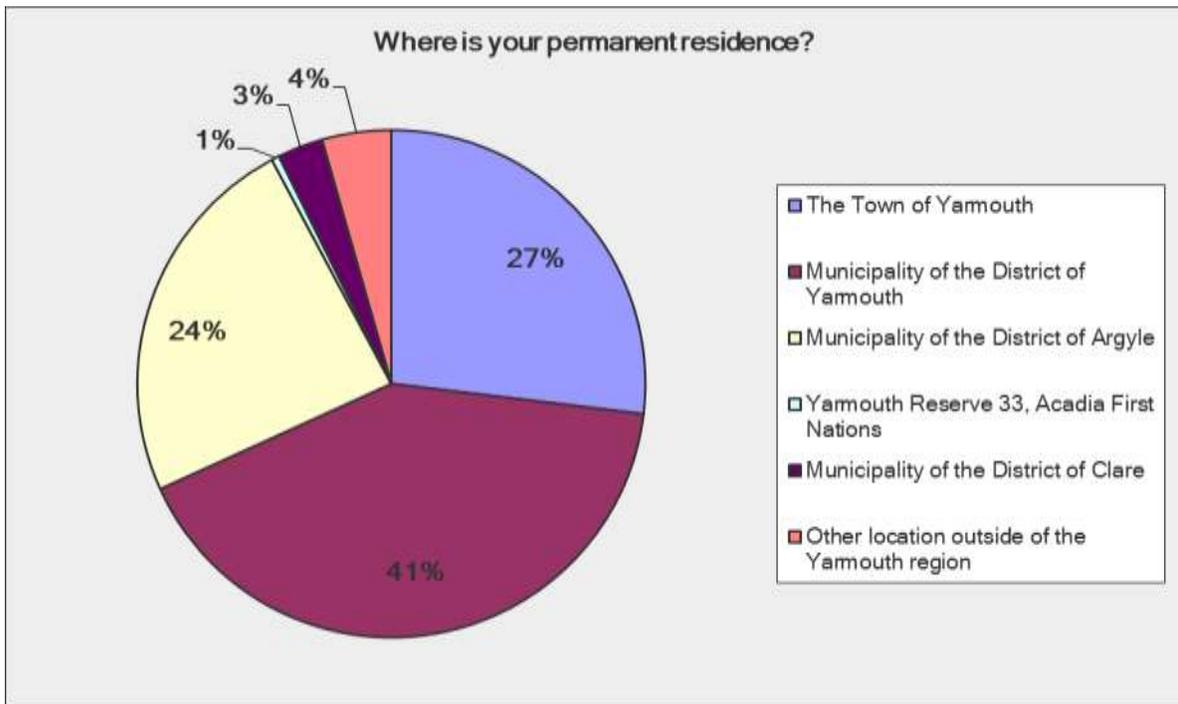
**Table 3.1 Household Breakdown**



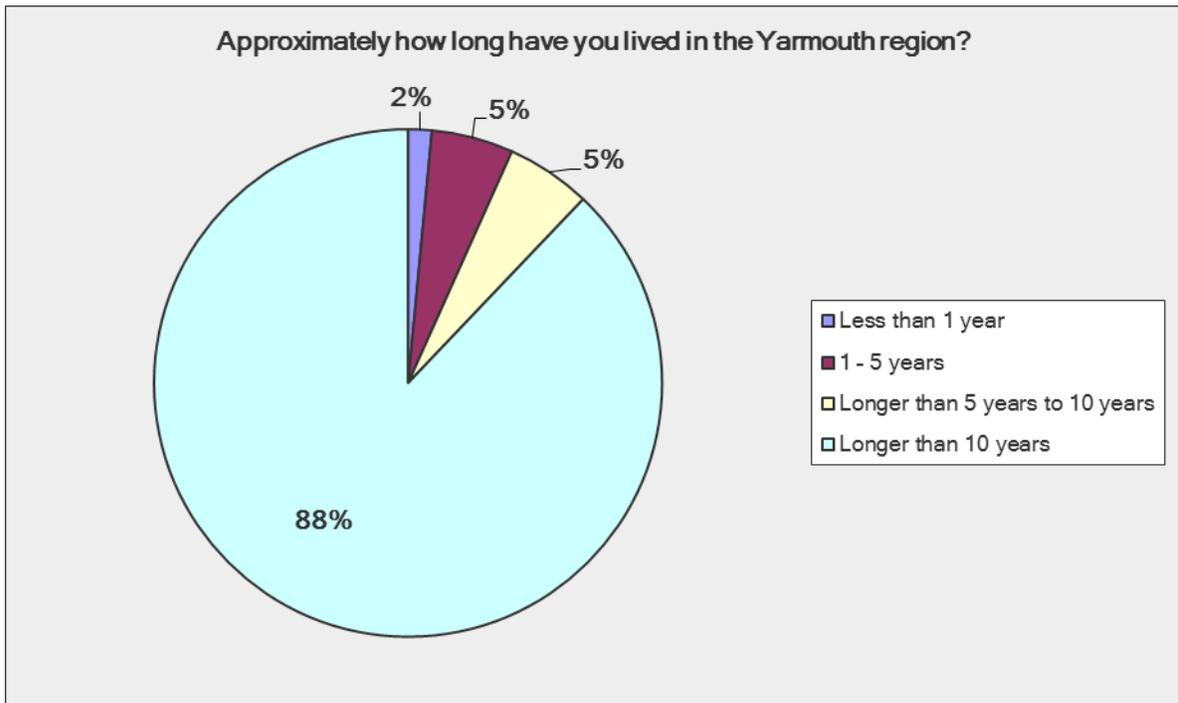
**Table 3.2 Age Categories**



**Table 3.3 Location of Residence**



**Table 3.4 Length of Residency in the Region**



## Use of Existing Facilities

Nearly 60% of respondents have used an arena within the past year. Other facilities with high usage include indoor pool (44%), gymnasium (42%), indoor social or meeting space (39%), indoor theatre (39%), indoor multi-purpose space or hall (37%) and indoor fitness facility (35%).

