



TOWN OF AMHERST  
**AMHERST RECREATION  
MASTER PLAN REPORT**  
October 31, 2016

You Gotta Believe  
DR. BRIAN FERGUSON

Allen's  
Locksmithing  
Paint and More

CREDIT UNION  
COMMUNITY  
SUPPORTING OUR YOUTH  
www.communitycreditunion.ns.ca

Karl's  
convenience  
"The one stop for all your needs"  
23 E-B-L-4 ST  
FORMERLY ELLIOTT'S GROCERY

Carter's  
SPORTS CRESTING LTD.  
www.cartersportscreating.com  
Embroidery - Signs - Engraving  
Promotional Products

Old Dutch



Stantec Consulting Ltd.

102-40 Highfield Park Drive  
Dartmouth NS B3A 0A3

TO PROTECT THE HEALTH OF  
OUR PENSIONERS AND VOLUNTEERS  
PLEASE DON'T USE TOBACCO  
PRODUCTS IN THIS PROPERTY



**Amherst Recreation Master  
Plan  
FINAL REPORT**

Final report summarizing research and analysis completed in support of recommendations constituting the Recreation Master Plan for the Town of Amherst.



Prepared for:  
Town of Amherst

Prepared by:  
Stantec Consulting Ltd.

October 31, 2016



## Sign-off Sheet

This document entitled Amherst Recreation Master Plan FINAL REPORT was prepared by Stantec Consulting Ltd. ("Stantec") for the account of Town of Amherst (the "Client"). Any reliance on this document by any third party is strictly prohibited. The material in it reflects Stantec's professional judgment in light of the scope, schedule, and other limitations stated in the document and in the contract between Stantec and the Client. The opinions in the document are based on conditions and information existing at the time the document was published and do not take into account any subsequent changes. In preparing the document, Stantec did not verify information supplied to it by others. Any use which a third party makes of this document is the responsibility of such third party. Such third party agrees that Stantec shall not be responsible for costs or damages of any kind, if any, suffered by it or any other third party as a result of decisions made or actions taken based on this document.

Prepared by \_\_\_\_\_



(signature)

**John Heseltine, LPP MCIP, Senior Planner**

Reviewed by \_\_\_\_\_



(signature)

**Megan Jones, M.Pl., Community Planner**



## Table of Contents

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>1.5</b>
<b>1.0 INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1.1</b>
1.1 RECREATION DEFINED .....	1.1
1.2 PROJECT APPROACH .....	1.1
1.3 REPORT STRUCTURE.....	1.2
<b>2.0 DEMOGRAPHY AND RECREATION IN AMHERST .....</b>	<b>2.1</b>
2.1 RECENT GROWTH AND CHANGE .....	2.1
2.2 TOWN DEMOGRAPHY .....	2.2
2.2.1 Population Dynamics.....	2.2
2.2.2 Population Projection.....	2.3
2.3 RECREATION TRENDS.....	2.3
2.4 RECREATION PARTICIPATION .....	2.9
2.5 AGE AND PARTICIPATION .....	2.11
2.6 RECREATION ACTIVITY IN AMHERST .....	2.13
2.6.1 Health and Participation .....	2.14
2.6.2 Recreation Activities .....	2.14
2.6.3 Recreation Facilities Use .....	2.17
2.7 FUTURE RECREATION INTERESTS .....	2.20
<b>3.0 CONSULTATION IN AMHERST .....</b>	<b>3.1</b>
3.1 PAST STUDIES .....	3.1
3.2 STAKEHOLDER VIEWS .....	3.3
3.3 FRAMEWORK SETTING WORKSHOP .....	3.5
3.4 PUBLIC WORKSHOP .....	3.7
3.4.1 Facilities Improvements.....	3.7
3.4.2 Trail Improvements.....	3.8
3.4.3 New Facilities .....	3.8
3.4.4 Program Improvements.....	3.8
<b>4.0 RECREATION SERVICES AND FACILITIES IN AMHERST.....</b>	<b>4.1</b>
4.1 RECREATION DEPARTMENT STAFFING.....	4.1
4.2 FINANCIAL .....	4.3
4.2.1 Expenditures .....	4.3
4.2.2 Revenues.....	4.7
4.3 RECREATION FACILITIES.....	4.10
4.4 RECREATION PROGRAMMING .....	4.15
<b>5.0 ACTION PLAN.....</b>	<b>5.1</b>
5.1 FUNDING OPTIONS .....	5.1
5.2 A FRAMEWORK FOR RECREATION IN AMHERST .....	5.3
5.3 ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE .....	5.6

5.4	SERVICE DELIVERY .....	5.7
5.5	TRAILS DEVELOPMENT .....	5.8
5.6	PARKS AND OPEN SPACE IMPROVEMENTS.....	5.12
5.7	INDOOR FACILITIES .....	5.14
5.8	NEW FACILITIES .....	5.15
5.9	REGIONAL COOPERATION.....	5.17
5.10	CAPITAL BUDGET.....	5.18

