



Yarmouth Culture, Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Draft: September 26, 2025

Photo Credit: Town of Yarmouth



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Photo Credit: Town of Yarmouth



Introduction

The Town of Yarmouth is a lively community, with a resident population of nearly 7,000 that swells during the week as people travel in for work and school. Anchored by a proud maritime heritage and an active working waterfront, Yarmouth's historic downtown features an appealing mix of shops, services, and greenspace. The town is situated within a stunning natural environment of coastline, lakes, and forests. It sits on the traditional territory of the Mi'kmaq, who have lived here for thousands of years. Yarmouth's cultural fabric is further shaped by Acadian, African Nova Scotian, and other communities that have contributed to its identity for centuries.

With a wide variety of festivals, arts offerings, and recreational amenities, the Town continues to support and invest in spaces and services that encourage active lifestyles and social connections. It recognizes that recreation is a public good and a tool to build and strengthen community.

This Master Plan is intended to help guide future investments in culture, parks and recreation over the next decade in support of the Town's vision and priorities.

The Project

This Master Plan will guide decisions about culture, parks, and recreation facilities and programs for the next 10 years. It was developed based on input from residents and community groups, Town staff and Council, interviews with key partners and facility operators, as well as research and analysis by the consulting team.

VISION FOR CULTURE, PARKS AND RECREATION IN YARMOUTH

Culture, parks and recreation services in the Town of Yarmouth build community. They are accessible to everyone, create positive social impacts, and elevate individual and collective wellbeing.

OUTCOMES

Through implementation of this plan, the Town will:

1. Enhance resident access to arts and cultural services.
2. Create more youth friendly spaces and programs.
3. Address the recreational needs of underserved and marginalized people.
4. Increase the availability of affordable culture, parks and recreation services.
5. Support public festivals and events.
6. Build capacity among community organizations that deliver culture and recreation services.

Guiding Principles for Service Delivery

Guiding principles for culture, parks and recreation service delivery were developed to support the implementation of the master plan. The Town of Yarmouth will endeavor to:

1. Provide equitable access to facilities, services and programs which will include a balance between access for:
 - Organized groups and the general public
 - Passive and active endeavors
 - Competitive and non-competitive pursuits
 - Structured and spontaneous activities
 - Diverse ages, cultures, and abilities
 - Indoor and outdoor opportunities
2. Ensure accessibility and inclusion in all programs, facilities, and services.
3. Strive to achieve long-term sustainability, continuity, and adaptability in infrastructure and programs.
4. Support community development through culture, parks and recreation services for the benefit of individuals, families, and neighbourhoods.
5. Prioritize community engagement and participation in the planning, development, and evaluation of culture, parks and recreation programs and facilities.
6. Foster strong collaborations and partnerships with local organizations to leverage resources, expertise, and support for the delivery of culture, parks and recreation services.
7. Seek opportunities to mitigate and adapt to climate change and enhance community resiliency.

Master Plan Priorities

This plan identifies the following priorities for developing culture, parks and recreation in the Town of Yarmouth.

To advance cultural development the Town will seek to:

- Embed culture as a key pillar of recreational service provision
- Develop a festival and events sustainability strategy
- Address cultural space needs
- Support cultural organizations and programming
- Renew the vision for downtown and the waterfront as a public and tourist destination

To advance parks development the Town will seek to:

- Enhance and connect multi-purpose trails
- Increase public programming in parks
- Install new spontaneous use and event/gathering amenities in parks
- Upgrade Town-owned ball fields
- Develop public spaces, walkways and trails along the waterfront
- Explore the feasibility of mountain bike trails and a mountain bike park
- Support sports that are rising in popularity
- Add new sports fields as demand increases
- Investigate options to enhance the Yarmouth Dog Park

To advance recreational development the Town will seek to:

- Offer more public programming during prime time
- Expand free and low cost programming
- Offer more youth programming
- Undertake a feasibility study for a new multi-purpose indoor facility
- Develop an aquatics programming plan
- Increase non-competitive, casual recreational programming
- Support an operational plan for the new Credit Union Wellness Centre
- Work with Partners to Develop a Public Access Policy for Local School Gymnasiums
- Improve the existing splash park at the Credit Union RecPlex
- Invest in the Lake Milo Aquatic Club

To advance service delivery, community partnerships and communication the Town will seek to:

- Continue to Partner with Neighbouring Municipalities to Deliver Recreation Services
- Develop an Operational Plan to initiate implementation of the Master Plan
- Adopt facility allocation policies
- Consider adopting a formalized process and criteria to evaluate capital projects
- Designate a culture, parks and recreation liaison
- Develop a communication strategy for culture, parks and recreation services
- Involve the community in master plan implementation
- Grow community volunteer capacity
- Ensure accessibility is a key consideration in facility renewal and development
- Consider climate change in facility renewal and development
- Review and update the culture, parks and recreation plan every five years

Top 10 Actions

The following 10 actions have been identified as those with the most potential to advance the Town's vision for culture, parks and recreation in the short to medium term. They are listed in a recommended order of importance.



1

Increase access to facilities, programs and spontaneous recreational activities for people of all abilities and income levels by allocating more prime time space for broad public access, developing allocation policies for facility use, and creating a fee waiver program.



2

Ensure that culture is considered in the planning, design and delivery of all recreational services, facilities and related municipal activities.



3

Complete a Festival and Events Sustainability Strategy that will work with partners to increase the sustainability of festivals and events in the community.



4

Undertake a feasibility study for a new multi-purpose indoor facility including a turf field, indoor climbing wall, and indoor playground.



5

Connect key facilities and parks with multi-purpose trails.



6

Increase public programming and install new amenities in parks.



7

Collaborate with the Arts community to complete a feasibility study for a new performing arts facility.



8

Designate a culture, parks and recreation liaison position to support community organizations.



9

Develop a communication strategy for culture, parks and recreation services to help increase awareness and participation.



10

Adopt a formalized process and Capital Project Evaluation Criteria to evaluate Town-led projects and community-led projects requesting Town funding.

Conclusion

This Master Plan positions the Town to further enhance its role in culture, parks and recreation services. It reinforces the importance of arts and culture, recognizes the benefits and potential of its parks system, and understands that recreation is a fundamental component of the community. By putting this plan into action, the Town will strengthen its community development efforts and realize stronger outcomes. All residents will have better access to facilities and programs that align with their interests and means, and that support their overall well-being and their connections to neighbours, friends, and family.



Coalshed Festival
Photo Credits (top-bottom): Saltwire, CJLS

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PROJECT OVERVIEW



Introduction

The Town of Yarmouth is an attractive seaside community in southwest Nova Scotia. With a population of nearly 7,000 that doubles on weekdays as workers and students commute in from surrounding communities, it is a thriving center of activity in the Western Region.¹ It has a strong maritime heritage, and its working waterfront maintains its deep-rooted connection to the sea. The downtown area, set along the harbour, is home to charming shops, cafés, and services. The community has a rich natural setting and is located in a diverse landscape of coastal shores, lakes, and forests.

The town is within the traditional territory of the Mi'kmaq who have been the stewards of the land here for thousands of years. There are several First Nation communities nearby, including the Wasoqup'aq First Nation and the Bear River First Nation. Acadian settlers arrived in the 1660s and Acadian culture is prominent in Yarmouth and the Acadian Shores region. People of African descent have been in Nova Scotia for over 400 years, and there is a strong Black presence in Yarmouth today.

There is a diversity of cultural activities offered in the community, spanning many forms of the arts, and numerous festivals and events. There are also plentiful recreational opportunities including those that are both land and water based. Parks, trails, lakes and beaches provide abundant options year-round, as do recreation programs and facilities such as arenas, a pool, library, and arts centre.

The Town is committed to ongoing planning for life-enriching opportunities, spaces that serve the needs of the community as they evolve, and services that uplift all residents, neighbourhoods and families. The purpose of this Master Plan is to guide decisions about culture, parks, and recreation facilities and programs for the next 10 years.

Culture, parks and recreation facilities and programs

Culture: Cultural facilities are places that support cultural activities. Examples include libraries, museums, art galleries, and theatres. Cultural programs are activities or events aimed at promoting cultural understanding such as dance performances, theatre performances, cultural learning programs, heritage and visual arts programs.

Park: A designated area of land that is set aside for recreational activities. Examples include sport fields or green spaces.

Recreation: Recreation facilities are places for people to enjoy leisure activities such as arenas, swimming pools, and gymnasiums. Recreation programs are activities that promote social, physical, and emotional health such as swimming lessons, fitness programs, or skating lessons.

Process

The Yarmouth Culture, Parks and Recreation Master Plan process has five, interconnected phases, as described next. The project is currently in Phase 4.



Project Team

The Project Steering Committee was established to oversee the project, provide input, and give feedback on the overall direction of the Master Plan. The plan was developed by Expedition Management Consulting Ltd.

Project Steering Committee	
Organization	Representatives
Town of Yarmouth Council	Mayor Pam Mood Deputy Mayor Steve Berry Councillor Belle Hatfield Councillor Derek Lesser Councillor Kelley Bishara-Lacroix Councillor Wade Cleveland Councillor Gil Dares
Town of Yarmouth Administration	Jeff Gushue – Chief Administrative Officer Frank Grant – Director, Yarmouth Recreation Chad LeBlanc – Manager of Public Works Todd Muise – Parks and Facilities Supervisor Lindsay Florian – Municipal Clerk
Consultant Team (Expedition Management Consulting Ltd.)	Justin Rousseau – Managing Director Maxwell Harrison – Senior Associate Cassandra Gilmore – Associate Lisa Larson – Consultant Breanna Hives – Graphic Designer

Overview of Research

A variety of primary and secondary research activities were conducted to develop the Master Plan. Primary research was completed through surveys of residents and community groups, input workshops with the community and Town staff, interviews with key partners, a community tour and in-person engagement stations, and discussions with facility operators.

1. Surveys Administered

- a. Resident Survey
- b. Community Group Survey

2. Meetings Conducted

- a. Project Steering Committee Meetings
Date: December 11, 2024, January 16 and June 5, 2025
- b. Community Input Workshops
Date: April 1 and April 3, 2025
- c. In-Person Engagement Stations
Dates: April 9 and April 10, 2025
- d. Town Staff Input Workshop
Date: April 10, 2025

3. Culture, Parks, and Recreation Groups Engaged (through interviews and/or surveys):

Invites to participate in the engagement process were sent out to community groups. 22 groups chose to participate, including representatives of the following organizations.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Boys and Girls Club of Yarmouth | 13. Western Counties Regional Library |
| 2. Bethany Turpin Music Studio | 14. Western Nova Scotia Arts and Heritage Society |
| 3. Clipper Soccer Club | 15. Western Nova Scotia Exhibition |
| 4. Hear! Hear! Society | 16. Yarmouth Area Minor Baseball Association |
| 5. Lions Club of Yarmouth | 17. Yarmouth Curling Association |
| 6. Mariners Centre | 18. Yarmouth Golf and Country Club |
| 7. Public Health & Youth Wellbeing Network | 19. Yarmouth Music Society |
| 8. Sexuality and Gender Equity - SAGE | 20. Yarmouth N.S. Seniors for Seniors |
| 9. Seafest | 21. Yarmouth Regional Arts Council |
| 10. Sign of the Whale Gallery | 22. Yarmouth Whitecaps Swim Club |
| 11. Southwest Nova Biosphere Region | |
| 12. Tri County Tridents Rugby Football Club | |

4. Tours Conducted

Members of the consulting team toured the town to gain a first-hand perspective of community culture, parks, and recreation assets.

5. Documents Reviewed

- a. Strategies, plans, and other documents from the Town of Yarmouth.
- b. Reports, statistics, surveys, and planning documents from community groups.
- c. Culture, parks, and recreation frameworks and policies from provincial and national sources.

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COMMUNITY ANALYSIS



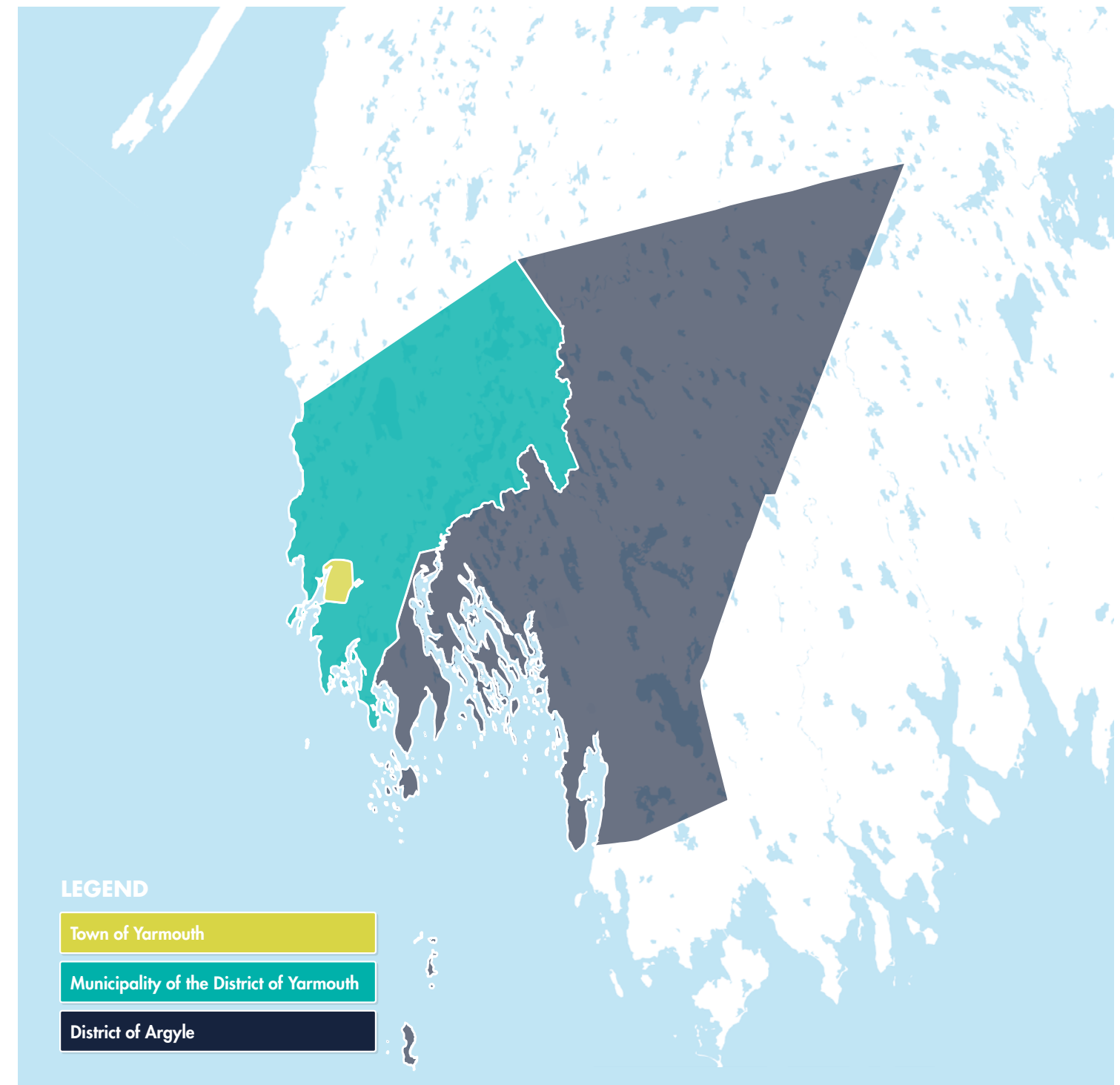
Culture, Parks and Recreation Overview

Yarmouth's culture and recreation scene is alive with festivals, community events, performances and concerts, sporting events, community groups and cultural organizations, museums, arts and recreational facilities, and numerous parks and trails. The town's heritage buildings and districts, working waterfront and diverse population contribute to the community's unique cultural and social fabric.

Organizations such as the Yarmouth Arts Regional Council (YARC), Yarmouth Art Society, Yarmouth Craft Guild, and Yarmouth Farmers' Community Market also contribute actively to the town's creative vibrancy, and volunteers play a key role in supporting cultural and recreational offerings. There are also numerous sport and athletic organizations, parks and fields that provide residents with opportunities for spontaneous and organized leisure activities. The majority of residents (94% of respondents to the community survey) agree that culture, parks and recreation are important to their quality of life.

Culture and recreation programs available in the town support healthy lifestyles, encourage social connections, promote lifelong learning, and create opportunities for residents to engage with their community. Residents have access to recreation outside the town as well. The Hebron Sports Complex is just beyond the municipal boundary. The Town, Municipal District of Yarmouth and Municipality of Argyle partner to deliver facilities and programs to residents in the region.

Figure 1. Yarmouth Context Map



Community Demographics

The population of the Town of Yarmouth was 6,829 in 2021. Between 2016 and 2021, the number of residents increased by 5%.² Population projections based on a moderate growth scenario (1.5%/year) indicate a potential population of 9,335 by 2042.³ See Figure 2 for more detail.

In 2021, there were an additional 17,970 regional residents in the Municipal District of Yarmouth and the Municipality of Argyle.⁴ Many of them travel frequently to the Town of Yarmouth for work and play. When the Town’s residents are also accounted for, the regional population in 2021 was 24,799.

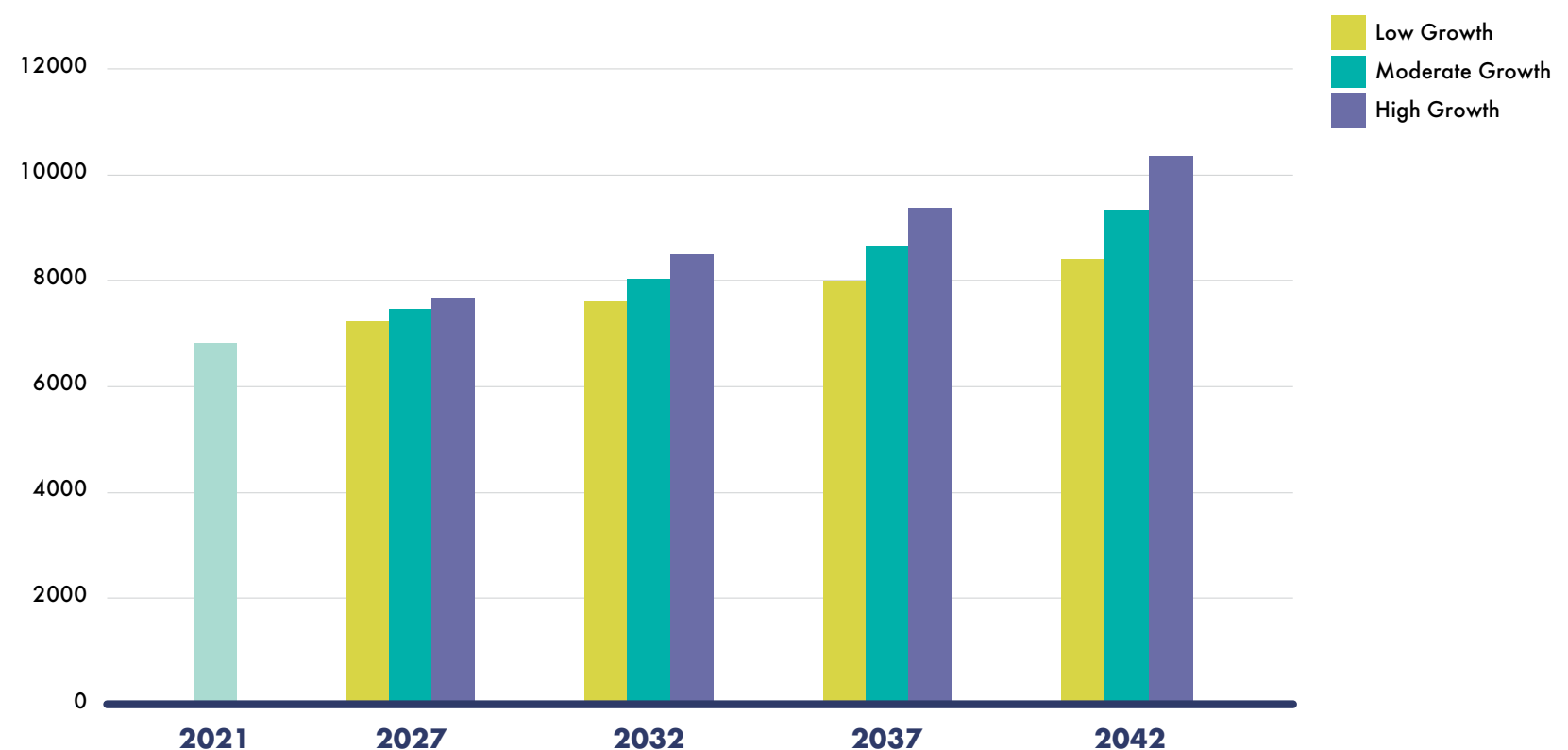
In 2021, people under 14 represented 15% of the Town population, those 15 to 64 represented 58%, and those 65 and older made up 27% of the total. The number of seniors was up from 25% in 2016, and the number of children and youth was up from 14%. The growing number of youth and seniors, and the fact that the median age of Yarmouth residents (49) is higher than the median age across Nova Scotia (46), means that planning facilities and programs for many age ranges is an important consideration for future culture, parks and recreation services in the community. The median age of regional residents is also high, at 50 in both the Municipal District of Yarmouth and the Municipality of Argyle.⁵

What is also important is that a significant number of town residents (42%) live in a one-person household. The average household size is low at 2. In Nova

Scotia it is 2.2 and across Canada it is 2.5. While most people live in a single-detached house (44%), the remainder live in apartment buildings and other forms of attached housing. The median household income in 2020 was \$48,000. This is lower than the median of \$71,500 for the province at that time, as well as for the Municipal District of Yarmouth which was \$68,500 and the Municipality of Argyle which was \$71,500.⁶ These statistics suggest that some town residents may have less ability to pay for recreation services. They point to the need for low cost cultural and recreational opportunities, as well as programs and public spaces where residents can connect with each other.

In 2021, Indigenous people living in Yarmouth made up 14% of the town’s population. Of these 20% were First Nations people, 77% were Métis, and 1% were Inuit. In 2021, the largest racialized group in the town was Black, representing 4% of the total population. The second group was South Asian, at 1% of the total population. In total 9% of the population self-identified as racialized in 2021, up from 7% in 2016.⁷ The needs and interests of a growing culturally diverse community should be reflected in culture, parks and recreation services.

Figure 2. Projected Population Growth in the Town of Yarmouth⁸



Culture, Parks and Recreation Inventory

The Town of Yarmouth is home to a variety of culture, recreation and parks facilities. Together these provide public access to ice surfaces, a swimming pool, fitness centre, community halls, sport courts, sport fields, green spaces, and arts and heritage amenities.

Notable municipally owned indoor assets include Mariners on Main, the Milo Boat Club, and the Mariners Centre. Key amenities in Mariners on Main include a pool, gymnasium and fitness centre. Most of the gymnasium at Mariners on Main is used as a fitness space. Other gymnasium facilities in the community are in local schools. The Mariners Centre features two ice surfaces and several meeting spaces.

The construction of a new wellness centre next to the Mariners Centre will create a campus style community hub for the town, including a new aquatics centre, fitness centre and indoor walking track.

The Yarmouth Lions Community Centre, The Yarmouth Arts Regional Centre (Th'YARC), the Izaak Walton Killam Library, Rotary Community Centre, Harbourfront Museum and Yarmouth Curling Club are key indoor facilities that are owned and operated by external organizations. The Town has committed \$300,000 to improvements to the curling rink.

Notable municipally-owned outdoor assets in the community include a splash park, skateboard park, multi-purpose trails, multi-sport courts at the Credit Union RecPlex, ten public parks, several sports fields, and docks at Lake Milo. There are four Town-owned playgrounds, as well as three playgrounds at local schools. The Hebron Recreation Complex is outside of the Town's boundaries, approximately 8km north of the community. This facility serves residents from across the region and includes regulation-size softball fields and tennis courts.

The 87km Yarmouth County Rail Trail (Hartlin trail) travels north-south through the town, connecting the community up to Norwood and down to Lower East Pubnico. It is open to motorized and non-motorized users.

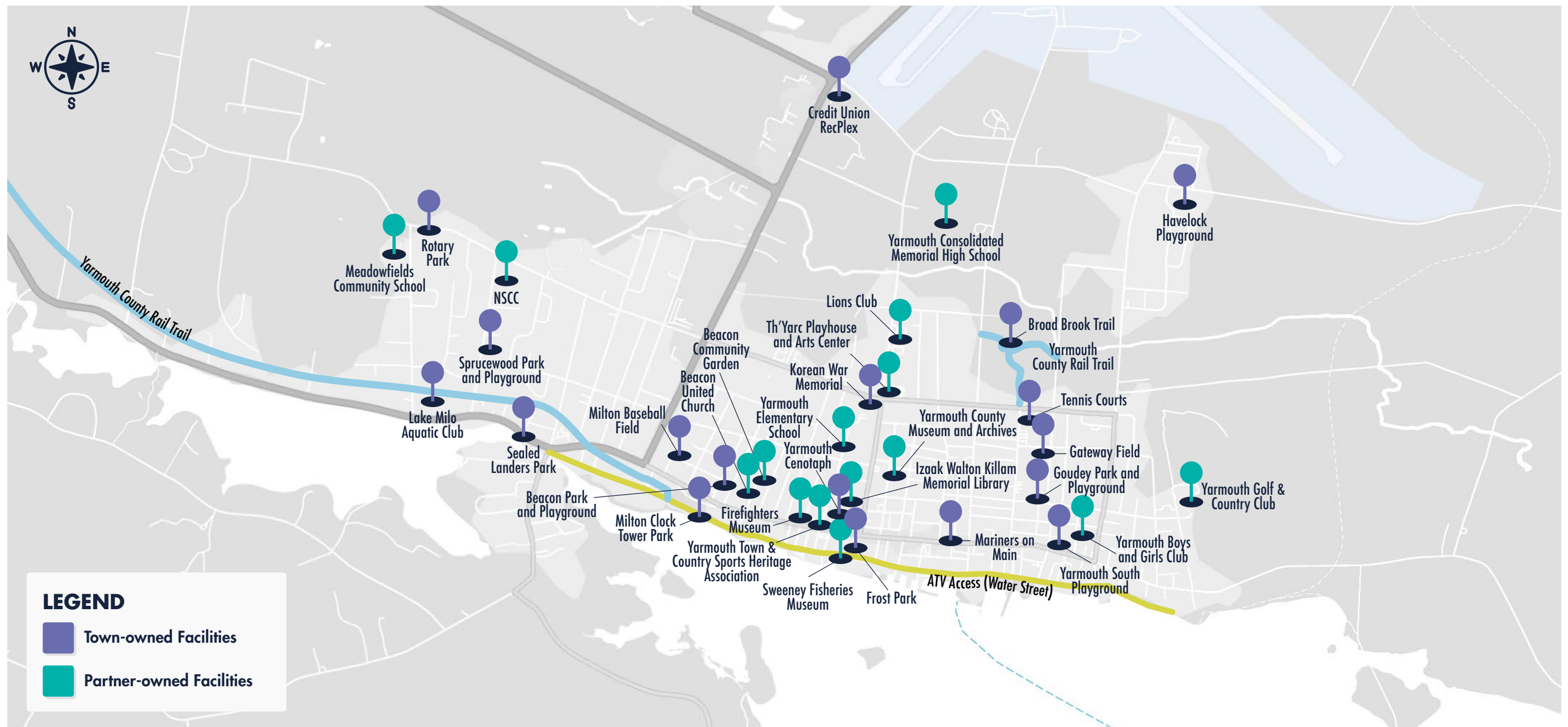
For a complete inventory of the town's culture, parks, and recreation infrastructure, and an overview of programs, please see Appendix A. See Figure 3 for a map of existing facilities.

