

2014-2017
Active
Living
Strategy







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Introduction

The Active Living Strategy 2014-2017 (ALS 2014-17) represents the next phase of the recreation and parks department's commitment to build a more active and healthy community. Derived from our experience with the strategy crafted in 2008, this new plan identifies our past successes, and the future strategic goals that we should pursue to maintain, and build upon, the positive results we have observed. This plan maintains a comprehensive approach to physical activity and health interventions by utilizing the socio-ecological framework, and the assets and opportunities inherent in each of our communities.

Background on the Active Living Strategy (2008)

In 2008, the Recreation and Parks department entered into a partnership with the NS department of Health Promotion and Protection (now Health and Wellness) to share the costs of developing an active living strategy (ALS2008) for the Municipality. A coordinator was hired who crafted the plan through 2008 which was adopted by council in October of that year. However, the plan was not immediately implemented, but by late 2009 a new coordinator was hired as the Municipal Physical Activity Leader (MPAL).

In brief, the MPAL was tasked with the following:

1. Capacity Building:
 - Increase number and quality of physical activity opportunities
 - Recruit new leaders and enhance the skills of existing instructors
2. Develop and implement an Active Transportation Plan
3. Public awareness:
 - Increase public awareness of the importance of physical activity and active living
 - Develop a marketing strategy for active living programs, services, and amenities
4. Advise staff and Council on policy and plan development
5. Monitoring and evaluation of efforts to measure the impacts of the above items
6. Other responsibilities (e.g. professional networks at regional, provincial, and national level)

The overarching goal of the ALS2008 was to promote an active lifestyle to our residents--a way of life in which physical activity is valued and integrated into daily living. To achieve this vision, five key goals statements were crafted under the pillars of the socio-ecological approach. These were:

Social Environment:

Goal 1: Increase the capacity of individuals, families, and organizations to participate in physical activity

Goal 2: Increase the number and quality of physical activity leaders

Physical Environment:

Goal 3: Improve access to safe and convenient natural and built environments for spontaneous and organized play, physical activity, and active transportation

Public Awareness:

Goal 4: Increase the awareness of benefits of physical activity

Policy and Planning Environment:

Goal 5: Increase and improve policy developments to support physical activity

Each goal statement was also informed by a list of objectives (a full list can be found in Appendix A)

Implementation of the strategy began in earnest in November of 2009. The plan provided clear direction for some of the strategic actions and decisions, yet provided enough guidance and flexibility that as new and unimagined opportunities came along, the MPAL was empowered to respond to them when strategically prudent.

Table 1. Examples of these 'unimagined' activities include:

- Recreation Land Evaluation tool development
- Nature play promotion (Eatwormsplay.com)
- Playpods
- Age friendly community assessment
- South Shore and Nova Scotia Outdoor Leadership development
- Easy to be Active employee wellness program
- Our Health Centre (OHC) programming team participation
- Making Tracks
- Community Transit NS board membership
- South Shore Active Communities activities
- After school programming
- ARC - Achieving Recreation Champions leadership funding model
- Streetscape Plan contribution
- Cut n Run 5k/10k event organizing

- ICSP planning
- One meter law development and promotion
- Regional/provincial trail counter protocol development
- Recreation 4 Health collaboration
- Recreation and mental health linkages
- Aspotogan Bikeway Plan, and Blue Route development
- Share the Road campaign development
- UNSM AT committee membership
- Humans vs. Zombies event organizing
- East River Trail build
- Chebucto-Chester Transportation Working Group membership
- Lightning Strikes Kayak program organizing
- Map in a Tube community engagement process development
- SouthShoreConnect.ca development

4. Continue to build and strengthen partnerships (e.g. community groups, regional associations) at the local level
5. Continue to use a community development and capacity building approach
6. Build support for policy development and active transportation

The Emerging Landscape

As suggested by the lengthy list of ‘unimagined opportunities’ (Table 1) the landscape for health promotion in NS is constantly changing and evolving. Throughout our process of refreshing the strategy we have been mindful of, and informed by, some of the more recent planning initiatives that have occurred at the municipal and provincial level:

Active Transportation Policy and Playbook: In April of 2012, Council formally adopted *P-73 Active Transportation Policy*. This Policy is Council’s public commitment to improve citizen’s awareness of AT opportunities, and to improve the built environment to facilitate AT. The policy was informed by a background document entitled *Our Active Transportation Playbook: Everyday Mobility Options for Heart and Health* which was an inventory of possible education, awareness, and infrastructure programs designed to increase walking and biking’s transport mode share. Implementation of the AT playbook is also now part of Council’s Strategic Plan (below).

Council’s Strategic Plan (2013-2016): Council’s Strategic Plan, which was adopted in October 2013, influences the ALS 2014-17 in two primary areas. First, Council Goal #3 states that council will ensure that “sufficient infrastructure is available to best serve our residents and businesses.” Among other means, this will be achieved by “encouraging the development of a healthy community”, and “ensuring sidewalks and networks are developed and maintained in a safe and useable condition”. Specific actions to support these objectives include:

Objective: Encouraging the development of a healthy community

- Assess each municipally-owned property on potential recreational applications and provide signage/promotion of the uses of each property as required.
- Conduct a needs assessment for recreation and open space opportunities via a refresh of the Active Living Strategy
- Encourage the provision of affordable and accessible

By 2013 it was clear that many of the strategic objectives had either been achieved or had advanced to the point that they needed to be re-considered or re-imagined as to how best action them. In late 2013, the recreation department embarked on a refresh process to assess the results of our past efforts and re-focus future efforts.

Results of the MPAL evaluation by the province

In addition to the recreation departments own ongoing self-assessment, the province of Nova Scotia completed a review of the MPAL program in early 2013. As the Municipality of Chester was one of the first partners in the provincial program, we came up first for review (Annapolis Royal and Shelburne were also included). Through a lengthy stakeholder review process (internal and external), the provincial research team concluded the following about the future of the Chester MPAL program:

The Province should:

1. Continue to support MPAL through cost sharing between the DHW and the Municipality
2. Continue to provide supports (e.g. data, professional development) to the Municipality through the DHW

The Municipality should:

3. Continue to support the MPAL coordinator role

local transportation public programs

- Serve as a catalyst/ supporter for community-led initiatives that facilitate this goal
- Implement the Trails Maintenance Plan
- Implement the Active Transportation Playbook
- Support the development and maintenance of community gardens
- Encourage eco-friendly lifestyle opportunities in new developments

Objective: Ensuring sidewalks and networks are developed and maintained in a safe and useable condition

- Provide consideration to the sidewalk development plan (AT Playbook) annually as part of the budget process
- Clarify ownership of sidewalk assets with the Province (ie. Storm sewer)
- Develop a process for inspection and maintenance of all sidewalks

Relevant evaluation metrics to assess progress on these objectives include:

- Increased usage of municipal public space and amenities
- Increased opportunity for safe active transportation
- Improved access to information pertaining to municipal assets (eg. availability, details, etc.)

Chester Municipal Recreation Committee (CMRC) 2010

priorities: The CMRC is comprised of citizens, elected officials, and recreation staff. In 2010, they crafted a vision, mission, and priority action areas to guide the work of the entire recreation and parks department (see Appendix B). As the Active Living Strategy is one component of the work undertaken by the recreation and parks department, the CMRC plan necessarily will need to inform and inspire the ALS 2014.

Recreation for Health and Our Health Centre: One of the linkages between the recreation and health sectors with the greatest potential lies within the development of Our Health Centre. Specifically the programming team (which the MPAL currently serves as co-chair) has developed a list of priority goal and actions centered on the determinants of health as they apply to the South Shore context. Within this, we have also invested in our relationship with researchers in Dalhousie's School of Health and Human Performance who are investigating the best ways to break down the 'brick wall' between the two sectors to help create better, more sustainable health

outcomes for people living with chronic disease.

Additionally, our provincial partners at **Physical Activity Sport and Recreation (PASR)** have identified the following significant trends which inform their strategic planning and which we would be wise to also pay attention to:

1. Fundamental shifts in the directions being taken by governments at the federal, provincial, and municipal levels
2. Directions and priorities increasingly driven by the health agenda
3. A broadening and more complex set of expectations and responsibilities for PASR [this applies to municipal recreation departments in general]
4. A challenging fiscal environment and its impact on infrastructure
5. The changing nature of communities/municipalities
6. A changing social/demographic landscape
7. Shifts in the profession/field
8. Increasing influence of technology as both an enabler and competitor for a physically active lifestyle.

The landscape shift that might have the most influence over which strategic goals we adopt is the province's **2013 Thrive! Strategy**. Thrive! Is the government's commitment to prevent childhood obesity. The plan focuses on healthy eating and physical activity and emphasizes creating environments that make it easier for Nova Scotians to eat well and be active. Specifically, our Memorandum of Understanding with the province now enunciates their three primary areas of interest for which we are expected to be agents and advocates:

Section 1.2 of Municipal Roles and Responsibilities: Ensure the [Municipality of Chester's] Plan follows the principles set out in Schedule "A" and in particular addresses the following priorities:

- A. Focus on youth, ages 12 to 18, especially girls;
- B. Focus on female population across the lifespan; and
- C. Walking and biking as part of daily living.