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 2-1	Selected Indicators of Health, Population 12 years and over, Canada, Nova Scotia and Colchester East Hants/Cumberland Health Region, 2014 .....	2.10
Table 2-2	Physical Activity During Leisure Time, Moderately Active or Active by Age Group, Canada, Nova Scotia and Colchester East Hants/Cumberland Health Region, 2014 .....	2.11
Table 2-3	Physical Activity During Leisure Time, Moderately Active or Active, Canada, Nova Scotia and Colchester East Hants/Cumberland Health Region, 2003-2014.....	2.12
Table 2-4	Demographic Comparison, Town of Amherst Recreation Phone Survey, 2015 .....	2.13
Table 2-5	Indicators of Physical Activity, Amherst, Nova Scotia and Canada, 2010 .....	2.14
Table 2-6	Recreation Activities by Participation, Town of Amherst, 2015.....	2.16
Table 2-7	Unmet Recreation Wants, Town of Amherst, 2015.....	2.17
Table 2-8	Recreation Facilities Ranked by Relative Use, Town of Amherst, 2015.....	2.19
Table 2-9	Estimated Active Recreation Participants, Town of Amherst, 2011-2031 .....	2.22
Table 2-10	Estimated Participants by Recreation Activity, Town of Amherst, 2011-2031 .....	2.23
Table 4-1	Administrative Staff, Selected Recreation Organizations, Nova Scotia, 2015 .....	4.2
Table 4-2	Arena Staffing, Selected Facilities, Nova Scotia, 2015.....	4.3
Table 4-3	Actual Recreation Program Revenues and Expenditures, Town of Amherst, 2015-2016 .....	4.4
Table 4-4	Recreation Expenditures per Capita, Nova Scotia Towns, 2011-2013.....	4.6
Table 4-5	Sales of Recreation and Cultural Services, Nova Scotia Towns, 2011-2013.....	4.8
Table 4-6	Recreation Facilities Standards and Town of Amherst Supply, 2015.....	4.10
Table 4-7	Parks and Open Standards and Town of Amherst Supply, 2015 .....	4.11
Table 4-8	Suggested Upgrades with Costing, Recreation Facilities, Town of Amherst, 2015 ...	4.14
Table 5-1	New Lighting Equipment Requirements, Amherst Trails, 2015 .....	5.11
Table 5-2	Summary of Recommendations with Phasing, 2016-2026 .....	5.19

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2-1	Town of Amherst Population, 1891-2011.....	2.1
Figure 2-2	Past and Projected Population by Age Group, Town of Amherst, 1996-2031 .....	2.4
Figure 2-3	A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015.....	2.7
Figure 2-4	Physical Activity During Leisure Time, Moderately Active or Active, Canada, Nova Scotia and Colchester East Hants/Cumberland Health Region, Population 12 years +, 2003-2014.....	2.9
Figure 2-5	Physical Activities, Amherst, Nova Scotia and Canada, 2010.....	2.15
Figure 2-6	Reasons for Non-participation in Recreation Activities, Amherst, 2015.....	2.17
Figure 2-7	Use of Facilities for Recreation, Town of Amherst, 2010 .....	2.18
Figure 2-8	Recreation Activities Pursued Outside of Amherst, Town of Amherst, 2015.....	2.20
Figure 2-9	Participation in Town Events, Town of Amherst, 2015.....	2.21

Figure 4-1	Selected Recreation Facilities, Town of Amherst, 2015 .....	4.13
Figure 5-1	Support for Recreation Financing Methods, Town of Amherst, 2015.....	5.2
Figure 5-2	A Framework for Recreation in Amherst.....	5.5
Figure 5-3	Proposed Organization Chart, Town of Amherst Recreation Department.....	5.6
Figure 5-4	Existing and Potential Trails Network, Town of Amherst, 2015.....	5.10

## LIST OF APPENDICES

**APPENDIX A      COMMUNITY RECREATION SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE**

**APPENDIX B      RECREATION FACILITY SUMMARY**

**APPENDIX C      10-YEAR RECREATION CAPITAL BUDGET**



## Executive Summary

### Introduction

Effective planning for recreation service delivery requires a good understanding of existing facilities and services. To ensure a structured review of Amherst's recreation needs, Stantec conducted this study in three phases outlined in our proposal of June 19, 2015:

- **Phase 1 – Situation Assessment** resulted in the Situation Assessment Report summarizing demographic and recreation trends in the town in relation to current recreation facility provisions.
- **Phase 2 – Public Engagement** in which Stantec conducted a public meeting in the town and carried out a community survey leading to preparation of a Capital Cost Implication Report in which we assessed the financial implications of improvements required to address the needs identified through staff, stakeholder, and public consultation.
- **Phase 3 – Master Plan Delivery** during which Stantec integrated the outputs of the first and second phases with further analysis in Phase 3 to create this Recreation Master Plan. Work has included development of recommendations and a related action plan to address the future recreation services provision in the town.

### Demography and Recreation in Amherst

Amherst residents are well aware that the town's population, although stable, is aging. Amherst's older population appears to be one factor in lower levels of recreation participation in the community relative to Nova Scotia and Canada as a whole. Youth participation in recreation, on the other hand, appears to be higher than provincial and national norms.

Facilities do not appear to place any significant limits on participation. A survey conducted in the Town of Amherst by Ispos Reid in 2010 found general satisfaction with recreation opportunities in the town as did the recent telephone survey of town residents conducted on behalf of Stantec for this study. Both surveys found that walking is by far the leading recreation activity in Amherst. The Stantec survey further established that the most heavily used recreation facilities in the community are those that are used by walkers, most notably the Amherst Stadium Walking Track, the Dickey Park Track, the town's trails system, and its sidewalks. These facilities attract significant numbers of adult users. While there are also many younger residents who walk, youth are much more likely to participate in competitive team activities and are the primary users of the indoor facilities such as the Y pool and the Amherst Stadium ice surface.

Projections of future activity levels and demand for specific recreation activities created by applying participation rates obtained by Statistics Canada and Ispos Reid applied to Stantec's detailed projections of population by age and sex cohorts suggest relatively little change in the number of residents considered active or in the activities that are likely to attract the most participants. While the declining number of

young people will negatively impact activity levels, it appears likely that their decline will be countered by an ongoing trend to increased interest in recreation among older age groups. Overall, calculations suggest that residents considered moderately active or active will increase modestly. Walking and informal recreation activities favoured by older residents are expected to remain the predominant forms of recreation in the town. Team sports in which youth tend to be heavily involved appear likely to decline, although it may be argued that today's young people are more likely to continue their involvement particularly if facilities and programs are "freed up" as demand for youth programs declines.