The construction of a new wellness centre next to the Mariners Centre will create a campus style community hub for the town, including a new aquatics centre, fitness centre and indoor walking track.



Photo Credit: Yarmouth Recreation

Figure 3. Existing Culture, Parks and Recreation Network



Program and Facility Analysis

It is important to consider the utilization of culture, parks, and recreation facilities when determining current and future needs. The following provides a description of facility utilization in Yarmouth (where data was available).

According to the results of the community survey, of all available amenities, Town residents use walking/hiking trails, parks and green spaces, playgrounds and soccer fields the most. The majority of people do not leave the community to access recreation facilities.

In addition to individual residents of the town and surrounding communities, many user groups access Town and partner owned facilities. They include community organizations, recreational sports groups, minor sports organizations, elite sports organizations, and schools. Many user groups have seen participant numbers grow since 2022, and expect continued growth over the next five years.

Membership numbers at Mariners on Main are strong, with over 650 members on file in January 2025 and 7,545 member check-ins that month. Ice usage at the Mariners Centre is also high with prime time hours being essentially fully booked in both arenas. Non-prime time hours (weekdays before 4pm) are approximately 30% used. Minor and junior hockey are the most frequent users. The ice sheets are also used by other skating and recreational hockey groups. Only 5% of available ice time (1/19 hours per day) is allocated to public skating, and this is typically scheduled during non-prime hours. The ice can be covered and the arenas can be used for other purposes. Tournaments, conventions and graduations are typical non-ice uses.

Only **5%** of available ice time (1/19 hours per day) is allocated to public skating, and this is typically scheduled during non-prime hours.

Other Town owned facilities are less heavily used, including the rentable space at the Lake Milo Aquatic Club. Of approximately 5,100 bookable hours, an average of 755 were booked annually between 2021 and 2024.

Facilities such as the Mariner Centre and Aquatic Club are also used to host public and private events, including conventions, concerts, sport tournaments, trade shows, and celebrations such as recitals and graduations. Many events at the Mariner Centre occur during the summer months when the ice surface is out. These bookings impact dry floor availability for the public and user groups. The agricultural building and riding ring at the Mariners Centre is used annually for an exhibition and cultural festival. Outdoor spaces and public rights of way are also used for a variety of events throughout the year, including Killam's Wharf, ball fields, and Main Street. The Town and its municipal partners offer a variety of culture, parks and recreation programs at their facilities and other venues in the community such as school gymnasiums. Community organizations also deliver a wide range of programs, at a range of public, private and non-governmental facilities.


Th'YARC, a non-profit run performing arts centre, hosts several shows and programs annually. According to Th'YARC staff, the 330 seat theatre hosts four to six local productions and 51 shows from visiting artists per year. It is also used for dance recitals and arts workshops. The theatre is programmed for approximately 75 days each year.

See Appendix A for a program inventory. Participation in youth programming offered by Yarmouth Recreation is high. Participation in adult programming is lower.

Comparative Analysis


A comparative benchmarking analysis of communities similar to Yarmouth was conducted to provide a reference point for the current level of culture, parks, and recreation service provision.

Communities were chosen as comparators if they met the following criteria:



6-10K

The municipality's population was between 6,000 and 10,000 in 2021.



The municipality is located in Nova Scotia.

Bridgewater, Amherst, New Glasgow and Kentville were selected.

The analysis primarily included publicly owned facilities in Yarmouth and comparators. In the case of museums, performing arts centres and libraries, the analysis included facilities owned by non-municipal entities. The analysis did not include culture, parks and recreation facilities outside of the Town of Yarmouth's boundaries such as in the Municipal District of Yarmouth or the Municipality of Argyle.

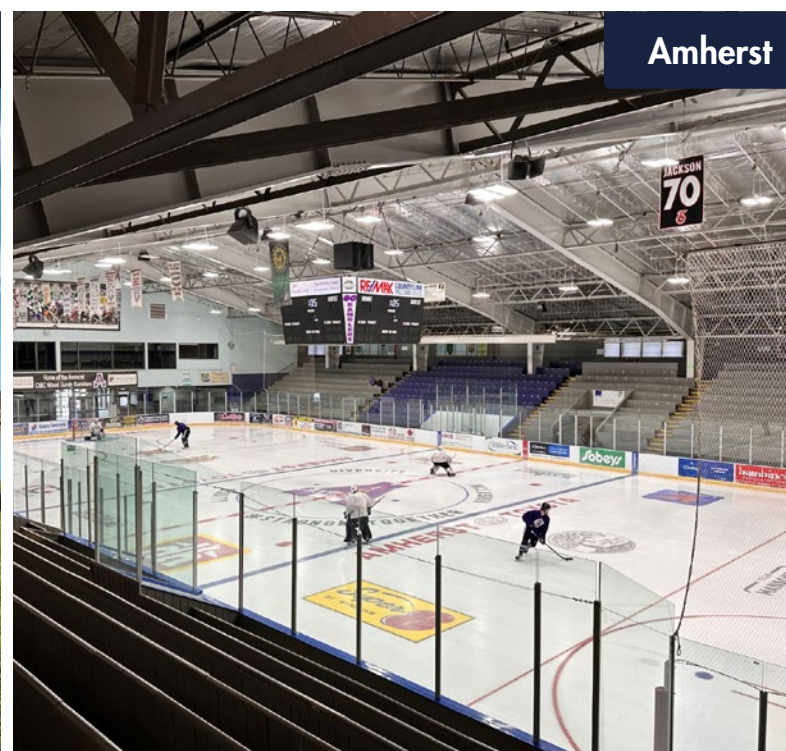
Overall, the analysis indicates that:

- The Town exceeds comparator service levels in many areas. This includes museums, performing arts centres, ice surfaces, ballfields, outdoor multi-sport courts, indoor pickleball courts, outdoor tennis courts, and dog parks.
- The community is on par with comparators for fitness centres, indoor pools, rectangular grass sports fields, spray parks, indoor multi-sport gymnasiums, curling sheets, skate parks and libraries.
- The community is below comparator averages in indoor multi-sport complexes (e.g. fieldhouses).

Photo Credits (L-R): Town of Bridgewater, Town of Amherst, Greg Richardson Photography, Town of Kentville



Bridgewater



Amherst



New Glasgow



Kentville

Tourism Linkages

Culture, parks and recreation services that are enjoyed by town and regional residents also attract visitors from further afield and support tourism. This in turn benefits the local economy. The Town of Yarmouth has much to offer and build on with respect to the types of experiences that many tourists are seeking. Many domestic and international travellers are looking for holidays focused on relaxation and experiences, including authentic local food, local heritage and culture, and connecting with nature.

Yarmouth's rich heritage, waterfront location, thriving arts and culture scene, and high-quality recreation facilities could be further leveraged to meet visitor needs and boost tourism locally. The community has experience hosting major events such as the Acadian World Congress/Congrès mondial acadien

and Nova Scotia Music Week, and attracts cruise ship passengers. It also hosts sport tournaments and has the potential to draw more sport tourism participants and visitors from both the Maritimes and the Northeast U.S. For a town of its size, Yarmouth has an impressive number of accommodation options with approximately 600 rooms available between hotels and short-term accommodations. As a partner in the Yarmouth and Acadian Shores Tourism Association, the Town is well-positioned to build on its assets and further its tourism goals.

If managed thoughtfully, tourism can help enhance local cultural and recreational options for the community's benefit. For example, iconic events that provide cultural experiences for residents can also attract tourists and tourist spending. Investments in

infrastructure and services to support such events, whether through grants from external sources or capacity development assistance for event organizers and businesses, can have positive impacts on local life and visitation.

There are risks and challenges related to tourism that should also be considered. These include overcrowding as more people visit the community, the commercialization of local activities as their focus turns to revenue generation related to tourism, and local disappointment if the charm of the community changes. Fortunately, these risks can be managed to ensure that the wide ranging social and economic benefits of tourism related to culture, parks and recreation services are maintained.

Photo Credit: Town of Yarmouth



3

STRATEGIC ANALYSIS

Current State of Culture, Parks and Recreation

Yarmouth offers notable strengths in culture, parks, and recreation. The town features well-maintained and expanding facilities, strong partnerships with nearby municipalities, and an active arts and culture scene supported by local groups. Facilities are known for excellent customer service, are well used, and bolstered by successful community fundraising. The town's compact geography, scenic waterfront and historic architecture provide accessibility, character, and charm.

Still, Yarmouth faces challenges. Infrastructure is aging, and a limited population and tax base constrain resource availability for maintenance and life cycle upgrades. The town also serves a broader regional population, which increases demand. Some local organizations struggle with capacity and public awareness

of programs is low. Municipal supports for arts and culture are not as strong as for athletics and sports, creating an imbalance in service provision.

Opportunities for growth include expanding youth programming, supporting community groups, and encouraging volunteerism to boost local capacity and engagement. Culture and recreation can be leveraged for community development, tourism and economic benefits. Rising costs, climate-related infrastructure threats, an aging volunteer base, and affordability issues for residents could hinder progress. Strategic action is needed to build on strengths while tackling these risks.



Photo Credit: Town of Yarmouth

SWOT Analysis

A high-level analysis of the Town of Yarmouth's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) as they relate to culture, recreation and parks was completed to support the Master Plan. The key findings from this analysis are provided below.

S	W	O	T
Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing facilities are well maintained. New facilities are being developed. Strong partnerships with adjacent municipalities. Active arts and culture communities are represented by several local organizations. High membership numbers at existing facilities. Successful community fundraising efforts for recreation amenities. Attractive waterfront community with historic buildings and districts. Good community wayfinding signage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recreation infrastructure is aging and will have increasing maintenance needs. Limited population and tax base to support new services. Limited capacity among community organizations and entities to deliver much-loved events. Limited public awareness of programs and recreation opportunities. Arts and culture programs and facilities are not given as much attention as those for sports. Imbalance in availability of facilities for spontaneous use by residents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing utilization of existing facilities. Filling facility gaps. Strengthening the organizational capacity of festival and event organizers. Supporting community groups and encouraging volunteerism. Expanding programming and enhancing facilities for children and youth to respond to social needs. Linking culture, parks and recreation development with tourism development to attract visitors and residents. Leveraging cultural development to support economic development and vice versa. Building on public art and beautification activities. New revenue generating programming to support lower cost offerings. Building on existing network to improve trails for non-motorized users and enhance multi-modal access. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rising costs to maintain and build recreation infrastructure. Aging volunteer base for community organizations. Affordability is a key barrier to residents accessing services and programs. Challenges with engaging youth and adults in programming. Potential loss of Mariners on Main as a public recreation facility downtown when the new wellness centre opens. Rising sea levels, storm surges and flood risks associated with climate change.

Strategic Alignment Analysis

The concepts identified in this plan are aligned with the direction of other Town of Yarmouth strategic documents. In addition, the broader planning context of provincial and national recreation frameworks and plans were also considered.

Municipal Documents

Municipal Planning Strategy 2016 (in review)

This strategy recognizes the importance of recreational opportunities and organized sports to community life. It also acknowledges the importance of the town's natural and built heritage. It establishes objectives for recreational programming and facilities development. Overall, the plan encourages culture, parks and recreation programs and services for the community, and new recreation facilities of various scales and at various locations.

Downtown Blueprint (2010)

This is a plan to revitalize downtown Yarmouth. Its vision is for a diverse and thriving community where people live, work and play in a historic yet modern waterfront setting. Key features include an extension of the 'leisure' waterfront, creation of destination public spaces, regular hosting of events downtown, improvements to infrastructure including parks and streets, and the addition of a major creative sector anchor to the downtown.

Waterfront Development Action Plan (2018)

This action plan outlines a vision for the Yarmouth Waterfront and a revitalized waterfront economy. One of its four goals is to create a place for workers and visitors. Initiatives that are most closely tied to culture, parks, and recreation include creating a special event zone, facilitating and hosting events, expanding pedestrian space and access, and converting the Hartlin Trail to a multi-use trail.

Active Transportation Master Plan (2010)

The plan directs high quality infrastructure development to establish a clearly defined sustainable transportation network. It calls for a harmonic series of nodes and destinations for living and working, linked by multi-use trails, bike lanes, and sidewalks. The plan recognizes that people use active transportation infrastructure for both recreation and utility.

Accessible Yarmouth, Town of Yarmouth Accessibility Action Plan: Refresh 2025 to 2028 (2025)

The plan describes the Town's commitments to improving accessibility. Priority areas include goods and services, information and communications, employment, built environment, and transportation. The built environment priority states that the Town will work to improve accessibility in town-owned public buildings, parks and open spaces, and will review and prioritize challenges to accessibility in the town-owned built environment.

Equity and Anti-Racism Plan (2025)

The plan establishes the Town's commitment to equity and anti-racism, including goals to ensure all voices are heard and that all decisions are made with equity and anti-racism in mind. The plan commits to engaging underrepresented and under served communities to foster understanding, and to use feedback to inform advice, decisions, policies and training.

Corporate Climate Change Mitigation Plan (2021)

The plan provides actions and targets to reduce the amount of Greenhouse Gases (GHG) produced by the Town of Yarmouth's corporate activities. The plan states that energy efficiency should be considered whenever a capital project is being designed. This includes reviewing and optimizing current buildings. This is relevant to culture and recreation facilities.

Climate Change Action Plan (2013)

This plan identifies climate change hazards and policies for the Town. This policy is of particular relevance to PRC services and amenities: "It shall be the intention of Council to develop and manage municipal infrastructure and community assets in light of climate change with the aim of ensuring sustainable economical, social, cultural, environmental and fiscal responsible governance."

National and Provincial Documents

National Framework for Recreation: Pathways to Wellbeing (2015)

The National Framework provides a vision for recreation in Canada whereby everyone is engaged in meaningful, accessible recreation experiences that foster individual wellbeing, community wellbeing and the wellbeing of natural and built environments.

Shared Strategy for Advancing Recreation in Nova Scotia (2015)

Nova Scotia's strategy builds on the National Framework for Recreation in Canada, with a focus on directions and priorities most relevant to the province.



Photo Credits (top-bottom): Yarmouth Recreation, Expedition Management Consulting Ltd.

4

**TRENDS &
BENEFITS**

Culture, Parks and Recreation Trends

There are many trends impacting the delivery of culture, parks and recreation services. Those most relevant to the Town of Yarmouth are included here.



Growing Recognition of the Connection Between Culture and Community Building

Governments and residents are increasingly recognizing the importance of culture to building strong and healthy communities. The 2022 Nova Scotia Cultural Survey found that 78% of Nova Scotians believe that cultural activities and organizations are important to them, and 70% believe culture increases citizen engagement and participation.⁹



Positive Impacts of Investing in Arts and Culture

Investments in arts and culture development have the potential to produce a wide range of positive social and economic impacts.¹⁰ Nova Scotians believe that culture has value, and many believe cultural organizations drive the economy where they live.¹¹



Growing Interest in Informal and Individual Activities

Participation in independent, life sport activities has been increasing and is a programming trend across the recreation sector. Life sport activities include things like biking, swimming, walking, hiking, and other pursuits that are non-competitive, fun, and individualized.¹² In 2022, Nova Scotia households reported participating in many of these activities. Among the most frequently reported were walking (74%), hiking (30%), swimming and related activities (30%), and going to a playground or park (29%).¹³



Changing Lifestyle Habits

Leisure screen use has increased, indicating shifts in how people choose to spend their free time. Enhancing access and encouraging more use of facilities and recreational services is important to support ongoing community health.



Youth Sport Popularity and Preferences

Soccer, swimming, hockey and basketball are the most popular organized sports for children and youth (3-17 year old) participation. Preferences vary by gender and origin. New Canadian youth exhibit a preference for soccer, swimming and basketball. One in four girls between 3 and 17 participate in dance, ballet and gymnastics.¹⁴



Household Income and Youth Sports Participation

A 2022 Canadian survey found that “sport participation of children and youth increased with increasing household income, whereby 60% of children and youth living in lower income households (<\$60,000 per year) reported participating in sport in the past year compared to 73% of those living in higher income households (≥\$100,000 per year)”.¹⁵ Low cost access to programs and facilities for children and youth in lower income households is a key consideration for public recreation planning.

Facility Planning, Program and Development Trends



Aging Infrastructure

Aging infrastructure poses a significant challenge for municipalities across the country. It will be important to ensure facility maintenance is a priority to support the longevity of facilities.



Increased Emphasis on Inclusion and Access

Municipalities are taking strong steps to address barriers and constraints that their residents face when participating in culture, parks and recreation services. The importance of inclusion and access in the sector is also being recognized and acted on at provincial and federal levels.



Focus on Sustainability and Capacity of Recreation

An appropriate mix of individuals, including professional staff and volunteers, are needed for delivering high quality programs and services.



The Integration of Technology into Recreation and Leisure

The use of web, mobile, and cloud-based platforms has increased, indicating a shift in programming, information delivery, and data collection.



Evolving Nature of Volunteerism

Volunteers remain essential to the planning and delivery of recreation, culture, events, and programs. Trends that may impact the Town include an aging volunteer base and a redefining of volunteer commitment as a negotiated and mutually beneficial arrangement rather than a one-way investment of time by the volunteer.¹⁶



Increasing Costs

The costs to maintain, operate, and build new recreation, parks, and culture infrastructure have increased significantly since the COVID pandemic. Supply chain issues, cost of materials, and labour shortages have all contributed to increases in the cost of construction and project timelines.¹⁷



Changing Demographics

It is important to consider demographics when planning for culture, parks and recreation. Service delivery systems must evolve and grow alongside the population as there are more people to serve and changing user profiles and interests.



Changing Environment and Climate

The effects of climate change are becoming more apparent and there is an increasing feeling of urgency to adapt quickly. Parks and facilities will need thoughtful planning and maintenance to respond to climate change.

Benefits Of Culture, Parks and Recreation



1

Enhanced Mental and Physical Well-Being

Recreation has an important role to play in increasing physical activity, which is a crucial factor in physical and mental health. People who participate in recreation have reported improved self-esteem and life satisfaction. The same can be said for participation in cultural activities.



2

Enhanced Social Well-Being

Experiencing cultural and recreational activities has been shown to enhance social well-being. For both children and adults, participation supports the development and strengthening of social relationships.



3

Builds Strong Families and Communities

Participation in cultural and recreational activities can be an important component of fostering community life, family cohesion, adaptability and resilience while helping to build welcoming communities for people and families from diverse cultures.



4

Helps People Connect with the Outdoors

Connecting citizens with the outdoors can provide both environmental and human benefits. Exposure to green spaces can have a positive effect on health, including reducing stress levels and improving cognitive development in children.



5

Economic Benefits

Culture and recreation have been shown to be powerful contributors to community revitalization and economic development. Spending on culture and recreation provides local economic benefits including providing employment opportunities. It also supports local placemaking and can showcase a community's unique natural and built heritage. There are also significant cost savings to society through reductions in obesity and other chronic health conditions, and strain on social services.

5

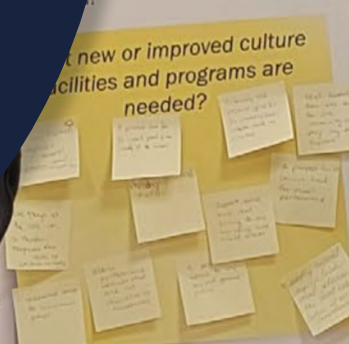
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT RESULTS

Facility and Program Needs

Make your input on identifying new or improved culture facilities and programs that are needed in your community.

Write down your suggestions on the sticky-notes and

What new or improved culture facilities and programs are needed?



Summary of Engagement Process

Input from residents, community groups, key partners, and Town Council and staff were gathered from December 2024 to April 2025. In total, the engagement process produced 361 touchpoints. Figure 4 provides a breakdown of engagement touchpoints by activity. The community groups that participated in the engagement process account for 2,638 registered participants.

Figure 4. Summary of Engagement Touchpoints

Engagement Activity	Total Engagement
Resident Survey	233 responses
Community Group Survey	19 responses
Community Road Show (In-Person Engagement Booths)	81 participants
Community Input Workshops	6 participants
Council Input Opportunity	6 participants
Staff Input Workshop	7 participants
Interviews	9 completed
Total	361

Key Findings

The remainder of this section summarizes the key findings from the input received. To view the expanded engagement results, please see Appendix B.



Photo Credit: Expedition Management Consulting Ltd.

Resident Survey Results

52% of resident survey respondents live in the Town of Yarmouth. 43% live in the Municipal District of Yarmouth. Survey results illustrate a strong alignment in facility and program needs among Town and Municipal District residents.

NEW OR IMPROVED FACILITY AND PROGRAM NEEDS

Indoor culture facilities	Performing arts theatre, woodworking shop, and ceramic studio
Indoor recreation facilities	Indoor playground, climbing wall, indoor turf field, and swimming pool
Outdoor facilities	Festival/event space, nature park, trails/pathways, and an outdoor swimming pool
Culture programming	Cultural festivals/events, visual arts programs, and performing arts programs
Parks programming	Parks festivals/events, educational/skill building programs, and parks programs
Recreation programming	Children/youth activity programs, aquatic programs, fitness programs, and sport events



"The Mariners Centre is a hub for the community. We are lucky to have that facility. I am proud of the community we have build around it."
Survey Respondent

QUALITY OF LIFE

94%

"Culture, parks, and recreation opportunities are important to my quality of life"



LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH OPPORTUNITIES BY POPULATION



There was a mix of satisfaction levels for culture, parks and recreation opportunities for all populations. Dissatisfaction most outweighed satisfaction for youth, Indigenous People and diverse cultures.

BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION



46% Unaware of available activities



46% Scheduling/timing of activities



39% Program(s) not offered



31% Too expensive



SUPPORT FOR INCREASED TAXATION AND USER FEES

55%

of respondents indicated they would support some level of increase to property taxes to better meet culture, parks, and recreation opportunities in Yarmouth.

46%

of respondents indicated support for increased user fees to better meet their needs.



Community Group Survey Results

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Respondents identified opportunities and challenges their organization is experiencing in meeting the needs of their participants. Respondents identified the following most often:

- Availability of facilities is a challenge including fields, pool, and gym space.
- Attracting new members, specifically younger demographics is a challenge.
- Feedback received from performers that existing venues are not adequate.
- Opportunities include reducing barriers to access, creating youth friendly spaces, improving community partnership, and more youth-centered programming.
- Insurance can be expensive.

FACILITY NEEDS

Respondents identified new facilities and upgrades to existing facilities in order to serve their organization and participants. Respondents identified the following most often:

- Upgrades to existing facilities including baseball diamonds, softball fields, curling rink, and sports fields.
- Upgrades needed at the YGCC building and Lion's Club.
- New facilities including a performance venue.
- Maintaining existing facilities including the gymnasium at Mariners on Main.
- Enhanced partnership opportunities.
- Expanded parking at the Mariners Centre.

LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH TOWN SERVICES

Respondents were most satisfied with Town services for community grants, facility rentals/bookings at Town-owned facilities, advertising and promotions, and technology and digital tools.



SUPPORT FOR INCREASED USER FEES



41%

of community groups that responded to the survey said they would be willing to pay for increased user fees.

GROWTH IN MEMBERSHIP

95%

of community groups that responded projected their annual participant base to grow over the next 5 years.



ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES TO ENCOURAGE VOLUNTEERISM

Respondents identified opportunities to encourage volunteerism in the Town of Yarmouth. Respondents identified the following most often:



- Hosting more volunteer events where people can learn about various organizations.
- Staffed position to organize and connect a volunteer network.
- Promote programs and the volunteers needed to support programs.

Community Road Show

Members of the consulting team visited the Town of Yarmouth on April 9 and 10, 2025 to conduct in-person engagement stations. Staff engagement stations were set up at multiple locations to collect input from community members regarding their culture, parks, and recreation facility and program needs. The stations had table-top presentation boards where participants could “stick” their input onto the boards. In total, the consultant team engaged with 81 community members. Additionally, two Digital Community Input Workshops were hosted on March 27 and April 1, 2025. 6 people from the community participated in the sessions. The following summarizes the input received.

Culture Facility and Program Requests:

- New performing arts facility.
- More performing arts opportunities.
- More weekend activities and opportunities for seniors.

Outdoor Facility and Program Requests:

- More walking trails and pathways.
- Opportunity for the waterfront to be further developed.
- More green space, parks, and playgrounds.
- Lighting at ball fields and tennis courts.
- More activities for kids.
- Program space and amenities for markets and festivals (e.g. power).

Indoor Facility and Program Requests:

- Indoor playground.
- Indoor multipurpose facility with turf field and walking track.
- Ensuring programs and facilities and distributed across the community.
- Curling rink upgrades.
- More programs for kids, teens, and seniors.
- More public skating and public swimming.
- Another ice surface.



Photo Credit: Expedition Management Consulting Ltd.

Council Input Opportunity

Input was collected from Town Council throughout the engagement process. 6 participants provided input. The following summarizes the input received.