**Table 3.5 Use of Existing Facilities**

In the past year, within the Yarmouth region, have you or other members of your household used any of the following INDOOR recreation, sport or culture facilities? (Please check all that apply)		
Answer Options	Response %	Response Count
We have not used any indoor recreation, sport or culture facilities	12.2%	56
Arenas	59.0%	271
Curling facility	13.1%	60
Indoor pool	44.2%	203
Gymnasium	41.8%	192
Indoor fitness facility	34.6%	159
Indoor dance studio	15.3%	70
Indoor theatre	39.0%	179
Indoor area for walking	13.7%	63
Indoor social or meeting space	39.2%	180
Indoor multi-purpose space or hall	37.5%	172
Other (please specify)	6.8%	31
	<i>answered question</i>	<b>459</b>
	<i>skipped question</i>	<b>6</b>

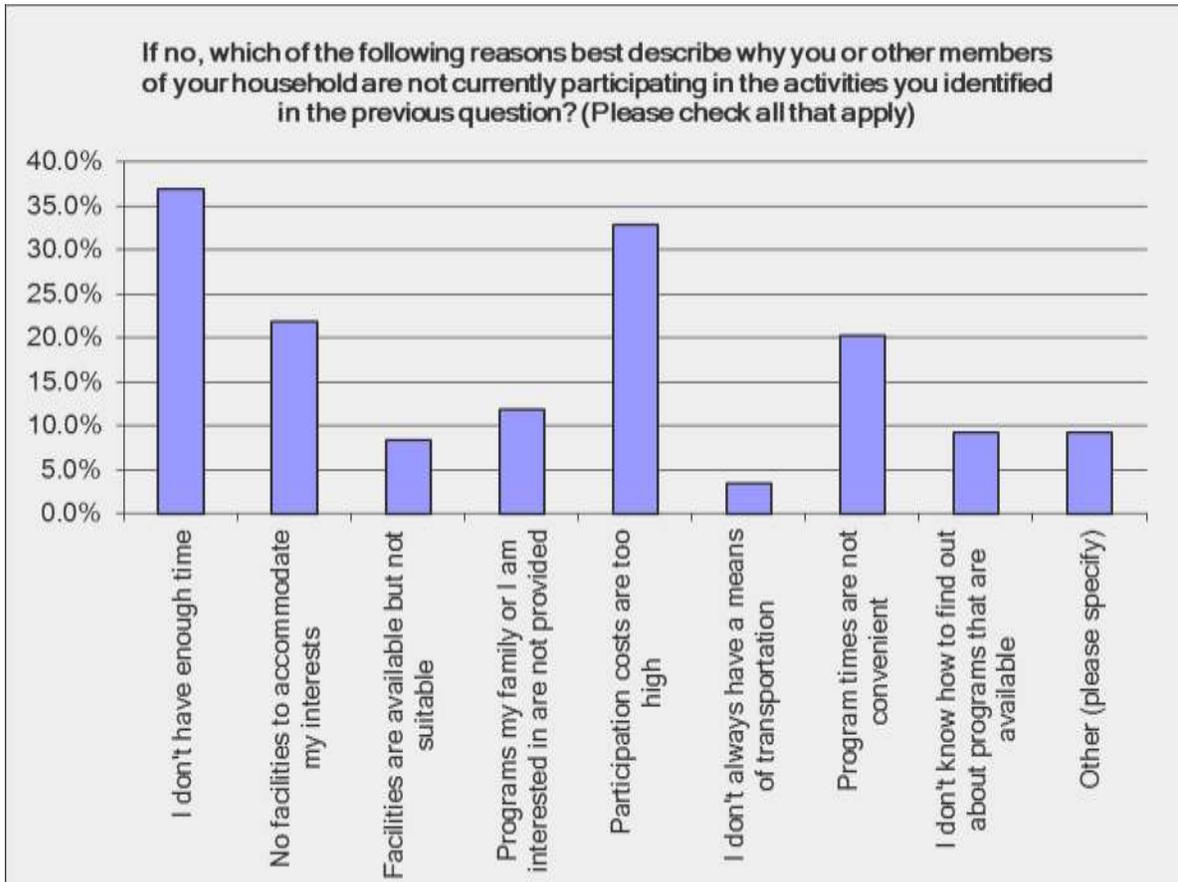
Just over fifty percent (54%) of respondents or members of their household have used the Y.M.C.A of Yarmouth in the past year. While only 20% of respondents or members of their household are currently members of the Y.M.C.A of Yarmouth.

Seventy percent (70%) of respondents said that there are indoor recreation or leisure activities or programs that they or other members of their household would like to participate in but cannot at this time. Table 3.6 depicts the recreation or leisure activities they would like to participate in, but cannot at this time. The most frequently activity indicated was running or walking on an indoor track (75%) followed by recreational and fitness swimming (35%). The most frequent reasons provided for not currently participating in the leisure activities desired are 'I don't have enough time' and 'participation costs are too high'.

**Table 3.6 Activities of Interest**

<b>If yes, what are the INDOOR recreation or leisure activities that you or other members of your household would like to participate in but cannot at this time? (Please check all that apply)</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response %</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Running or walking on an indoor track	74.6%	229
Aerobics, Pilates or Yoga classes	21.5%	66
Using a fitness centre with weights and cardio machines	20.2%	62
Playing indoor sports like basketball in a gym	14.7%	45
Playing indoor sports like soccer in a fieldhouse	25.7%	79
Older adult social groups	17.3%	53
Arts instruction program e.g. pottery, painting etc.	28.3%	87
Improvisation or drama activity	5.9%	18
Dance classes	20.5%	63
Curling	5.5%	17
Recreational and fitness swimming	35.5%	109
Swim Instruction	17.9%	55
After school program for children	16.0%	49
Gymnastics	18.9%	58
Ball hockey	20.8%	64
Figure skating	3.9%	12
Recreational skating	8.5%	26
Youth drop in program	13.0%	40
Youth leadership development	10.4%	32
Play group for pre-school children	11.4%	35
Hockey girls / women	9.4%	29
Hockey boys / men	6.8%	21
Cooking or nutrition class	20.5%	63
Other (please specify)	19.2%	59
	<i>answered question</i>	<b>307</b>
	<i>skipped question</i>	<b>158</b>