### Consultation in Amherst

A range of past studies has addressed recreation related issues in Amherst and helped to inform Stantec's consultation of the Amherst community. They include the 2004 Recreation Master Plan, the 2010 Physical Activity Strategy, an AT Plan prepared by Town staff, a study to assess the feasibility of a multi-use artificial turf sport field. The planning firm Ekistics prepared a study assessing the rehabilitation of Dickey Brook within the town and an action plan to revitalize the downtown that both have important implications for the development of parks and trails in the community. Finally, separate studies have been completed that assess the needs of youth and seniors in Amherst. The 2013 Future Visions for Youth report recommended the development of a youth centre.

A Framework Setting Workshop was held with key stakeholders in Amherst on November 5, 2015. The group included Town staff involved in and/or influenced by recreation services, including a member of the Amherst Police Force; a representative of the Y; and representatives of local community groups. Discussion emphasized improving and more effectively allocating the recreation resources available in Amherst.

A Public Workshop hosted by Stantec at the NSCC in Amherst on Tuesday, December 2, 2015, attracted roughly 50 town residents and recreation stakeholders and several Town Councillors. Participants were encouraged to work together in roundtable discussions to identify needed recreation facility and trails improvements, and recreation programming needs. Participants expressed concerns with facility maintenance, aging infrastructure, and program and service needs throughout the community (e.g., lack of meeting space). For the most part recreation needs identified were small scale, although some participants suggested that a multi-purpose community centre similar to the recently completed Rath Eastlink Centre in Truro would be desirable.

### Recreation Services and Facilities in Amherst

The Director of Recreation currently oversees the Town's Physical Activity Coordinator, an Administrative Assistant, and seven operations staff. The Department has also had a Marketing Coordinator through a series of term positions.

In 2014-2015 Amherst spent nearly \$2 million on recreation operations and budgetted a similar amount for 2015-2016. Comparison of Amherst's recreation expenditures from 2011 through 2013 to the expenditures by 29 other Nova Scotia towns found Amherst ranked 15<sup>th</sup>. Revenues generated from sale of recreation services over the same period, Amherst ranked 23<sup>rd</sup>. With a few exceptions, Nova Scotia towns recover a modest portion of recreation costs through sale of services.

Stantec inspected 21 recreation facilities in Amherst identified by Recreation Department staff including all of the Town's recreation properties as well as facilities such as the Y that are owned by other organizations but which are important community assets. Consulting team members characterized all facilities they visited as Fair to Good. They identified no facilities as Excellent but neither were any considered to be Poor. As requested by Town Recreation staff, Stantec prepared a list of capital improvements needed to ensure facilities remain operational and do not deteriorate further. Stantec has estimated High Priority investments at \$205,000 and Medium Priority upgrades at \$209,000.

### Action Plan

Stantec's Action Plan emphasizes the completion and enhancement of the Town's trails network within the context of a renewed commitment to maintenance of the Town's overall parks and open space system. Recreation buildings are in good condition and meet established community needs. While some stakeholders are interested in an all season sport field complex and/or a multi-purpose community centre, the feasibility of such projects requires the involvement of the County of Cumberland and, perhaps, the Town of Oxford. The primary short-term building need is a dedicated youth centre.

The Action Plan has been developed within a Framework for Recreation in Amherst modeled on the Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015. The Town Framework establishes five Principles of Operation: Prudent Management, Cost-effective (service development and delivery), Engaged (operations), Quality (management and service delivery), and Collaboration. These principles relate to five respective goals as follows: Community Enhancement, Targeted Delivery, Community Involvement, Professional Management, and Partnership Building.

To address current needs, Stantec recommends the hiring of a dedicated Facilities Coordinator to oversee operation staff as well as commitment to an ongoing Communications/ Events Coordinator. At the operational level, Stantec recommends the hiring of a horticulturalist/arborist and assessment of the current deployment of Amherst Stadium staff to maintenance of parks and open spaces. Additional training of some operational staff is also recommended to help them to better handle outdoor maintenance responsibilities. Alternatively, these staff might be assigned to roles with the Public Works Department during the summer period to facilitate engagement by the Town of outdoor workers to work with the horticulturalist/arborist to ensure effective upgrading and maintenance of the Town's outdoor facilities.

The Recreation Department has incorporated Stantec's recommended expenditures in their proposed Recommended expenditures derived from Stantec's estimates of required upgrades, projects identified and costed above, as well as projects identified in consultation with Recreation Department staff are consolidated in the proposed Ten-year Capital Budget in **Appendix C**. The capital budget proposes expenditures averaging just over \$330,000 per year over its first five years. It includes an annual allocation of \$12,500 for trails development.

The costs of implementing the Dickey Brook Rehabilitation Plan, which complements the recommendations of this Master Plan for trails upgrades, are the major components of the second five-years of the budget. The first five years of the Ekistics implementation plan for brook rehabilitation, which includes wayfinding and walkway improvements, has a total price tag close to \$1 million, suggesting an

annual investment of \$200,000, allocated to years 6 through 10. In year 6 the capital budget is estimated at \$327,000 of which the investment in Dickey Brook will constitute 61.2% of the proposed expenditure. Through the balance of the budget period to year 10, total annual expenditures are estimated at \$277,500 of which brook rehabilitation accounts for 72.1%.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Town of Amherst occupies an advantageous position on the primary transportation corridor in Nova Scotia and across Canada. On the TransCanada Highway at the gateway to Nova Scotia, Amherst benefits from a diversified economy and regional pre-eminence in Cumberland County. Town residents benefit from a good array of recreation facilities headlined by the Amherst Stadium and Dickey Park, and strong cooperative arrangements with the community.