Our ALS 2014 needs to be mindful of the sum of these landscape shifts, and the multiple directions from which they come. The MPAL's responsibility to our citizens is to clear the pathway to physical activity opportunities and help to ensure that they are ready to take advantage of them when they arrive. Yet ultimately, citizens need to take on participation on their own (e.g. you can lead a horse to water, but...). The ALS 2014 should maintain our ability to be innovative and agile, but perhaps we need to narrow our focus slightly to build capacity and leadership in a few key areas.

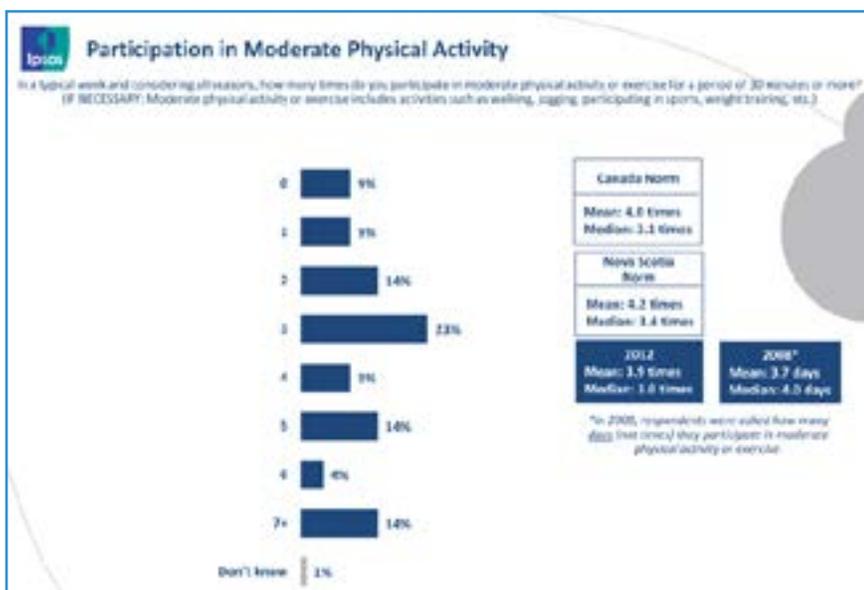
What the data suggests

The current data that is available to us suggests that more people are choosing to be physically active. The South Shore District Health Authority reports that physical activity rates for citizens 12 and over increased 7.8% from 43.5% in 2009, to 46.9% in 2012. The 2012 rate is still troublingly low compared to the provincial and national levels (13% lower) [Lunenburg County Community Fund Vital Signs 2013].

Similarly, the Ipsos Reid polling (n=300) of Chester Municipal residents conducted in 2012 revealed that the mean number of times per week that people engaged

in moderate physical activity was up slightly, yet below provincial and national norms. Additionally, resident’s satisfaction with the variety, and quality of the recreation services the municipality provides; plus the job we do to encourage folks to be physically active, increased significantly and is well above the Nova Scotia norms. Note: 2008 data was derived from polling of Chester AND Mahone Bay residents—2012 data only included Municipality of Chester residents.

These trends are positive but not conclusive. More work can be done to make sure that opportunities are developed and presented to residents, and that they are able to meaningfully engage in them to derive their health benefits.

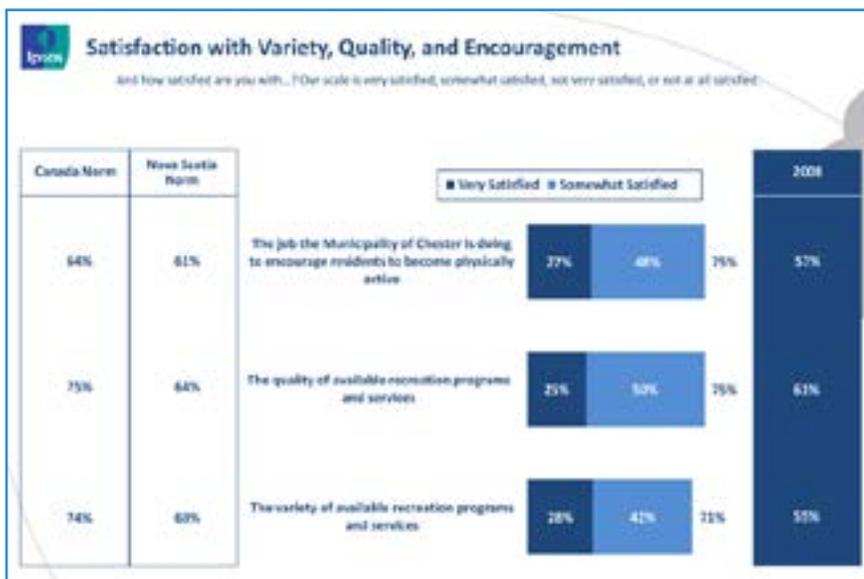


The Refresh Development Process

Late in the fall of 2013, we invited community stakeholders to a series of focus groups (conducted in Chester, and at Forest Heights Community School). Of the 41 people identified and invited, 11 chose to take part in one of the focus groups (Appendix C). The Chester Municipal Recreation Committee (6 of 8 members, plus 4 staff) took part in an independent focus group (total participants = 21). The invitees were selected based on their awareness of the Active Living Strategy and their working relationship with the MPAL that has developed over the past 3.5 years. It was felt that these people would be best positioned to share their:

1. Awareness of the active Living Strategy’s strategic goals
2. Assessment of the effectiveness of our implementation strategies
3. Own professional experience
4. Knowledge of our communities strengths and assets
5. Knowledge of the needs of our target populations.

In brief, the focus groups consisted of a series of appreciative inquiry questions designed to solicit constructive opinions on the outcomes the ALS 2014-17 should attempt to achieve (Appendix C). They were facilitated



attempt to achieve (Appendix C). They were facilitated

cooperatively by the Recreation and Parks Director and the MPAL; however, participants were explicitly asked to offer their honest opinions, and it was not the role of either facilitator to respond to, or challenge, their points of view.

Looking Back:

Q1: What has been the greatest success of the ALS2008 so far?

Our inquiry began with an attempt to identify where we've been with the strategy and the perception of the participants of where the strength of its execution has laid. From these we also expected to identify areas of success to build upon.

Please note: The responses provided in the tables below represent an edited and somewhat consolidated (e.g. responses from different groups are placed under one bullet) version of the responses received. More complete notes can be found in Appendix D. In some cases the responses cannot be directly ascribed to the work of the MPAL (e.g. PRO Kids promotion is more the direct responsibility of that program's coordinator); nevertheless, all responses have been included here as they too illustrate the direction from the community.

- Trail enhancements
- Improved promotional material for physical activity and recreation (e.g. Explore Life, the Recreation Map and Guide)
- Increased awareness of physical activity opportunities
- More AT facilities being implemented (e.g. paved shoulders, bike racks)
- Sidewalk developments
- More Youth programming
- Now have a critical mass of people paying attention to the need for physical activity opportunities
- Skatepark promotion
- Cut n Run 5k/10k Walk and Run
- Municipal wide reach of recreation services
- Increased influence to effect change (e.g. advocacy and partnerships)
- Excellent skill set of all staff
- Support of partners (e.g. Community Wheels)
- PRO kids promotion
- Development of the AT Playbook and Policy

- Increased number and diversity of summer programs
- Council's commitment to the Active living strategy
- Continued funding partnership with the DHW
- Acquisition of new properties and the emphasis on outdoor recreation
- Recognition of the work contributed at the provincial level toward the active transportation, and physical activity promotion climates
- Increased collaboration between the recreation and health sectors
- Partnerships with other municipal recreation departments to provide and promote opportunities for all (e.g. adapted equipment)
- An improved vision for physical activity in our communities
- The ALS2008 has been flexible enough to allow us to be responsive to what's happening in our communities.

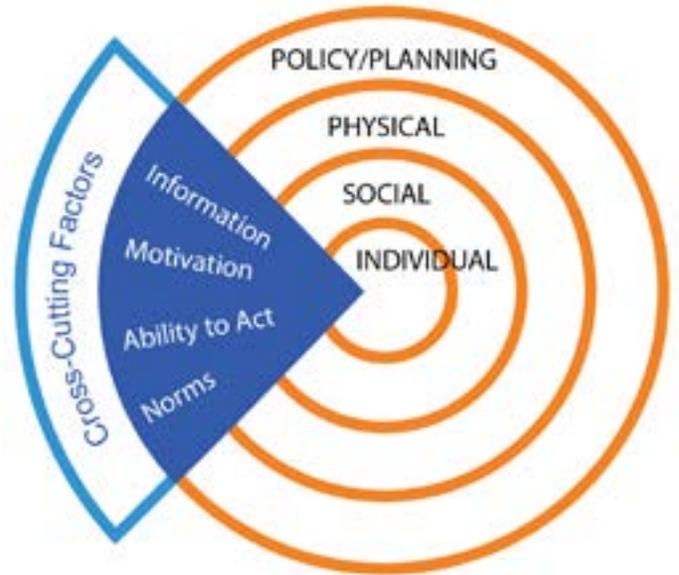
Q2: What have we over- or under-emphasized in our work?