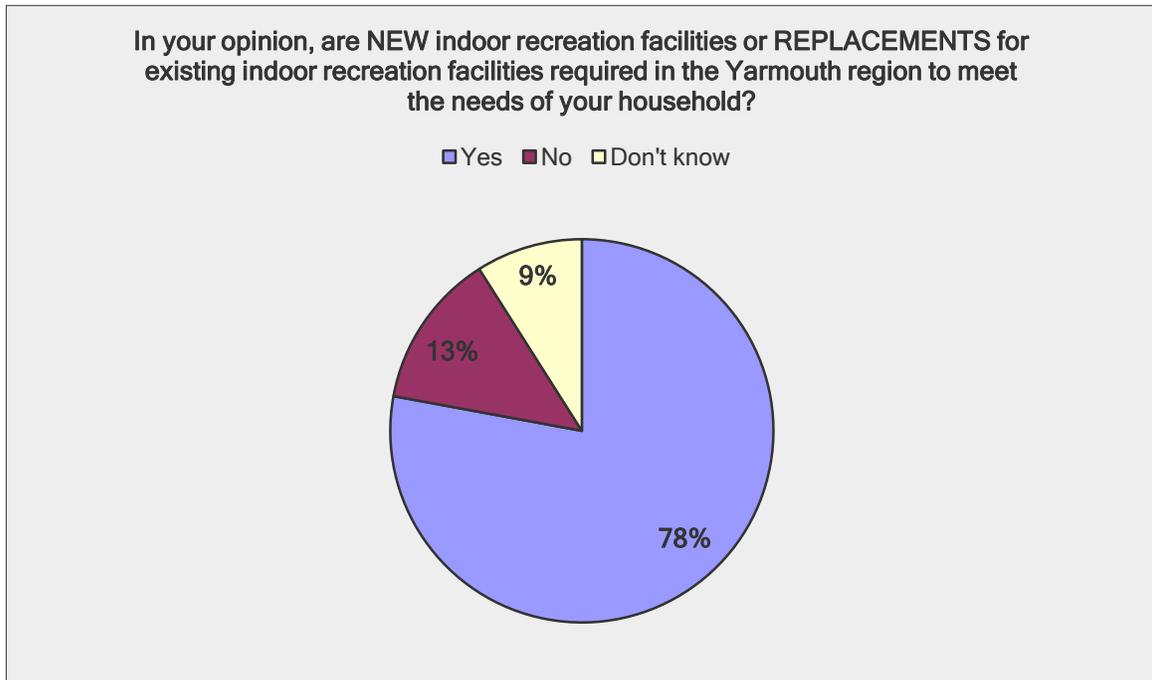
**Table 3.7 Reasons for Not Participating in Activities Desired**



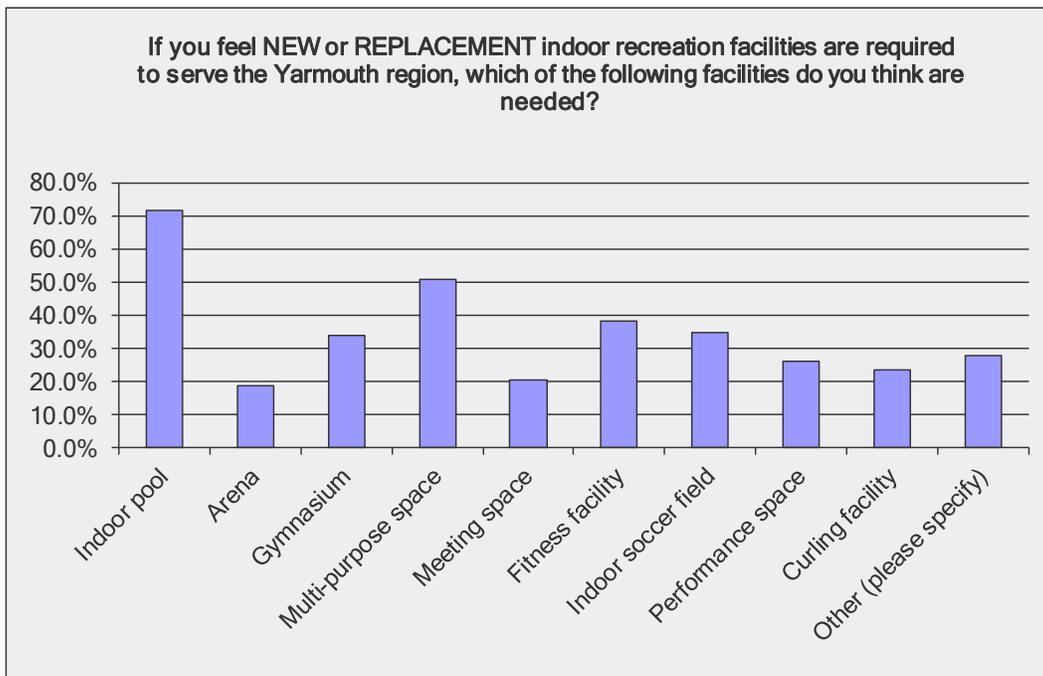
**New or Replacement Indoor Facilities**

The majority of respondents (78%) feel that new or replacement facilities are required in the Yarmouth Region to meet their household needs. The most frequent facility indicated was an indoor pool followed by multi-purpose space. See Table 3.9 for a breakdown of facilities indicated.

**Table 3.8 Are New or Replacement Facility Required**



**Table 3.9 New or Replacement Facility Requirements<sup>19</sup>**



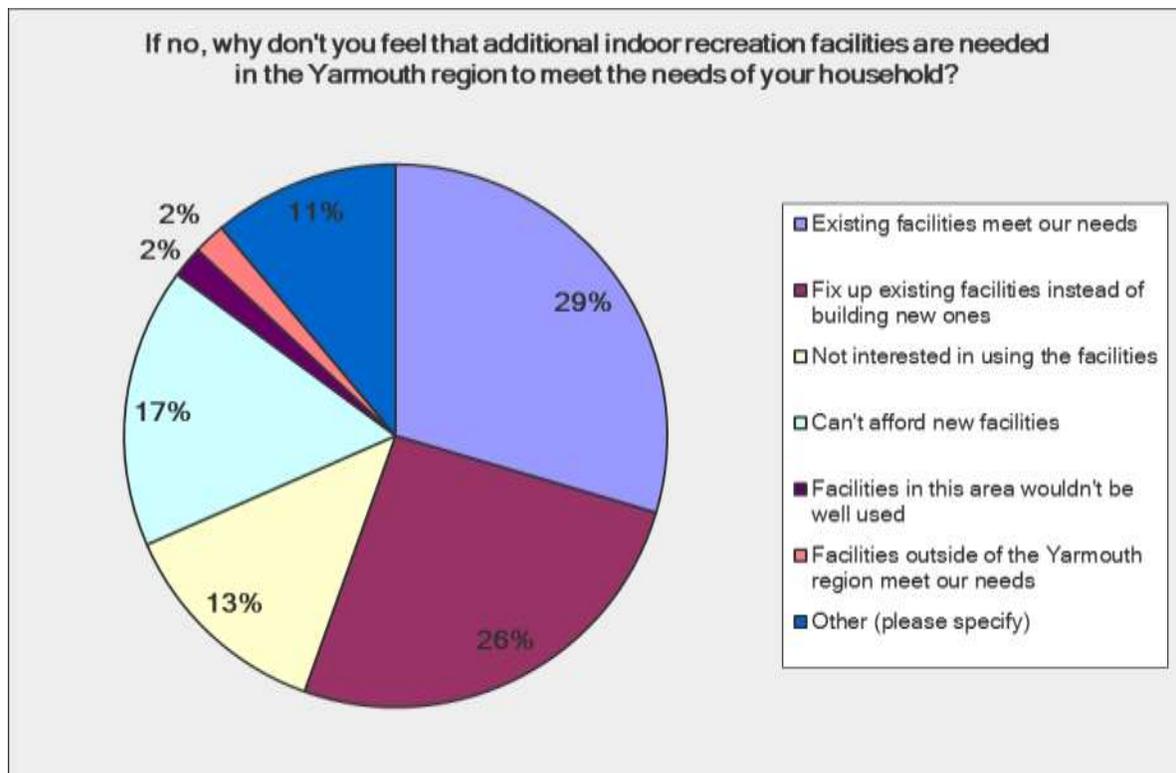
<sup>19</sup> The table represents closed ended responses that were identified in the question. This could have created a higher response for these facilities.