### 1.1 RECREATION DEFINED

The term “recreation” has a very broad meaning. Dictionary definitions tend to emphasize activities undertaken by choice for enjoyment. The definition put forward in the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association’s 2015 *Framework for Recreation in Canada* emphasizes this breadth:

*Recreation is the experience that results from freely chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community wellbeing.*

While people commonly associate recreation with sports, it also incorporates arts and cultural activities.

### 1.2 PROJECT APPROACH

The provision of quality recreation facilities and services is a key issue for the Town of Amherst. Parks and recreation facilities are a leading attraction for visitors and an amenity for citizens. Commitment to provision of high quality recreation facilities and services is also vital for the health and quality of life of town residents. Planning is critical in this context to ensure services are cost effectively targeted to meet public needs and interests, and promote the community development.

The last Town of Amherst recreation master plan was prepared in 2004. While the Town has made significant strides within the context of that document and has identified key projects for future development, conversations with Town staff that began this process suggested concerns with operations and communications. While the Town with the help of a wide range of community partners offers a good array of recreational facilities and programs, Recreation Department staff suggested that better coordination, improved maintenance, and more effective delivery of information to the public are all required.

Effective planning for recreation service delivery requires a good understanding of existing facilities and services. To ensure a structured review of Amherst’s recreation needs, Stantec conducted this study in three phases outlined in our proposal of June 19, 2015:

- **Phase 1 – Situation Assessment**
- **Phase 2 – Public Engagement**
- **Phase 3 – Master Plan Delivery**

A Situation Assessment Report was the primary output of Phase 1. It included a demographic overview of the community drawn from a recent Stantec study for the Town of Amherst and an assessment of its implications for current and future recreation needs drawing on past studies of recreation in the community. In particular, the earlier report reviewed the results of a telephone survey of Amherst residents conducted by Ispos Reid in 2010 as part of Amherst's participation in the Municipal Physical Activity Leadership (MPAL) program. The report also included a summary and ratings of existing recreation facilities, parks, open spaces, and trails in the town prepared by Stantec engineering staff, as well as an overview of the Town's current recreation staffing. At the request of Recreation Department staff, we also prepared a preliminary list of upgrades to existing recreation facilities within the town that Stantec inspected for this assignment.

While the range of facilities offered by the Town is impressive, many facilities are aging. Similarly, while the population of the community is stable, in contrast to many Nova Scotia towns that are losing residents, Amherst residents are aging. With fewer children and increasing numbers of elderly citizens, the Town must consider the fit between current offerings and evolving needs and preferences.

Aging facilities and users are a common theme in contemporary recreation planning. Many currently used facilities were developed in more expansive and prosperous times through the 1950s and into the 1970s. Facilities from those times were built for communities with proportionately more children than at present. They are now close to or more than a half-century old. Most have already been renewed at least once but reflect both former needs and aging technologies.

Work in Phase 2 resulted in the Capital Cost Implication Report, which incorporated most of the content of the Situation Assessment Report with the results of additional research and analysis completed in Phase 2. During the second phase, Stantec held a focus group with recreation stakeholders in Amherst to establish a framework for assessing recreation issues and needs in the town. With the help of our partners for this assignment, The Marketing Clinic, we also carried out a community telephone survey and conducted a public workshop in the town.

This final Recreation Master Plan expands on the Capital Cost Implication Report. It integrates previous research with further analysis carried out in the third and final project phase to create the Recreation Master Plan. It includes recommendations for reorganization of the Recreation Department and a related phased action plan to address the future recreation needs in the town.

### 1.3 REPORT STRUCTURE

Following this chapter, this report provides an overview of Amherst's demography largely based on the results of economic and demographic studies completed by Stantec for the Town of Amherst in 2015. Taking into account demographic trends in the community, the second half of **Chapter 2.0** discusses the influence of population aging on recreation activity arriving at estimates of future recreation interests in the town drawing heavily on information gathered through surveys conducted in Amherst by Ispos Reid in 2010 and by Stantec for this assignment.

Introduction  
October 31, 2016

**Chapter 3.0** summarizes input from recreation stakeholders in Amherst through various consultation events undertaken as part of the Recreation Master Plan process including interviewing, a focus group session, and an open public workshop. **Chapter 4.0** reviews Town of Amherst recreation facilities, staff, and financial commitments leading to our proposed Action Plan. The Action Plan in **Chapter 5.0** covers proposals for development of the Town's trails network and other recreation facilities as well as for operations of the Town of Amherst Recreation Department on behalf of town residents and in collaboration with other municipal governments in the region.