This question was intended help us understand how our work has been received, and whether or not it aligns well with the interests and assets of the communities which we serve.

- Need more instruction and support for existing program leaders
- Broaden the pool of instructors
- Increase opportunities for meaningful youth engagement and leadership development
- Reduce the cost of sports in schools
- Need more opportunities for seniors and persons with disability
- Improve utility of our natural assets (e.g. watersports)
- Improve entry into sport (e.g. self-efficacy)
- Use non-traditional activities as a model to spread inexpensive and accessible activities
- Make information more accessible
- Develop municipal led aquatics programs and an indoor swimming pool
- More sidewalks and connectivity
- Develop a bike route around the Aspotogan
- More attention to the youth, physical activity gender gap

- More co-ed sports
- More emphasis on sport and community sport development with emphasis on female participation
- More outdoor recreation facility installations (e.g. Green Gym)
- More Safe Routes to School infrastructure and promotion
- Too much energy put into a challenging outdoor rink
- AT has become an identity and received a lot of attention, but that's okay because it impacts so many other goals in the plan

Socio-Ecological Model for Change



Looking Forward:

The overarching goal of the strategy remains to promote an 'active lifestyle to our residents--a way of life in which physical activity is valued and integrated into daily living'. With the 'discovery' phase behind us, participants were asked to comment on what outcomes the ALS2014 should attempt to achieve over the next three years. The premise of the approach is that given our goal, and the community driven outcomes supplied by participants,



after applying the appropriate evidence filters, recreation staff would be able to develop appropriate objectives (action strategies). Put another way, if we complete our **objectives** we will achieve our **goals**, and ultimately achieve the positive **outcomes** that are vital in our community to change the state of active living, physical activity, and ultimately health.

Additionally, the questions were framed inside the socio-ecological model. This model is useful to represent and understand the complex nature of interactions individuals have with their environments which either inhibit or facilitate physical activity. It is also helpful to keep all of these levels in mind when deciding upon or designing interventions—the 'how' above- the objectives or actions we will pursue to achieve our goals and realize the results we desire. The socio-ecological model also reminds us that we cannot rely solely on one level or another and expect to achieve sustainable changes in physical activity behavior.

One will also note that few of the responses fit purely

into only one socio-ecological level. Duplication of ideas and themes illustrates the complex and inter-related nature of the questions.

Q3: What outcomes do we want to achieve at the INDIVIDUAL level?

The individual level refers to personal knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, barriers, and motivation (or values). Skills, abilities, age, gender, self-efficacy, etc. are all important considerations. Programs are often targeted at this level, but we can also consider self-directed, or un-programmed activities here.

- Increase participation in already established activities (sports, programs, self-directed)
- Decrease chronic disease
- Increase happiness through physical activity
- Establish the use of public land for recreation
- Increase participant confidence/self-efficacy
- Marry the health and recreation sectors
- Establish physical activity awards and recognition
- More programs for pre-teens
- More teenage girls walking after school
- Decrease screen time
- More people walking as a mode of transportation, more short trip active transportation, and more multi-mode trips choices
- More kids learning to swim
- More use of existing facilities

- 10% more walking and biking to work by 2016
- Improve active transportation access and opportunities and make it the 'easy' choice
- Increase percentage of 'very satisfied' responses in the Ipsos Reid survey for program variety, quality, and encouragement
- Reach and surpass NS and Canadian physical activity rates
- Identify why people are not participating in our programs
- Increase awareness of and opportunities for 'accidental physical activity'
- Increase lighting along walking routes
- Increase play
- Increase intrinsic motivation
- Increase joy/happiness
- Revisit the recreation needs assessment
- Conduct community planning (e.g. map in a Tube) in all communities
- Promote the joyful and social aspects of physical activity
- Offer 'discoveries' of physical activity and provide recognition

Q4: What outcomes do we want to achieve at the SOCIAL level?

The social level refers to the supports offered by friends, family, and peer groups; or organizations and where people gather (e.g. school). Messages from trusted sources and the influence of gender, community norms, and culture can impact physical activity behaviors.

- More social meeting places, events, community design, and destinations that foster/require physical activity
- Filter the above through our MOU with DHW
- Piggyback physical activity on existing social activities that foster/require PA
- Look to other sectors (culture, art, economic) for synergies
- Increase the number of walking clubs, 'meetups', and neighborhood activities and provide supports (e.g. equipment) and build capacity for self-leadership
- Increase the number and quality of PA leaders, instructors, coaches, and volunteers (referees, boards, etc.)
- Increase youth volunteer leadership

- Increase quality and quantity of sports programs
- Reach isolated families and increase support (include transportation)
- Broaden the definition of school sport teams to include non-traditional activities
- Bring Active Safe Routes to School to all schools
- More female school age skateboard instructors
- More skill development for girls
- Increase access to water and water activities
- Conduct open space planning (explore recreation use of public lands and the use of easements)
- More family activities than include kids and parents involvement

Q5: What outcomes do we want to achieve at the PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT level?

This level refers to natural or built environments and the access and availability of them (open spaces, parks, pools, walking tracks, etc.). The quality, aesthetics, connectivity, accessibility (e.g. transportation) and safety of them (real and perceived) can all be determinants of use

- Continue trail enhancements and tread improvements
- Develop/create/maintain open spaces (public lands), access to them, and facilities on them
- Increase four-season participation and pursue four-season facility development/feasibility review specific to identified community needs throughout , and consider private/public partnerships
- Ensure existing facilities are at capacity before developing new ones
- Increase ocean access points
- Improve active transportation facilities (e.g. paved shoulders) and connectivity
- Improve the spectrum of trail opportunities and include communities in the development planning
- More amenities (benches, bike racks, wayfinding signage, Park n Walk) to support physical activity
- Develop the Aspotogan as the ultimate bike route
- Increase community access to schools in the Village
- Increase support to community recreation groups (e.g. conservation corp, garden clubs, Gray Grant Society)
- Attend to issues raised in the Age Friendly

Q6: What outcomes do we want to achieve at the POLICY and PLANNING level?

This level refers to plans and policies developed to support physical activity within land-use plans, active transportation, recreation facility plans and sport development, workplaces, health settings, and community group funding opportunities.

- Be provincial leaders in AT policy and planning
- Make physical activity a requirement in school
- Advocate for AT education in schools
- Increase equity (gender, access, affordability, mobility)
- Councilors to act as physical activity role models
- Adjust subdivision bylaws to promote AT, connectivity, and physical activity, achieve more substantive recreationally suited lots
- Develop an active living brand and communications plan
- Continue to employ a whole of government approach
- Develop a physical activity leadership standards policy
- Develop a Parks and Open Space plan (consider use of recreation easements in the plan)
- Develop a workplace policy to support staff to be active (outside organizations can also help)

Q7: What have we missed?

Participants were given one last opportunity to offer suggestions that may not have previously come forward in their group conversation. Many of the responses given here were echoed in other focus groups.

- Increase Bike Route connectivity
- Release information on opportunities more frequently
- Develop a community recreation communications strategy (to assist non-government partners)
- Increase community grants to make physical activity more accessible and affordable
- Consider partnerships with private landowners when developing and Open Space plan
- Continue doing fun stuff

- Consider Tancook Island as a destination for physical activity
- Every resident of the municipality knows of every physical activity opportunity
- Make physical activity mandatory in schools
- Work with the health sector to promote opportunities and advocacy

What have we been told?

From the responses above we can re-organize them to consider the 'project' areas where we typically work; while being mindful of the comprehensive multi-level approach inherent in the socio-ecological model.

Trails: People have noticed the recent upgrades to the trail system and recognize its accessibility for all users; that it serves as a connective spine of our communities; and its potential as a tourism and business driver/resource. We've been told to continue these enhancements and improve trail use even further by improving its exposure and the amenities (benches, way finding signage, etc.) that make it a destination for residents and visitors.

Marketing: *Explore Life* and *The Recreation Map and Guide* are recognized as valuable, professional, and inspirational physical activity promotion tools. It was suggested that the recent Ipsos Reid data results may at least be partly due to the wide distribution of these items. Nevertheless, they are viewed as only a part of a broader branding and communication strategy that should be developed. The strategy should aggressively connect people and their chosen activities to places to do them. Emphasis should be placed on four season activities, and explore opportunities for 'accidental recreation'-those activities that easily get built into your day, or piggyback on other activities. The strategy should also produce more information, more frequently, and support community organizations in disseminating their messages.