An indoor walking / running track was the most common response in the 'other' category. Indoor equestrian facility and indoor playground was also a common response.

Ninety-seven percent of respondents feel that if new or replacement facilities are required, the Mariners Centre is an appropriate location for these facilities. While 3% feel it is not because of parking and location issues, thoughts that the pool / Y.M.C.A should stay in the downtown at the existing location, and more space for barns and equestrian facilities should be maintained at the Mariners Centre.

Of those who did not feel that new or replacement facilities are required (13%), the top reasons provided were 'existing facilities meet our needs' and 'fix up existing facilities instead of building new ones'. See Table 3.10 for a full breakdown of reasons.

**Table 3.10 Reasons Why Some Respondents Feel New or Replacement Facilities are Not Required**



### **3.5. User Group Survey**

Mariners Centre staff identified 17 sport and recreation organizations that use indoor recreation and sport facilities to complete an on-line questionnaire. A meeting with user groups was held to introduce them to the study and the survey. A representative from each group was provided with an email inviting them to participate in the survey process and providing them a unique web address to access the survey. Information requested on the survey included the types of programs and service groups provided, membership trends, use of and satisfaction with facilities and anticipated demand for additional or new facilities or services in the future. In total 16 organizations responded to the survey. A complete list of user groups is found in Appendix C.

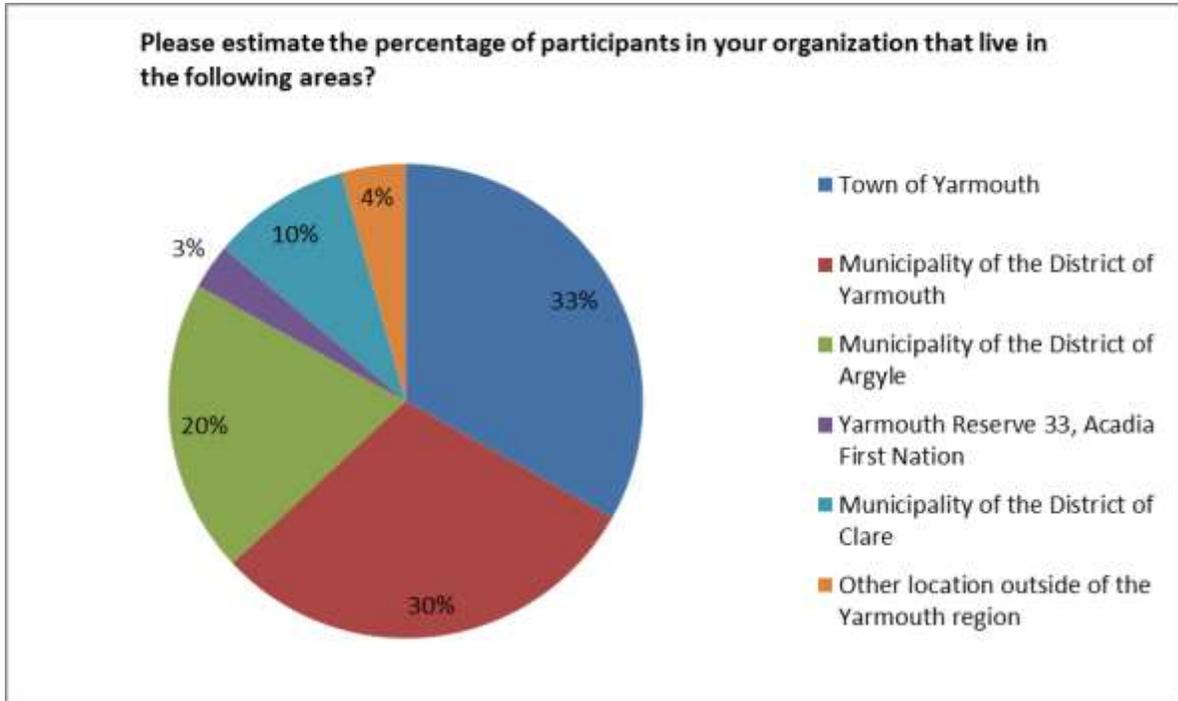
Synchro Nova Scotia responded to the User Group Survey and identified that they currently do not have a Synchro Team in the Yarmouth area and 97% of their current 200 members are from outside of the Yarmouth area. For this reason, Synchro NS's information was not collated with the other respondent groups in the following summary. Their response to specific questions has been indicated in the following sections as they relate to possible future use of an expanded Mariners Centre. Synchro NS reported that there was a team in Yarmouth previously and attributed the folding of the team due to lack of appropriate facilities and cost. They reported that a recent 'Try-it' session was held at the Y.M.C.A. and there appears to be interest in the area.