## 2.0 DEMOGRAPHY AND RECREATION IN AMHERST

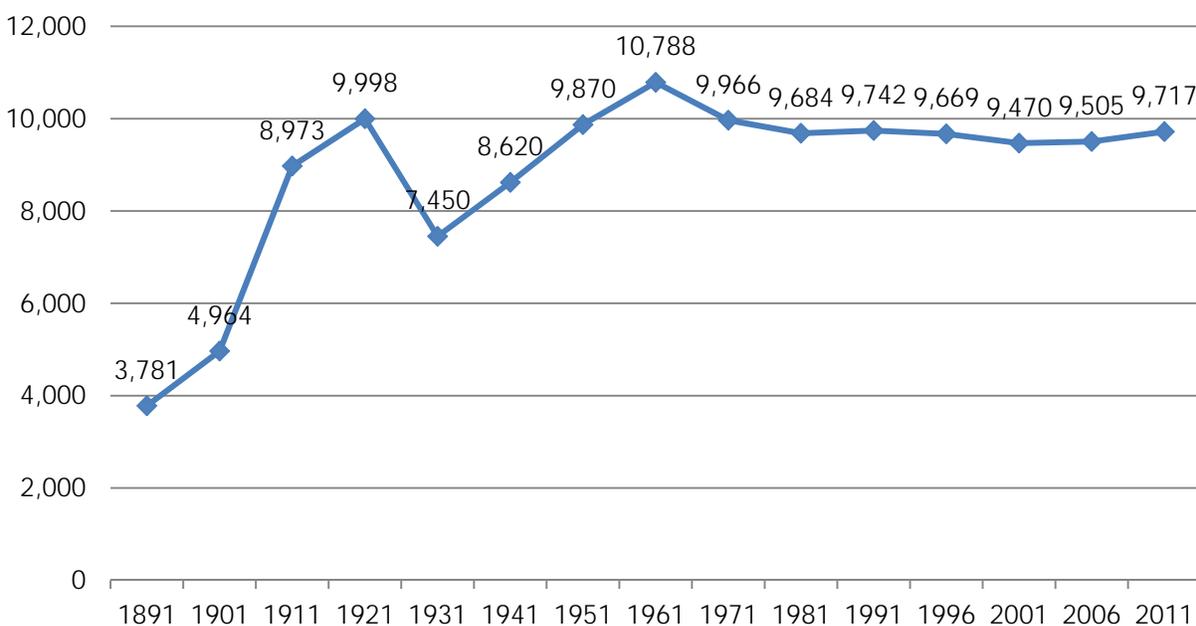
Amherst is the second largest town in Nova Scotia. Its 2011 Census population of 9,717 placed it behind Truro (population 12,059 in 2011) and modestly ahead of New Glasgow (population 9,562 in 2011). Amherst, furthermore, grew from 2006 to 2011 adding 212 residents in contrast to many Nova Scotia towns that lost population (Nova Scotia towns as a group increased their population by just 0.2% compared to Amherst's 2.2% increase).

An obvious critical issue for this study is the demand for recreation facilities and services in Amherst. The size of the community's population is obviously a key determinant of demand. A second critical consideration is its age composition as stage of life strongly influences recreation interests and participation levels. The future number of residents and the proportions of specific age groups in the town combined with the apparent current participation of residents in recreation relative to their ages provide the basis for estimating long-term demands and needs for which the Master Plan should provide.

### 2.1 RECENT GROWTH AND CHANGE

While the increase in population experienced over the last complete census period is positive, it continues a well-established pattern of uneasy population stability in Amherst that dates from the 1971 Census when the town's population dropped below 10,000 people. Since that time, the number of citizens in Amherst has hovered in the mid-9,000 range losing and gaining small numbers from census to census (**Figure 2-1**).

Figure 2-1 Town of Amherst Population, 1891-2011



Source Census of Canada 1891-2011

Previous work by Stantec that accompanied our demographic study completed in spring 2015 concluded that Amherst benefits from a diverse economy with relatively large numbers employed in the growing Public Administration and Health Care sectors but also fair representation in the Manufacturing sector, which lost substantial numbers across Canada in the most recent census period from 2006 to 2011. The town lost 235 jobs over the period. The current decline in the Canadian dollar may be beneficial for Amherst insofar as it should lift the Canadian manufacturing sector.

## 2.2 TOWN DEMOGRAPHY

Stantec's past study of Amherst's economy and demography covered not only the town's past growth but also the structure of population in the community, and growth and change expected in the future.<sup>1</sup> The structure of population refers to the distribution of age and gender groups. Population aging has, of course, become a dominant issue in demographic discussions in Nova Scotia over the past 20 years and is a critical issue for the Town of Amherst.

### 2.2.1 Population Dynamics

Demographic change is a function of three features of population: births, deaths, and migration. In Canada, birth rates have declined significantly over the long-term, although there has been a very moderate increase in recent years. Death rates have declined steadily throughout the country's history. Migration rates, on the other hand, vary considerably from place to place. Canada is normally a destination for immigrants and they are a major factor in the country's steadily moderate increase in population. Nova Scotia, on the other hand, attracts relatively few in-migrants either from other countries or from other provinces. Within Nova Scotia, movement also tends to be from rural and small town Nova Scotia to Halifax.

Stantec staff have developed a model that takes all of these factors into account. The model assesses births, deaths, and migration in Amherst in the context of expected population growth and change in Nova Scotia and Canada. Our previously mentioned letter report details features of the model.

Application of the model suggests that Amherst's growth is inhibited because its population in the key child-bearing years from 20 to 39 is small and declining. There were, for example, only 465 town residents between the ages of 25 and 29 in 2011 compared to 770 between 55 and 59, a difference of nearly 66%. Only 21.7% of Amherst's population was between 20 and 39 years of age as opposed to 23.8% for Nova Scotia and 26.0% for Canada.

While the shortfall in Cumberland County is not as severe as in much of rural Nova Scotia (e.g., only 18.8% of the population in Cumberland County is between 20 and 39), it is influential. Only 15.4% of the town's population is under the age of 15. Although this proportion is slightly higher than the Nova Scotia average of 15.0%, it is behind the Canadian norm of 16.8%.

---

<sup>1</sup> See John Heseltine, Stantec Consulting Limited, to Jason MacDonald, Deputy CAO, Town of Amherst, Town of Amherst "Population Projection and Shift-Share Analysis," letter report dated April 22, 2015.

Estimates of migration for Amherst do not show dramatic shifts on the scale that we have seen in many other Nova Scotia communities. Amherst, in fact, appears to experience moderate in-migration in most age groups. The only age group in which our calculations suggest consistent out-migration is the 25 to 29 cohort, for which we have estimated net out migration in all three of the most recent census periods.

