

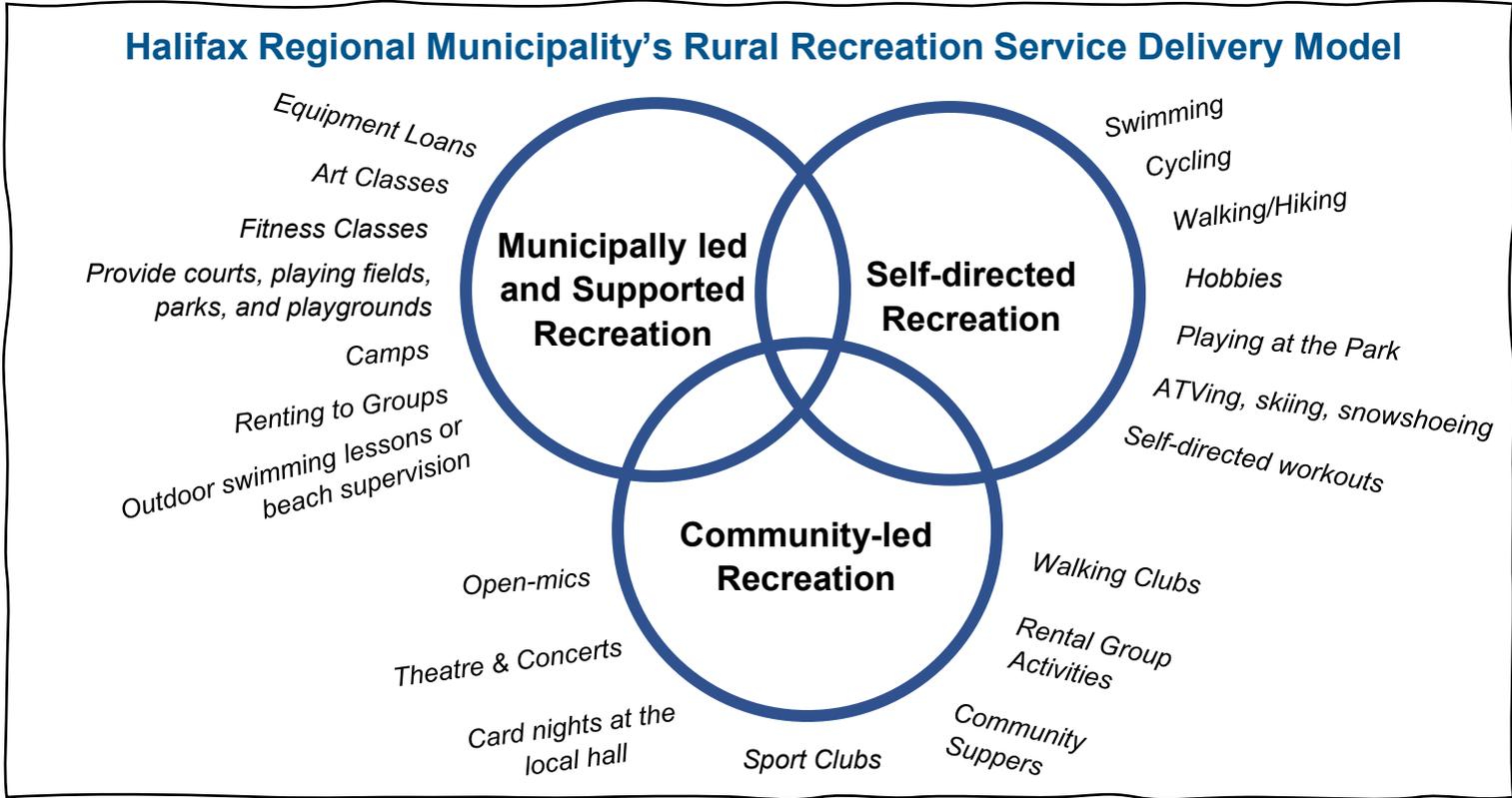
Item 12.1.2

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# **Rural Recreation Strategy Update Presentation**