Youth: Respondents recognized the investment that the municipality has made into major projects and programs such as the skate park, summer programming, and PRO Kids; but wonder what's next for these. On-going effort should be made to increase awareness and provide a diverse set of opportunities for youth to participate in physical activity. Additionally, perhaps

it is time to expand the scope of the programs and address other barriers such as transportation needs, and affordability (for youth who may not otherwise meet funding assistance criteria).

Active Transportation: The municipality has become known provincially as a leader in AT policy development and advocacy. We have made some advances in education and infrastructure improvements (paved shoulders, Aspotogan route, bike racks); but this trajectory needs to continue and more needs to be done in order to make AT the easy choice for residents. Emphasis should be placed on developing Active Safe Routes to School, encouraging girls to walk and bike, and encouraging multi-modal and short trips via AT.

Events: The Cut 'n Run was heralded as the most significant event derived from the ALS2008. Events such as these are renowned for not only providing an avenue for physical activity for an established community (e.g. runners), but also for providing the social environment and encouragement many people desire to take on, and feel supported in, a new personal challenge. Participants feel this social interaction could be capitalized on more frequently in already established social communities (e.g. neighborhood events).

Equity and Inclusion: The adapted equipment loan program, a partnership with the other Lunenburg-Queens recreation departments, was held up as the best example of our attempts to create a more inclusive recreation landscape. While laudable, participants would also like to see more attention on enticing and supporting seniors and females to take part in events and activities. An inclusion policy could be one tool to help ensure this principle becomes a lens by which we design our programs and place priorities. Expansion of the community groups funding grants, with an emphasis on physical activity outcomes, could also be employed.

Leadership: Although building leadership capacity has received some attention, in general it is recognized that more needs to be done. We need more leaders, on paths of continuous improvement, in all realms of community recreation (coaches, volunteers, coaches, referees, etc.). A quality leadership standards policy could be developed. Leadership should also be developed within student leaders and the communities should be engaged in facility development (all kinds-- natural and built, existing and new, small and large).

Sport: Likewise, community sport development has been under-emphasized in the execution of the ALS2008. Attention should be paid to the quantity (more non-traditional sports) and quality (strength of program delivery and the health of organizations). Particular attention needs to be paid to encouraging girls to participate and increasing their sense of self-efficacy. This is more likely to be accomplished by attending to the settings (non-competitive, girls-only) and leadership (quality, trained female instructors and coaches) that support girls.

Partnerships: The MPAL program has created several useful collaborative relationships which have expanded the mandates of the partner organizations to more closely consider active living and physical activity. The result of this is that we now have a critical mass of people and organizations all pointed in the same direction who recognize the important role recreation/active living plays in supporting health. These partnerships have also helped to influence change at a policy level.

The Health Sector: Our work on supporting people self-managing chronic disease through recreation has been recognized. Respondents would like us to pursue this direction and continue to 'marry' the health and recreation sectors. This idea of recreation supports and environments within the health sector links to the idea of creating 'happiness'. Active living has many benefits, mental and physical, which collectively can be conveniently called 'happiness'. Recreation should be in the 'happiness' business.

Programming: Participants recognize that the recreation department provides a diverse set of programs that reach across the municipality and serve the wants and needs of all ages. A gap in service for aquatics was noted. In the future we should emphasize programs targeting pre-teens, social recreation (e.g. walking groups, meet-ups), and 'accidental' physical activity (physical activity is a by-product, but not the focus, of an event). Partnerships with non-traditional sectors (e.g. forestry), and community use of Village schools should be pursued.

The Outdoors: Our natural environments, on land and on water, are viewed as perhaps our greatest recreation assets. This is particularly true when considering the cost and feasibility of large infrastructure projects. The municipality itself owns few properties so

it is felt that more can be done to increase and optimize the available base for physical activities. Respondents suggested not just looking for new properties, but new relationships and tools to increase public access to areas to 'play'. An open space strategy was suggested as the next step to fully catalog our existing opportunities, assess the level of service each of our communities enjoys, and identify future opportunities.

The Built Environment: How people use the built environment should be thought of in two ways: 1) increasing access to, and usage of, the current built environment; and 2) identifying four-season facility developments that are specific to our communities' needs or desires. The Map in a Tube methodology employed as part of the Aspotogan Heritage Trust's Creating a Stronger Tomorrow (CAST) projects was viewed as a valuable and replicable process to identify the past, present, and future needs of our community assets. Some of these needs and public amenities which support physical activity have already been identified through the Age Friendly Community Assessment project and therefore more should be done to implement these findings.

Council's Role: Respondents also noted the important role that municipal council plays in supporting the health of our communities. Specifically, it was hoped that recreation and health outcomes would become a lens through which Council would make many of their decisions. Whether it be sub-division by-laws, land use planning, or a means by which they advocate to other levels of government and community organizations; Council is in a position to take a leading and supportive role to improve the health of our communities.

Whole of Government approach:

Lastly, we took the results of the focus groups with community stakeholders to our colleagues in Public Works and the Community Development departments. The purpose of this discussion was both to inform them of what the community told us, and also to solicit their feedback on the items that were particularly relevant to their operations.

Physical activity, specifically experiential activities, were viewed as an important economic driver and an important value position to add to municipal decision making. For example Sub-division bylaws and municipal construction specifications should encourage active transportation, active living, physical activity, and open space development. And it was noted that regulations need not be prohibitive, but rather a progressive range

of solutions can be made available and then developers could determine which is right for the market they seek. Open space planning in particular was seen as a valuable tool to manage community's expectations and to help us plan for how they are going to grow, and to meet Council's Strategic Plan. If the Active Living Strategy can confidently capture the voice of citizens, then the entire municipal government operations will be better positioned to represent and act upon our partnership with our communities.

What does the evidence tell us to do?

We made a pledge to the focus group respondents to consider all of their suggestions and to determine where or best chance of success lies with ALS 2014.

From the outcomes they suggested, we asked them to entrust us with determining the action plan to meet the goals of the strategy.

We know that a comprehensive approach, one that is mindful of the four socio-ecological levels and seeks to include strategic community partners, while challenging, is recognized to have the greatest potential for changing population level physical activity.

Multiple concurrent strategies will need to be employed in order to ensure the best chance to positively influence physical activity behavior choices. The following principles should guide the selection of our physical activity interventions.

- A. Whole of Government Approach:** Integrate physical activity and the creation of active communities into the existing decision making processes of all operational areas of the municipal government
- B. Comprehensive:** Use multiple levels of the socio-ecological model to address factors affecting physical activity behavior
- C. Partnerships:** Meaningfully collaborate with public, private, and volunteer sector community partners.
- D. Integrated Planning:** Achieve multiple objectives by aligning and linking the physical activity strategy with many other municipal strategies and priorities.
- E. Sustainable:** Seek long-term political, financial, and organizational commitments from partners for and active communities.
- F. Community Involvement:** Make it easy for citizens to contribute to the on-going formulation and implementation of the active living strategy

Our Strategic Goals and Action Plan 2014-2017

G. Evidence Informed and Effective: Use the best available evidence, and proven best practices to inform decisions and evaluation.

H. Tailored to the Community: Adapt strategies to what will work in the local, sometimes community specific, context. To do so also implies reliably understanding the local context.

I. Maximum Population Reach: Design interventions to reach a wide audience but pay special attention to population sub-groups that face the greatest barriers.

J. All ages: Use a life course approach to address needs of children, youth, adults, and older adults. Recently we've also begun to use the term 'healthspan' to consider the needs of people across their lives, both when they're healthy, and when new health challenges emerge.

K. Cultural Competency: Instill cultural awareness in self and community partners so that diverse needs can be met (race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, disability, etc.)

L. Equity: Eliminate disparities in access to physical activity opportunities, and reduce inequities that result from geography socio-economic status, and gender by focusing on inactive groups and groups with inequitable access.

M. Capacity Building: Build the commitment, skills, and fulfillment of active community partners and leaders.

N. Inactive to moderately active: Focus on moving inactive populations to moderately active status.

O. Healthy Personal Choice: Make the active choice the easy and most attractive choice.

The input, information, and evidence above has been synthesized into the following six strategic goals for implementation between 2014 and 2017.

Each strategic goal outlines the expected outcomes and the actions that will support them; progress metrics; and which of the evidence principles are strongly reflected within them.

Strategic Goal #1 **OUTDOOR RECREATION**

GOAL

Improve access to outdoor recreation opportunities, and provide a wider spectrum of opportunities that match the variety of interests and abilities of citizens

Actions

Individual Level:

- Provide training opportunities in outdoor pursuits and increase the number of trained leaders
- Develop youth outdoor skills.
- Develop female leaders who can lead girls in outdoor pursuits

Social Level:

- Host more guided events (e.g. hikes, bikes, paddles) in a variety of locations. These events should incorporate elements of nature interpretation and skills building.
- Develop informal 'meetup' groups via social media.
- Develop more opportunities for outdoor, natural, unstructured play in a variety of settings
- Develop more events and destinations that capitalize on the family, fun, and social aspects of physical activity and/or piggyback physical activity on existing events

Physical Level:

- Continue trail upgrades and provide better signage and amenities.
- Continue Destination Trail marketing and awareness
- Encourage businesses to capture and capitalize upon the market of outdoor enthusiasts we will strive to build and attract.
- Invest in a wide spectrum of trail development types based on the conclusions of the Park and Open Space plan (below).