### 2.2.2 Population Projection

By applying estimates of migration with projected Nova Scotia birth and survival rates for each age and sex group, we can develop very detailed population projections. Our projection for the Town of Amherst summarized in **Figure 2-2** suggests a moderate increase over the next census period to 2016 but slow decline thereafter.

The future trend shown in the figure is more moderate and not much different from the town's demographic experience since 1971 over which time the community's population undulated slightly up and down. Our predicted populations for 2026 and 2031, as a matter of fact, are almost identical to the populations recorded for the town in 1996 and 2001.

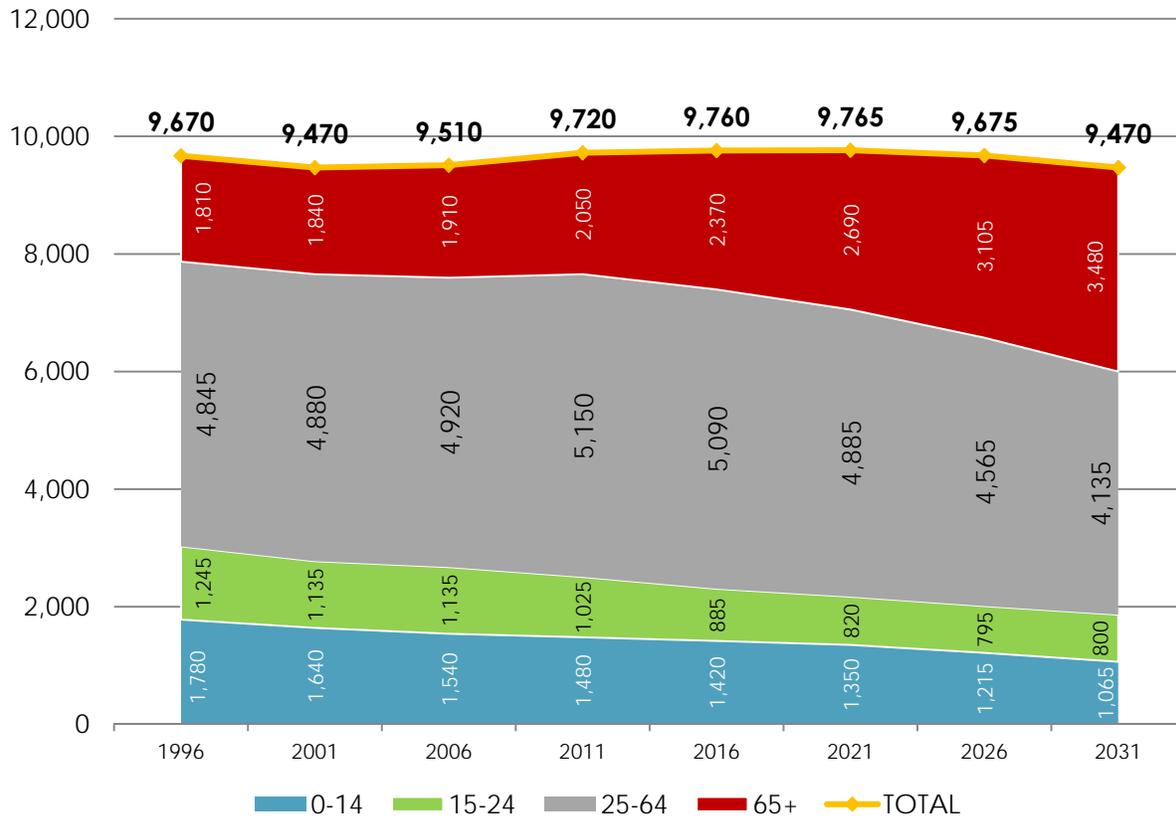
The projection is based on the town's most recent experience from 2006 to 2011 during which time Amherst increased its population. We also generated a projection based on the more extended period from 1996 to 2011, which was characterized by two census periods during which the town lost population prior to its modest gain from 2006 to 2011. The result was an immediate decrease in population from 2011 to 2016 followed by further decreases of increasing magnitude over each successive census leading to a predicted 2031 population of 8,835.

The factor that most strongly influences the projection over the 2011 to 2031 period shown in **Figure 2-2** is the ongoing aging of the population. As can be seen in the table in the lower half of the figure where the percentage of population in broad age groups is detailed, the proportion of Amherst residents over 65 is about to nearly double. In contrast, the shares of population in all other age groups can be expected to fall in absolute numbers.

## 2.3 RECREATION TRENDS

Recreation interests evolve constantly. Demographic change is critical but so also are new technologies and inventions. Skateboarding, BMX cycling, kite boarding, and ultimate frisbee are examples of new recreation activities that have been spawned by recent innovations. In addition, social change, which is a function of demographic shifts, technological advances, and evolving mores and tastes, can be very influential.

Figure 2-2 Past and Projected Population by Age Group, Town of Amherst, 1996-2031



Age	1996	2001	2006	2011	2016	2021	2026	2031
<b>Population</b>								
0-14	1,780	1,640	1,540	1,480	1,420	1,350	1,215	1,065
15-24	1,245	1,135	1,135	1,025	885	820	795	800
25-64	4,845	4,880	4,920	5,150	5,090	4,885	4,565	4,135
65+	1,810	1,840	1,910	2,050	2,370	2,690	3,105	3,480
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9,670</b>	<b>9,470</b>	<b>9,510</b>	<b>9,720</b>	<b>9,760</b>	<b>9,765</b>	<b>9,675</b>	<b>9,470</b>
<b>% Change</b>		<b>-2.1%</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	<b>2.2%</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	<b>0.1%</b>	<b>-0.9%</b>	<b>-2.1%</b>
<b>Percentage of Total Population</b>								
0-14	18.4%	17.3%	16.2%	15.2%	14.5%	13.8%	12.6%	11.2%
15-24	12.9%	12.0%	11.9%	10.5%	9.1%	8.4%	8.2%	8.4%
25-64	50.1%	51.5%	51.7%	53.0%	52.2%	50.0%	47.2%	43.7%
65+	18.7%	19.4%	20.1%	21.1%	24.3%	27.5%	32.1%	36.7%