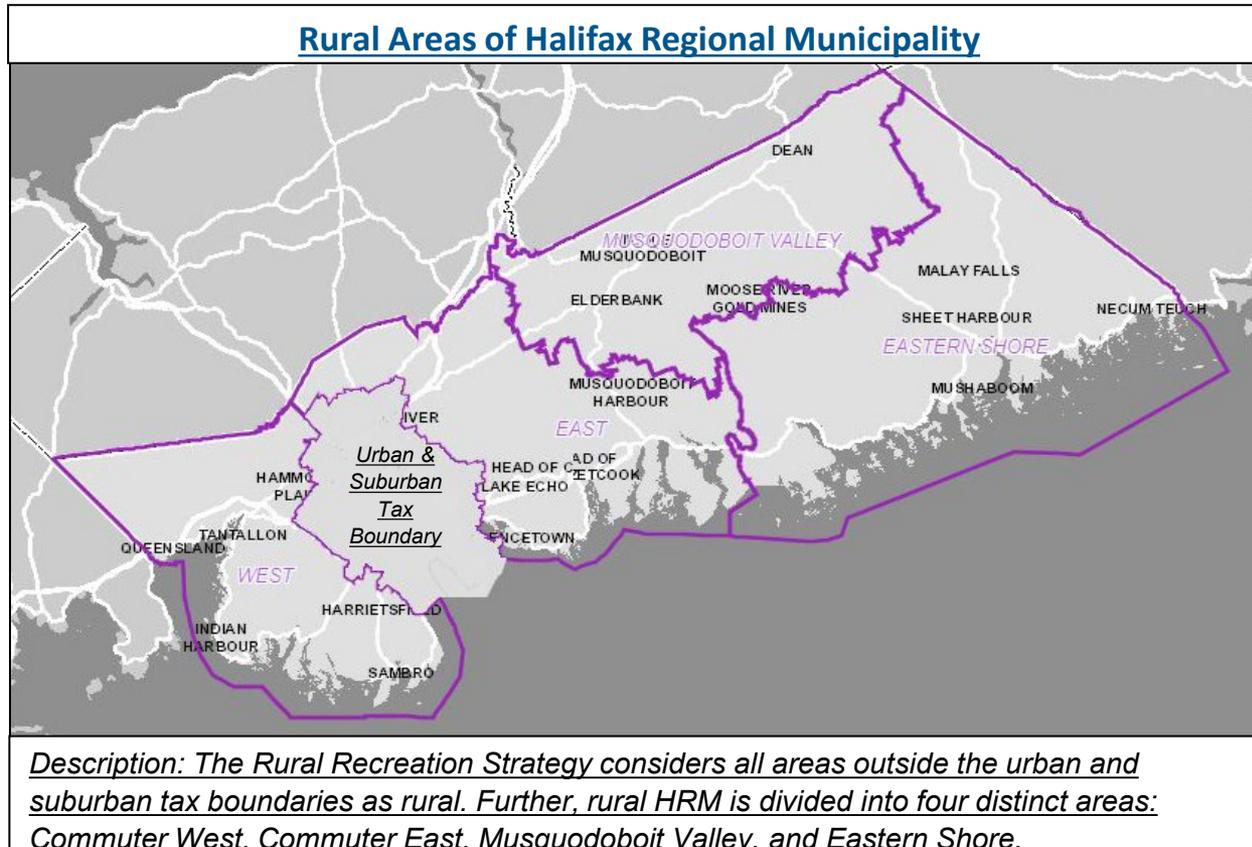
Angela Green, Director  
Recreation Programming

# The Meaning of Recreation in Rural HRM



# Where & What is “Rural Recreation” HRM?

Activities, places & spaces, outside the Urban & Suburban Tax Boundary



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# Engagement



- Internal staff and rural Councillor interviews
- Over 2,500 online & mail-out resident surveys completed



- 43 - Recreation & Sport Organization questionnaires collected



- Stakeholder meetings with other government, arms-length organizations, as well as not-for-profit organizations



- 12 - Pop-Up Engagements were conducted throughout rural HRM, interacting with 154 residents

# What We Heard



1. **Equitable Access to Indoor Facilities**
2. **Equitable access to Outdoor Recreation Opportunities**
3. **Volunteer Support**
4. **Programming that Meets Rural Needs**
5. **Advertising and Communications that Reflect Rural Communities**
6. **Collaboration through Partnerships**

# 1. Equitable Access to Indoor Facilities

## **Weaknesses & Challenges**

- Most survey respondents are not willing to drive more than 15-30 minutes to their recreation activity, closely followed by those who are not willing to drive more than 15 minutes.
- Respondents from the Musquodoboit Valley and Eastern Shore regions feel neglected by the municipality. They expressed frustration and dissatisfaction with the lack of facilities in their communities.