- There is an emphasis on understanding the needs for cultural programs and facilities.
- Recreation offerings should reflect community demographics.
- Recreation should be inclusive and accessible to all.
- Creating a model that encourages the community to develop its own resources with Town support.
- Challenges with socio-economic issues.
- The performing arts centre is in need of replacement.

Town Staff Input Workshop

An input workshop was held on April 10 for Yarmouth Recreation staff. 7 participants participated. The following summarizes the input received.

- There is a desire to solidify more of a community development approach through recreation.
- Better serving 13–20-year-olds and underserved populations such as low income and differently abled.
- Enhancing marketing and communications.
- Supporting and expanding events, particularly the waterfront.
- Community interest in more arts/culture space.
- Indoor fieldhouse is a facility gap in southwest Nova Scotia.
- Celebrating successes and leaving a legacy.

Photo Credits: Town of Yarmouth



6

VISION FOR THE FUTURE

The Town of Yarmouth is ready to grow and evolve its culture, parks and recreation services. Its commitment to residents, partnerships with neighbouring municipalities, along with the passion of community members and community organizations will fuel implementation of this plan over the next ten years.

VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Culture, parks and recreation services in the Town of Yarmouth build community. They are accessible to everyone, create positive social impacts, and elevate individual and collective wellbeing.

OUTCOMES

Through implementation of this plan, the Town will:

1. Enhance resident access to arts and cultural services.
2. Create more youth friendly spaces and programs.
3. Address the recreational needs of underserved and marginalized people.
4. Increase the availability of affordable culture, parks and recreation services.
5. Support public festivals and events.
6. Build capacity among community organizations that deliver culture and recreation services.

Guiding Principles for Service Delivery

Guiding principles for culture, parks and recreation service delivery were developed to support the implementation of the master plan. The Town of Yarmouth will endeavor to:

1. Provide equitable access to facilities, services and programs which will include a balance between access for:
 - Organized groups and the general public
 - Passive and active endeavors
 - Competitive and non-competitive pursuits
 - Structured and spontaneous activities
 - Diverse ages, cultures, and abilities
 - Indoor and outdoor opportunities
2. Ensure accessibility and inclusion in all programs, facilities, and services.
3. Strive to achieve long-term sustainability, continuity, and adaptability in infrastructure and programs.
4. Support community development through culture, parks and recreation services for the benefit of individuals, families, and neighbourhoods.
5. Prioritize community engagement and participation in the planning, development, and evaluation of culture, parks and recreation programs and facilities.
6. Foster strong collaborations and partnerships with local organizations to leverage resources, expertise, and support for the delivery of culture, parks and recreation services.
7. Seek opportunities to mitigate and adapt to climate change and enhance community resiliency.

7

**MASTER PLAN
PRIORITIES**

This section outlines the key areas of focus for developing culture, parks and recreation in the Town of Yarmouth. Priorities were identified based on extensive research, analysis, review of trends, consultant assessments, and engagement with the community. Some of the priorities will take more time to accomplish than others, so the Town is encouraged to pursue multiple priorities at the same time, as resources allow.

Priorities have been divided into four categories for organizational purposes (note that the numbering does not indicate priority). These categories include:

1. Culture Development
2. Parks Development
3. Recreation Development
4. Service Delivery, Community Partnerships, and Communication

Action items are identified under each priority. Each action item has been assigned a suggested priority rating, anticipated timeline, and estimated cost for implementation.

It should be recognized that this Master Plan is a non-statutory plan whose purpose is to provide direction and guidance. Implementation of the plan may be impacted by a variety of factors, including Council priorities, available resources, and emerging opportunities/challenges.

Legend

Recommended Direction

 MAINTAIN	Maintain the amenity or program at its current service level.
 IMPROVE	The amenity, service or program needs significant improvement to meet community needs.
 REPURPOSE	The amenity is not providing significant value to the community and there are opportunities to repurpose it to better meet community needs.
 NEW AMENITY OR SERVICE	This would be a new amenity or service in the Town of Yarmouth and would serve to meet community needs.
 NEW STRATEGY, POLICY, OR TOOL	This would be a new strategy, policy or administrative tool that would serve to meet community needs.
 FURTHER STUDY	Further study is recommended before proceeding with development.

Timeline

Short Term	2025 – 2026
Medium Term	2027 – 2030
Long Term	2030 – 2035
Ongoing	


Priority

- High Priority (H)
- Medium Priority (M)
- Low Priority (L)

Cost Criteria

Low Cost (\$)	Less than \$50,000
Medium Cost (\$\$)	\$50,000 - \$500,000
High Cost (\$\$\$)	More than \$500,000
Staff	Action can be undertaken with existing staff resources

Quick Wins

 A blue star indicates that an action item is a “Quick Win.” Quick wins are actions that can be implemented within a short timeframe, have a high probability of success, and have a relatively low cost.



Culture Development

A. Embed Culture as a Key Pillar of Recreational Service Provision

B. Develop a Festival and Events Sustainability Strategy

C. Address Cultural Space Needs

D. Support Cultural Organizations and Programming

E. Renew the Vision for Downtown and the Waterfront as a Public and Tourist Destination

1. Culture Development

The following identifies the main cultural development priorities for the Town of Yarmouth.

A. Embed Culture as a Key Pillar of Recreational Service Provision

Recommended Direction	Recommendation(s)	Rationale
 REPURPOSE	1. Ensure that culture is considered in the planning, design and delivery of all recreational services, facilities and related municipal activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The importance of culture as an integral element of recreational service provision was a key theme of engagement with residents, community groups, and Town Council and Administration. There is an opportunity to embed culture across recreational facilities and offerings, and across departments and business areas. This could entail seeing culture as a lens to be applied to a wide diversity of municipal and private projects that have a tie to recreation. These may include new neighbourhood design, civic facility and infrastructure planning, and community and economic development projects.

 **Timeline**
Ongoing

 **Priority**
High

 **Cost**
Staff



Culture Development

A. Embed Culture as a Key Pillar of Recreational Service Provision

B. Develop a Festival and Events Sustainability Strategy

C. Address Cultural Space Needs

D. Support Cultural Organizations and Programming

E. Renew the Vision for Downtown and the Waterfront as a Public and Tourist Destination

B. Develop a Festival and Events Sustainability Strategy

Recommended Direction	Recommendation(s)	Rationale
 REPURPOSE	<p>1. Develop a festival and events sustainability strategy to identify key event delivery challenges and opportunities and to address the pressing challenges faced by organizers of iconic community events including potential options for short-term supports, regional and private partnerships, and Town support. The strategy should also identify opportunities to grow tourism and animate public spaces through festivals and events.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local festivals and events are well loved. They contribute to the community’s unique character, bring residents together and support the local economy. Festivals and events are driven by community members and some are not currently sustainable. Several iconic festivals have been cancelled or are at risk of not being able to continue operating into the future. A strategy would describe a pathway for how the Town, its partners and local businesses will work together to maintain existing festivals and events in the community. It would also identify how community groups can be supported to host events, what types of events have the strongest potential for growth, the role of events as a tourism attraction, and what actions are required to attract and host them.



Timeline
Short



Priority
High



Cost
\$-\$\$



Culture Development

A. Embed Culture as a Key Pillar of Recreational Service Provision

B. Develop a Festival and Events Sustainability Strategy

C. Address Cultural Space Needs

D. Support Cultural Organizations and Programming

E. Renew the Vision for Downtown and the Waterfront as a Public and Tourist Destination

Recommended Direction	Recommendation(s)	Rationale
<p>REPURPOSE</p>	<p>2. Amend the Town’s Grant Policy to include grants for organizations that deliver community events.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to funding is a key barrier for event organizers. • The Town’s existing Grant Policy could be amended to help reduce this barrier.



Timeline
Medium



Priority
Medium



Cost
\$



Culture Development

A. Embed Culture as a Key Pillar of Recreational Service Provision


B. Develop a Festival and Events Sustainability Strategy

C. Address Cultural Space Needs

D. Support Cultural Organizations and Programming

E. Renew the Vision for Downtown and the Waterfront as a Public and Tourist Destination

C. Address Cultural Space Needs

Recommended Direction	Recommendation(s)	Rationale
 FURTHER STUDY	1. Support the arts community in the completion of a feasibility study for a new performing arts facility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new performing arts facility was identified through the community survey as the most needed new or improved indoor cultural facility.




Timeline
Short



Priority
Medium



Cost
\$\$

Recommended Direction	Recommendation(s)	Rationale
 REPURPOSE	2. Leverage underutilized facilities in the community to fill demand for creative and maker spaces. ★	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creative and maker spaces such as a woodshop, ceramics studio, painting studio, gallery, rehearsal spaces and multipurpose spaces were identified as in need through the resident and community group surveys. There are underutilized assets in the Town that may be suitable to repurpose to meet these needs, such as closed schools and the closed visitor information centre.



Timeline
Short



Priority
Medium



Cost
\$\$\$



Culture Development

A. Embed Culture as a Key Pillar of Recreational Service Provision

B. Develop a Festival and Events Sustainability Strategy

C. Address Cultural Space Needs

D. Support Cultural Organizations and Programming

E. Renew the Vision for Downtown and the Waterfront as a Public and Tourist Destination

D. Support Cultural Organizations and Programming

Recommended Direction	Recommendation(s)	Rationale
<p>IMPROVE</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide capacity building support for arts and cultural organizations to help them continue to deliver and to expand cultural services and programs. 2. Partner with cultural program providers to expand cultural programming. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community organizations indicated a need for additional support from the Town in order to continue delivering services and programs for residents. • Residents are highly interested in expanded cultural services and programs.



Timeline
Ongoing



Priority
Medium



Cost
Staff/\$



Culture Development

A. Embed Culture as a Key Pillar of Recreational Service Provision


B. Develop a Festival and Events Sustainability Strategy

C. Address Cultural Space Needs

D. Support Cultural Organizations and Programming

E. Renew the Vision for Downtown and the Waterfront as a Public and Tourist Destination

E. Renew the Vision for Downtown and the Waterfront as a Public and Tourist Destination

Recommended Direction	Recommendation(s)	Rationale
 IMPROVE	1. Renew the vision for downtown and the waterfront, including updating the Waterfront Development Action Plan and Downtown Blueprint.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Downtown and the Waterfront are unique and important places within the town. They have the potential to become a vibrant district destination that attracts residents, tourists, and investment. Over the last fifteen years the Town has made progress towards improving these areas. Updating plans will set the municipality and partners up for continued progress.



Timeline
Short



Priority
Medium



Cost
\$\$



Parks Development

A. Enhance and Connect Multi-Purpose Trails

B. Increase Public Programming in Parks

C. Install New Amenities in Parks

D. Upgrade Town-Owned Ball Fields

E. Develop Public Spaces, Walkways and Trails Along the Waterfront

F. Explore the Feasibility of Mountain Bike Trails and a Mountain Bike Park

G. Support Sports that are Rising in Popularity


H. Add New Sports Fields as Demand Increases

I. Investigate Options to Enhance the Yarmouth Dog Park

2. Parks Development

The following identifies the main parks and trails development priorities for the Town of Yarmouth.

A. Enhance and Connect Multi-Purpose Trails

Recommended Direction	Recommendation(s)	Rationale
 NEW AMENITY OR SERVICE	1. Connect key facilities and parks with multi-purpose trails (e.g. Lake Milo to downtown/waterfront, Broad Brook Park to downtown, Mariners Centre with downtown and surrounding residential and commercial areas).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Town is home to several prominent parks and recreational facilities. These facilities are not well connected for residents using active modes of transportation. 22% of resident survey respondents identified trails and pathways as the most needed new or improved outdoor facility.



Timeline
Short - Medium



Priority
High



Cost
\$\$\$



Parks Development

A. Enhance and Connect Multi-Purpose Trails

B. Increase Public Programming in Parks

C. Install New Amenities in Parks

D. Upgrade Town-Owned Ball Fields

E. Develop Public Spaces, Walkways and Trails Along the Waterfront

F. Explore the Feasibility of Mountain Bike Trails and a Mountain Bike Park

G. Support Sports that are Rising in Popularity

H. Add New Sports Fields as Demand Increases

I. Investigate Options to Enhance the Yarmouth Dog Park

Recommended Direction	Recommendation(s)	Rationale
<p>NEW STRATEGY, POLICY, OR TOOL</p>	<p>2. Develop a trail strategy to guide medium and long term development of multi-use trails in the community and connections with trails in adjacent municipalities. Work in partnership with the Municipal District of Yarmouth and the Municipality of Argyle on regional elements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trails are popular recreational and tourism amenities in the community. Existing trails are well used and would benefit from future improvements. New trails would provide additional recreation opportunities for people of all ages and abilities. An overarching strategy for recreational trails would guide the development of an enhanced trail network to support recreation and tourism in the town and region.



Timeline
Medium



Priority
Medium



Cost
\$\$

Recommended Direction	Recommendation(s)	Rationale
<p>IMPROVE</p>	<p>3. Work with regional partners to investigate the feasibility of creating a multi-use non-motorized trail around Lake Milo.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lake Milo is a key natural and recreational amenity for the town and region. A trail around the lake would be a legacy project for the Town and regional partners, providing waterfront access and connection to future generations of residents and visitors.



Timeline
Medium



Priority
Medium



Cost
\$\$



Parks Development

A. Enhance and Connect Multi-Purpose Trails

B. Increase Public Programming in Parks

C. Install New Amenities in Parks

D. Upgrade Town-Owned Ball Fields

E. Develop Public Spaces, Walkways and Trails Along the Waterfront


F. Explore the Feasibility of Mountain Bike Trails and a Mountain Bike Park

G. Support Sports that are Rising in Popularity

H. Add New Sports Fields as Demand Increases

I. Investigate Options to Enhance the Yarmouth Dog Park

B. Increase Public Programming in Parks

Recommended Direction	Recommendation(s)	Rationale
 NEW AMENITY OR SERVICE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Offer free or low cost programming for children and youth in parks (e.g. access to sport equipment, organized and supervised drop-in activities). 2. Increase nature-based programming in parks (e.g. nature walks, bird watching). 3. Use parks as venues for educational/skill-building programs (e.g. orienteering courses, bike repair classes, etc.). 4. Support community organizations to offer trail programs in parks (e.g. running clubs, hiking groups, mountain bike groups, x-country skiing, etc.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs for children and youth were identified as the most needed recreational programming in the community survey. Educational and skill building programs, nature programs and trail programs were respectively identified as the second, third and fourth most needed parks programs. • According to a 2023 youth-wellbeing study, 81% of youth in the tri-counties are more likely to say their community never has much to do.¹⁸ Almost 40% reported they could not afford to pay for an activity they like to do in their free time.
 IMPROVE		

 **Timeline**
Short - Long

 **Priority**
High



 **Cost**
Varies



Parks Development

- A. Enhance and Connect Multi-Purpose Trails
- B. Increase Public Programming in Parks
- C. Install New Amenities in Parks**
- D. Upgrade Town-Owned Ball Fields
- E. Develop Public Spaces, Walkways and Trails Along the Waterfront
- F. Explore the Feasibility of Mountain Bike Trails and a Mountain Bike Park
- G. Support Sports that are Rising in Popularity
- H. Add New Sports Fields as Demand Increases
- I. Investigate Options to Enhance the Yarmouth Dog Park

C. Install New Amenities in Parks

Recommended Direction	Recommendation(s)	Rationale
 NEW AMENITY OR SERVICE  REPURPOSE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Install recreational amenities in parks that provide spontaneous activity opportunities for residents (e.g. ping pong tables, basketball hoops, outdoor games, etc.). 2. Enhance existing parks with amenities that support their use for community gatherings (e.g. utility hook-ups, hardscaping, seating, lighting). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is strong interest among residents and community groups in more opportunities for free and low cost recreational activity. 31% of resident survey respondents noted that activities being too expensive prevented them from participating more often. • There is also strong interest for more events. • Installing features that support the use of parks for community gatherings would also help to activate public spaces, encourage positive social activity, and put more eyes on the street.

 **Timeline**
Short - Long

 **Priority**
High

 **Cost**
Varies



Parks Development

A. Enhance and Connect Multi-Purpose Trails

B. Increase Public Programming in Parks

C. Install New Amenities in Parks

D. Upgrade Town-Owned Ball Fields

E. Develop Public Spaces, Walkways and Trails Along the Waterfront

F. Explore the Feasibility of Mountain Bike Trails and a Mountain Bike Park

G. Support Sports that are Rising in Popularity

H. Add New Sports Fields as Demand Increases

I. Investigate Options to Enhance the Yarmouth Dog Park

D. Upgrade Town-Owned Ball Fields

Recommended Direction	Recommendation(s)	Rationale
<p>REPURPOSE</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Upgrade Town-owned ball diamonds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resident and community group feedback identified the need for upgrades to Town-owned ball diamonds. Upgrades to consider include fencing, the addition of mobile back stops, dugout repairs and drainage improvements.

Timeline
Short

Priority
High

Cost
\$\$\$

E. Develop Public Spaces, Walkways and Trails Along the Waterfront

Recommended Direction	Recommendation(s)	Rationale
<p>NEW AMENITY OR SERVICE</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Develop public green spaces, walkways and trails along the waterfront wherever possible, working with private property owners where required for access. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is limited public access to the waterfront. Residents are interested in new and improved trails and paths along the waterfront. Better access would help connect residents and visitors with the water and help to showcase unique aspects of the Town's history, geography, and current economy.

Timeline
Medium

Priority
Medium

Cost
\$\$\$



Parks Development

A. Enhance and Connect Multi-Purpose Trails

B. Increase Public Programming in Parks

C. Install New Amenities in Parks

D. Upgrade Town-Owned Ball Fields

E. Develop Public Spaces, Walkways and Trails Along the Waterfront


F. Explore the Feasibility of Mountain Bike Trails and a Mountain Bike Park

G. Support Sports that are Rising in Popularity

H. Add New Sports Fields as Demand Increases

I. Investigate Options to Enhance the Yarmouth Dog Park

F. Explore the Feasibility of Mountain Bike Trails and a Mountain Bike Park


Recommended Direction	Recommendation(s)	Rationale
 NEW STRATEGY, POLICY, OR TOOL	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with neighbouring municipalities and interested community members to explore the feasibility of developing mountain bike trails and a mountain bike park in the tri-county region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some residents are interested in the development of mountain bike trails and a bike park. Such amenities are becoming common in municipalities across North America. • Trails and a bike park could provide free and spontaneous recreational opportunities for residents, and attract visitors to the area.

 **Timeline**
Medium

 **Priority**
Medium

 **Cost**
\$\$

G. Support Sports that are Rising in Popularity

Recommended Direction	Recommendation(s)	Rationale
 REPURPOSE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assess enhancements that could be made to field spaces that would enable them to be used for rugby or cricket. Make these enhancements as resources allow. 2. Ensure up and coming sports receive equitable access to prime time field space. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field sports such as rugby and cricket are rising in popularity. • Supporting access to appropriate fields with amenities/features for such sports will enable more residents to participate in their preferred recreational activities.

 **Timeline**
Medium

 **Priority**
Medium


 **Cost**
\$\$



Parks Development

- A. Enhance and Connect Multi-Purpose Trails
- B. Increase Public Programming in Parks
- C. Install New Amenities in Parks
- D. Upgrade Town-Owned Ball Fields
- E. Develop Public Spaces, Walkways and Trails Along the Waterfront
- F. Explore the Feasibility of Mountain Bike Trails and a Mountain Bike Park
- G. Support Sports that are Rising in Popularity
- H. Add New Sports Fields as Demand Increases**
- I. Investigate Options to Enhance the Yarmouth Dog Park**

H. Add New Sports Fields as Demand Increases


Recommended Direction	Recommendation(s)	Rationale
 NEW AMENITY OR SERVICE	1. Add new sports fields as demand increases over the life of this Master Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Soccer is among the most popular sports in the community, and others are becoming more popular. Consideration should be given to adding new sports fields as demand grows.

 **Timeline**
Medium-Long

 **Priority**
Medium

 **Cost**
\$\$\$

I. Investigate Options to Enhance the Yarmouth Dog Park

Recommended Direction	Recommendation(s)	Rationale
 REPURPOSE	1. Investigate options to enhance the function and aesthetics of the Yarmouth Dog Park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey respondents noted a need for improvements to the dog park. Upgrades such as fixed waste management bins, the addition of benches/seating, and changes to support access by people with mobility issues would improve the look and function of the park.

 **Timeline**
Medium

 **Priority**
Medium

 **Cost**
\$-\$



Recreation Development

- A. Offer More Public Programming During Prime Time**
- B. Expand Free and Low Cost Programming**
- C. Offer More Youth Programming**
- D. Undertake a Feasibility Study for a New Multi-purpose Indoor Facility**
- E. Develop an Aquatics Programming Plan**
- F. Increase Non-Competitive, Casual Recreational Programming**
- G. Support an Operational Plan for the New Credit Union Wellness Centre**
- H. Work with Partners to Develop a Public Access Policy for Local School Gymnasiums**
- I. Improve the Existing Splash Park at the Credit Union RecPlex**
- J. Invest in the Lake Milo Aquatic Club**

3. Recreation Development

The following identifies the main recreation development priorities for the Town of Yarmouth.

A. Offer More Public Programming During Prime Time

Recommended Direction	Recommendation(s)	Rationale
 REPURPOSE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Offer more public programming at anchor recreation facilities during prime time (e.g. arenas, pools, fitness centres and gymnasiums). 2. Offer 'learn to play' recreation programs and provide the equipment required to participate in these programs and in spontaneous recreational activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents requested enhanced access to recreation facilities. 45% of survey respondents also noted that the scheduling/timing of activities was their main barrier to participating in culture, parks and recreation activities more often. • Some facilities, such as arenas, currently have limited availability for spontaneous/drop-in public use. • Increasing public access on weekday evenings and weekends, and accommodating user schedules, could result in greater user satisfaction and more equity between casual users and organized user groups. • Additional facility access opportunities should be paired with free or low cost rental equipment and 'learn to' programs. These help to further reduce barriers for people who may not have the equipment or skills needed to allow them to participate fully.

Timeline
Ongoing

Priority
High

Cost
\$



Recreation Development

A. Offer More Public Programming During Prime Time

B. Expand Free and Low Cost Programming

C. Offer More Youth Programming

D. Undertake a Feasibility Study for a New Multi-purpose Indoor Facility

E. Develop an Aquatics Programming Plan

F. Increase Non-Competitive, Casual Recreational Programming


G. Support an Operational Plan for the New Credit Union Wellness Centre

H. Work with Partners to Develop a Public Access Policy for Local School Gymnasiums

I. Improve the Existing Splash Park at the Credit Union RecPlex

J. Invest in the Lake Milo Aquatic Club

B. Expand Free and Low Cost Programming

Recommended Direction	Recommendation(s)	Rationale
 REPURPOSE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create a fee waiver program to improve access to municipal recreational facilities for people and households with low incomes. 2. Support programming for people with low incomes, working with community organizations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents and community groups indicated the need for low-cost recreational programs. 33% of resident survey respondents do not participate in recreation due to activities being too expensive. • The median household income in the community is significantly lower than the provincial median. • Town support for low-cost access to recreational programming would help limit the impacts of affordability as a barrier to participation. • A fee waiver program would help to eliminate financial barriers and would communicate the Town’s support for equitable access to recreation.



Timeline
Short



Priority
High



Cost
Staff/\$



Recreation Development

A. Offer More Public Programming During Prime Time

B. Expand Free and Low Cost Programming

C. Offer More Youth Programming

D. Undertake a Feasibility Study for a New Multi-purpose Indoor Facility

E. Develop an Aquatics Programming Plan

F. Increase Non-Competitive, Casual Recreational Programming

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J. Invest in the Lake Milo Aquatic Club

C. Offer More Youth Programming

Recommended Direction	Recommendation(s)	Rationale
 IMPROVE	1. Expand free and low-cost programming for youth, working with local community groups, organizations and social service agencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is high demand for programming geared to youth. • New opportunities for free and low cost youth programming should be explored with community partners to build on the success of Teen Takeover and expand to other recreational facilities.

Timeline
Short

Priority
High

Cost
\$

Recommended Direction	Recommendation(s)	Rationale
 NEW AMENITY OR SERVICE	2. Support access to organized recreational sports and facilitated recreational activities for underprivileged children and youth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for underprivileged children and youth to learn, participate and compete in organized recreational sports and facilitated recreational activities should be explored, facilitated and developed. • Programming should go beyond events and activities to help with related needs such as transportation and equipment. Where possible, activities should be located and prioritized in neighbourhoods with the greatest needs.

Timeline
Short

Priority
Medium

Cost
\$



Recreation Development

- A. Offer More Public Programming During Prime Time
- B. Expand Free and Low Cost Programming
- C. Offer More Youth Programming**
- D. Undertake a Feasibility Study for a New Multi-purpose Indoor Facility
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- F. Increase Non-Competitive, Casual Recreational Programming
- G. Support an Operational Plan for the New Credit Union Wellness Centre
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Examples of Programs that Support Access to Recreation for Children and Youth

KidSport Nova Scotia – Provides grants to kids from families facing financial barriers to help cover the costs of sport registration and equipment fees so that all kids in Nova Scotia can experience the benefits of sport.


JSTRONG Fund – Assists youth and families who may not be able to participate in sports and recreation due to financial burdens. In addition, the JSTRONG Fund holds an annual two day street hockey tournament free of charge for all youth to participate in downtown Yarmouth.

NHL/NHLPA FIRST SHIFT – Facilitates entry into hockey by offering a program that is accessible, affordable, safe, and fun. An on-ice curriculum introduces the sport and builds skills. Registration fees include head to toe equipment.



Recreation Development

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Recommended Direction	Recommendation(s)	Rationale
 NEW AMENITY OR SERVICE	3. Develop a Leaders in Training program for youth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programming for kids and youth was a top priority identified through the resident and community group surveys. • Leaders in Training programs are typically designed for youth aged 13-17 to develop leadership skills and gain practical experience. Participating youth help recreational leaders run programs. They get an opportunity to give back to their community and to earn Personal Development Credit hours for school. • The Town and community as a whole benefit from these programs through the development of future recreation leaders.