#### **Group Profiles and Participation Rates**

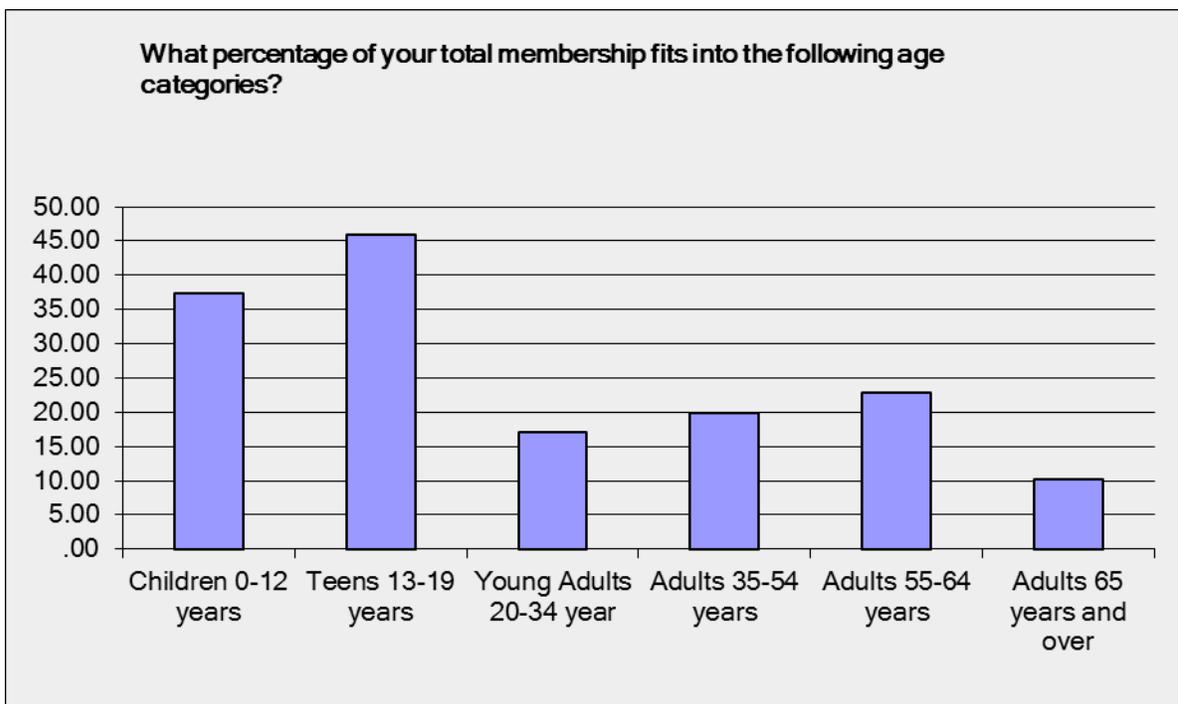
Many of the groups (7 groups) engage in ice-based activities, one group engages in aquatic activities, one in arena floor activities (non-ice) and one group in arts / culture activities. Five groups engage in other activities including: summer soccer program on grass pitches and winter program in the gym, athletics program (i.e. track and field), multi-purpose / gymnastics activities, martial arts and beach volleyball courts.

When considering all user groups collectively, most participants are from the Town of Yarmouth (37%) and the Municipality of the District of Yarmouth (33%) as shown in Table 3.11. On average, most groups provide sport and recreation activities for youth and children (see Table 3.12)

**Table 3.11 Where Participants Live**



**Table 3.12 Participants' Age Breakdown**



**Table 3.13: Total Participant Rates**

Organization / Group	2015	2014	2013	2012	Past Trend	Perceived 5 Year Trend	% Increase / Decrease Anticipated
Yarmouth Clippers Soccer Club	400	430	450	450	Decrease	Stable	-
Yarmouth Old- timers Hockey League	90	90	90	90	Stable	Increase	6% - 10%
Yarmouth Skating Club	130	147	155	123	Stable	Increase	6% - 10%
Hockey school	90	90	90	90	Stable	Stable	-
Southwest Nova Athletics Club	25	10	-	-	Stable	Increase	Greater than 20%
Yarmouth County Minor Hockey Association	451	507	515	554	Decrease	Decrease	6% - 10%
Yarmouth Karate Challenge	170				Stable	Increase	16% - 20%
Cheerleading / Gymnastics	50	45	48	38	Increase	Increase	Greater than 20%
Special Olympics Yarmouth	135	135	135	135	Stable	Stable	-
Sledge Hockey	48	-	-	-	Stable	Increase	Greater than 20%
Yarmouth Curling Association	137	125	125	120	Increase	Increase	Less than 5%
Boys and Girls Club of Yarmouth	120	109	98	108	Increase	Increase	Less than 5%
Yarmouth Y Whitecaps	48	47	46	48	Stable	Stable	-
Southwest Fusion Volleyball Club	250	180	120	80	Increase	Increase	Greater than 20%
Yarmouth Vikings high school boys hockey team	19	19	21	20	Stable	Stable	-

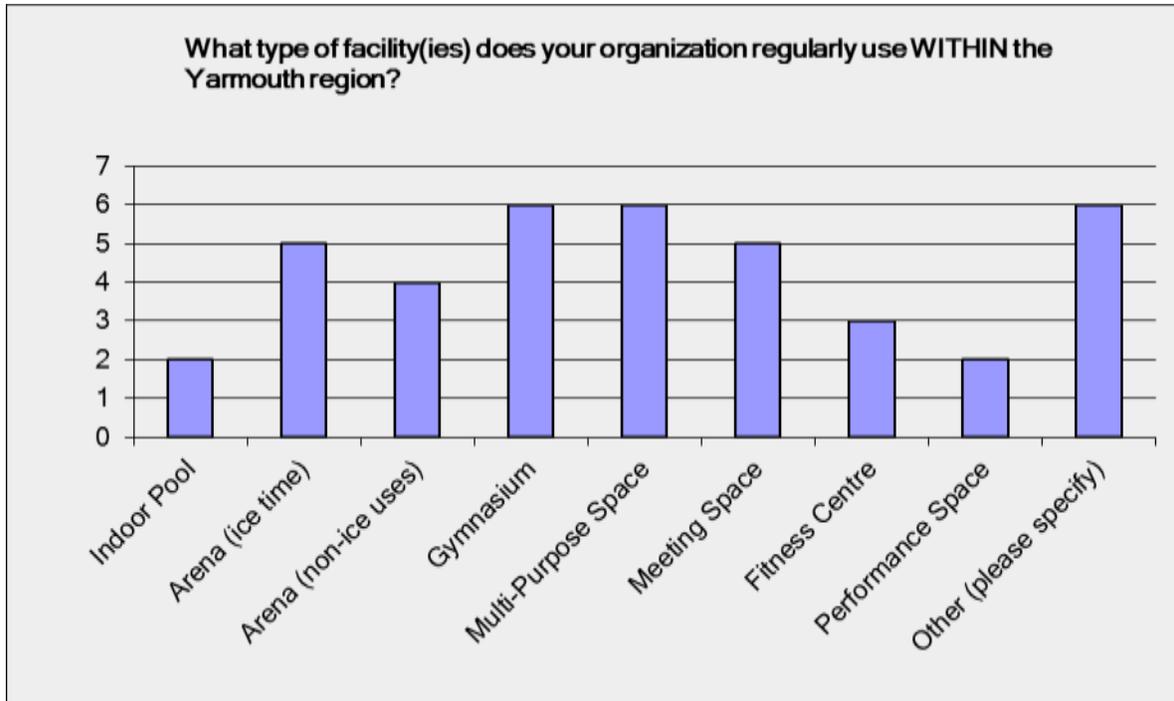
Over the past four years, the majority of groups' participation rates have remained stable. Cheerleading / Gymnastics, Yarmouth Curling Association, Boys and Girls Club of Yarmouth, and Southwest Fusion Volleyball Club indicate increased participation, while Yarmouth Clippers Soccer and Minor Hockey's participation is decreasing.