## **Opportunities & Expectations**

- Community-run recreation centres and halls are interested in providing recreation programming and events but need support to make facility improvements.
- Staff continue to work with Halifax Regional Centre for Education (HRCE) to access public recreation space during after-hours.

## 2. Equitable access to Outdoor Recreation

### Weaknesses & Challenges

- Many respondents walk and cycle for recreation, however, some stated that they are afraid to partake in these activities in their communities due to the increase in, and the speed of, traffic.
- Respondents also indicate they enjoy informal recreation at HRM's many lakes, rivers, and ocean beaches through swimming and various boating activities however purchasing equipment is expensive. Also noted that access to waterways can sometimes be unclear, private, or lack amenities needed to support users.

### Opportunities & Expectations

- Respondents would like to see more formalized trails and improved public water access. Also, simple amenities like providing picnic tables, benches, portable toilets in the summer months, and storage would make the outdoor assets more usable for the public.

# 3. Volunteer Support

## Weaknesses & Challenges

- 10 organizations with indoor facilities explained they want to work on building maintenance, accessibility redesigns, green retrofitting, and modernizing, but cannot afford to do so. Four volunteer organizations expressed that the municipality's requirements for insurance and legal contracts is a barrier to working with municipal staff.

## Opportunities & Expectations

- 25 organizations said support with training on topics such as First Aid, High Five, board development, strategic planning, volunteer recruitment and retention, grant writing, technology, diversity and inclusion, and recreation skills would be beneficial.
- Rural youth are looking for opportunities to build leadership, volunteer, and job-readiness skills.

# 4. Programming that Meets Rural Needs

## Weaknesses & Challenges

- Respondents from the most rural communities perceive a lack of programs in their communities while commuter-rural regions have trouble accessing programs because they fill quickly.
- Programming demands are not necessarily the same as urban-centric demands. Residents seem to prefer impromptu events, drop-ins, and outdoor activities. Staff need flexibility to accommodate this trend.

## Opportunities & Expectations

- Respondents would like to have more organized programs, such as swimming lessons and fitness classes closer to their communities
- Senior respondents are looking for safe opportunities to socialize and be physically active near their homes.
- Youth are looking for more programming opportunities and would also like more youth-dedicated spaces to support them with mental health and tutoring.

# 5. Advertising & Communications that Reflect Rural Communities

## Weaknesses & Challenges

- Respondents explained that they are unaware of the what recreation opportunities exist in their communities and that better communications would be beneficial.
- Many survey respondents perceive there are no programs in their communities even though there are, showing marketing needs to be improved.

## Opportunities & Expectations

- In order of popularity, survey respondents prefer to find out about recreation opportunities through; local Facebook pages, email lists, and direct mailouts.
- Youth prefer to find out about recreation through Instagram and posters in their schools.

# 6. Collaboration through Partnerships

## **Weaknesses & Challenges**

- There are currently no regular or formalized communications between other relevant levels of government or arms-length organizations also delivering or supporting recreation.
- Missed opportunities to coordinate projects, plans, and programs

## **Opportunities & Expectations**

- All governmental and arms-length organizations interviewed agreed that regular planning meetings would be beneficial.
- Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage NS and Recreation Nova Scotia would like to see the municipality use NovaScotiaConnect.ca which is a community recreation database for all of Nova Scotia.

# Next Steps

- 1. Continue to develop the Rural Recreation Strategy informed by:**
  - additional stakeholder input on unstructured recreation,
  - best practice review,
  - jurisdictional scans, and
  - geographic spatial analysis of parks and recreation assets.
- 2. Bring strategy forward for Regional Council approval.**

# Thank you!



## Questions?

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