Timeline
Short



Priority
Medium




Cost
\$



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D. Undertake a Feasibility Study for a New Multi-purpose Indoor Facility

Recommended Direction	Recommendation(s)	Rationale
 <p>NEW STRATEGY, POLICY, OR TOOL</p>	<p>1. Undertake a feasibility study for a new multi-purpose indoor facility including a turf field, indoor climbing wall, and indoor playground.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An indoor turf field, climbing wall, and playground were among the most requested new or improved indoor amenities through the resident and community group surveys. • There are no comparable facilities in the town or region. • An indoor turf field would support year-round playing field access for a variety of sports. It could also support sport tournaments and tourism.



Timeline
Short



Priority
High




Cost
\$\$



Recreation Development

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E. Develop an Aquatics Programming Plan

Recommended Direction	Recommendation(s)	Rationale
 IMPROVE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop an aquatics programming plan that responds to community demand for the Credit Union Wellness Centre in advance of its opening. 2. Explore the feasibility of providing additional swimming lessons while Mariners on Main remains operational. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many residents are interested in enhanced aquatics programming. • More opportunities for programming will exist at the new aquatics facility at the Credit Union Wellness Centre when it opens. • Options that could be explored in the meantime include lessons at Lake Milo and increases in the number of programs and lessons provided at Mariners on Main.



Timeline
Short-Medium



Priority
High



Cost
\$



Recreation Development

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F. Increase Non-Competitive, Casual Recreational Programming

Recommended Direction	Recommendation(s)	Rationale
 IMPROVE	1. Provide fun opportunities for people to get active by expanding non-competitive, casual sports programming, including working with community groups and residents to pilot new programs for adults and seniors (e.g. new drop in programs, new rec league opportunities, new intro to sport activities) and offering programs led by recreation facilitators to support participation in drop-in sessions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 39% of resident survey respondents indicated that they do not participate in recreation due to programs not being offered. • People are increasingly interested in participating in non-competitive recreational activities. • Fun and facilitated activities can help people feel welcome and build connections with others in their community.



Timeline
Short




Priority
Medium



Cost
\$

G. Support an Operational Plan for the New Credit Union Wellness Centre

Recommended Direction	Recommendation(s)	Rationale
 NEW STRATEGY, POLICY, OR TOOL	1. Advocate for the Mariners Centre Management Authority to create an operational plan for the new aquatics centre.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an opportunity to create an operational plan for the new aquatics centre before it opens. Such a plan should prioritize public access to the pool and identify new opportunities for revenue generation to support long-term sustainability and low cost access for those most in need.



Timeline
Short



Priority
High




Cost
Staff



Recreation Development

- A. Offer More Public Programming During Prime Time
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H. Work with Partners to Develop a Public Access Policy for Local School Gymnasiums

Recommended Direction	Recommendation(s)	Rationale
 <p>NEW STRATEGY, POLICY, OR TOOL</p>	<p>1. Work with municipal partners and the Regional Centre for Education to develop a county-wide public access policy for gymnasiums in local schools.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The gymnasium at Mariners on Main is a popular and well-used amenity. It will no longer be available to users when Mariners on Main is transitioned to a new use. • There is strong demand for gym and multi-use court space from many groups in the community, including youth and sports clubs. • There are 12 gymnasiums in local schools. Enhancing access to them would help to meet demand while maximizing existing facilities.



Timeline
Medium




Priority
High



Cost
Staff

I. Improve the Existing Splash Park at the Credit Union RecPlex

Recommended Direction	Recommendation(s)	Rationale
 <p>IMPROVE</p>	<p>1. Improve the existing splash park at the Credit Union RecPlex.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The existing splash park at the Credit Union RecPlex is a well-used amenity. • Improvements would make it more suitable for older children and more comfortable for all users. • Additional community engagement could inform potential changes and new amenities.



Timeline
Medium



Priority
Medium



Cost
\$\$\$



Recreation Development

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J. Invest in the Lake Milo Aquatic Club

J. Invest in the Lake Milo Aquatic Club

Recommended Direction	Recommendation(s)	Rationale
<p>IMPROVE</p>	<p>1. Invest in the Lake Milo Aquatic Club as resources allow, upgrading the building, grounds and water sports equipment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investments in the building and grounds would enhance this amenity for users and ensure that it can be enjoyed by residents for many years to come. • Potential improvements include the addition of picnic tables, shade structures and additional seating, more docks, reconfiguration of the parking lot on the north side of the building to create more public space, and the creation of swimming lanes. • Additional equipment for public use could help to encourage residents to access this amenity (e.g. life jackets, inflatables, paddle boards).



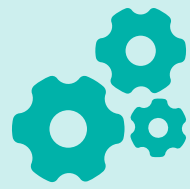
Timeline
Medium – Long



Priority
Medium



Cost
\$\$\$



Service Delivery, Community Partnerships, and Communication Development

A. Continue to Partner with Neighbouring Municipalities to Deliver Recreation Services

B. Develop an Operational Plan to Initiate Implementation of the Master Plan

C. Adopt Facility Allocation Policies

D. Consider Adopting a Formalized Process and Criteria to Evaluate Capital Projects

E. Designate a Culture, Parks and Recreation Liaison

F. Develop a Communication Strategy for Culture, Parks and Recreation Services

G. Involve the Community in Master Plan Implementation

H. Grow Community Volunteer Capacity

I. Ensure Accessibility is a Key Consideration in Facility Renewal and Development


J. Consider Climate Change in Facility Renewal and Development

K. Review and Update the Culture, Parks and Recreation Plan Every Five Years

4. Service Delivery, Community Partnerships, and Communication

The following identifies the main service delivery, community partnerships, and communication priorities for the Town of Yarmouth.

A. Continue to Partner with Neighbouring Municipalities to Deliver Recreation Services

Recommended Direction	Recommendation(s)	Rationale
 MAINTAIN	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to partner with the Municipal District of Yarmouth and the Municipality of Argyle to deliver programs and operate facilities. Review partnerships every five years to ensure they remain effective and aligned with community needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The partnership between the Town, the Municipal District of Yarmouth and the Municipality of Argyle contributes to efficiencies, synergies, and access to recreation for residents of the region. Ongoing collaboration will be important to realize the vision of the plan for the benefit of all community members. This Master Plan can be used as a tool to communicate between partners. Monitoring the value and effectiveness of partnerships on a regular basis will ensure that they remain strong and continue to benefit residents and community groups.



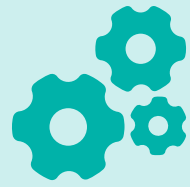
Timeline
Ongoing



Priority
High



Cost
Staff



Service Delivery, Community Partnerships, and Communication Development

A. Continue to Partner with Neighbouring Municipalities to Deliver Recreation Services

B. Develop an Operational Plan to Initiate Implementation of the Master Plan

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D. Consider Adopting a Formalized Process and Criteria to Evaluate Capital Projects

E. Designate a Culture, Parks and Recreation Liaison

F. Develop a Communication Strategy for Culture, Parks and Recreation Services

G. Involve the Community in Master Plan Implementation


H. Grow Community Volunteer Capacity

I. Ensure Accessibility is a Key Consideration in Facility Renewal and Development

J. Consider Climate Change in Facility Renewal and Development

K. Review and Update the Culture, Parks and Recreation Plan Every Five Years

B. Develop an Operational Plan to Initiate Implementation of the Master Plan

Recommended Direction	Recommendation(s)	Rationale
 NEW STRATEGY, POLICY, OR TOOL	1. Develop an operational plan to direct initiation of the Master Plan's implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An operational plan would act as a bridging document between adoption of the Plan by Town Council and administrative actions to advance specific recommendations.



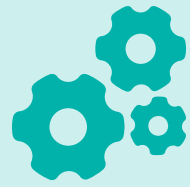
Timeline
Short



Priority
High




Cost
Staff



Service Delivery, Community Partnerships, and Communication Development

- A. Continue to Partner with Neighbouring Municipalities to Deliver Recreation Services
- B. Develop an Operational Plan to Initiate Implementation of the Master Plan
- C. Adopt Facility Allocation Policies**
- D. Consider Adopting a Formalized Process and Criteria to Evaluate Capital Projects
- E. Designate a Culture, Parks and Recreation Liaison
- F. Develop a Communication Strategy for Culture, Parks and Recreation Services
- G. Involve the Community in Master Plan Implementation
- H. Grow Community Volunteer Capacity
- I. Ensure Accessibility is a Key Consideration in Facility Renewal and Development
- J. Consider Climate Change in Facility Renewal and Development
- K. Review and Update the Culture, Parks and Recreation Plan Every Five Years

C. Adopt Facility Allocation Policies

Recommended Direction	Recommendation(s)	Rationale
 NEW STRATEGY, POLICY, OR TOOL	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adopt an overarching allocation policy for culture, parks and recreation facilities. An allocation policy should balance access for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organized groups and the general public • Competitive and non-competitive pursuits • Emerging and established groups • Structured and spontaneous activities • Diverse ages, cultures, and abilities 2. Work with partners to adopt facility-specific allocation policies at the Credit Union Wellness Centre and Mariners Centre that ensure strong public access. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Town does not have an allocation policy to ensure equitable access for residents and user groups to public facilities. • Only 5% of available ice time is currently available for public drop in use. • It can be a challenge for some groups to access facilities to deliver and grow their programs.



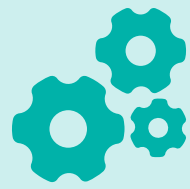
Timeline
Short



Priority
High




Cost
Staff



Service Delivery, Community Partnerships, and Communication Development

- A. Continue to Partner with Neighbouring Municipalities to Deliver Recreation Services
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D. Consider Adopting a Formalized Process and Criteria to Evaluate Capital Projects

Recommended Direction	Recommendation(s)	Rationale
 <p>NEW STRATEGY, POLICY, OR TOOL</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider adopting a formalized process and Capital Project Evaluation Criteria to evaluate Town led projects and community led projects requesting Town funding. See Appendix C. 2. Work with partners to identify where they best fit into the process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A formalized and data-based process for evaluating new capital projects and new partnerships would ensure capital projects that are funded in whole or in part by the Town provide adequate value for investment.



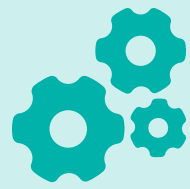
Timeline
Short



Priority
High




Cost
Staff



Service Delivery, Community Partnerships, and Communication Development

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E. Designate a Culture, Parks and Recreation Liaison

Recommended Direction	Recommendation(s)	Rationale
 NEW AMENITY OR SERVICE	1. Designate a culture, parks and recreation liaison.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community-based organizations play an important role in the delivery of culture, parks and recreation services in the Town of Yarmouth. Most are volunteer-run and would benefit from additional help from the municipality. • A designated liaison would recognize the importance of these organizations and help them to enhance their offerings. Recommended responsibilities of a liaison include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building relationships with local organizations and understanding their services and needs • Communicating with organizations about Town culture, parks and recreation services and priorities • Acting as the single point of contact for local organizations related to culture, parks and recreation services and supporting coordination with other internal and external partners • Supporting capacity development (e.g. volunteer development, management and training) • Aligning programming opportunities and sharing information with residents • Supporting volunteer development • Providing assistance to groups in the delivery of culture, parks and recreation programming (e.g. identifying available spaces and resources) • Providing assistance to Yarmouth Recreation in the delivery of culture, parks and recreation programming during newly available public access times and for new programs • This position could be created by re-allocating existing staff time, establishing a new full or part time position, or by using contracted resources.



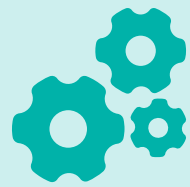
Timeline
Short



Priority
High



Cost
\$\$



Service Delivery, Community Partnerships, and Communication Development

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- J. Consider Climate Change in Facility Renewal and Development
- K. Review and Update the Culture, Parks and Recreation Plan Every Five Years

F. Develop a Communication Strategy for Culture, Parks and Recreation Services

Recommended Direction	Recommendation(s)	Rationale
<p>NEW STRATEGY, POLICY, OR TOOL</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a communication strategy for culture, parks and recreation services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey respondents indicated that their number one reason for not participating in culture, parks and recreation programs was being unaware of them. Sharing information about available programs and facilities can help increase public awareness and participation. The Town could work with municipal partners (including municipal communication and marketing staff) and community groups to identify communication needs and tactics to better reach residents of the town and surrounding region. A shared website containing information about all recreational opportunities could be explored.



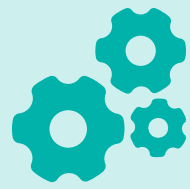
Timeline
Short



Priority
High



Cost
Staff



Service Delivery, Community Partnerships, and Communication Development

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- E. Designate a Culture, Parks and Recreation Liaison
- F. Develop a Communication Strategy for Culture, Parks and Recreation Services
- G. Involve the Community in Master Plan Implementation**
- H. Grow Community Volunteer Capacity
- I. Ensure Accessibility is a Key Consideration in Facility Renewal and Development
- J. Consider Climate Change in Facility Renewal and Development
- K. Review and Update the Culture, Parks and Recreation Plan Every Five Years

G. Involve the Community in Master Plan Implementation

Recommended Direction	Recommendation(s)	Rationale
<p>NEW STRATEGY, POLICY, OR TOOL</p>	<p>1. Use ad hoc task forces to bring together culture, parks and recreation stakeholders in the implementation of specific facility and program development actions in this plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community members and community organizations have diverse interests, experience and expertise related to culture, parks and recreation services. Involving them in implementation would recognize and leverage their unique abilities, perspectives and capacities and build community ownership of culture, parks and recreation services. • Ad hoc committees that are brought together for short periods of time to contribute to a focused and well-defined activity can be more strategic and efficient than standing committees.



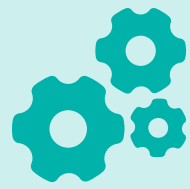
Timeline
Short



Priority
High




Cost
Staff



Service Delivery, Community Partnerships, and Communication Development

- A. Continue to Partner with Neighbouring Municipalities to Deliver Recreation Services
- B. Develop an Operational Plan to Initiate Implementation of the Master Plan
- C. Adopt Facility Allocation Policies
- D. Consider Adopting a Formalized Process and Criteria to Evaluate Capital Projects
- E. Designate a Culture, Parks and Recreation Liaison
- F. Develop a Communication Strategy for Culture, Parks and Recreation Services
- G. Involve the Community in Master Plan Implementation
- H. Grow Community Volunteer Capacity**
- I. Ensure Accessibility is a Key Consideration in Facility Renewal and Development
- J. Consider Climate Change in Facility Renewal and Development
- K. Review and Update the Culture, Parks and Recreation Plan Every Five Years

H. Grow Community Volunteer Capacity

Recommended Direction	Recommendation(s)	Rationale
 <p>NEW AMENITY OR SERVICE</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Host an annual leisure fair for residents to become familiar with culture, parks and recreation programs, organizations, and volunteer opportunities. 2. Explore the potential to work with partners to implement a program to strengthen volunteering in the culture, parks and recreation sector, including undertaking a needs assessment, developing and implementing an engagement and promotion plan, and creating volunteer support and recognition strategies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many local organizations rely on volunteers. The community's volunteer base is aging, and organizations require support to attract volunteers. • Volunteers can also support public culture, parks and recreation services and programs, enhancing the Town's ability to provide these. • 30% of community respondents indicated that a lack of knowledge about where to volunteer or how to get involved prevented them from volunteering in a culture, parks and recreation capacity. • The proposed Culture, Parks and Recreation Liaison could play a key role in volunteer development.



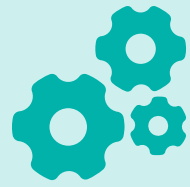
Timeline
Short



Priority
Medium




Cost
Staff



Service Delivery, Community Partnerships, and Communication Development

- A. Continue to Partner with Neighbouring Municipalities to Deliver Recreation Services
- B. Develop an Operational Plan to Initiate Implementation of the Master Plan
- C. Adopt Facility Allocation Policies
- D. Consider Adopting a Formalized Process and Criteria to Evaluate Capital Projects
- E. Designate a Culture, Parks and Recreation Liaison
- F. Develop a Communication Strategy for Culture, Parks and Recreation Services
- G. Involve the Community in Master Plan Implementation
- H. Grow Community Volunteer Capacity
- I. Ensure Accessibility is a Key Consideration in Facility Renewal and Development**
- J. Consider Climate Change in Facility Renewal and Development
- K. Review and Update the Culture, Parks and Recreation Plan Every Five Years

I. Ensure Accessibility is a Key Consideration in Facility Renewal and Development

Recommended Direction	Recommendation(s)	Rationale
 NEW AMENITY OR SERVICE	1. Make sure that accessibility is considered in the design of all culture, parks and recreation facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facility design can be a key barrier to people with disabilities participating in recreational activities. • According to the 2024 Nova Scotia Quality of Life Survey, people with disabilities in the Town of Yarmouth feel there is not enough for them to do. They also experience low life satisfaction compared to other demographic groups, and engage less in good quality exercise. • The Town can help address these issues by designing recreational facilities (including parks, trails, playgrounds, indoor and outdoor facilities) that consider the needs of people with disabilities.



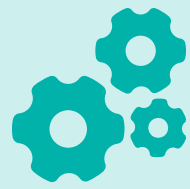
Timeline
Ongoing



Priority
High



Cost
\$\$



Service Delivery, Community Partnerships, and Communication Development

- A. Continue to Partner with Neighbouring Municipalities to Deliver Recreation Services
- B. Develop an Operational Plan to Initiate Implementation of the Master Plan
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- I. Ensure Accessibility is a Key Consideration in Facility Renewal and Development
- J. Consider Climate Change in Facility Renewal and Development**
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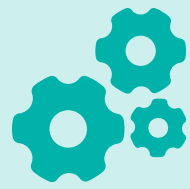
J. Consider Climate Change in Facility Renewal and Development

Recommended Direction	Recommendation(s)	Rationale
 NEW STRATEGY, POLICY, OR TOOL	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collaborate with municipal partners to identify the potential role of recreation facilities in emergency management and response, and outline specific steps and actions required to ensure these facilities can operate effectively and meet community needs during emergencies. 2. Consider climate change related risks (e.g. storm surge, sea level rise, extreme storms) when siting and designing facilities. 3. Complete energy and emissions audits of existing recreation facilities to identify strategic investments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Town’s Climate Change Action Plan states the intention of the Town to develop and manage municipal assets in light of climate change. It’s Corporate Climate Change Mitigation Plan (2021) recognizes that energy efficiency should be considered whenever a capital project is being designed. • Considering energy efficiency and climate change risks in the renovation, siting, design and construction of recreational facilities would align with these plans. • Working with partners to identify what role recreation facilities might play in emergencies could improve the Town’s emergency management and responses capabilities.

Timeline
Ongoing

Priority
High

Cost
Staff




Service Delivery, Community Partnerships, and Communication Development

- A. Continue to Partner with Neighbouring Municipalities to Deliver Recreation Services
- B. Develop an Operational Plan to Initiate Implementation of the Master Plan
- C. Adopt Facility Allocation Policies
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- H. Grow Community Volunteer Capacity
- I. Ensure Accessibility is a Key Consideration in Facility Renewal and Development
- J. Consider Climate Change in Facility Renewal and Development

K. Review and Update the Culture, Parks and Recreation Plan Every Five Years

K. Review and Update the Culture, Parks and Recreation Plan Every Five Years

Recommended Direction	Recommendation(s)	Rationale
 NEW AMENITY OR SERVICE	1. Review the Master Plan every five years and undertake a fulsome update as required.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A review of the Master Plan should be completed after five years of implementation. A fulsome update may be needed at that time depending on progress made and evolving circumstances.



Timeline
Ongoing



Priority
High



Cost
\$\$



8

IMPLEMENTING THE MASTER PLAN

This section provides guidance toward implementing the Master Plan.

Organizational Lead

The Town of Yarmouth will take the lead role in implementing the Master Plan, working with municipal partners and shared entities such as Yarmouth Recreation and the Mariners Centre Management Authority. They are encouraged to seek partnerships with user groups, community organizations, the local business community and the provincial government to leverage available expertise and resources. Residents can also be engaged through task forces and committees to help contribute to implementation.

Future Planning, Evaluation, and Reporting

A key component of the success of the Master Plan will be the evaluation of its initiatives. Recommended performance measures are identified in Appendix D. The plan should be reviewed bi-annually, at which time priorities should be re-evaluated and a discussion of any variances should occur in reference to performance measures. If new projects are added (or old projects removed) as the plan progresses, this should be done by weighing the relative priority of all projects in the plan. The action plan should be updated on a yearly basis; therefore, the third quarter evaluation period will set the stage for the updated version of the plan. In the fourth quarter, the updated plan should be formalized, and a draft approved by the end of the year. A fulsome update of the Master Plan may be needed after year five of implementation, depending on progress made and circumstances at the time.

Implementation Considerations

The Master Plan recommends several priorities and supporting action items. Attempting to complete all initiatives concurrently will stretch the resources and limit the focus of the Town as it implements the plan. Therefore, it is recommended that implementation of the plan begins with the highest priority items and quick wins.



Photo Credit (top-bottom): Saltwire, CJLS

Top 10 Actions

The following actions have been identified as the top priorities of the master plan. They are listed in a recommended order of priority. This priority list and all components of the plan are for planning purposes only and subject to annual budget approvals and ongoing planning efforts from the Town. The Town may add, remove or re-order activities based on the needs of the community at the time of implementation.

- 
1 Increase access to facilities, programs and spontaneous recreational activities for people of all abilities and income levels by allocating more prime time space for broad public access, developing allocation policies for facility use, and creating a fee waiver program.
- 
2 Ensure that culture is considered in the planning, design and delivery of all recreational services, facilities and related municipal activities.
- 
3 Complete a Festival and Events Sustainability Strategy that will work with partners to increase the sustainability of festivals and events in the community.
- 
4 Undertake a feasibility study for a new multi-purpose indoor facility including a turf field, indoor climbing wall, and indoor playground.
- 
5 Connect key facilities and parks with multi-purpose trails.
- 
6 Increase public programming and install new amenities in parks.
- 
7 Collaborate with the Arts community to complete a feasibility study for a new performing arts facility.
- 
8 Designate a culture, parks and recreation liaison position to support community organizations.
- 
9 Develop a communication strategy for culture, parks and recreation services to help increase awareness and participation.
- 
10 Adopt a formalized process and Capital Project Evaluation Criteria to evaluate Town-led projects and community-led projects requesting Town funding.

9

CONCLUSION



Photo Credit: Town of Yarmouth

This Master Plan positions the Town to further enhance its role in culture, parks and recreation services. It reinforces the importance of arts and culture, recognizes the benefits and potential of its parks system, and understands that recreation is a fundamental component of the community. By putting this plan into action, the Town will strengthen its community development efforts and realize stronger outcomes. All residents will have better access to facilities and programs that align with their interests and means, and that support their overall well-being and their connections to neighbours, friends, and family.

APPENDICES



Appendix A – Facility and Program Inventory

Indoor Facilities – Town Owned

Mariners on Main

Mariners on Main is located at 275 Main Street. The facility includes a swimming pool that features three, 18.3 metre lanes and depths ranging from four to nine feet. Mariners on Main also includes a fitness centre, spin, dance and yoga studios as well as basketball, pickleball and racquetball courts.¹⁹

Lake Milo Boat Club

Lake Milo Boat Club is located at 700 Main Street, north of downtown and on the shore of Lake Milo. It is a two-story building of wood frame construction built in 1937. The second floor features a banquet hall and kitchen that can be used for events.²⁰ There are docks and platforms on site that are used to access the lake for swimming.

Yarmouth Fire Hall

The upper level of the Yarmouth Fire Hall is a multi-purpose community centre. It is available for rentals. It includes a kitchen, large stage, elevator and onsite parking. It is located east of the waterfront at 221 Pleasant St.

Indoor Facilities – Owned by Municipal Partners

Mariners Centre

The Mariners Centre is located at 45 Jody Shelley Drive. The facility has two ice surfaces, with seating capacity for close to 1,300 spectators. The ice for the 2024/2025 season is in place from the end of August to April. The Mariners Centre also includes an indoor walking track around the arena, a viewing area between the arenas, and a large meeting space that could support sport tourism events.²¹ There are also three other spaces that can be rented for meetings and events. There is an outdoor riding arena and pavilion on site that are used annually for an agricultural exhibition. The facility is jointly owned by the Town of Yarmouth, the Municipal District of Yarmouth, and the Municipality of Argyle.

Credit Union Wellness Centre

This centre is under construction and expected to be completed by the end of 2026. It will include a barrier-free aquatics centre with a 6-lane 25m lap pool and leisure pool. It will also house an indoor walking track, fitness center, and other recreational spaces. It will also feature universal change rooms. The facility will be jointly owned by the Town of Yarmouth, the Municipal District of Yarmouth, and the Municipality of Argyle, and managed by the Mariners Centre Management Authority. With the closure of Acadia University's pool in Wolfville, the Credit Union pool will become the largest in southwest Nova Scotia.

Rotary Community Centre at the Hebron Recreation Complex

The Rotary Community Centre is located off Cemetery Road in Hebron, in the Municipal District of Yarmouth. It features an open space where tables and chairs can be arranged as needed, along with a fully equipped kitchen. It is owned by the Municipal District of Yarmouth and operated by Yarmouth Recreation.

Indoor Facilities – Owned by Non-Municipal Partners

Yarmouth Arts Regional Centre (Th'YARC)

Th'YARC is the largest multi-function performance centre in Southwestern Nova Scotia. It is operated by the Yarmouth Arts Regional Council. The centre consists of a 325-soft seat theatre with fly tower, an art gallery, an artist studio, an etching studio, and a costume studio.

Yarmouth Lions Community Centre

The Yarmouth Lions Community Centre is located at 87 Parade Street. The facility includes a community hall and kitchen.

Izaak Walton Killam Memorial Library

The library is located at 403 Main Street. It is across from Frost Park and Town Hall. It is open Tuesdays through Sundays, and offers a variety of programming for children and adults. It is a branch of the Western Counties Regional Library.

Nova Scotia Community College Burrigge Campus

The campus is home to an indoor gymnasium as well as four indoor hard courts with permanent lines and portable nets that are used for pickleball.

The Harbourfront Museum

The museum is located in the historic Killam Brothers Building on the Yarmouth waterfront. It houses a collection of galleries with a mission to share stories of the area's culturally diverse past. The building was built in 1838 and is one of Canada's oldest shipping offices. It is operated by Friends of the Yarmouth Light Society.