Source: Census of Canada, 1996-2011, projections 2016-2031 by Stantec

Recreation professionals tend to be avid researchers and there is no lack of information on current trends in leisure time pursuits and sports participation. A key trend in fact is a shift from competitive sport to more casual, individual pursuits. Canada's 2010 General Social Survey noted that:

*... the national participation rate of Canadians age 15 years and older has been declining since 1992. In 2010, 7.2 million or 26% of Canadians age 15 and older participated regularly in sport. This represents a 17% decline over the past 18 years.<sup>2</sup>*

The main reason for this decline, according to the same report, is the aging of our population and the tendency of sport participation to decline as people get older. Eastern Canada, where the population is generally older, has experienced more substantial decline. Nova Scotia, in fact, led all provinces with a decline in sport participation from 32% to 21%, between 2005 and 2010 (-11%).

The decline in sport participation is not necessarily negative. It may simply indicate shifting activity choices:

*The downward trend in sport participation does not mean that Canadians do not engage in physical activities. Many engage in regular exercise through various physical programs or classes while others enjoy jogging, gardening, power walking, etc. According to the 2010 Canadian Community Health Survey, 14.8 million people, representing 52% of Canadians age 12 and older, were involved in leisure time physical activity; this represents a slight increase from 2006.<sup>3</sup>*

Older Canadians are more inclined to individual recreational pursuits that are frequently non-competitive such as the three activities noted in the quotation. As of 2010, the most popular active sport in Canada was golf, which moved past ice hockey, downhill skiing, and swimming between surveys in 1992 and 2010. The percentage of Canadians participating in golf, however, actually declined during the period from 5.9% to 5.2%. Of the ten most practiced sports in Canada, only soccer and cycling increased their participation rates over the period.<sup>4</sup>

While aging has clearly influenced the rise of golf relative to hockey and downhill skiing, it does not appear to be the primary reason for declining participation. The most frequently cited reason for non-participation among respondents to the 2010 Social Survey was lack of time (32%). Age was cited by only 8% and cost by just 3%.<sup>5</sup>

The Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015 prepared by the Interprovincial Sport and Recreation Council and the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association is seeking to address current challenges for recreation providers across the country. It emphasizes lifelong participation in recreation. Related goals

---

<sup>2</sup> Canada. Canadian Heritage, Sport Participation 2010, Research Paper, February 2013, p. 14.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Table 7, p. 33 (the participation rate for soccer increased from 1.8% in 1992 to 3.5% in 2010 and cycling grew from 1.0% to 1.4%. By contrast, baseball dropped from 5.6% to 2.1%, ice hockey from 6.4% to 4.4%, and swimming from 6.2% to 1.4%.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.

shown in **Figure 2-3** complement the goal of encouraging Canadians to stay active throughout life. While the framework recognizes the value of organized sport, it equally endorses alternative recreational activities that are individual and non-competitive. Emphases on inclusion, the natural environment, and active transportation reflect awareness that recreation is integrated with everyday activities as exemplified in the phrase “active choices are the easy choices.”<sup>6</sup>

The framework fits with the trend to less structured recreational activities but it is unlikely to relieve recreation providers, particularly in smaller communities:

*... there has been a growing appreciation of the important role that recreation plays in the health of Canadian communities and this has been reflected in the priorities assigned to municipal recreation expenditures. Outcomes associated with health and physical activity have contributed to a much stronger focus on informal and unorganized leisure pursuits and facilities and services that engage a broader sector of the community. This is evident in the expansion of trail systems and changes in policies and programming. Another major change has been the relative role of the municipality and the community. Twenty years ago in many Canadian communities, and particularly those in rural areas, recreation was almost exclusively the responsibility of the community. Over time the municipality has adopted a more active role in providing recreation services directly and in supporting volunteer efforts indirectly. While recreation continues to be a shared responsibility between community volunteers and the municipality, most Canadian communities are seeing a shift in these roles with a larger municipal role in support of volunteers.<sup>7</sup>*

Many recreation providers have embraced this responsibility. Programming has intensified with new attention to the needs of different age groups reflected in “generational programming” or programs targeted to specific age groups. In particular, given the traditional emphasis on youth in recreation services, attention has turned to delivering programs suited to adults and seniors. While this includes opportunities to extend traditional sports like ice hockey to older age groups, the faster growing segments are individual sports. This includes “life sports” such as cycling, kayaking, tennis, swimming, jogging, and walking that can be adopted in childhood and carried through life. Recreation programmers have also sought to modify offerings to address time limitations and the need of participants for flexibility with modifications to popular sports such as soccer with smaller squads, shorter league seasons, and fun events like themed road races.<sup>8</sup>