Several organizations think their participation rate will increase over the next five years. The organizations reported that the main reasons they think there will be an increase in their membership levels are 'interest in their activities', 'quality and availability of facilities' and 'quality of marketing and promotional material'. Minor Hockey anticipates that their participation rate will decrease over the next five years, due to population decline.

**Facilities – Current Use**

The groups currently use several facilities within the Yarmouth region with the most commonly used facilities being gymnasiums and multi-purpose spaces. Five groups<sup>20</sup> said they use other facilities and specified outdoor grass pitches, outdoor track and running surfaces, curling ice, beach volleyball courts, 25 m pool in Clare and gymnastics facilities out of town.

**Table 3.15: Current Facilities Used in the Yarmouth Region**



The majority of groups who completed the survey currently use the Mariners Centre for programs and activities (10 groups). Six respondents think the facilities they use are adequate for their current and future use. Four respondents did not think the facilities they use are adequate because of ice time availability, space not being adequate for athletes to develop the sport of Athletics, need for better dryland / fitness training area and lack of curling ice at the facility.

Only 2 out of the 15 respondent groups currently use the Y.M.C.A. The Yarmouth Y Whitecaps Swim Team does not feel that the facility is adequate for their current and future needs. Synchro NS also reported that they used the Y.M.C.A. of Yarmouth and it was not adequate for their needs. Their collective reasons being, the pool is not a competitive size and lack of viewing capacity, the building is not accessible for most people with disabilities, the parking lot is not adequate, the rental fees are high and lack of availability of pool time.

<sup>20</sup> Yarmouth Clippers Soccer Club; Southwest Nova Athletics Club; Yarmouth Curling Association; Southwest Fusion Volleyball Club; Yarmouth Y Whitecaps

The total current usage (hours per week) of the various facilities used by the surveyed organizations can be seen in the following table, which shows that the most utilized facilities are the arena for ice time and gymnasium.

**Table 3.16: Current Utilization of Facilities within the Yarmouth Region**

	Hours per Week*	Total Annual Hours**
Indoor Pool	20	858
Arena (ice time)	186	2,812
Arena (non-ice time)	18	154
Gymnasium	122	3,585
Multi-purpose Space	28	500
Meeting Space	9	317
Fitness Centre	17	500
Performance Space	1	5
Other	108	2,432

\* Total Hours per Week is the sum of all hours used by responding groups per week

\*\* Total Annual Hours is the sum of all hours used by responding groups per year

Other responses included beach volleyball courts (20 hours per week), curling ice (24 hours per week), karate spaces (12 hours per week), outdoor track and other running surfaces (10 hours per week) and outdoor grass pitches (40 hours per week).

**Facilities – Desired Additional Use**

Of those respondents who do use facilities in the Yarmouth region, eight respondents would like additional time. The following table shows that a substantial amount of additional time is required in a gymnasium. As well additional indoor pool hours are required by groups.

The most common reason given for requiring more time within facilities is to improve programs the groups are already offering. A breakdown of the reasons the groups require more time is provided in Table 3.18.

**Table 3.17: Additional Hours required in Yarmouth Region Facilities**

	Hours per Week*	Total Annual Hours**
Indoor Pool	14	568
Arena (ice time)	5	116
Arena (non-ice time)	0	0
Gymnasium	44	2,120
Multi-purpose Space	0	0
Meeting Space	2	24
Fitness Centre	2	4
Performance Space	0	0
Other	51	1,156

\* Total Hours per Week is the sum of all additional hours required by responding groups per week

\*\* Total Annual Hours is the sum of all additional hours required by responding groups per year

Participants who indicated 'other' were Cheerleading / Gymnastics who are looking for a specialized facility (6 hours per week), Volleyball who is looking for additional beach volleyball courts (25 additional hours per week), Athletics (Track and Field) are also looking for a specialized facility and a walk / run facility (8 additional hours per week), and Yarmouth Clippers Soccer Club (12 hours per week).

**Table 3.18: Reasons for Additional Facility Time**



### Tournaments and Meets

Nine groups<sup>21</sup> currently host tournaments and meets and of these groups, five groups<sup>22</sup> do not think the facilities they use are adequate to host. The reasons being there is no access for persons with disabilities and limited seasonal use; Yarmouth High gym does not have enough space for spectators for cheerleading / gymnastics; condition of curling ice, age of equipment, environment, seating space; Yarmouth pool not large enough to host (e.g. Yarmouth based swim team runs competitions in Clare at Université Sainte-Anne); not adequate facilities to host larger volleyball tournaments. Synchro NS also reported that the hold meets and the Y.M.C.A. pool is not an adequate size.

Six groups do not host tournaments, but half of these groups would like to in the future.<sup>23</sup> The reasons why groups do not currently host are lack of proper bathroom facilities / bleachers at soccer pitches and inability to secure ice time when awarded competitions.

<sup>21</sup> Southwest Nova Athletics Club; Yarmouth County Minor Hockey Association; Yarmouth Karate Challenge; Cheerleading / Gymnastics; Special Olympics Yarmouth; Yarmouth Curling Association; Yarmouth Y Whitecaps; Southwest Fusion Volleyball Club; Yarmouth Vikings High School Boys Hockey Team.