Sweeney Fisheries Museum

The museum is on the second floor of an operational fish processing plant. It operates seasonally from May to October. It houses a collection of artifacts from companies owned by the late W. Laurence Sweeney, as well as information on Yarmouth's marine heritage. Exhibits and collections are owned by the Town.

Yarmouth County Museum and Archives

The largest museum in town, located in a former church building. Owned and operated by the Yarmouth Historical Society. Open year-round.

Firefighters Museum

Dedicated to the history of firefighting in Nova Scotia. Part of the Nova Scotia Museum System. Located close to downtown.

Curling Rink

Four sheet curling rink on the Yarmouth Links (golf course) site. Operated by the Yarmouth Curling Association. The Town has committed \$300,000 to improvements to this facility.

Rodd Grand Yarmouth Hotel and Convention Centre

Houses the largest meeting space southwest of Halifax. Can accommodate groups of up to 340 banquet-style and 440 theatre-style. Offer conference services such as meal planning, audio-visual and off-site catering.



Photo Credit: Expedition Management Consulting Ltd.

Outdoor Facilities – Town Owned

Killam Brothers Property (Killam Bros Marina/ Wharf)

The 1.23 acre site is on Yarmouth's waterfront. It includes a parking lot, boardwalk and marina. The Killam Building on the site is historical and was upgraded in 1997 when the Town purchased the site. The parking lot is used for festivals and events. Killam Wharf Limited has an easement through the property to access its restaurant and pub on the adjacent property.

Yarmouth Skate Park

Yarmouth Skate Park is located on Main Street. It features a concrete skateboard park and a playground.²²

Lake Milo

Lake Milo is located at 700 Main Street. It includes lifeguarded swimming, canoe rentals, dragon boating, and canoe/kayak programs. The site also features a public boat launch and floating docks.²³

Broadbrook Trail

Broadbrook Trail is located in central Yarmouth near Yarmouth Consolidated Memorial High School. The park is home to three baseball fields, Mariners Field, Travellers Field, and Veterans Field. The park also includes a wetland trail.

Coronation Park

Coronation Park is located at the north end of Main Street. The park features green space and a baseball field.

Frost Park

This large urban park is in the centre of downtown Yarmouth, next to Town Hall. It is between Water St and Main St. It features a fountain, benches, and mature trees.

Other Parks and Playgrounds

Yarmouth is home to many parks and playgrounds. These include Rotary Park, Sealed Landers Park, Beacon Park, Doug Melanson Park, Clock Tower Park, Southend Playground, Havelock Drive Playground, Goudey Park, and Sprucewood Playground. Additionally, Yarmouth has a dog park situated between South East Street and Forest Street. It features a grassy ground cover and two separate enclosures.²⁴

Gateway Ball Park

Gateway Park is located on William Street. The park includes a baseball field, canteen, washroom facilities, and an outdoor track.

St. Ambrose Field

St. Ambrose Field is located on the east side of Gateway Park. The field includes two baseball diamonds and bleachers.



Outdoor Facilities – Owned by Municipal Partners

Hebron Recreation Complex

There are three regulation-size softball fields available at the complex. They are appropriate for tournaments. There is also a playground and tennis courts. The 2km Forchu River Trail is on the site. The complex is owned by the Municipal District of Yarmouth and operated by Yarmouth Recreation.

Jumpstart Inclusive Multi-Sport Courts

The multi-sport courts are on the Credit Union RecPlex site. They are marked for various sports and feature adjustable equipment, offering opportunities for both traditional and Para Sports. They also include accessible seating areas and shaded rest spots.

Yarmouth Splash Park

The Yarmouth Splash Park is located at the Credit Union RecPlex. There are several small water features on a concrete pad.

Outdoor Facilities – Owned by Non-Municipal Partners

Yarmouth MCHS Soccer Fields

Yarmouth High Soccer Field is located on Parade Street. It is primarily used by the school and the Yarmouth Clippers Soccer Club. There is also a field on Forest Street.

Play on Ball Hockey Rink

The Play on Ball Hockey Rink is located in the parking lot outside the Mariners Centre on Starrs Road. It is open during the summer season for drop-in ball hockey.

Tennis Courts

The St. Ambrose Tennis Courts are located on the corner of Pleasant and Albert Streets in Yarmouth, featuring three courts. The Hebron Tennis Courts are located at the Hebron Recreation Centre and has four courts. They are managed by Yarmouth Recreation.

Yarmouth Links Golf Course

The Yarmouth Links Golf Course is located at 28 Forbes Street. The course has 18 holes as well as a pro shop located on site. The course also offers a panoramic view of the local lighthouse and ocean.²⁵

Janet Smith Memorial Soccer Field

Janet Smith Memorial Soccer Field is located adjacent to the Municipal District of Yarmouth Office in Hebron. This facility includes a full-sized field, clubhouse building with washrooms, a meeting space, soccer club office, and storage facilities.

Maple Grove Soccer Field

Maple Grove Soccer Field is located in Hebron and features a soccer field.

Programs

Yarmouth Recreation offers several programming for residents in the Town of Yarmouth and the Municipal District of Yarmouth. Programs offered by Yarmouth Recreation include:

- Children and Youth Programs:
 - Families at Play
 - Tiny Sports
 - Nerf Wars
 - Fun Nights
 - Day Camps
- Teen Programs:
 - She's Got Game
- Adult Programs:
 - Recreation Badminton
 - Beginner Pickleball
 - Recreation Pickleball
 - Advanced Pickleball
 - Active Soles Community Walking Groups
 - Canoe/kayak programs at Lake Milo
- Seniors Programs:
 - Co-ed Seniors Badminton
 - Co-ed Seniors Pickleball
 - Seniors for Seniors Dances

The Town also has a no-cost sports equipment loan program, and some other recreational programs are low-cost (\$2-\$5 per participant). It also offers canoe rentals.

The MCMA offers fitness classes, swimming lessons, lifeguard training, first aid, youth camps, racquetball instruction, karate classes, and Teen Takeover nights at the facilities that it operates.

There are also several community organizations that offer various culture, recreation, and sport programs including soccer, baseball, dance, football, golf, skating, swimming, performing arts, visual arts and more.

Appendix B – Expanded Engagement Results

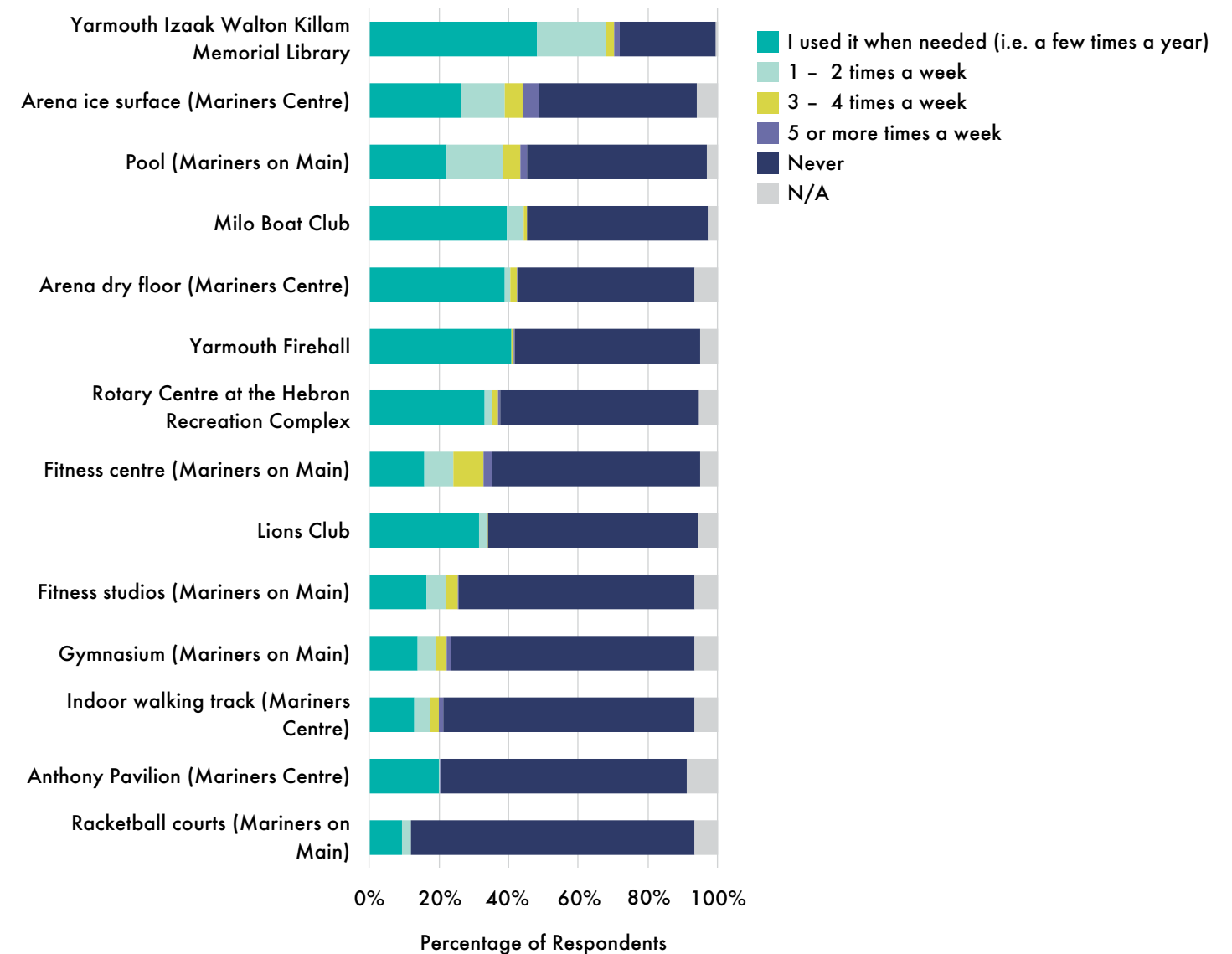
Resident Survey Results

A resident survey was conducted from March 10 to April 17, 2025. The objective of the resident survey was to gain a deeper understanding of resident’s needs for culture, parks, and recreation facilities and programs in Yarmouth.

Of 233 responses received, 52% indicated they reside in the Town of Yarmouth, 43% said they reside in the Municipality of the District of Yarmouth, and 6% of respondents said other. 64% of respondents identified as female, 29% identified as male, 3% preferred not to say, and 4% identified as other. Respondents were primarily between the ages of 40-49 (25%), 30-39 (23%), 60-69 (19%), and 50-59 (18%).

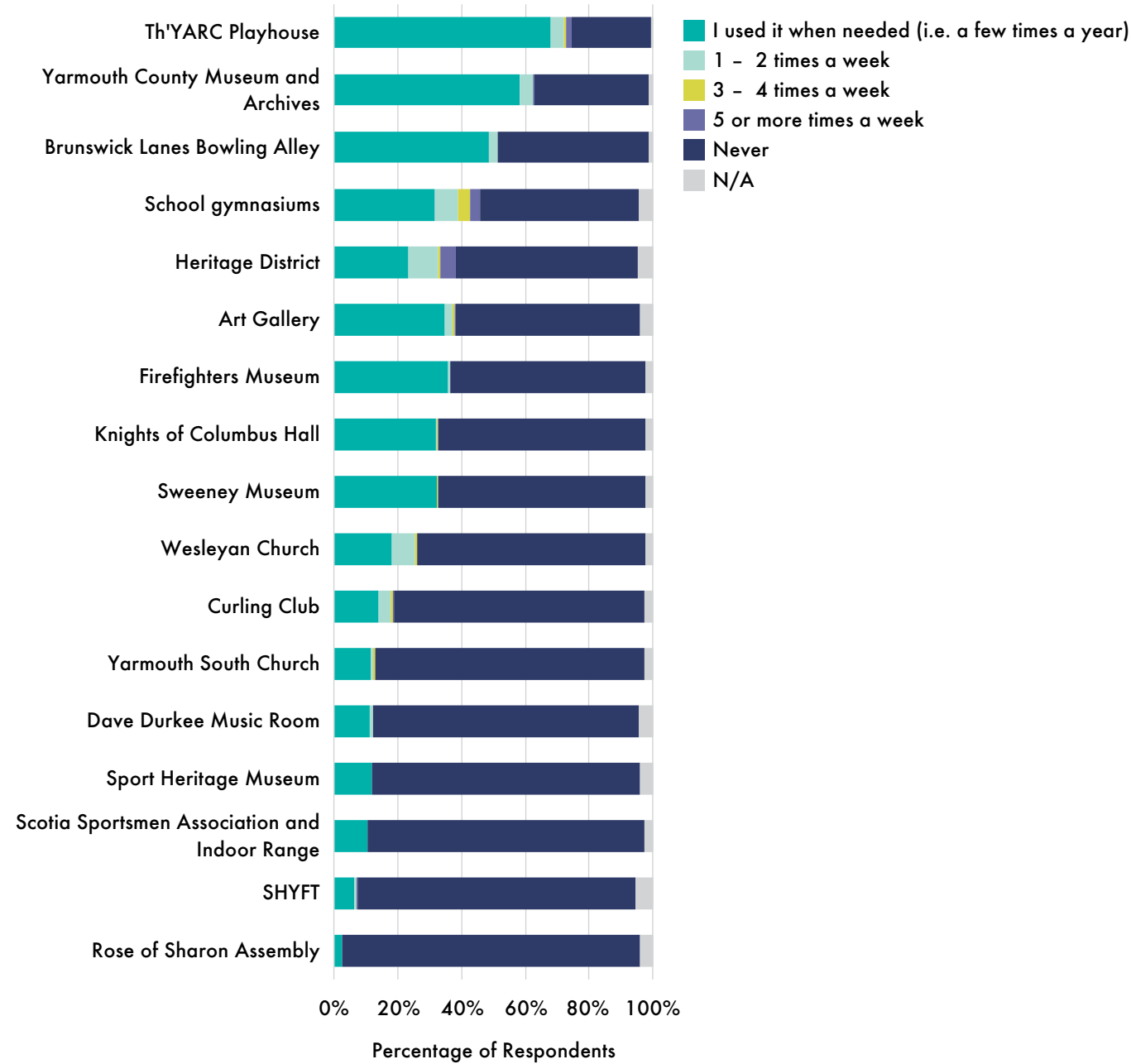


Please indicate how often you use the following Town-owned indoor culture and recreation facilities in the Town of Yarmouth on a weekly basis.

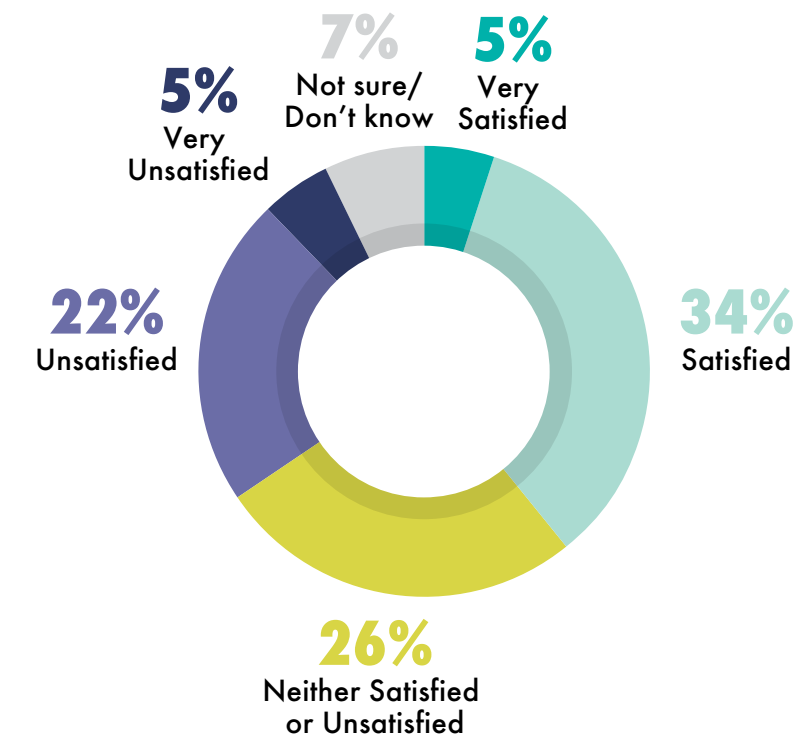




Please indicate how often you use the following partner-owned indoor culture and recreation facilities in the Town of Yarmouth on a weekly basis.

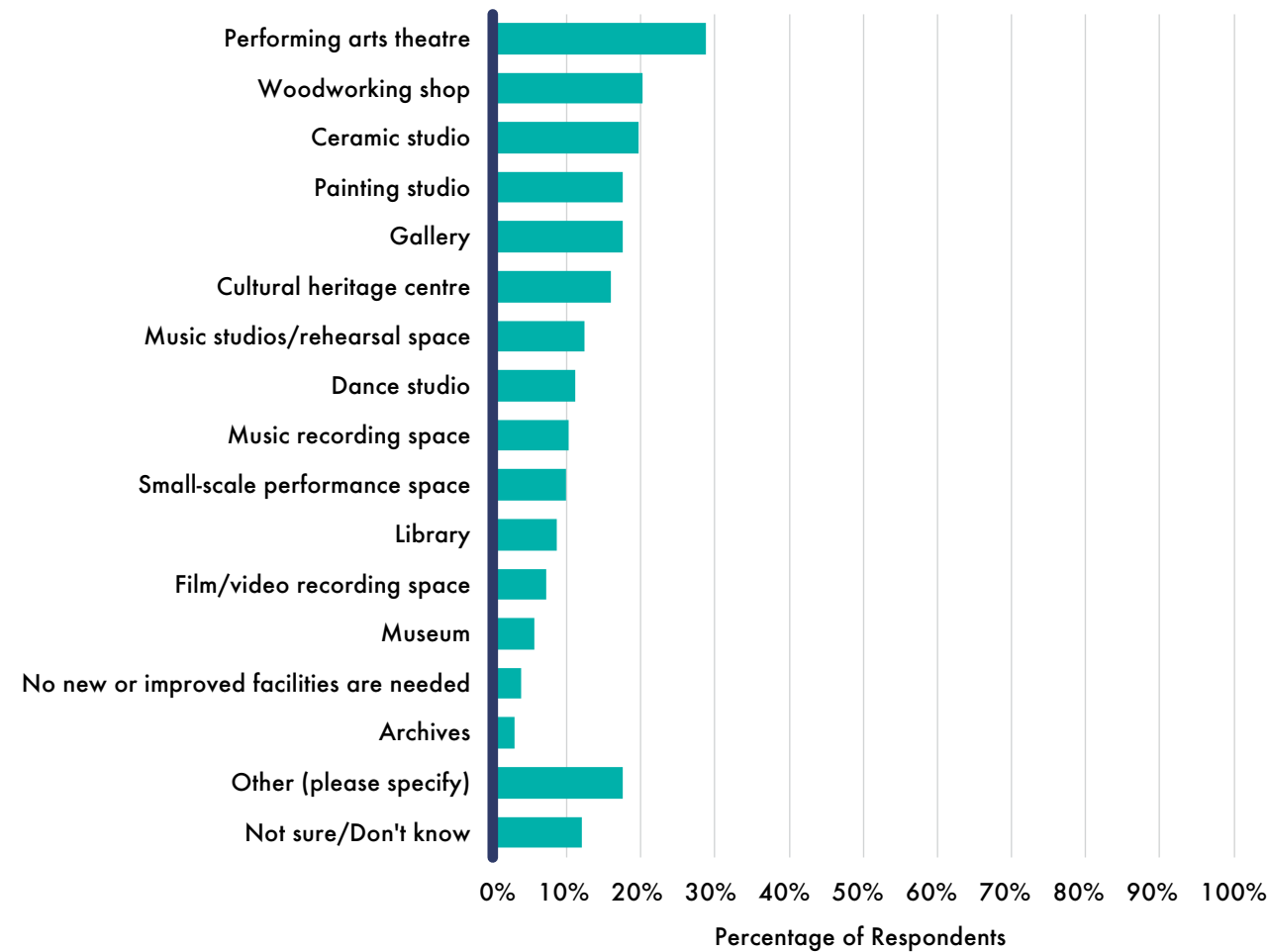


Please rate your level of satisfaction with indoor culture and recreation facilities in the Town of Yarmouth.

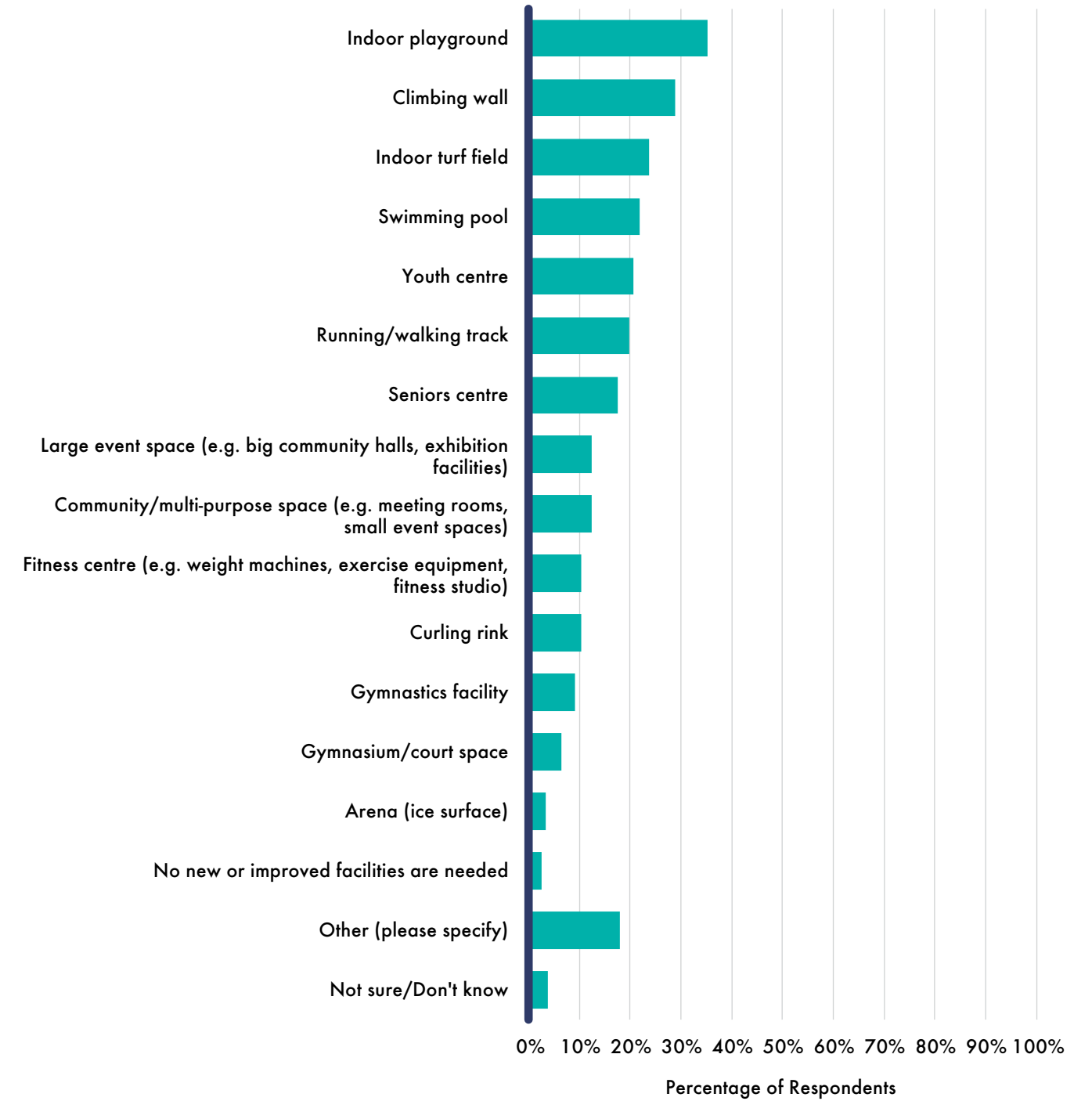




What, if any, new or improved indoor culture facilities are most needed in the Town of Yarmouth? Please select up to three options.

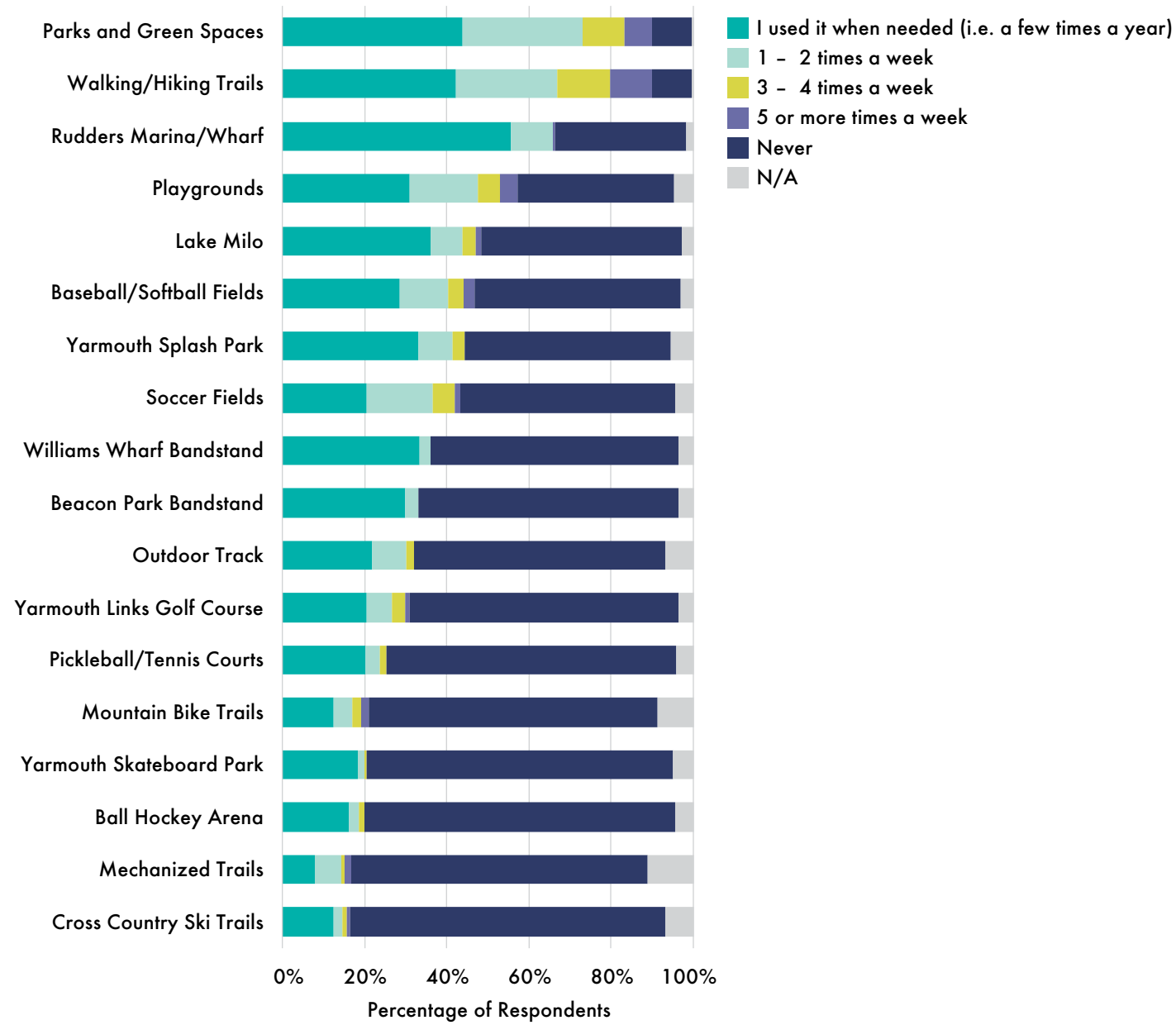


What, if any, new or improved indoor recreation facilities are most needed in the Town of Yarmouth? Please select up to three options.