Policy/Planning Level:

- Produce a Park and Open Space plan for the municipality using the Map in a Tube methodology of community engagement and assess future needs based on an equitable level of service and the specific needs of our communities. This should be conducted in partnership with the Community Development department (specifically planning and economic development)
- Amend the sub-division by-law to more effectively result in quality, recreation land opportunities that reflect the desired findings of the Park and Open Space strategy.
- Explore, and when possible implement, park and open space partnerships with provincial/private landowners.
- Develop a volunteer policy that governs how people might contribute to helping to build new outdoor facilities (e.g. trails)

Outcomes

- More people are accessing and using natural outdoor environments for their joyful physical activity opportunities
- Outdoor recreation becomes a signature characteristic of the municipality and an economic development and tourism driver.

What Do

How Do it

Result

We will know that we have been successful if:

- We can demonstrate an increase in trail traffic as a result of the Destination Trail, and local marketing initiatives
- Increase the number and quality of publically accessible outdoor spaces, through purchase, or partnerships with private landowners
- Traffic counts and user experience surveys show increased satisfaction with outdoor recreation opportunities
- Businesses note increased opportunities to capture the 'outdoor enthusiast' market

PRINCIPLES in ACTION

- Whole of Government
- Comprehensive
- Partnerships
- Integrated Planning
- Sustainable

- Community Involvement
- Evidence Informed and Effective
- Tailored to the Community
- Maximum Population Reach
- All Ages

- Cultural Competency
- Equity
- Capacity Building
- Inactive to Moderate
- Healthy Personal Choice

Strategic Goal #2 SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENTS

GOAL

← Actions

← Outcomes

Improve the environments in which girls, and females through the lifespan, take part in sport and physical activity

Individual Level:

- Develop activities and programs that promote confidence and self-efficacy in girls and females through the lifespan.
- Develop the leadership abilities of older girls/women so that they can act as responsible mentors and role models for younger girls and senior women
- Provide program adaptations and adapted equipment for older adults and awareness of the opportunities.

Social Level:

- Improve the number and quality of opportunities for girls and females through the lifespan to take part in sports—competitive and non-competitive, traditional and non-traditional
- Develop a Community Sport Council with a focus on all sports, but with sub-committee attention on female participation
- Reduce barriers to female participation by encouraging and developing female/girls-only, lo-cost activities in multiple settings
- Develop messaging directly targeting males (boys, adults, and fathers) about the gender gap, the importance of female participation, and how to create supportive environments.

Physical Level:

- Provide physical environments where females/girls can feel safe and not judged (e.g. girls-only clinics and sessions at the skate park)

Policy/Planning Level:

- Host a municipal summit with girls and relevant organization and sport leaders to examine the issue of declining female participation, how to overcome this, assess the level of commitment to address, and develop leadership
- Assess equity of opportunities for females/girls to participate (e.g. access to prime ice times, changing rooms) and look for tools to overcome (e.g. equity policy for municipal funding contributions)

- More girls are taking part in meaningful physical activity pursuits and deriving the health benefits associated with them.

What Do

How Do it

Result

We will know that we have been successful if:

- We reverse the trend of declining physical activity for girls in the teenage years, and demonstrate that girls in this age range successfully stick with their chosen pursuits into their adult years.
- More females/girls are accessing non-traditional sport and recreation pursuits (e.g. skateboarding, hockey)
- More youth leaders are female and they know how to create supportive, fun, non-competitive environments for girls.

PRINCIPLES in ACTION

- Whole of Government
- Comprehensive
- Partnerships
- Integrated Planning
- Sustainable

- Community Involvement
- Evidence Informed and Effective
- Tailored to the Community
- Maximum Population Reach
- All Ages

- Cultural Competency
- Equity
- Capacity Building
- Inactive to Moderate
- Healthy Personal Choice

Strategic Goal #3 INFORMATION AND INSPIRATION

GOAL

Actions

Outcomes

Improve the ability of citizens to access quality, timely information and inspiration on physical activity

Individual Level:

- Ensure that *Explore Life* continues to promote programming opportunities and editorial content on opportunities and the benefits of physical activity
- Publish an updated second edition of the *Recreation Map and Guide*, and broaden its distribution to as many households in the municipality as possible

Social Level:

- Recruit and develop 'ringleaders'-several leaders who will act to instigate activities for their peers (age, gender, socio-economic status) and provide the resources and training required to be great leaders.

Physical Level:

- Enact the SouthShoreConnect.ca marketing plan which will broaden the reach of the website and its effectiveness. The plan targets mothers as the primary influencers of physical activity behaviors for all members of their families.

Policy/Planning Level:

- Develop an *Active Community Communication Strategy* that brands and markets the municipality as one that embraces an active lifestyle and is constructed and executed in partnership with community organizations (public and private).
- The municipality relaxes its unwritten policy of only promoting Municipal activities in our marketing material. Instead, we can take a lead in including messaging on behalf of all partners (public and private) whose active community goals align with our own

- People increase their physical activity rates because our marketing and messaging provides the information and inspiration they need to regularly get active.
- Our active community partners receive the marketing support they need to effectively reach our common audience

What Do	How Do it	Result
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We will know that we have been successful if:

- The SouthShoreConnect.ca analytics tell us that people are increasingly turning to it as trusted source of information
- SoutShoreConnect.ca reveals terms for which people are searching, yet for which the demand is not met
- People understand the health, social, and spiritual benefits of physical activity and are willing to act to realize them
- Community partners have more time to dedicate to quality programming because our marketing strategy has alleviated some of the demands on their time
- Our communications and awareness efforts are effectively coupled with opportunities to build skills, confidence, and access to physical activity pursuits.
- Participation in already established organizations increases, and use of existing facilities increases
- We increase the frequency that our messages reach our citizens

PRINCIPLES in ACTION

- Whole of Government
- Comprehensive
- Partnerships
- Integrated Planning
- Sustainable

- Community Involvement
- Evidence Informed and Effective
- Tailored to the Community
- Maximum Population Reach
- All Ages

- Cultural Competency
- Equity
- Capacity Building
- Inactive to Moderate
- Healthy Personal Choice

Strategic Goal #4 DAILY WALKING AND BIKING

GOAL

← Actions

← Outcomes

Walking and biking are the first choice people make for getting where they need to go.

Individual Level:

- Re-commit to developing walking and biking safety skills for children and youth (e.g. Making Tracks)
- Develop leaders by implementing Can-Bike training for adults
- Provide personal safety items (e.g. bike helmets) to increase the ability of people to use our current infrastructure

Social Level:

- Host youth, adult, older adult, and intergenerational hikes and bike rides.
- Host women and girls only hikes, walks, and rides.
- School Travel Planning occurs in all schools, but it is driven primarily from within the student and parent community, with support from the recreation department.

Physical Level:

- We continue to implement the suggested infrastructure improvements in the Active Transportation Playbook.
- Built environment improvements should be mindful of the needs of an ageing population and persons with disabilities.
- Prioritization should be given to the most acute problem spots, and locations that particularly effect the safety of children and older adults.

Policy/Planning Level:

- We continue to adhere to our Active Transportation Policy
- Residential and commercial developments should consider the lifespan/healthspan of the population and seek to enable citizens to 'age in place'
- Given that every trip begins and ends by walking, continue to support existing transit options, and develop more regional solutions so that citizens may more readily access daily destinations
- Develop a *Healthy Communities Guidebook* for contractors, builders, and developers that shows the benefits of building active communities; how to build for a variety of citizen's needs; how to help design supports for a more active community and develop a range of solutions from which they can choose to how to best build active transportation and active living into the developments.
- Continue to advocate for funding and policy changes and supports at the federal/provincial levels that will enable the municipality to make substantive changes to our built environment.
- Harmonize our annual AT planning items with the Department of Transportation's Five Year Plan

- More people regularly walk and bike, both for recreational and utilitarian purposes, on a daily basis.
- Our infrastructure becomes safer and more accessible for a wider spectrum of users.
- More people use multi-modal transit options

What Do

How Do it

Result

We will know that we have been successful if:

- More children walk and bike to school, and their parents are more confident in supporting these modes
- More adults use walking and biking for short trips
- Developers increasingly plan for and build residential and commercial properties that support active transportation, are barrier free, and allow people to age in place
- People report being, and feeling, safer on our streets and roads when walking and cycling.