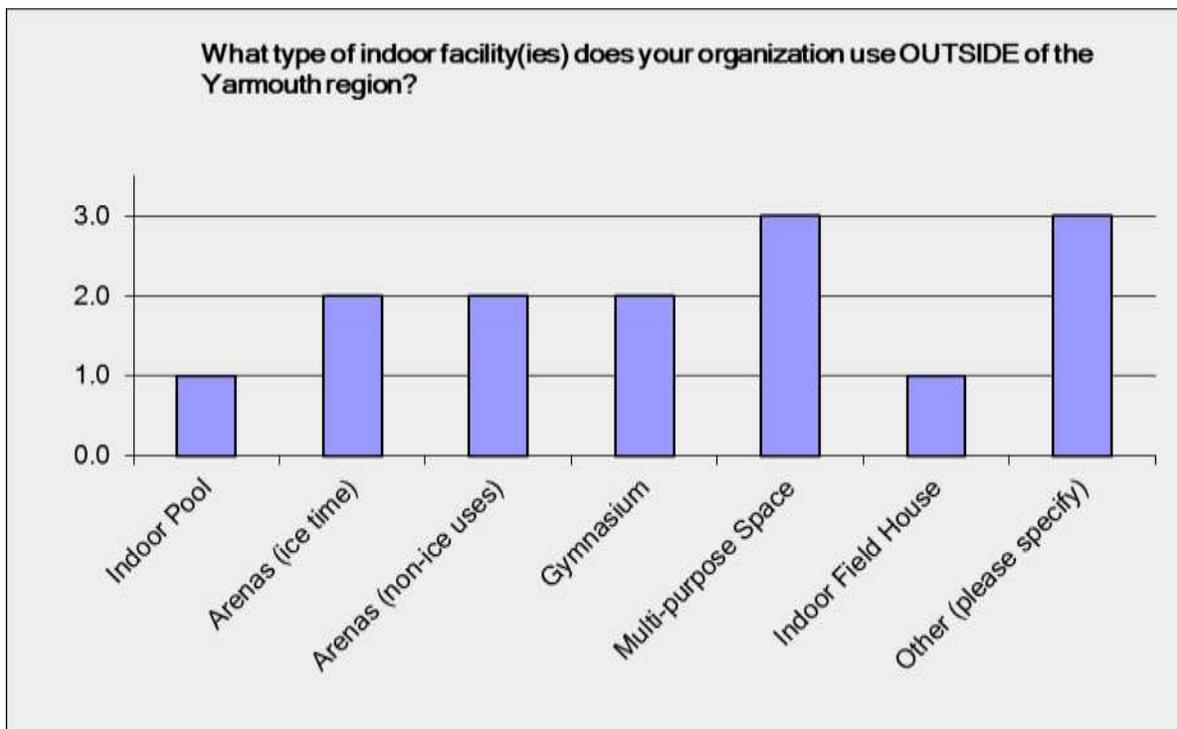
<sup>22</sup> Southwest Nova Athletics Club; Cheerleading / Gymnastics; Yarmouth Curling Association; Yarmouth Y Whitecaps; Southwest Fusion Volleyball Club.

<sup>23</sup> Yarmouth Clippers Soccer Club; Yarmouth Skating Club; Sledge Hockey.

### Facility Use Outside of the Yarmouth Region

Six of the respondent groups<sup>24</sup> currently use facilities outside of the Yarmouth Region for programs and activities (please note that this does not include tournaments and meets). The facilities used are listed in Table 3.19. The reasons include ‘the type of facility we need is not provided in the Yarmouth region’ (3 respondents), ‘we don’t have access to the Yarmouth region’s facilities when we need them’ (1 respondent), ‘facilities outside of Yarmouth are of higher quality’ (2 respondents), and ‘other’ (3 respondents). The ‘other’ responses included local ice rental not affordable for small groups, access difficult during certain times of the season and the fact that some groups run regional programs.

**Table 3.19: Facilities Regularly Used Outside of the Yarmouth Region**



### User Fees

Ten respondent groups<sup>25</sup> currently pay fees for the facilities they use while five groups<sup>26</sup> do not. Almost half of the respondent groups<sup>27</sup> feel that the cost to participate in their program or activity is

<sup>24</sup> Southwest Fusion Volleyball Club; Yarmouth Y whitecaps Swim Team; Sledge Hockey; Cheerleading / Gymnastics; Southwest Nova Athletics Club; Yarmouth Skating Club

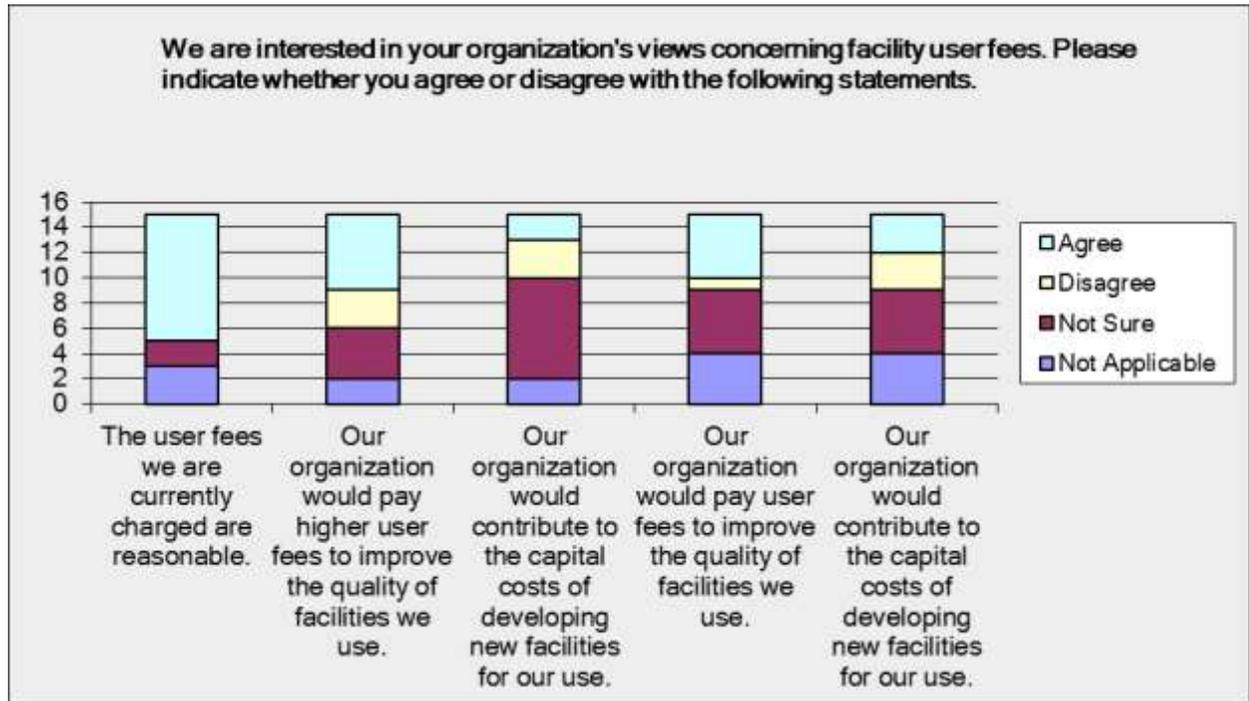
<sup>25</sup> Yarmouth Old-timers Hockey League; Yarmouth Skating Club; Hockey School; Yarmouth County Minor Hockey Association; Yarmouth Karate Challenge; Sledge Hockey; Yarmouth Curling Association; Boys and Girls Club of Yarmouth; Yarmouth Y Whitecaps