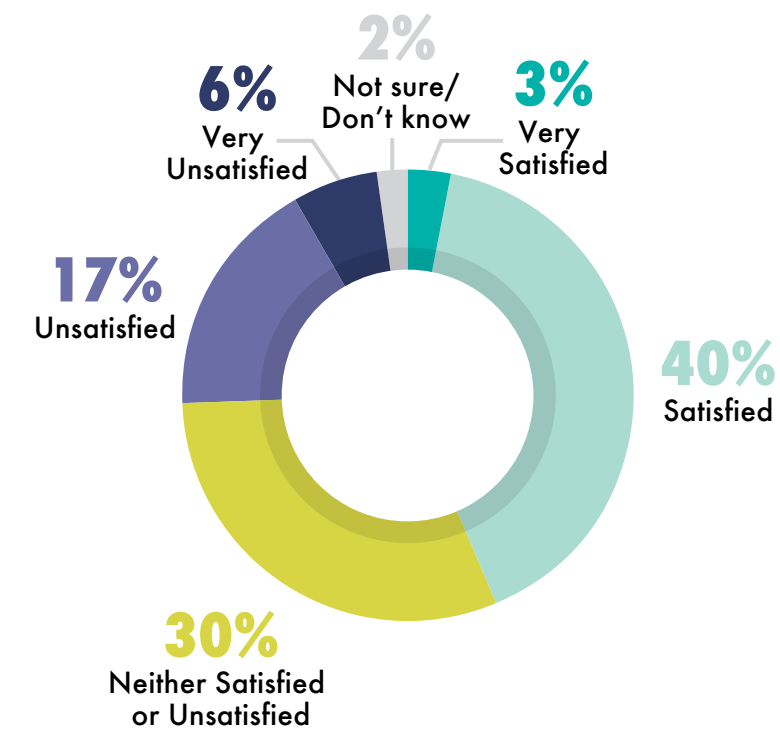




Please indicate how often you use the following outdoor facilities in the Town of Yarmouth on a weekly basis.

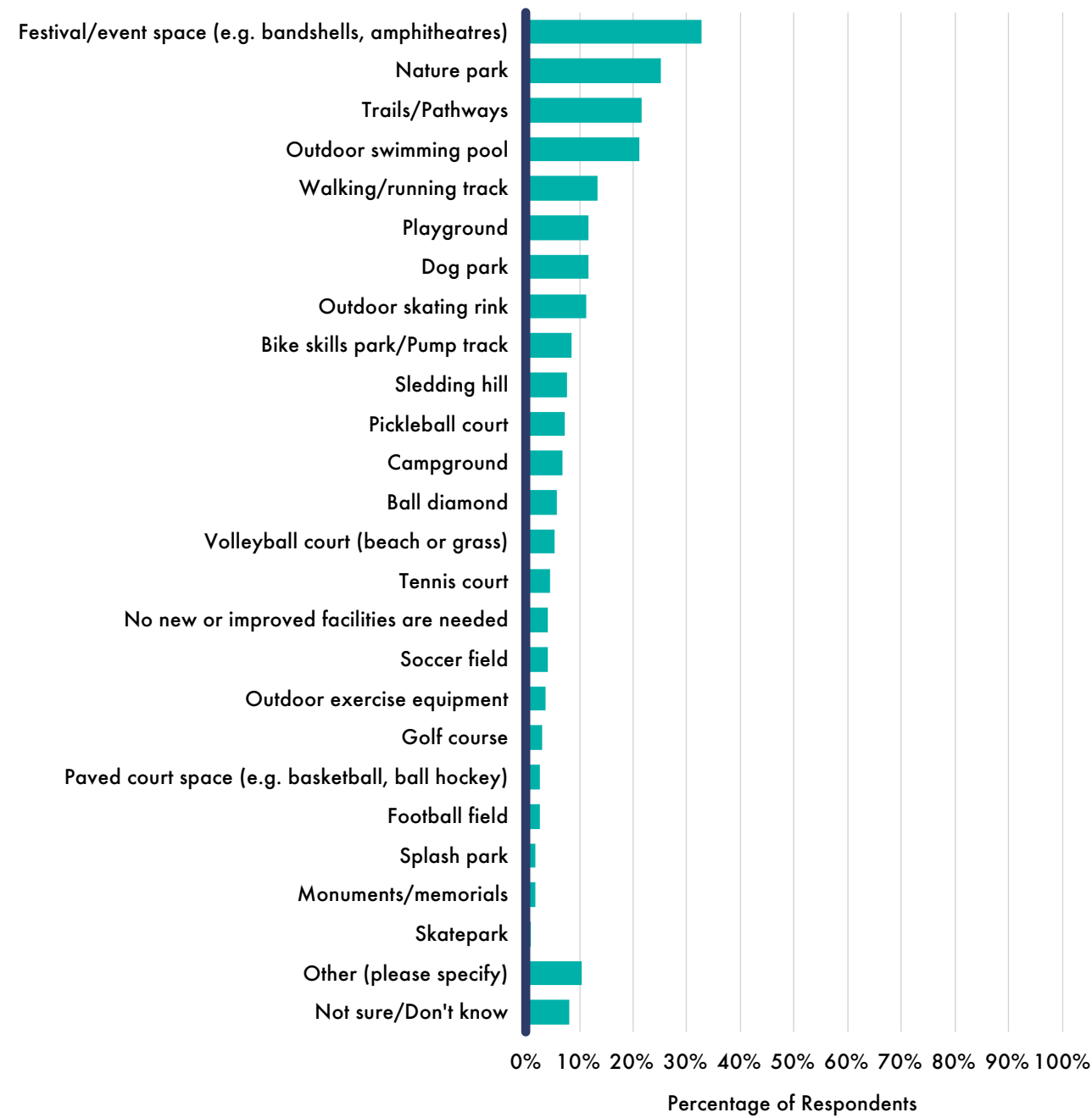


Please rate your level of satisfaction with outdoor facilities in the Town of Yarmouth.

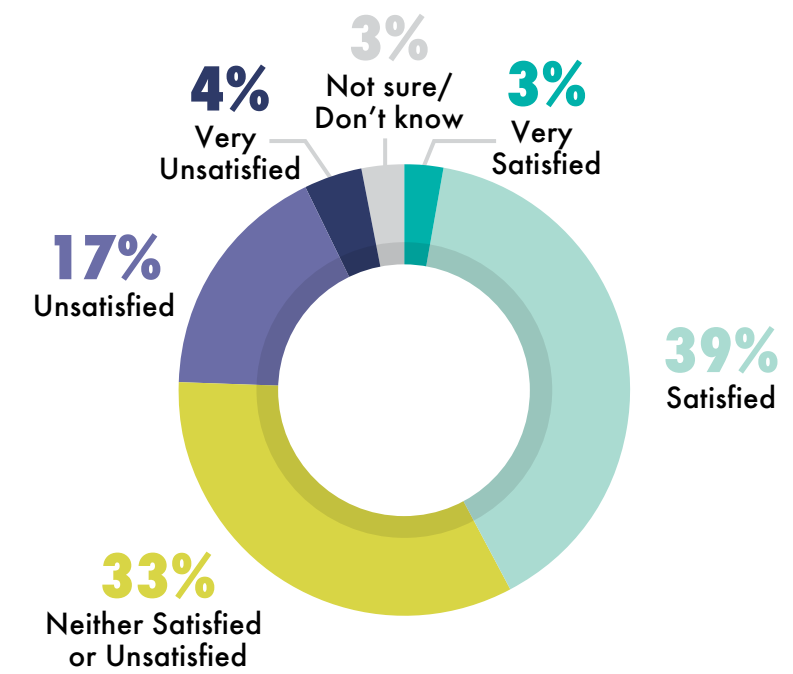




What, if any, new or improved outdoor facilities are most needed in the Town of Yarmouth? Please select up to three options.

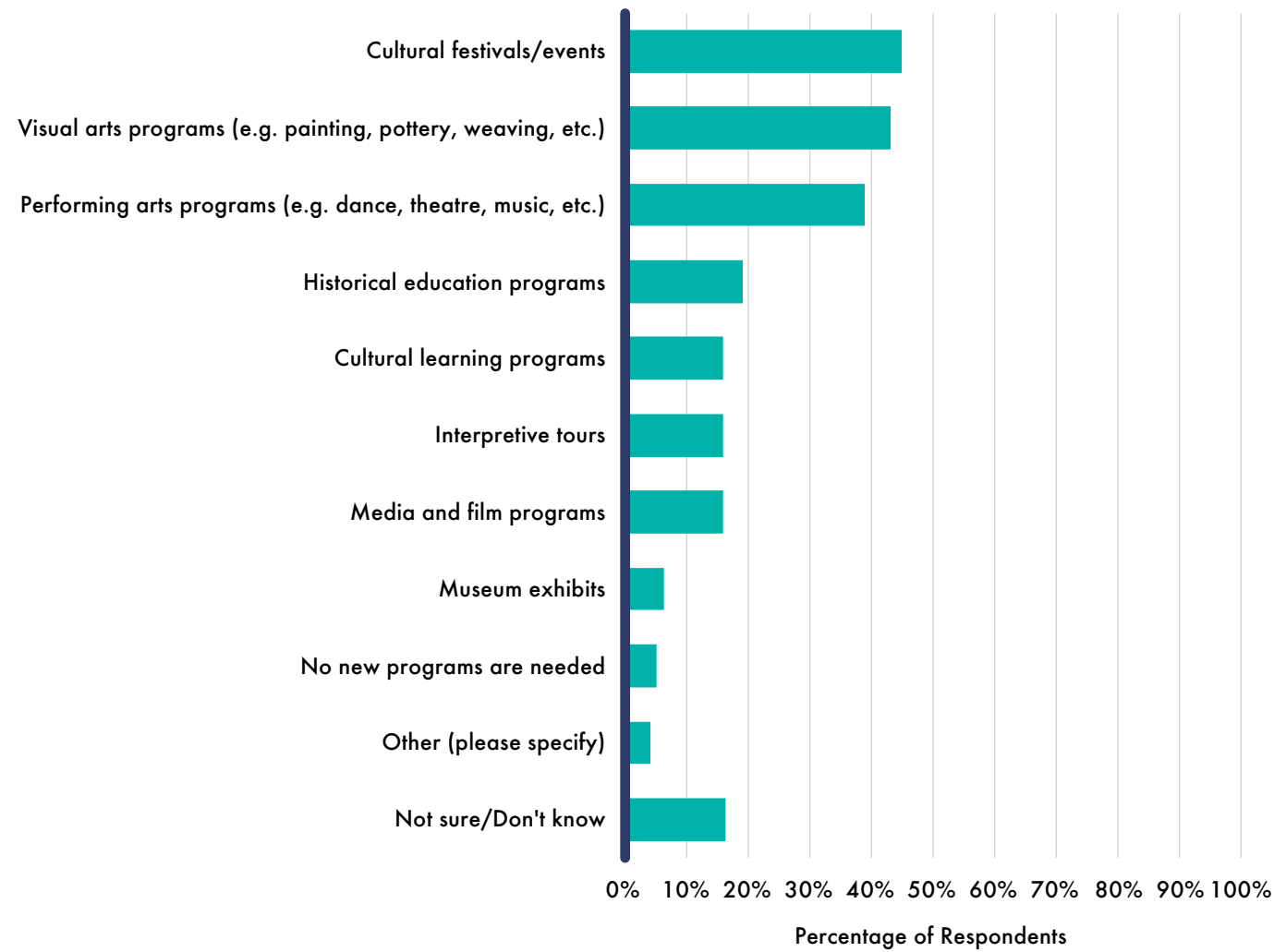


Please rate your level of satisfaction with culture, parks, and recreation programs in the Town of Yarmouth.

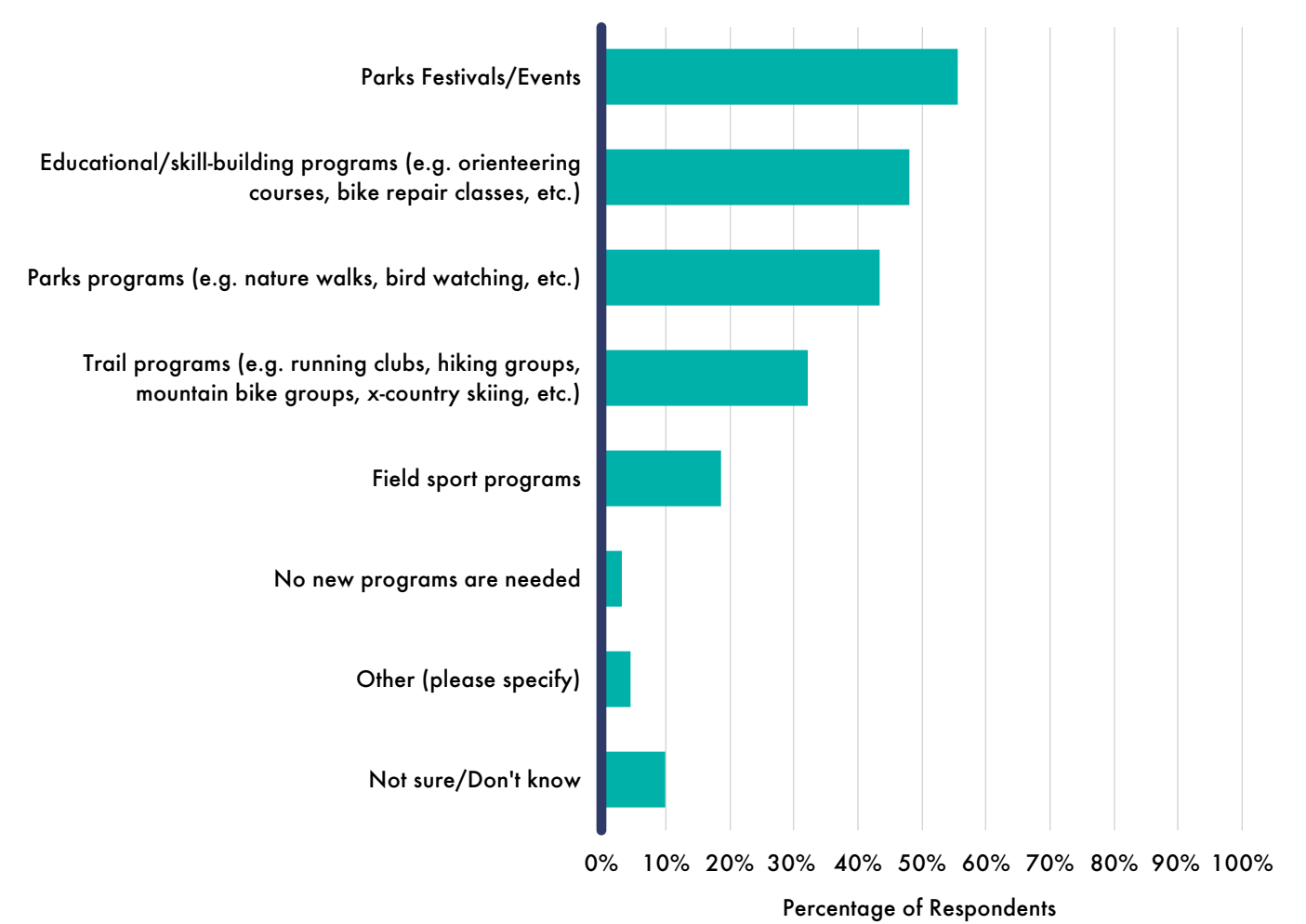




What, if any, new or improved culture programs are most needed in the Town of Yarmouth? Please select up to three options.

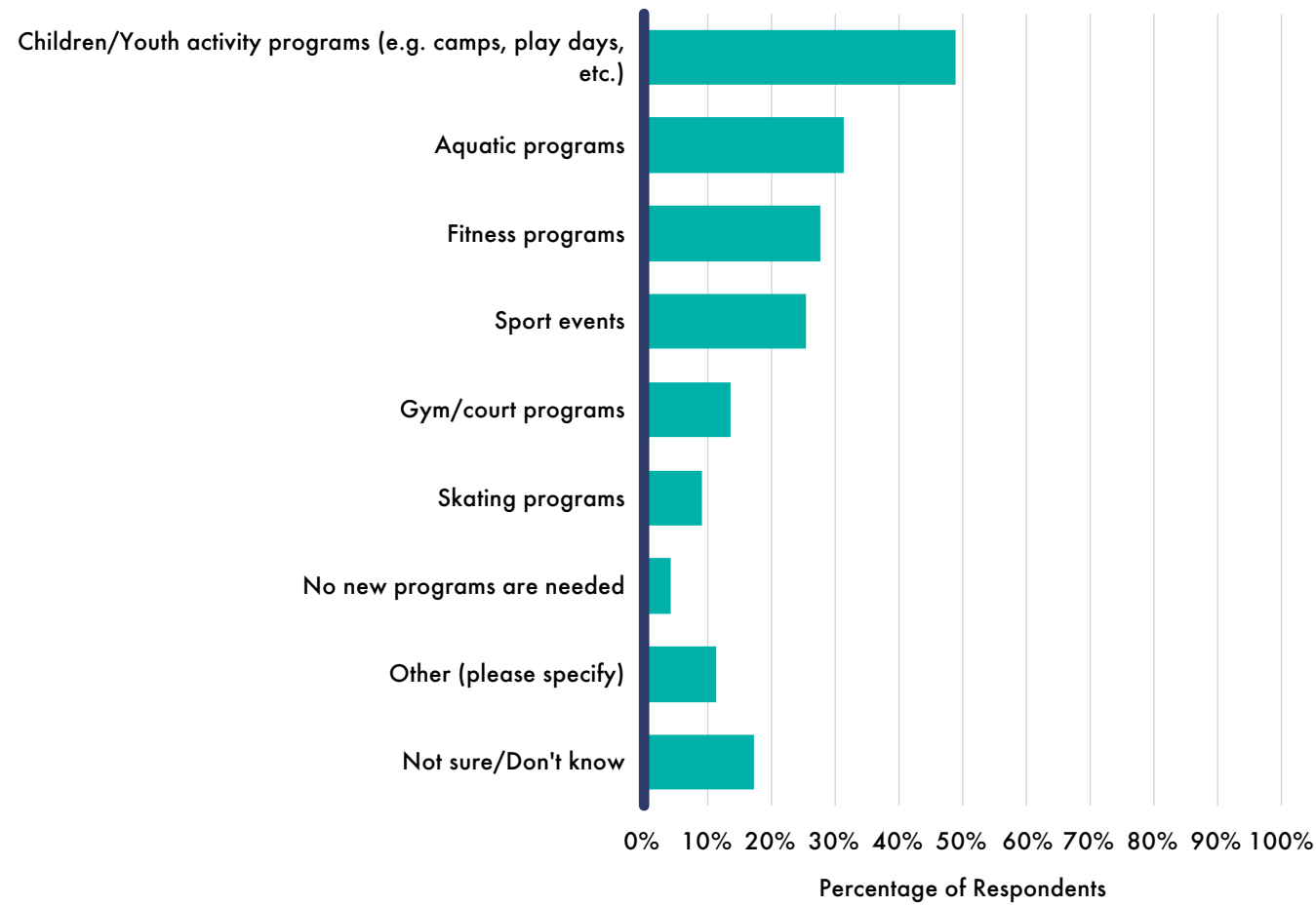


What, if any, new or improved parks programs are most needed in the Town of Yarmouth? Please select up to three options.

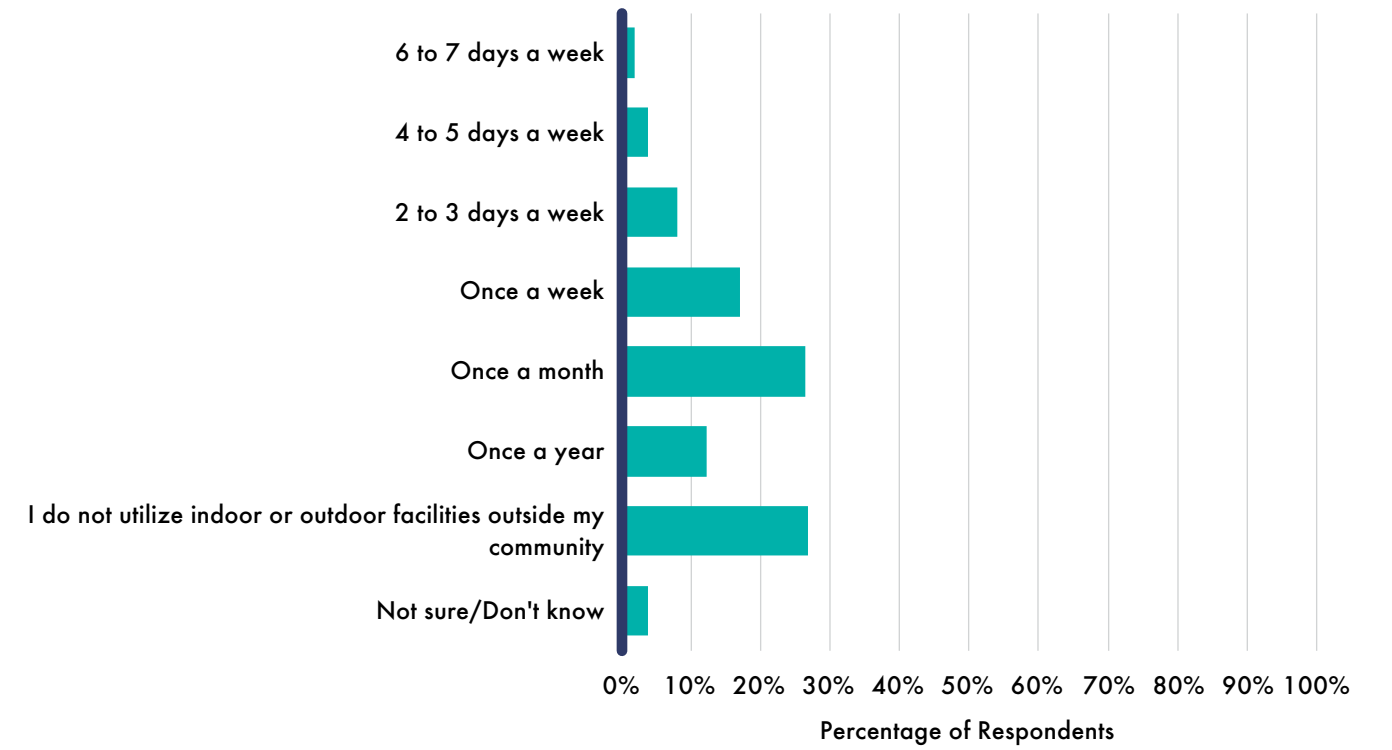




What, if any, new or improved recreation programs are most needed in the Town of Yarmouth? Please select up to three options.

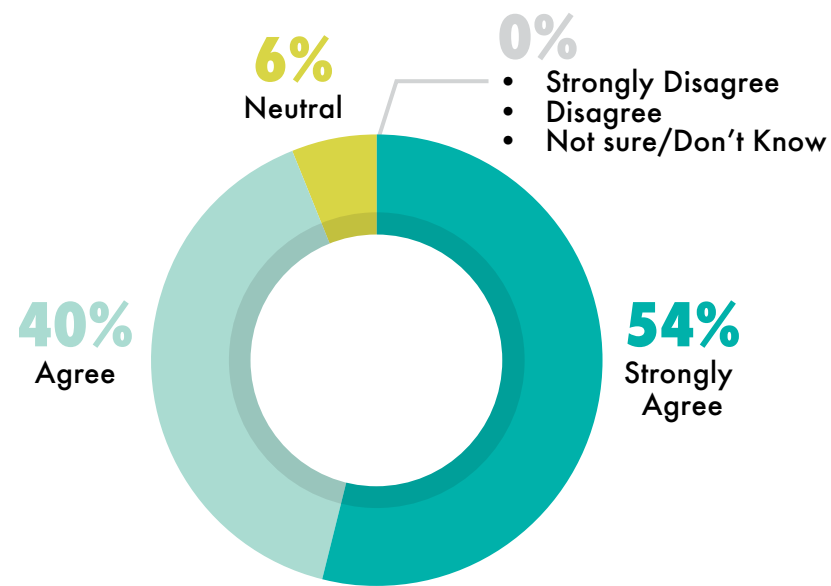


On average, how often do you travel outside the Town of Yarmouth to access indoor and/or outdoor facilities?