PRINCIPLES in ACTION

- Whole of Government
- Comprehensive
- Partnerships
- Integrated Planning
- Sustainable

- Community Involvement
- Evidence Informed and Effective
- Tailored to the Community
- Maximum Population Reach
- All Ages

- Cultural Competency
- Equity
- Capacity Building
- Inactive to Moderate
- Healthy Personal Choice

Strategic Goal #5 RECREATION AND HEALTH

GOAL

Actions

Outcomes

The recreation and health sectors have a closer collaborative and supportive relationship

Individual Level:

- The Recreation 4 Health program development continues to be tested and evaluated. The design enables the recreation department to enlist participants into existing programs, identify program gap areas and adapt programs as needed. It allows us to best know our citizens and how to respond to their needs and help overcome multiple barriers.

Social Level:

- The social determinants of health should be considered the first lens through which interventions are designed and implemented

Physical Level:

- The special needs of participants is identified and considered in facility design or use (e.g. privacy concerns in public spaces, room temperatures)

Policy/Planning Level:

- We develop an *Inclusion and Adaptation Policy* which will govern how people with special needs access our programs. It will instruct participants on how to identify and advocate for the personal needs, and activity leaders on how to adapt programs to the individual needs of participants
- The recreation department continues its collaborative relationship with Our Health Centre and builds its capacity to support program development at OHC

- Rates and the severity of chronic diseases decrease
- More people are able to successfully self-manage chronic disease
- More people understand the benefits of physical activity to help avoid or overcome personal health issues

What Do

How Do it

Result

We will know that we have been successful if:

- The number of people who turn to community recreation opportunities to help self-manage chronic disease increases
- The level of satisfaction with our programs of people living with chronic disease increases.

PRINCIPLES in ACTION

- Whole of Government
- Comprehensive
- Partnerships
- Integrated Planning
- Sustainable

- Community Involvement
- Evidence Informed and Effective
- Tailored to the Community
- Maximum Population Reach
- All Ages

- Cultural Competency
- Equity
- Capacity Building
- Inactive to Moderate
- Healthy Personal Choice

Strategic Goal #6 ISOLATED POPULATIONS

GOAL

Actions

Outcomes

Better access to, and service for, isolated and under-represented sub-populations

Individual Level:

- Work with Community Services, and the Continuing Care branch of DHW to get information into the hands of citizens who might benefit most from community recreation services

Social Level:

- Work with Family Resource Centers to increase recruitment of families into programs (other partnerships may include South Shore District Health, Justice, Our Health Centre, arts and culture organizations)

Physical Level:

- Work with Community Wheels to increase the number of disadvantaged families who are able to access transportation to programs.

Policy/Planning Level:

- Use the Pro Kids model to encourage and facilitate participation in recreation for adults, or the ability of parents and children to participate together.
- Make transportation an eligible expense in the PRO Kids program (in addition to registration and equipment)
- Develop a “We’re all in this together” strategy to access and inform isolated and under-represented individuals and families to make them aware of community recreation opportunities and means/supports to access them.

- The people who do not typically use recreation services, due to multiple barriers (e.g. cost, transportation, etc.), are more able to participate.

What Do	How Do it	Result
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We will know that we have been successful if:

- The percentage of people in Lunenburg County who self-identify as being ‘socially isolated’ (currently 25.9%) is reduced
- We increase trips by Community Wheels
- Increase recruitment into programs

PRINCIPLES in ACTION

- Whole of Government
- Comprehensive
- Partnerships
- Integrated Planning
- Sustainable

- Community Involvement
- Evidence Informed and Effective
- Tailored to the Community
- Maximum Population Reach
- All Ages

- Cultural Competency
- Equity
- Capacity Building
- Inactive to Moderate
- Healthy Personal Choice



Municipality of the District of Chester

2014-2017
Active
Living
Strategy

Appendix



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Appendix A

Active Living Strategy 2008 Overview

Guiding Statement:

An Active lifestyle is a way of life in which physical activity is valued and integrated in to daily living

The Active living strategy is based on the following principles:

- Helping inactive people become moderately active.
- Structured and unstructured opportunities for all, focusing on reducing disparities
- Physical activity at home, schools, at work and community
- Collaborative effort among community agencies, government, and non-government
- Strategies will be based on research evidence, community experience, and local assets

In the 2008, Ipsos-Reid survey of residents (16+) living in The Municipality of Chester and Mahone Bay, 62% of the population is not meeting the recommended levels of physical activity (30-60 minutes of moderate activity most days of the week) to achieve optimal health benefits.

Goal and Actions

Social Environment:

Goal 1: Increase the capacity of individuals, families, and organizations to participate in physical activity

- Identify alternative transportation options
- Increase opportunities for children and youth to be active (e.g. after school programs)
- Develop older adult fitness groups
- Deliver the Move More program
- Develop walking programs
- Develop Green Gym activities (conservation corps model, not the fitness equipment)
- Continue to deliver PRO Kids
- Deliver 40+ fitness in all communities
- Provide incentives for PA habits
- Develop geocaching program
- Increase opportunities for families to participate
- Provide focus group results to schools
- Develop opportunities for people with disabilities
- Encourage workplace PA promotion
- Develop in-home activities for older adults
- Develop school travel planning

Goal 2: Increase the number and quality physical activity leaders

- Recruit and train leaders for active transportation safety education
- Recruit and train physical activity leaders , specifically for older adults populations
- Recruit and train Move More leaders
- Recruit and train leaders for outdoor adventures
- Recruit and train Nordic walking instructors
- Identify leaders for Green Gym (e.g. conservation corps model)
- Identify volunteers to lead geocaching family outings
- Recruit area specific walking program leaders

- Increase the number of high five leaders
- Provide and communicate funding assistance for courses
- Recruit and train youth sport coaches
- Recruit and train PA leaders for people with disabilities
- Recruit and train skate pass leaders

Physical Environment

Goal 3: Improve access to safe and convenient natural and built environments for spontaneous and organized play, physical activity, and active transportation

- Support community schools and programs
- Create linkages for linear spaces, sidewalk and open spaces
- Implement PACE car
- Build awareness for age friendly communities and the required characteristics
- Trail enhancements including snow removal
- Explore expansion of community schools
- Assess if communities have sufficient access to parks, playground, and open spaces
- Enhance access to places and informational outreach
- Promote the utilitarian purpose of trails
- Encourage improvement of At on route 329 (the Aspotogan Loop)

Public Awareness:

Goal 4: Increase the awareness of benefits of physical activity

- Develop health promotion information about the benefits and importance of PA
- Develop and promote open spaces and opportunities for outdoor adventure
- Conduct a social marketing campaign to educate, motivate, and change attitudes towards PA
- Develop AL guide promoting local spaces for PA
- Provide practitioners with information on local PA opportunities
- Develop an informational outreach strategy to promote the active living guide
- Brand the AL strategy
- Promote the Brand
- Deliver “live and Unplugged”
- Develop a map and brochure of open spaces

Policy and Planning

Goal 5: Increase and improve policy developments to support physical activity

- By-law that requires new sub-divisions provide AT opportunities
- Continue funding programs that increase PA, particularly for older adults
- Continue funding programs that allow children from lower income families to access PA
- Encourage council to adopt the UNSM AT resolution
- Enhance access to places and informational outreach
- Policy that states any new infrastructure has maximum accessibility standards
- Review and utilize the Child and Youth Friendly Land Use planning guidelines
- Municipal lands signage policy that inform PA opportunities

Appendix B

Chester Municipal Recreation Committee 2010 Priority Areas

Top six priority areas as determined by a Results Based Planning Exercise November 2010

1. GOAL

Improve quality and quantity of recreation opportunities for Young Families.

STRATEGIES

- 1.1 Plan programs in community centres throughout the Municipality as much as possible.
- 1.2 Offer more after school programs.
- 1.3 Ask for input from families to find out what they want.
- 1.4 Offer more weekend programs to bring families together.
- 1.5 Build skill and knowledge in families to allow them to initiate their own play at home or in the community.
- 1.6 Provide recreation opportunities for parents and children at the same time (play together).

2. GOAL

Improve access to and increase the use of outdoor recreation spaces.

STRATEGIES

- 2.1 Increase open space opportunities and make the public aware of opportunities.
- 2.2 Create an adventure guide to outdoor spaces in the Municipality.
- 2.3 Establish an equipment inventory and make the public aware of it.
- 2.4 Encourage free outdoor activities in various locations around the Municipality.
- 2.5 Outdoor recreation spaces should include “backyards” (i.e. patches of woods, coastal waters, fields)

3. GOAL

Increase accessibility to affordable recreation opportunities.

STRATEGIES

- 3.1 Offer more free programs & family rates.
- 3.2 Continue to support local programs in each community by supplementing instructor’s travel cost and having community coordinators.
- 3.3 Direct financial support for programs (rather than cost recovery basis).
- 3.4 Continue to offer and support PRO Kids.
- 3.5 Frequent user discounts/community incentives (ie: discounts on services, coupons for services & goods).
- 3.6 Offer equipment rental through Municipality (ie: outdoor equipment).

4. GOAL

Increase the physical activity levels of Youth & Adults.