<sup>26</sup> Yarmouth Clippers Soccer Club; Southwest Nova Athletics Club; Cheerleading / Gymnastics; Special Olympics Yarmouth; Southwest Fusion Volleyball Club

a major concern for members, however close to three quarters of the respondents (11 respondents) do not believe that the current cost to take part in their program significantly restricts the number of participants.

The groups were asked a series of questions regarding user fees and capital contributions. Most groups felt that the user fees they are being charged are reasonable<sup>28</sup> and some groups are willing to pay higher user fees to improve the quality of the facilities they use<sup>29</sup>. Most groups were unsure if they would contribute to capital costs to develop new facilities they desire, while two groups indicated that they would be willing to contribute to capital costs<sup>30</sup>. See Table 3.20 for a breakdown of responses.

**Table 3.20: User Fees and Capital Contributions**



<sup>27</sup> Yarmouth Skating Club; Hockey school; Yarmouth County Minor Hockey Association; Yarmouth Karate Challenge; Special Olympics Yarmouth; Sledge Hockey; Yarmouth Y Whitecaps

<sup>28</sup> Yarmouth Old-timers Hockey League; Yarmouth Skating Club ; Hockey school; Yarmouth County Minor Hockey Association; Yarmouth Karate Challenge; Yarmouth Curling Association; Boys and Girls Club of Yarmouth ;Yarmouth Y Whitecaps; Southwest Fusion Volleyball Club; Yarmouth Vikings high school boys hockey team.

<sup>29</sup> Yarmouth Old-timers Hockey League; Southwest Nova Athletics Club; Cheerleading / Gymnastics; Yarmouth Curling Association; Yarmouth Y Whitecaps; Southwest Fusion Volleyball Club.

<sup>30</sup> Cheerleading / Gymnastics; Southwest Fusion Volleyball Club.

## **Mariners Centre**

To conclude, respondents were asked if they would transfer time to the Mariners Centre if the facility was expanded to include facilities their group currently uses. Nearly 70% (10 respondents) said yes. Note that Synchro Nova Scotia also answered 'yes' when asked this question. Approximately 25% (4 respondents<sup>31</sup>) said they were unsure. Some of these groups (i.e. the Boys and Girls Club of Yarmouth) already have permanent facilities elsewhere in the community. One respondent, Yarmouth County Minor Hockey Association, already uses the Mariners Centre as their home facility and therefore would not be 'transferring' time from another facility.

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<sup>31</sup> Hockey school; Yarmouth Karate Challenge; Sledge Hockey; Boys and Girls Club of Yarmouth

## **APPENDIX A**

### **KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWEES**

Angelique LeBlanc – Western Region REN  
Natalie Smith – Economic Development Officer, Town of Yarmouth  
Aldric D’Entremont – Warden, Municipality of Argyle  
Pam Mood – Mayor, Town of Yarmouth  
Mitch Bonnar – Junior A Team  
Gerry Veran – Chief Financial Officer, Town of Yarmouth  
Ginette d’Entremont - Director of Recreation, Municipality of Argyle  
Derek Amalfa – Junior A Team  
Matthew Trask – Yarmouth and Area Chamber of Commerce  
Frank Grant – Director, Yarmouth Recreation Department  
Rick Allwright – President, Yarmouth Curling Club  
Jeff Gushue – CAO, Town of Yarmouth  
Ken Moses – CAO, Town of Yarmouth  
Yvonne Smith – CEO, Y.M.C.A of Southwest Nova Scotia  
Matt Fraiser – Chair, Yarmouth Y.M.C.A Board  
Dave Arenburg – Owner, Tim Hortons  
Larry Hattie – Owner, Ocean Blue Music  
Mark Muise – CFO, Nova Star Cruses Ltd.  
Murray Goodwin – Warden, Municipality of Argyle  
Greg Shay – CFO, Municipality of Argyle  
Neil Mackenzie – General Manager, Yarmouth and Acadia Shores  
Virginia Smith – Yarmouth Y Whitecaps  
Torey Grimshaw, Southwest Nova Athletics Club

## **APPENDIX B**

### **REQUEST FOR BRIEFS**

#### **Groups that submitted a brief:**

Yarmouth County Agricultural Society (organizers of the Western Nova Scotia Exhibition)

Yarmouth Hospital Foundation

Nova Scotia Community College (Yarmouth, Shelburne and Digby)

Yarmouth Regional Hospital Rehabilitation Services

Tri-County Regional School Board

MC Media

#### **Groups that were sent requests, but did not submit a brief:**

Yarmouth Rotary Club

Relay for Life

Sport Heritage Association

## APPENDIX C

### USER GROUPS

**Groups that completed the survey:**

Yarmouth Clippers Soccer Club  
Yarmouth Old-timers Hockey League  
Yarmouth Skating Club  
Hockey School  
Southwest Nova Athletics Club  
Yarmouth County Minor Hockey Association  
Yarmouth Karate Challenge  
Cheerleading / Gymnastics  
Special Olympics Yarmouth  
Sledge Hockey  
Yarmouth Curling Association  
Boys and Girls Club of Yarmouth  
Yarmouth Y Whitecaps  
Synchro NS  
Southwest Fusion Volleyball Club  
Yarmouth Vikings High School Boys Hockey Team

*Note that Yarmouth Minor Basketball was invited, but did not complete a survey.*