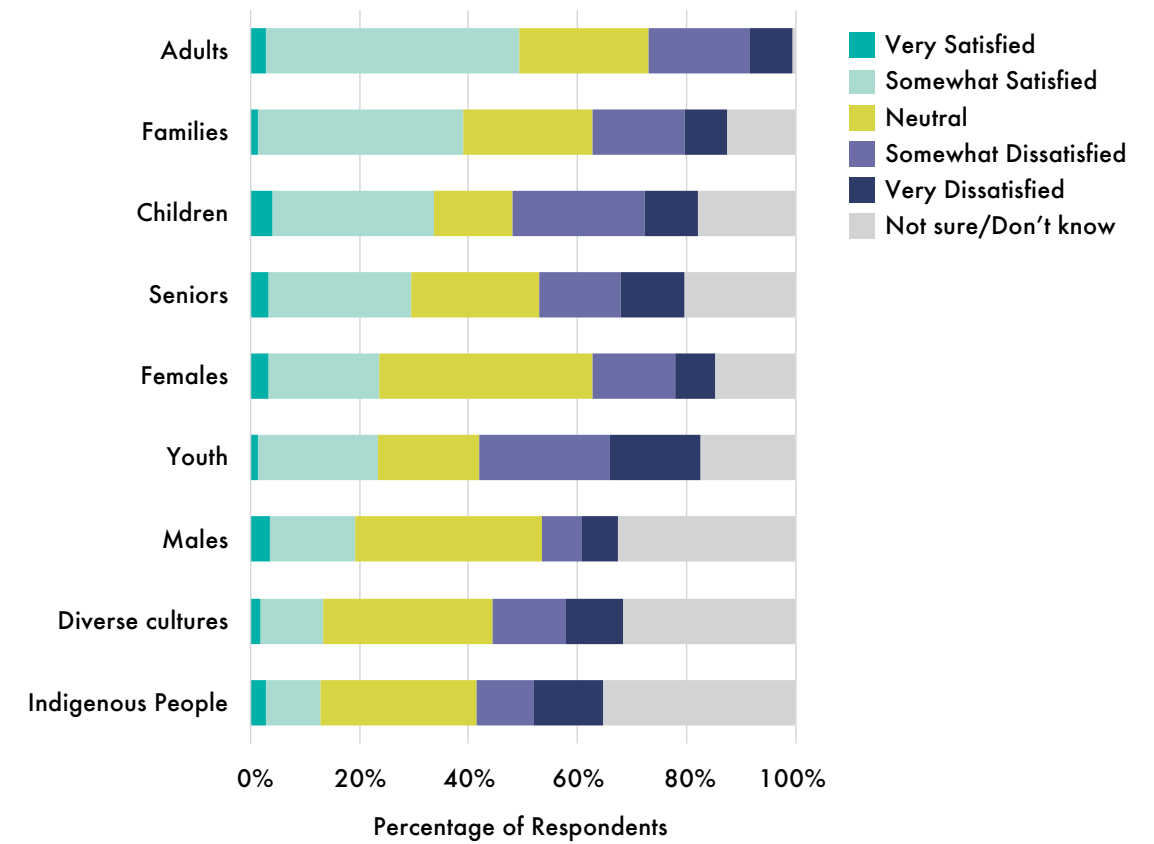




Please rate your level of agreement with the following statement:
Culture, parks, and recreation opportunities in my community are important to my quality of life.

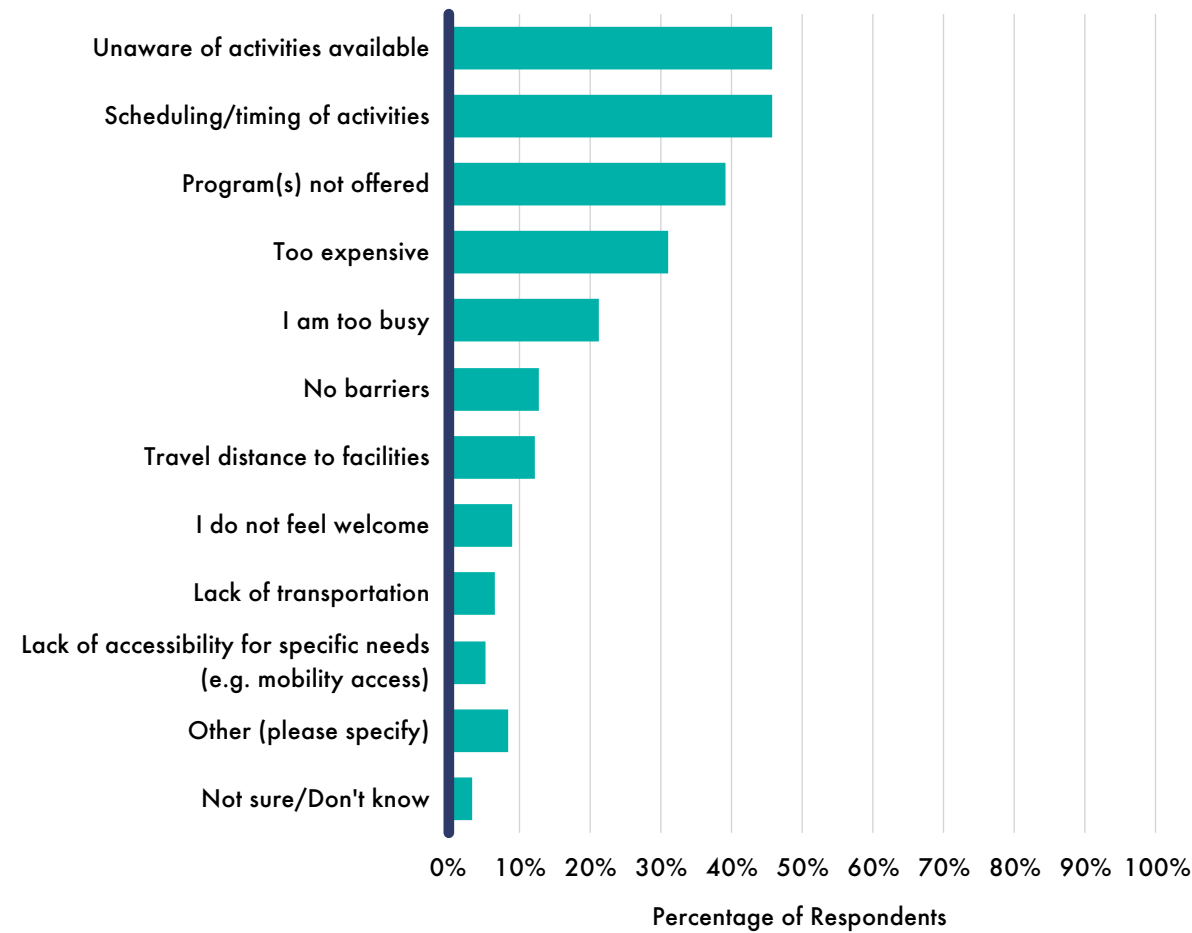


Overall, how satisfied are you with culture, parks, and recreation opportunities for the following populations in the Town of Yarmouth?

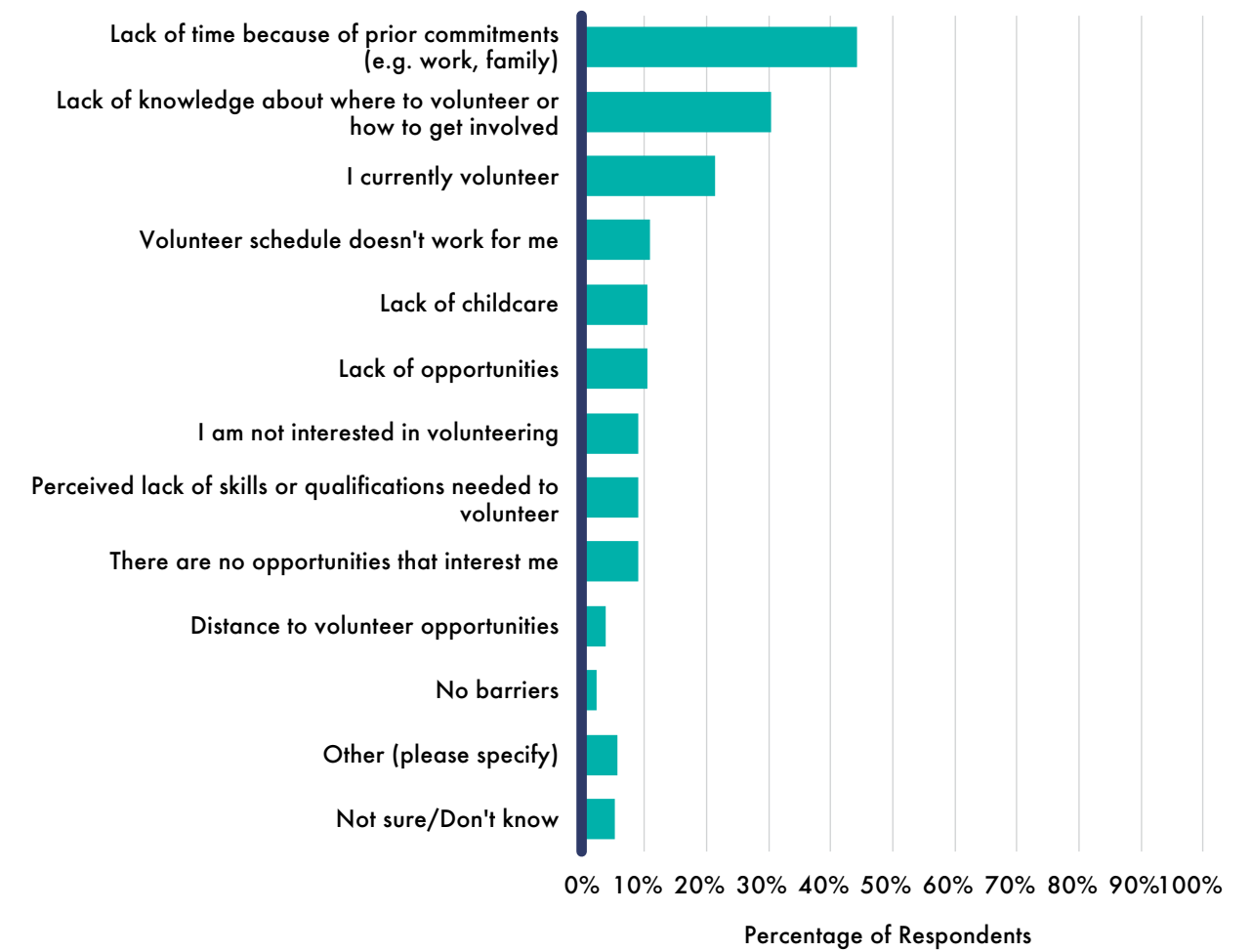




What, if anything, prevents you from participating in culture, parks, and recreation activities more often? Please select all that apply.



What, if anything, prevents you from volunteering in a culture, parks, and recreation capacity in the Town of Yarmouth? Please select all that apply.





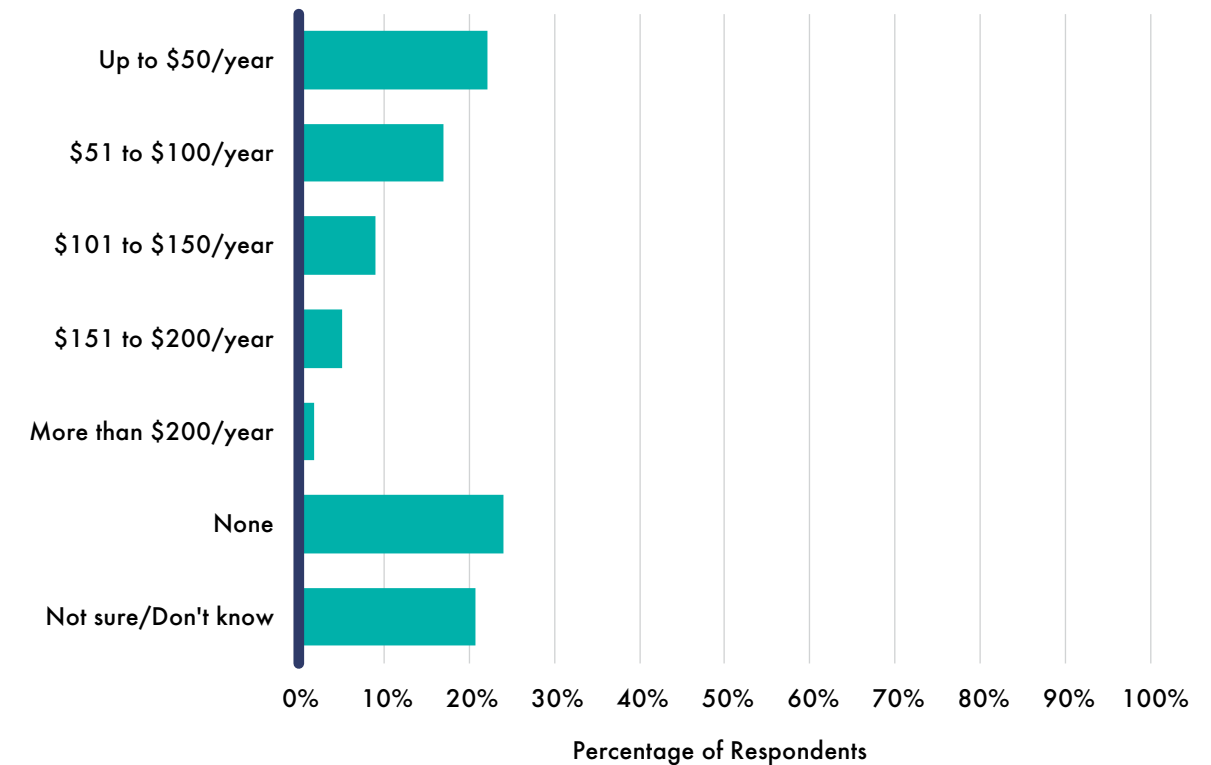
If one improvement could be made to culture, parks, and recreation facilities and programs in the Town of Yarmouth, what would your top priority be?

Respondents identified the following most often:

- Need for an indoor playground, arts, centre, performance space, and an indoor fieldhouse facility.
- Desire for more walking trails, green space, and parks.
- Need for more senior programs, kids/youth programs, evening and weekend programs, and arts programs.
- General comments about indoor facilities including the need for a gym, multipurpose facility, climbing wall, and additional ice surface.
- Need for enhanced communication and advertising.
- More events including outdoor concerts, music, and cultural events.
- Comments about accessibility including more affordable programs for youth, affordable facility memberships, and ensuring programs and facilities are accessible to everyone.
- Comments about inclusivity including more opportunities to bring cultures together, gender equity in scheduling, and supporting newcomers.



How much of an increase in property taxes would you support to enhance culture parks, and recreation opportunities in the Town of Yarmouth?





How much of an increase in user fees would you support to enhance culture, parks, and recreation opportunities in the Town of Yarmouth?

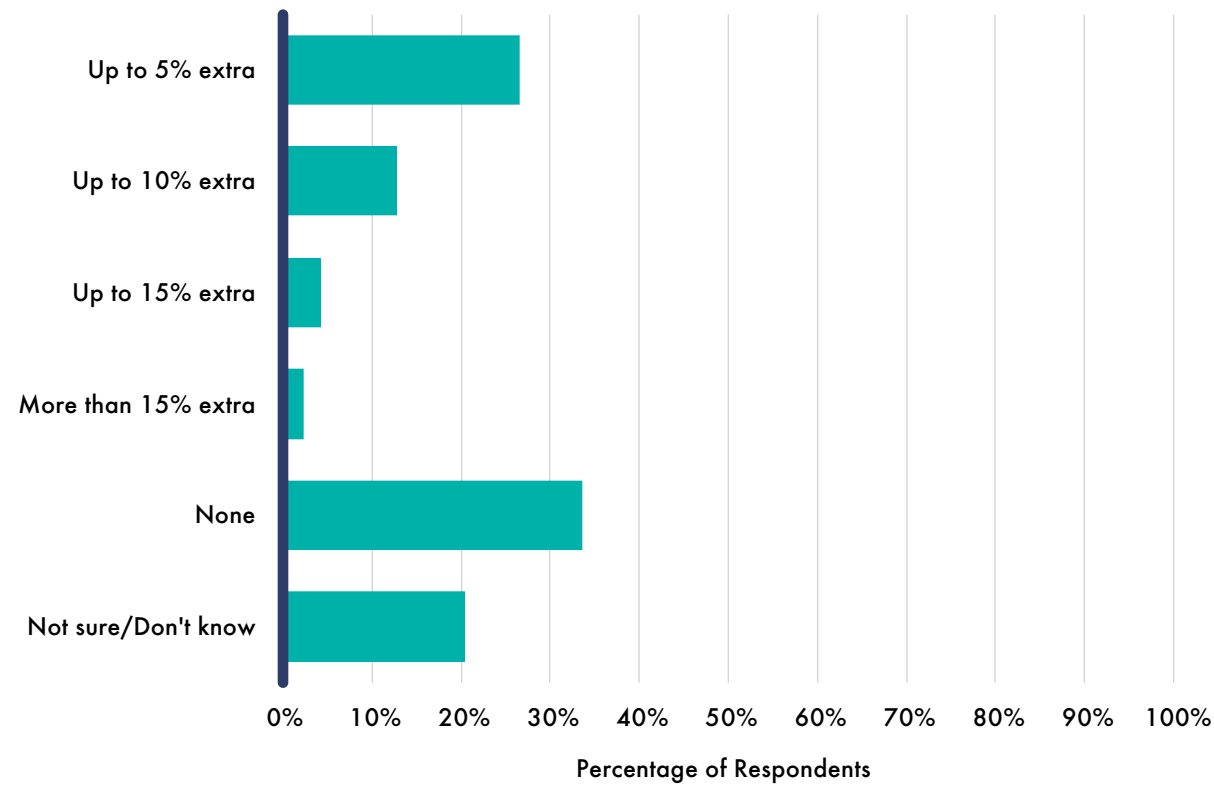




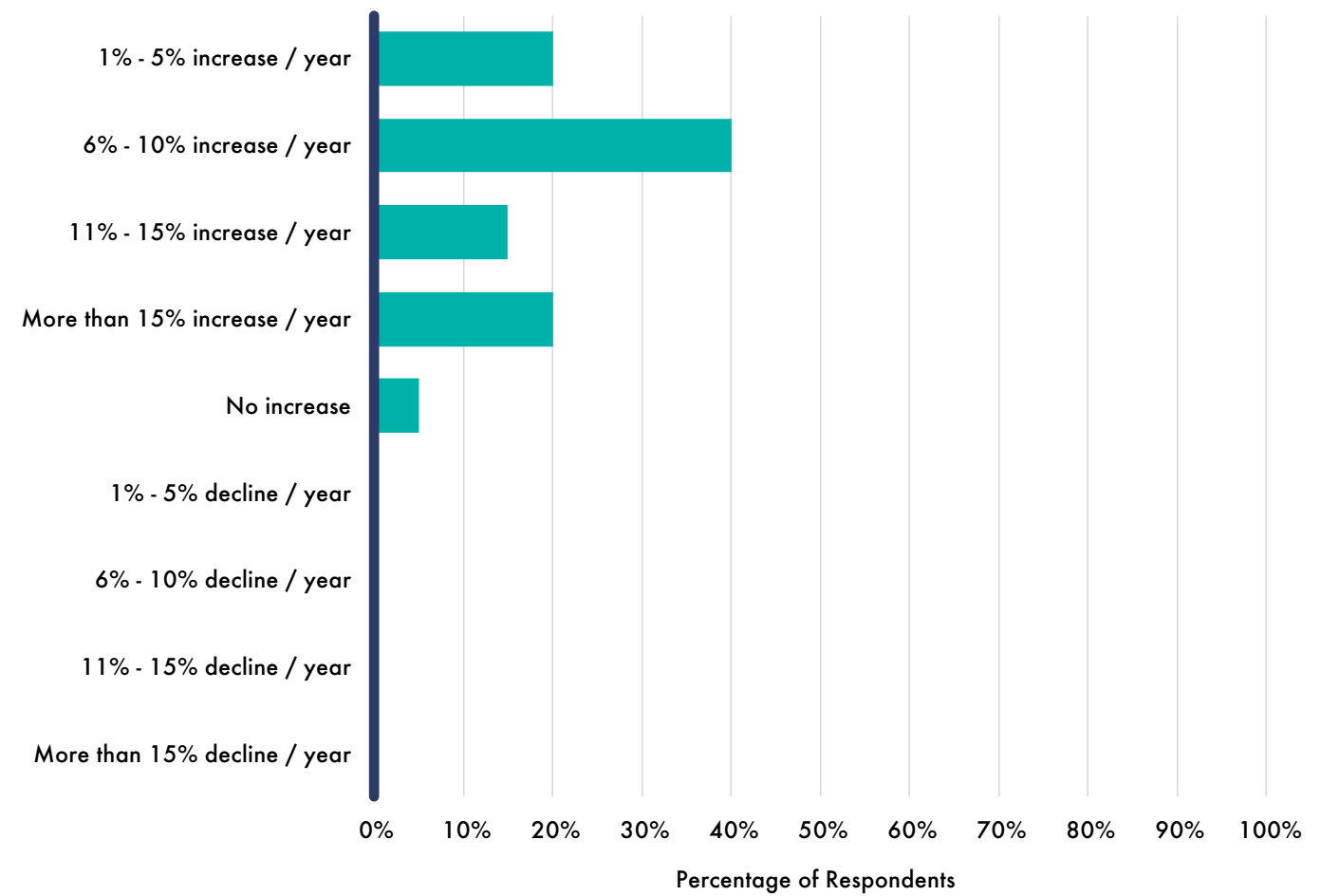
Photo Credit: Curl Yarmouth

Community Group Survey Results

A community group survey was conducted from March 10 to April 17, 2025. The objective of the survey was to gain a deeper understanding of community group’s perspectives in relation to culture, parks, and recreation facilities and programs in Yarmouth. In total, 19 responses were received.



What are your average annual growth projections for your participant base over the next 5 years?





If applicable, please describe any new facilities or upgrades to existing facilities that are needed to better serve your organization and its participants.

"We really need a performance venue in town, owned by the Town."

Hear! Hear! Society

"Upgrades to support sports other than hockey, like indoor soccer, basketball, baseball, pickleball, try-it recreation opportunities, and casual recreation and belonging. The easiest path forward is to save what we already have, like the gym space at MoM. Make this into a public gym for use by sports organizations, community groups, etc. Also use existing resources like the Anthony Pavilion better. Provide more partnership opportunities with NFP sector and the community to meet programming needs. Increase access with free or low cost options."

Public Health & Youth Wellbeing Network

"Parking area increased"

Western Nova Scotia Exhibition/ Western Nova Scotia Arts and Heritage Society

"Mobile backstop for Veterans (to allow various age groups to use it"

"Additional fencing for Travellers (netting behind the backstop to keep balls out of the wetland."

"Dugouts for Milton"

"Dugout repairs for Mariners"

"Batting cage for St. A/Gateway"

"Backstop at Mariners and Veterans have some loose brackets."

Yarmouth Area Minor Baseball Association

"This facility could use an upgrade to their accessibility for wheelchair participants, both the wheelchair ramp and front entryway."

Yarmouth NS Seniors for Seniors

"The building at YGCC is starting to age and will soon need major upgrades."

"New ice plant, concrete floor, accessibility entrance, and better viewing area."

Yarmouth Golf and Country Club

"We need a new roof, ice plant, and dehumidifier."

Curl Yarmouth

"New pool – which is on the horizon!"

Yarmouth Whitecaps Swim Club

"We need a new venue. I don't think that putting money in the old one is viable."

Th'Yarc

"To better serve the Tri-County Rugby Football Club and its participants, the installation of rugby uprights at a suitable field is essential. Currently, the club lacks a dedicated space with proper goal posts, which limits the ability to host official matches and conduct full-scale training sessions. Securing access to a field equipped with uprights would enhance player development, provide consistent and reliable venues for practices and allow the club to host home games, fostering greater community engagement. As the club continues to grow, having a designated field with appropriate infrastructure will ensure long-term sustainability and support the expansion of rugby in the region."

Tri County Tridents Rugby Football Club



Please describe why these enhancements are necessary to better serve your organization and its participants.

“Right now, we are at the mercy of the leadership of various churches and the museum. Any change in leadership or direction could result in our current venues no longer being available to us.

The concert grand piano, in particular, needs to be kept in a climate-controlled building, so it’s currently in the museum. Right now, we are holding concerts among the exhibits at the museum, but the space isn’t large enough to sell more than 55 tickets.

We’re doing our best with what we have, but we could address all of these issues with a purpose-built performance venue.

The Town provides facilities for recreation and parks, but simply does not offer facilities for the hundreds of performers and thousands of audience members in town.”

Hear! Hear! Society

“These upgrades are needed to better serve the community as a whole – across age groups and encourage active and healthy living opportunities.”

“Youth want opportunities to play basketball, volleyball, 9-square, hang-out (recreation) and need publicly available gym spaces. Youth who are engaged in community and feel valued, stay.”

Public Health & Youth Wellbeing Network

“Increased attendance at events.”

Western Nova Scotia Exhibition

“Improve usefulness and suitability for age groups using the facility.”

“Speed up play, reduce waste/expense of losing baseballs, reduce negative environmental impacts of searching through wetlands for baseballs.”

“Provide safety from hit balls/errant throws.”

“Necessary improvements to roofs to restore functionality.”

“Increase usefulness and provide better facility for learning and competition.”

Yarmouth Area Minor Baseball

“To provide greater access and encourage more participation for the disabled so they can take advantage of this venue.”

Yarmouth NS Seniors for Seniors

“Better/newer facilities are attractive to perspective members.”

Yarmouth Golf and Country Club

“We run the change of breaking down every year. In the last few years we started late due to mechanical difficulties.”

Curl Yarmouth

“We are maxed out due to space and available time at 50 participants in our program. With the new pool it will enable use to accommodate more swimmers within the programs we have.”

Yarmouth Whitecaps Swim Club

“It seems that the town is sports forward. It’s time for the arts to get its facility so the patrons can enjoy its performances.”