STRATEGIES

- 4.1 Promote backyard opportunities making it easy for people to be physically active.
- 4.2 Increase opportunities for family and/or multi-generational activities. Examples include Bboy dancing, skateboarding, dance, wrestling, circus club.

- 4.3 Increase focus on fun aspect of physical activity.
- 4.4 Encourage residents to integrate physical activity in daily routines (i.e. walk to school, work, grocery store).
- 4.5 Partner with agencies such as education and health to increase physical activity levels.

5. GOAL

Increase the quality and quantity of volunteers.

STRATEGIES

- 5.1 Contact volunteers / volunteer organizations and ask them what they need.
- 5.2 Encourage organizations to use short term volunteering.
- 5.3 Develop youth volunteer skills/mentor possibly through the school system/credits.
- 5.4 Promote L/Q Volunteer Partnership.
- 5.5 Further promote Municipal leadership funding, volunteer recognition and training opportunities.
- 5.6 Encourage local businesses to promote their employees to volunteer.

6. GOAL

Improve recreation opportunities for seniors.

STRATEGIES

- 6.1 Take programs to locations and times seniors are already together.
- 6.2 Encourage senior social programs.
- 6.3 Honour their past work/recreation lives & back on the water, back to the forest camp home cooking, school yard grounds and dancing.
- 6.4 Offer free drop-in programs (use a donation jar to help cover the cost).
- 6.5 Encourage and promote in home activities for seniors.
- 6.6 Encourage seniors to mentor youth and use their skills.
- 6.7 Offer programs in each community to limit travel.

7. GOAL

The “Mother” of all strategies.

STRATEGIES

- 7.1 Get back to basics – intergenerational unstructured, spontaneous, play, make it fun
- 7.2 Rally community around physical activity and healthy lifestyles. Communities competing against each other who makes the most gains in health & physical activity (Dr’s, schools, businesses, groups)

Appendix C

Focus Group Participants and Format

List of Participants:

Focus Groups Participants: Joy Calkin Trudi Curley Tracey Burgess Kathryn Gamache Philip Guest Andre Bouchard Debby Smith Jim Barkhouse Tia Haley Kevin Marczak Christina McLean Staff: Jody Conrad Trishe Colman Cosette Howlett	Recreation Committee Participants: Leslie Taylor Dawn Eliot David Chaplin-Saunders Satrina Swinemar Tina Connors Brad Armstrong Barry Baker Suzanne Brown
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Focus group format for the Active Living Strategy Refresh

Purpose:

- Assess the effectiveness of the AL Strategy and its execution. Deep re-examination.
- Course correction
- Validate and continue existing actions
- Determine new areas of emphasis, how and where to focus our work?

Motivation for refresh: time, new policy, progress/lack of

Time	Duration	Topic/Activity	Lead
1:00pm	5 mins	Introductions. Purpose of the focus group, housekeeping and ground rules.	Chad
1:05 pm	15 mins	Lookback: What is the problem we are trying to solve? Where we've been and where we are now. What is the current landscape (e.g. Council strategic plan, Thrive!) What has been the strategic direction to date? Strategic directions not included in AL2008. Results ipsos, and report	Gord

1:20 pm	5 mins	<p>Role Playing: Random generation of citizen profile (age, gender, socio-eco status, mobility, ??). Harvest random for group discussion. Very quick.</p> <p>What does PA mean for you? What you do, where you do it, how often, why/why not?</p>	Gord
1:25 pm	10 mins each	<p>Engagement Questions: Lessons learned according to participants</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What have been the greatest successes of the ALS been 2. What have we under/overemphasized 	Chad Gord taking notes
1:45 pm	15 mins each	<p>Exploration questions: Using the socio –ecological model as a framework, and reflecting on the current landscape, What outcomes does the AL strategy need to achieve. This is intended to drill deeper than “increase PA”. Where do we need to work? Solution leverage? Partner leverage? How we achieve it is another conversation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Individual level (MPAL works less at this level) 2. Social 3. Built Environment 4. Policy <p>Possible if time allows: Dot-mocracy using existing lists (success, over/under) and new lists generated? (keep old, add new, and prioritize)</p>	Chad Gord taking notes
2:45 pm	5mins	<p>Exit questions: What have we missed? Anything else you’d like to say?</p>	Chad
2:50 pm	5 mins	<p>Next steps for us and the process, and thanks you’s.</p> <p>After harvest we will run the opinions through filters (evidence, and whole of government)</p>	Chad

Appendix D

Full List of Comments Collected in Focus Groups

Focus Group 1 (Oct 10, 1-4pm)	Focus Group 2 (Oct 10, 6-9pm)	Focus Group 3 (CMRC, Oct 21, 7-9pm)	Phone Interview (Heart and Stroke, Nov 25, 10am)
Tia Haley, Nurse SSDHA Kathy Gamache, AHT Trudy Curly, Bluenose Coast Joy Calkin, Our Health Centre Christina McLean, HHELLPS Philip Guest, RECAP Cosette Howlett (Rec Staff)	Deb Smith, DHW Andre Bouchard, DHW Jim Barkhouse, LCCF Kevin Marczak, Chester Basin Rec Park	Leslie Taylor Dawn Eliot David Chaplin-Saunders Christine Rafuse Suzanne Brown Tina Connors Brad Armstrong Barry Baker Jody Conrad (Rec Staff) Trishe Colman (Rec Staff) Debbie Harnish (Rec Staff)	Tracey Burgess

Q1: What have been the greatest successes of the Active Living Strategy?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Getting upgrades to the trail done: Increase activities, usage, tourism potential. It's accessible to all ages, affordable, and is spine of community. Recreation Map & Guide: great utility, used by other community groups Increased awareness for PA opps: due to the highly visible package of resources that includes the MPAL, literature, facility improvements, other partners initiatives Success is admirable given the increasing number of barriers to PA (e.g coastal access, and competition from screen time) Sidewalks (increase wheelchair access) Youth Programming: more youth involved, more accessible, more variety (perhaps still needs a targeted approach however) We now have a "mass of people all pointed in the same direction" due to the coordinated interaction of interested parties that change the conversation around PA The obvious skatepark location-success has spawned others Cut n Run: attracts all ages, is visible, affordable, impacts first time participants and has a ripple effect Presence of municipal recreation widely distributed across the municipality We've broadened our ability to influence change (e.g. synergies with SSDHA) due to increase level of partnerships. Measured by how often "municipal recreation" is brought into conversations Skill set of staff: welcoming, helpful, knowledgeable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Wheels Sidewalk development Trail enhancements PRO Kids AT Playbook and Policy: as lens to inform and influence decision making Number and diversity of programs: Number of summer youth programs, affordability, female programming Council's commitment to the Active Living strategy, their analysis of our capacity to implement, conclusion that dedicated staffing is required to implement the Active Living strategy Making CMRC a committee of Council enhanced its ability to influence decisions The funding partnership with DHW makes the MPAL position more appealing and saleable to taxpayers (e.g. value for money) Emphasis on moving about outdoors: acquisition of new properties, using our natural assets, programs like Lightning Strikes, star gazing et. The Ipsos Reid data suggest positive results which is perhaps a testament to increased awareness of PA opportunities and outreach Willingness of citizen leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cut n Run: it was needed, is important to local running community, and creates awareness of PA Recognition of work done at provincial level: Recreation 4 Health, 1m law, AT work, respect for work, emulation by other municipalities, recruitment for boards Collaboration: e.g. recreation and health talking to each other (e.g. Mahone Bay workshop) Bike lane on route 3, Share the road campaign, 1m law Adapted equipment and partnership with other municipal rec departments Partnerships, making and maintaining Recreation land assessment tool: quality objective measure Explore Life: awareness, municipal wide reach, "makes me want to explore", wide variety of programs, easy to read, shows importance of un-programmed opportunities and encouragement for unstructured play Recreation Map and Guide Improvement of trails Skatepark PRO Kids Considerate of wants/needs of all ages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The AT Playbook and policy is exciting and sets an example for other muni's Rec relationship with council, we're seen as a valuable and equal contributor Offer a variety of programs and connect with many sectors of the community Separation of the MPAL mandate from the Rec dept mandate Chester Cut n Run Take novel approaches to issues Fostering the AT relationship with TIR Improvements to the trail We have a vision and foresight for PA in our communities The AI gives license to do different things, is flexible and allows us to be responsive to what's happening in our communities
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Q2: What have we over/underemphasized?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to do more instruction for leaders and support them after they've been recruited. • Broaden the pool of instructors. Inspire>mentor> train>certify • Provide opportunities that enhance students CV's. Create leadership in a different way (e.g. Duke of Ed, O2). Need meaningful engagement of youth. Develop a Youth (leadership, instructor, ?) Corp. • Reduce the cost of sport in schools • Need more opps for seniors and persons with disability. Provide access to events, and activities. Work where communities exist (e.g. Chandler's Cove) • Work with natural assets (e.g. sailing is perceived to be an elite and inaccessible activity) • Increase ways to enter into sport (e.g. self efficacy) • Look at non-traditional activities (e.g. bike polo) as a model to spread inexpensive and accessible activities • Make information more accessible. Make quick connections for people between activity and place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need a municipal led aquatics program (e.g. Red Cross learn to swim program). Supported by indoor swimming pool. • More sidewalks and better connections • A bike lane around the Aspotogan • More attention to the PA gender gap at grade 7 level, getting and keeping more girls involved in PA between grades 3 and 7. • More Co-ed sports • Not enough emphasis on sport and community sport development. Focus on female participation (survey the girls, "the setting/environment is more important than the activity) • Too much HvZ (offered in jest) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More Green Gym installations and awareness of the facilities • More Active Safe Routes to School in New Ross: improve infrastructure and promotion of walk/bike activities • Lot of energy put into Outdoor rink for very few skating days in the winter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AT has received a lot of attention, but that's okay because it impacts so many other goals in the plan • AT has become an identity•
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Q3: What OUTCOMES do we want to achieve at the INDIVIDUAL level?

- Increase participation in already established, organized programs, sport, and self-directed activities
- Decrease chronic disease (e.g. zero type II childhood diabetes)
- Find happiness through Physical activity (happiness is measurable)
- Establish the use of public land (provincial and municipal) for physical activity
- Increase the confidence /efficacy of people so that they feel comfortable to participate (e.g. adapt the diabetes toolkit for other purposes)
- Marry the Health sector to the Recreation sector
- Establish PA achievement awards/recognition/feedback
- More programs for the pre teen group so that they more strongly build habits that will carry them through ages 12-19

- More teenage girls waling after school
- Screen time decreases
- More people walking as a mode of transportation
- More kids learning to swim
- More use of existing facilities
- 10% more people walking and biking to work by 2016
- Encourage more multi-mode transportation choices
- Make short trip AT the norm

- People need to travel to PA opportunities. Improve AT access and increase opportunities for people to access the built environment on their own schedule
- Lighting along walking routes
- Increase 'very satisfied' in Ipsos Reid poll for variety, quality, and encouragement
- Reach and surpass NS and Canada physical activity rates
- Identify why people are not participating in our programs (e.g. where else are they getting their programs---hypothesis that many people are participating in their community of employment)
- Increase awareness of what is physical activity versus exercise (awareness of how it fits into your life, increase 'accidental PA' incorporate it into your daily life e.g. piggyback zumba for parents at kid's hockey practice)
- Increase Play
- Increase intrinsic motivation
- Increase joy/happiness
- Revisit the Recreation Needs Assessment: assess level of service (e.g. built environment, open space, trails) and increase awareness of existing opportunities
- Conduct Map in a Tube in other communities

- Want to make 150 minutes per week of mod/vig exercise for adults, and 60 per day for kids, easy to achieve. Make it just part of your day. Get PA without even realizing it.
- Promote the joyful and social side of PA
- Find creative ways to insert PA opportunities into people's live (e.g. standing desk, walking meeting, walking story books)
- Offer 'discovery'. Provide a number of touch points (e.g do squats for a subway ticket in Moscow). Don't force, provide opportunity and reward.

Q4: What OUTCOMES do we want to achieve at the SOCIAL level?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More social meeting places that foster/require PA • More destinations that foster/require PA • More activities that foster/require PA • Filter the above three through the three priority areas identified in the MOU • Create better connections between place and activity (social interaction strengthens PA outcomes) • Land Use planning that fosters/requires PA through social interaction (e.g. community design) • Piggyback PA on existing social events. 'Unorganized', spontaneous social events that foster/require PA (e.g. picnic in the park, hikes). *Avoid overlap/competition with other events. • Look to other sectors (culture, art, economic) for synergies (e.g. forestry tours) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of walking clubs (e.g. junior girls, seniors, step challenges) • Increase the number of PA leaders, instructors, coaches • Increase the number of and quality of PA volunteers (referees, boards, coaches) • Increase youth volunteer leadership development (their confidence to make decisions, and fulfillment in roles) • Increase the quality and quantity of sports programs • Respectfully reach isolated families (e.g. PRO Kids). Increase their awareness of support programs, expand support to include Transportation • SSRSB outcomes? Broaden the definition of Scholl sport teams to include non-traditional sports (e.g. skateboard team) • Bring Active Safe Routes to School to those that are not doing School Travel planning • More female school age skateboard instructors • Skill development for girls. More opportunities for girls to play and improve at traditional sports in an uncompetitive environment. More unstructured opportunities to develop skills that lead to sport. • Increase access to the water and water activities (e.g. kayaking) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase walk/bike clubs, 'meetups', informal coordination of groups. What role does rec dept have to encourage these? • Increase neighborhood activities, families getting together. • Open space planning including the notion of how to use the Bowater woodlands and new protected lands in the municipality, and how to establish recreation easements on private land to 'develop trail networks • More family activities that include kid & parent involvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize that some line wolfs are happy on their own. There is value in the social aspect. • Provide the mechanisms for people to get together. Meetups/facebook. • Promote family events and the equipment to explore as a group (snowshoes, etc) and self directed activities. • Provide the environment + social + individual it will become normal to do PA • Have a walking group in every community² self capacity and leadership • Build self capacity to be active so that people don't need to be told when/how to be active
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Q5: What OUTCOMES do we want to achieve at the PHYSICAL/BUILT/NATURAL level?

- Continue trail tread improvements
- Create/maintain open spaces, access to them, and facilities on them
- Four season facility development/feasibility review. Specific to identified community needs (e.g. does New Ross want/need a skatepark or is there a more relevant idea?)
- More public/private partnerships to develop/access facilities
- Increase citizen participation in facility development
- More ocean access points
- More people participating in outdoor activities across the four seasons (includes promotion of activities)
- Leverage public land (e.g. new wilderness areas) for lo-cost facility development
- Fill the capacity of existing facilities before building new ones (as above, do these meet the current community needs?)

- Paved shoulders on all routes
- More At connections between destinations
- More trails and a broader spectrum of opportunities and experiences
- Pool
- More amenities to support PA (e.g. benches, bike racks, enhancements to roads and trails, unobstructed vistas)
- Develop the Aspogogan as the ultimate Bike Route
- Increase community conservation corps in outdoor recreation opps, stewardship (e.g. garden clubs)
- Support Gray Grant recreation land development
- Increase community access to school s in the village

- Follow through on the issues identified in the Age Friendly Community assessment
- Promote the trail and develop new trails that consider multiple modes and a wide spectrum of trail opportunities and experiences, and connections between trails.
- Map in Tube for trail development
- Develop signage, amenities, wayfinding and awareness of trail opportunities.

- Park and walk in each community (“if you are expected to do AT from your door then AT probably fails in rural NS)
- More trail connections: there are not paved shoulders/sidewalks everywhere so education on the state of the built environment and how to navigate (e.g CanBike builds confidence, overcome perceived barriers)
- We want people using what we have and enable them to navigate the current Built environment
- More active living lanes and enhancements to the rail trail

Q6: What OUTCOMES do we want to achieve at the POLICY/PLANNING level?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be provincial leaders in AT policies and planning • Make PA a requirement in schools in order to graduate (e.g. does the municipality have a role to play to leverage our DHW, Schools+ partnerships?) • AT advocacy at the driver training stage • Increase equity: access, gender, affordability, disability/mobility • Councilors are required to role model PA (e.g. must participate in a least one PA event each year) • Adjust subdivision bylaws to promote AT, connectivity, PA. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a brand for Active living and a communications plan to distribute it. • Employ a whole of government approach • Develop a standards policy to ensure high quality PA leadership (e.g. require leaders to have high 5, Fundamental movement skills, healthy eating policy awareness) • Develop a Parks and Open space plan. “We don’t have a lot of open space” Plan how we are going to use the land we do have, how can we access provincial land, hat level of service do our communities require, what are the deficiencies/needs, develop a strategy to fill the needs? • Policy to support inclusion (e.g. how programs accommodate persons with disabilities) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider recreation easements and open space planning • Revisit the sub-division bylaw to achieve more substantive recreation suited lots <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy in place to support staff to be active 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead by example in the municipality before asking other workplaces to partake • Review the sub-division by-laws for their enabling of connectivity and definition of recreation suitability • Promote supportive settings in workplace settings • Tap into outside organizations for support (e.g. Heart & stroke)
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Q7: What have we missed? Any last thoughts?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase bike route connectivity • Have a graphic designer on staff to support communication efforts by community partners • Release little bits of information more frequently • Develop a community recreation communication strategy. Active and passive approaches. Beyond ExploreSouthShore.ca. Include non-government partners in the strategy. • More community grants to make PA accessible and affordable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re open space: develop partnerships with private landowners to access/use/develop the land (e.g. Castle rock, Deep Cove, Mill Cove, Hoolihan Lake) • Keep doing FUN STUFF! • Consider Tancook Island as a destination for PA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every resident of MODC knows of every PA opportunity • Daily PA is mandatory in schools • Include the health sector e.g. PA prescriptions and MD advocacy 	
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