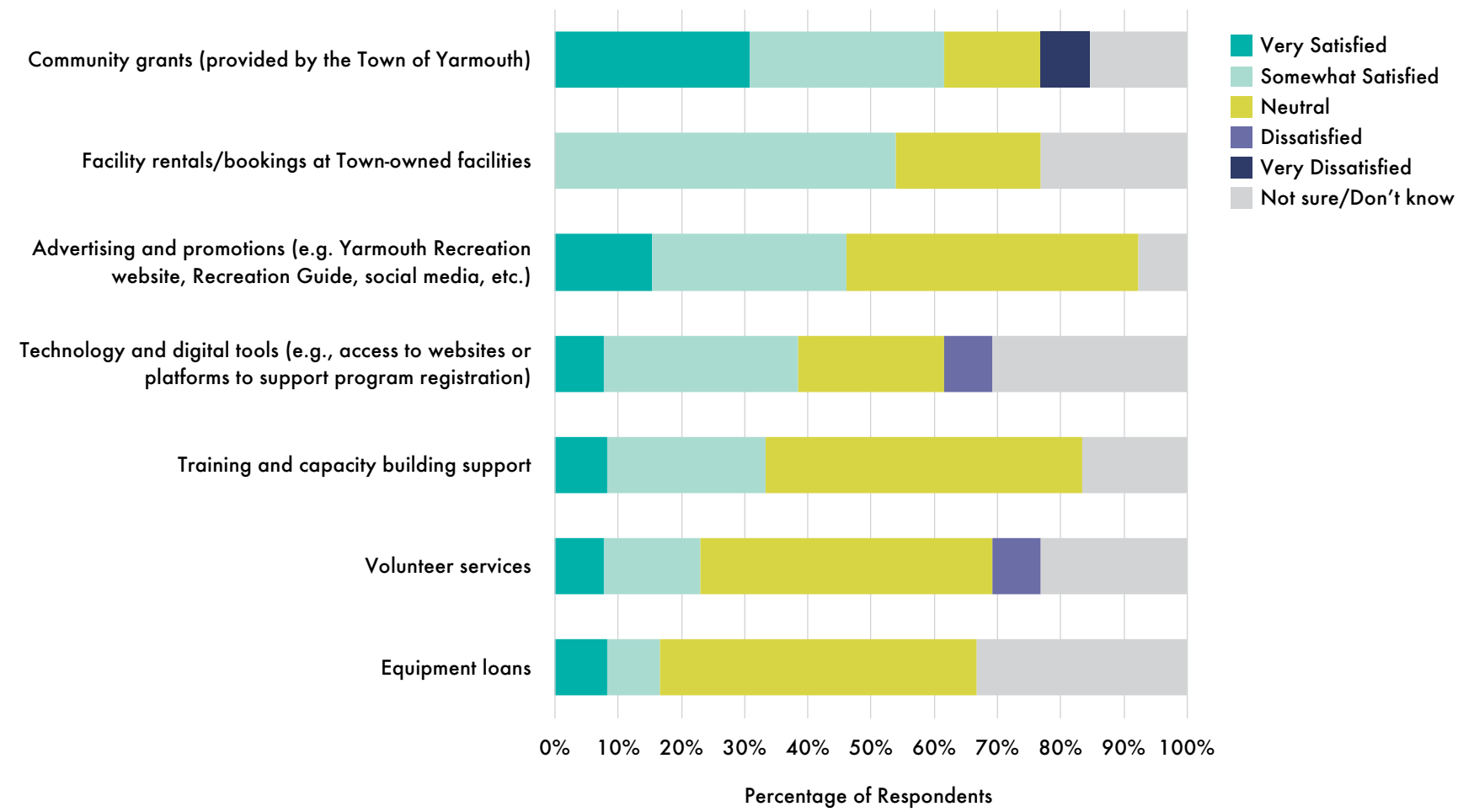
Th’Yarc

“These enhancements are necessary to better serve the Tri-County Rugby Football Club and its participants by providing a safe, structured, and professional environment for training and competition. Without rugby uprights, players are unable to practice key aspects of the game, such as kicking for points, conversions, and lineout throws, limiting their skill development and overall competitiveness. Additionally, the absence of a dedicated field with proper infrastructure prevents the club from hosting official matches, which impacts team morale, community engagement, and the ability to attract and retain players. Establishing a permanent field with uprights will not only enhance the quality of training and gameplay but also contribute to the long-term growth of the sport in the region. It will create more opportunities for youth and adult players to participate, increase visibility for rugby within the community, and allow the club to build stronger relationships with local schools and organizations interested in developing the sport.”

Tri County Tridents Rugby Football Club



How satisfied is your group with the following services in the Town of Yarmouth?





Please describe any opportunities or challenges your organization experiences in meeting the needs of its participants.

"We've had feedback from performers that our venues are not adequate. One solo pianist was performing two concerts at the museum and changed his program after playing the first concert, saying the room was too small for the program he performed - it was simply too loud.

We want to grow and bring more and better concerts to Yarmouth. We'll do our best no matter what, but having a venue fit for purpose would provide stability, more capacity for ticket sales, and a better experience for the performers and the audience."

Hear! Hear! Society

"Reducing barriers to access, creating youth friendly spaces, improving community partnerships and collaborative efforts, and more youth centered programming and opportunities."

"Facilities should consider re-examining how their community spaces are used to ensure youth have safe and welcoming places to hang out, free of charge."

"Consider ways to remove or reduce barriers that limit access due to age or income."

"Youth would like regular and more frequent programming opportunities after-school, during the evening and on weekends that are designed with them in mind."

"Consider expanding programming opportunities to engage youth in more diverse, playful, creative and non-competitive activity and hobby options."

"Explore opportunities to increase free access to sport and recreation programming after-school."

Public Health & Youth Wellbeing Network

"Availability of facilities."

Western Nova Scotia Exhibition

"We struggle to find enough field time with our current facilities for all our age divisions."

Yarmouth Area Minor Baseball

"Challenge will always be people wanting to get involved."

Yarmouth Seniors for Seniors

"The Curling Club has struggled since Covid attracting new and younger members."

Yarmouth Golf and County Club

"Cost of owning a building takes most of the money that could be used in other areas."

Curl Yarmouth

"Scheduling issues with the facility."

Yarmouth Whitecaps Swim Club

"Many established sports in the region have long-standing traditions, dedicated facilities, and community support, making it difficult for rugby to gain equal recognition and access to resources."

Tri County Tridents Rugby Football



In your opinion, are there any additional opportunities to encourage volunteerism in the Town of Yarmouth?

Respondents identified the following most often:

- Hosting more volunteer events where people can learn about various organizations.
- Staffed position to organize and connect a volunteer network.
- Promote programs and the volunteers needed to support programs.



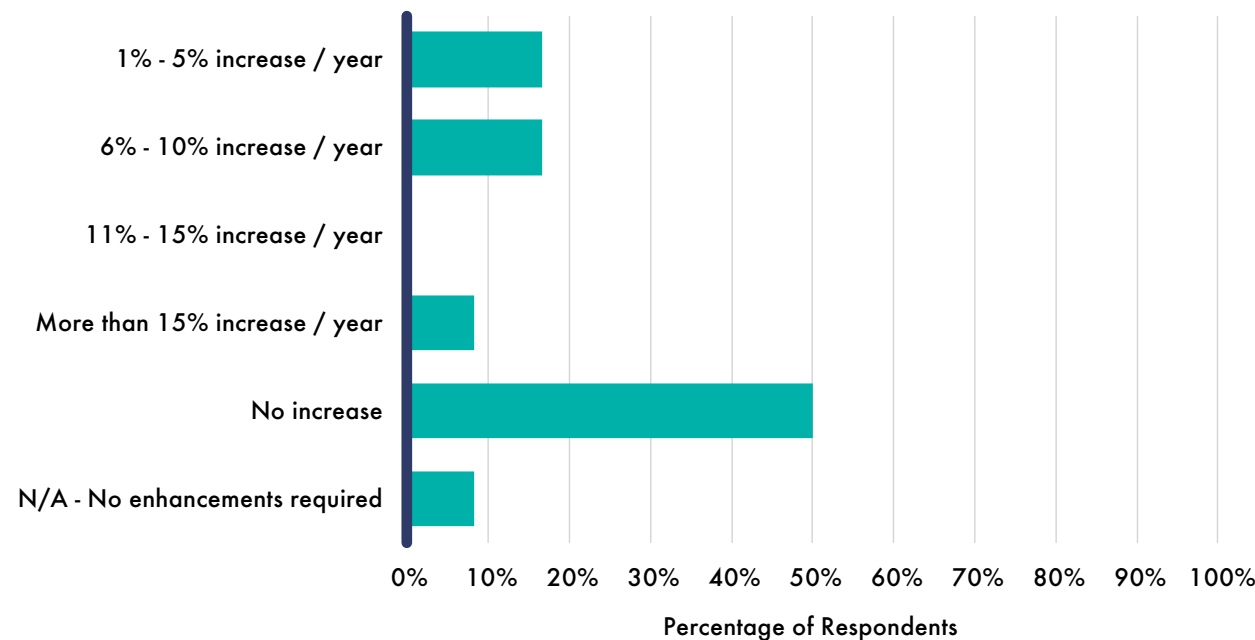
How can the Town of Yarmouth work with your group to help you better serve the community?

Respondents identified the following most often:

- More focus on culture facilities.
- Engage with community networks.
- Enhanced communication.
- Public advertising.
- Assist with volunteer recruitments.
- Facility access and infrastructure support.
- Grant and funding assistance.



Would your organization be willing to pay increased user fees in order to utilize enhanced facilities and services?



If you would like to provide any further input toward culture, parks, and recreation needs in the Town of Yarmouth, please do so here.

Respondents identified the following most often:

- Collecting input from community organizations by directly reaching out to groups.
- Take a balanced approach in the operating models and assess which items are revenue generating, cost recovery or subsidized.
- Appreciation with the support from recreation workers.
- Assistance with promotion.
- Collaboration and partnership opportunities.
- Focusing more on the arts.

In-Person Engagement Stations

Culture Facility and Programs	Outdoor Facility and Programs	Recreation Facility and Programs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More weekend activities. • More for seniors. • Need better venues for music and plays. • More seating at Th'YARC. • New theatre. • More performing arts opportunities. • A better theatre. • Permanent home for the concert grand piano. • More plays. • Theatre programs for kids. • Rehearsal space for local music groups. • Dialogue with representatives of all arts groups. • Support from the Town for community artists. • Commitment of interest in developing/growing the arts from the Town. • Weekly cultural displays/entertainment. • Library and museum are underused. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lighting at ball fields and tennis courts. • More for kids. • More trails. • Accessibility issues. • More parks and improved playgrounds. • More walkways along the wharf. • More flower gardens. • Vendors (along the wharf). • More weekend and evening programming. • More outdoor concerts. • Outdoor pool. • Soccer field that is not owned by schools. • Washrooms at playgrounds. • Supporting lower income individuals to access recreation facilities/programs. • Multipurpose outdoor sports field. • More bike lanes. • Water trampoline and slide at Milo. • Outdoor pickleball courts at Mariners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indoor playground. • More teens programs, kids programs, and seniors programs. • More public skating and open swim. • Supportive of campus approach for indoor facilities. • Can the Main on Mariners basketball court be saved? • Access to Mariners Centre is challenging for south towners. • Multipurpose facility • Racquetball courts. • Indoor fieldhouse. • Walking track. • Parents and kids programs. • Curling rink at Mariners. • More drop-ins at school gyms. • Ice surface. • More swim lessons in the evenings.

Digital Community Input Workshops

Culture Facility and Programs	Outdoor Facility and Programs	Recreation Facility and Programs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New public art gallery. • Children’s museum. • Smaller types of cultural facilities that are multipurpose. • More “big named” music performers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More walking trails and pathways. • Opportunity for the waterfront to be further developed. • Rail Trail is a valued asset. • Outdoor pool. • More green space, parks, and playgrounds. • Towne Square for performances. • Larger splash park and amenities. • Lighting at ball fields. • Space for cricket players. • Off road bike park. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indoor playground. • New indoor multipurpose facility with turf field, fitness centre, and walking track. • Mariners Centre is a great asset. • Ensuring that the annual agricultural show continues. • Educational bike riding programs/courses. • Ensuring programs and facilities are distributed across the community. • Program space and amenities for markets and festivals (e.g. power). • Curling rink is outdated. • “One stop shop” for program information.



Photo Credit: Town of Yarmouth

Appendix C – Capital Evaluation Process and Criteria

The following evaluation criteria and process are recommended to use when considering capital projects, including facility renovations, expansions, repurposing, and the construction of new facilities. They should be used to evaluate Town and partner-led projects, including those that are proposed by external entities and seeking Town funding support. Partners should be involved as early on in the process as possible.

The criteria can be weighted to reflect particular priorities. For example, if particular considerations such as land availability or public access, are a primary driving factor, scoring of related criteria can be multiplied to reflect that.

Criteria could be scored based on the following:

- 0 = clearly does address the considerations
- 1 = somewhat address the considerations
- 2 = clearly addresses the considerations
- 3 = exceeds the considerations (new and innovative thinking is demonstrated)

It is recommended that the Town incorporates evaluation of business cases using the criteria into their annual budget planning cycle. Business cases may be submitted by external partners seeking funding from the Town or by Town partners and Town Administration.

Evaluation Criteria

Criteria	Scoring Is Based on the Extent to Which a Project Aligns with the Following Considerations:
Demand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates strong demand from residents (indicators may include public input surveys, community group interviews, focus groups, activity trends, population projections, current and projected facility utilization, program statistics etc.). • Clearly identifies target markets and how the facility will meet the needs of those markets.
Supply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides complementary (vs. competitive) services and facilities. • Demonstrates existing facility supply does not meet demand. • Demonstrates effective use of existing assets and has completed a thorough review of all re-purposing options of existing assets.
Public Access and Extent of Benefit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates high level of accessibility to the public and ensures the greatest access to the greatest number of residents. • Demonstrates inclusiveness and accommodates people of all ages, cultural backgrounds, income levels and abilities. • Demonstrates benefits to the entire community or a large % of the public. Single use facilities or those facilities that cater mostly to one user group must specifically demonstrate broad community benefit. • Would help to balance/offset high utilization at existing facilities, enhance access to public facilities, and/or complement amenity and program offerings at other facilities.
Condition Assessment (for expansions, renovations, replacement, or transfer of ownership/management of an existing facility)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitigates safety risk to staff and public. • Ensures compliance with all laws and regulations. • Mitigates risk to infrastructure and the environment. • Enables operational cost savings and efficiencies. • The condition of the facility has been professionally assessed and resources are available to address known deficiencies.
Engagement with Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates early involvement and engagement with partners.
Engagement with Residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates meaningful engagement with residents.

Criteria	Scoring Is Based on the Extent to Which a Project Aligns with the Following Considerations:
Comparative Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparison of facility provision to benchmarks from other communities supports the project.
Strategic Alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates strategic alignment/compliance with Town planning documents. (e.g. master plans, facility site plans, strategic plans, municipal planning strategy)
Strategic Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates a collaborative approach and strong partnerships that will enhance public access and programming. • Demonstrates a plan to work with other relevant organizations to ensure resources are shared, support services are centralized and efficiencies are maximized.
Capital Cost Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital cost analysis is comprehensive and considers all aspects of development.
Capital Financing Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital financing plan is realistic and is supported by sound data. • Capital financing plan demonstrates a clear ability to fund the project. • Capital financing plan identifies impacts to taxpayers. • If applicable, sponsoring external organization demonstrates provision of an agreed upon percentage of project costs (e.g. cash in hand, grants, donations, labour in kind, etc.).
Operational Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operational revenue/cost assessment is realistic and is supported by sound data. • Business model demonstrates enhanced opportunities for residents, while seeking to maximize revenue and minimize tax supported annual operating costs. • Demonstrates sound lifecycle planning and allocates annual resources for lifecycle costs. • Clear identification of annual taxpayer support required and projected municipal allocations/tax requisitions.
Operating Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation plan is clear, logical and realistic, and demonstrates that the facility will operate efficiently and effectively. • Implementation plan identifies clear performance measures. • Proposed operating model demonstrates sound management capacity, financial resources, business infrastructure, support services, experience and management controls to support the on-going high quality operation of the facility.

Criteria	Scoring Is Based on the Extent to Which a Project Aligns with the Following Considerations:
Operating Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual operating savings have been quantified. • Impacts on existing staff have been identified. • Staff re-assignments have been considered. • Timing of replacement facility completion has been considered.
Facility Concept and Site Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sound preliminary design and site assessment that provides maximum benefit for residents. • Location ensures equitable access to facilities across the community. • Location links new facility with multi-modal transportation options, and other high value culture, parks, recreation assets. • Project is high quality and will be built to last. • Design encourages multi-use spaces that promote a variety of uses for a variety of interests. • Design allows for growth in the future as needs change and evolve. • Design will limit negative impacts on the environment.
Environmental Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental risks and mitigation measures are adequately identified.
Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project risks and mitigation measures are adequately identified.
Relative Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After evaluation of the above criteria, Town Council will measure the need for the project against other projects.

Process for Evaluating Major Capital Development Projects

It is recommended that the Town incorporates the evaluation of business cases into their annual budget planning cycle. Figure 5 outlines a process for evaluating major capital projects.

Figure 5. Major Capital Projects Evaluation Criteria

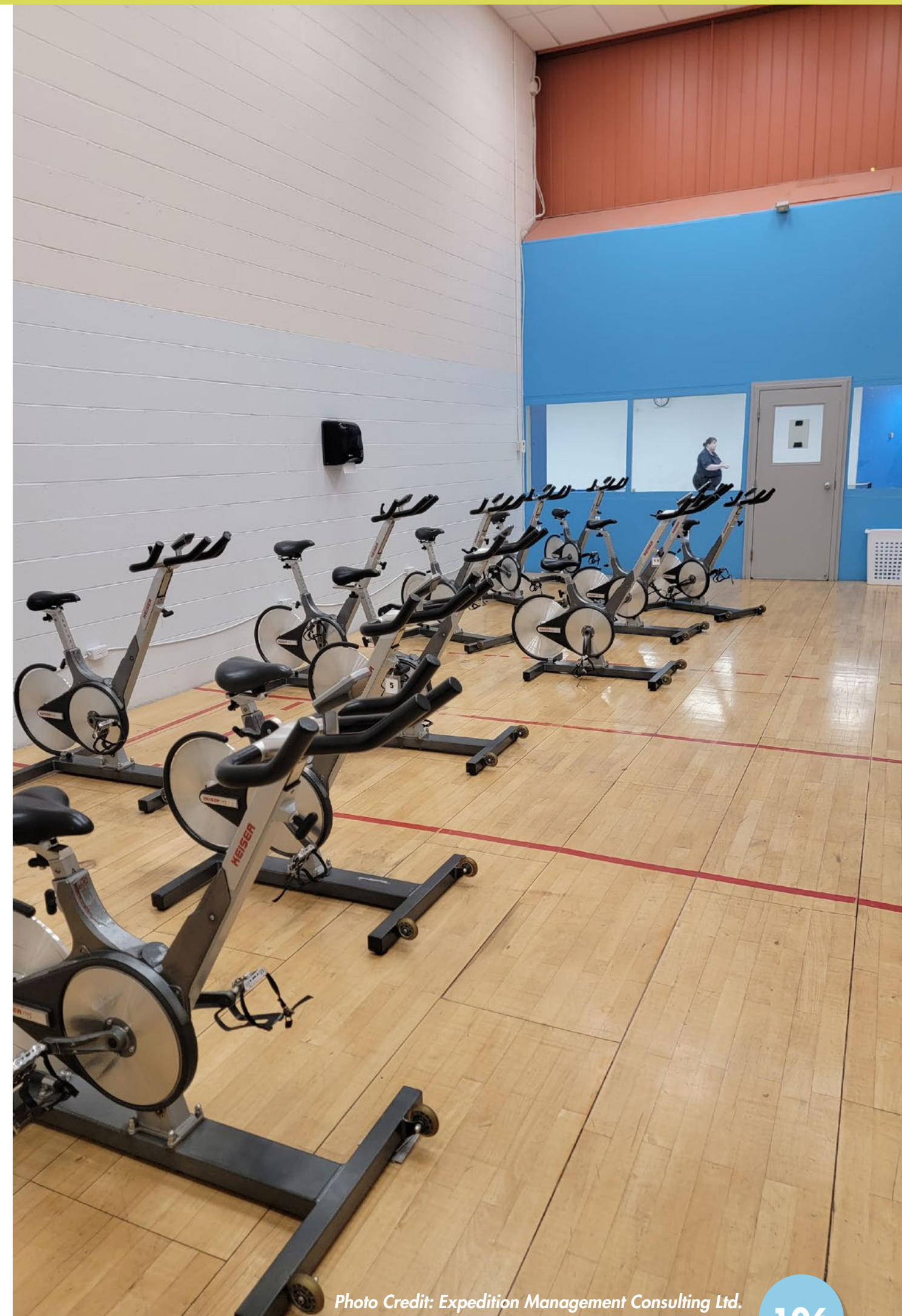
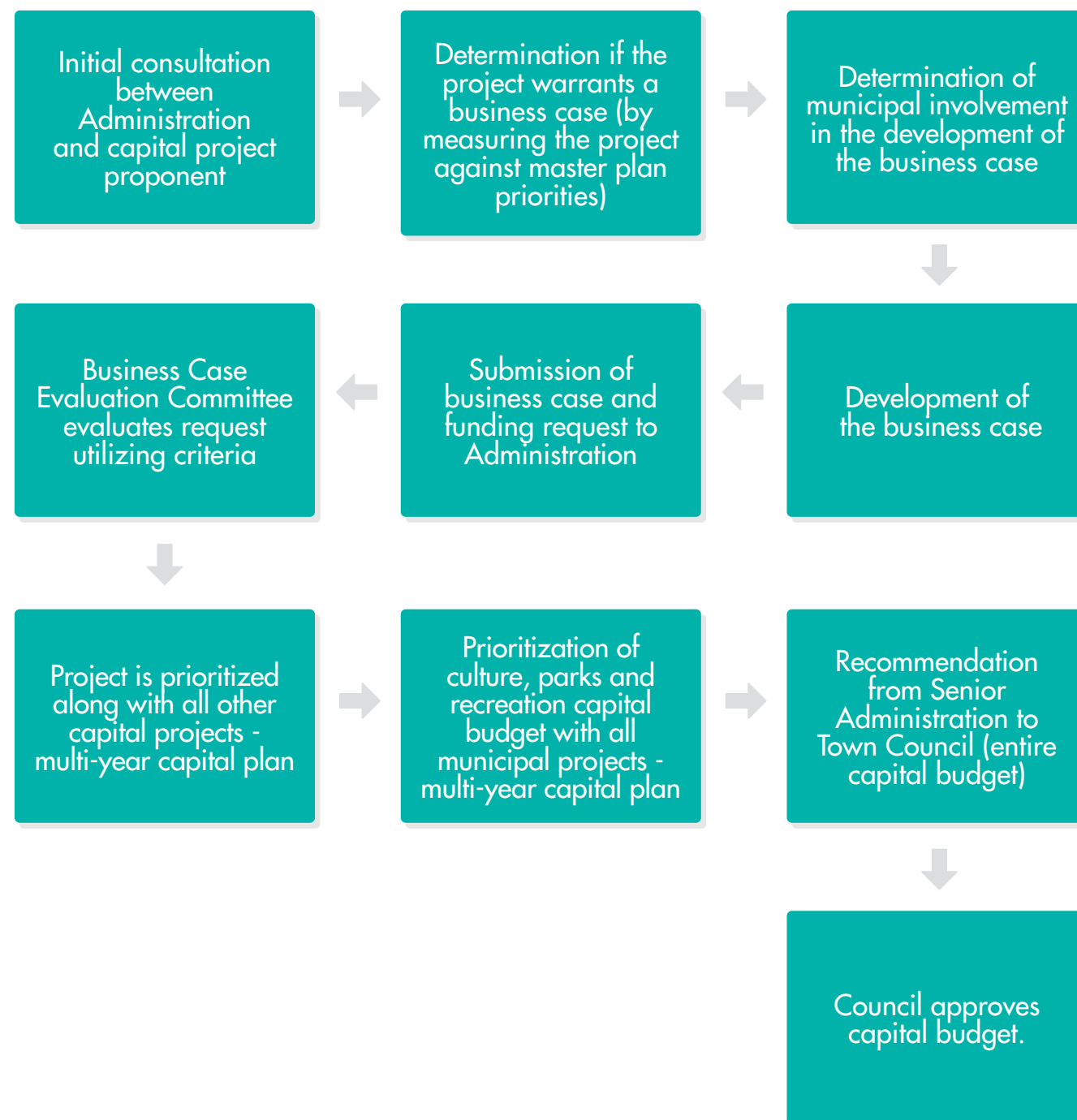


Photo Credit: Expedition Management Consulting Ltd.

Appendix D – Performance Measures

The Town of Yarmouth should use the following measures to track performance during implementation of the Master Plan. Exact numbers and percentages should be added to each performance measure once benchmarks have been developed.

Outcomes	KPI	Measurement Tools	Measurement Value
Social Measures	1.1 Increased public utilization of facilities (e.g. ice sheets, sport fields, community halls, etc.).	User statistics	% Growth
		Facility capacity analysis	% Utilization
	1.2 Increased prime time available for spontaneous drop-in activities at facilities.	Facility schedules	% Prime Time Available
	1.3 Strong participation in culture, parks and recreation, programs in the community across all age groups incomes and abilities.	Program registration data	% Registration
	1.4 Facilities and programs positively impact individual and community wellness.	Resident and user surveys	% Satisfaction
	1.5 Facilities and programs demonstrate a high level of accessibility, including participant affordability.	Accessibility audits, user surveys	% Satisfaction
Economic Measures	2.1 Increased revenue from programs/rentals/events.	Group surveys	% Satisfaction
		Program reviews	% Program Growth
		Facility improvements	% Facility Improvements
	2.2 Cost control measures are in place.	Revenue tracking	% Growth
		Expense tracking	% Target Realization
2.3 Increased local sponsorships for programs and facilities.	Revenue tracking	% Target Realization	
2.4 Increased market reach (communications) and community awareness.	Resident and user surveys	% Market Growth	
		% Awareness	
2.5 Increase in level of fundraising from community organizations.	Funding tracking	% Growth	

Outcomes	KPI	Measurement Tools	Measurement Value
Organizational Measures	3.1 Sufficient staff are in place to successfully deliver programs and run operations.	Staffing complement	% Alignment with Key Directions
	3.2 Facility and program performance are reviewed annually.	Annual report	% Target Realization % Growth
	3.3 Improved support is offered to community organizations.	User group survey	% Satisfaction
Environmental Measures	4.1 Facility use and development minimizes negative impact to the environment.	Environmental impact assessments, energy audits	Impacts Identified % Energy Savings
	4.2 Facility use and development addresses climate change mitigation and adaptation.	Climate risk assessments	Risks identified and actions taken

Appendix E – References

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