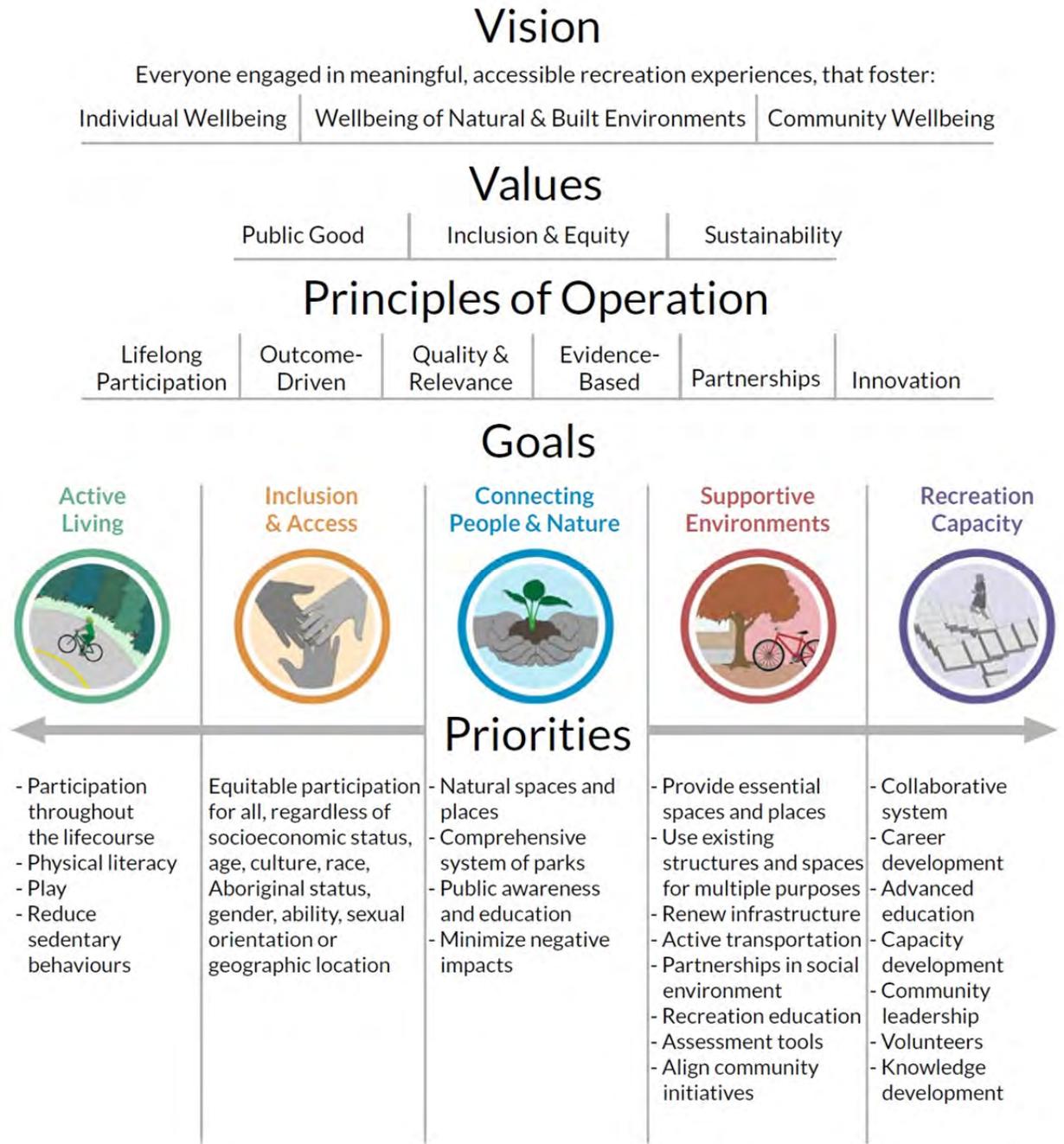
---

<sup>6</sup> National Recreation Framework Working Group, *A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Wellbeing*, January 2015, p. 20.

<sup>7</sup> dmA Planning and Management, *East Hants Recreation Needs Assessment: Final Report*, May 2012, p.3

<sup>8</sup> Carrie Madren, “A-Sporting-Shift,” *Parks & Recreation*, February 2014,

Figure 2-3 A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015



Source: National Recreation Framework Working Group, *A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Wellbeing*, January 2015, p. 17

The diversification of recreation options is notable. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) in the United States notes that when it was created in 1965, it categorized only seven types of recreation facilities, which were baseball diamonds, bathing beaches, golf courses, swimming pools, tennis courts, recreation buildings, and indoor recreation centres.<sup>9</sup> The association states that it now tracks “dozens” of facility types, several of which are present in Amherst, including an arena, which undoubtedly would have been recognized on a Canadian list in the 1960s; trails; and skateparks.

In terms of demand for municipal recreation services, current trends have mixed consequences. On the one hand, growing interest in individual activities, many of which are pursued outdoors, relieves recreation providers, to some degree, of organizational duties. As well, facilities are often less expensive for individual pursuits – if they are required at all.

On the other hand, a much wider variety of facilities and programs must be provided as the observation of the NRPA illuminates, and recreation departments must also provide for an increasingly diverse population. As important as it is to recognize the growing importance of older age groups and the coming wave of seniors, which this report emphasizes in Amherst, children remain a critical component of population for whom recreation has a formative role to play. Increasing balance in gender participation is also important. Girls and women are unquestionably catching up to their male counterparts in sport participation, and programs and facilities need to be adapted accordingly. Finally, there is growing recognition of the benefits of recreation to previously marginalized groups reflected in Paralympic and Special Olympic events.

Municipalities are also looking to recreation as a key tool for economic development. The NRPA recently completed a study of the economic impact of parks that found “America’s local and regional public park agencies generated nearly \$140 billion in economic activity and supported almost 1 million jobs from their operations and capital spending alone in 2013.”<sup>10</sup> While there is no equivalent study for Canada, it is likely that relatively similar results would hold here (recognizing that Canada’s economy is about 9% of the American economy).

Parks also enhance community appearance and are important tourist attractions. Within communities, they also have a positive impact on property values.<sup>11</sup> More generally, recreation facilities and programs have a role in shaping the image of a community, which is vital to attracting business, residents, and tourists.

---

<sup>9</sup> National Recreation and Park Association, *NRPA's 2015 Field Report: A Parks and Recreation National Database Analysis*, 2015.

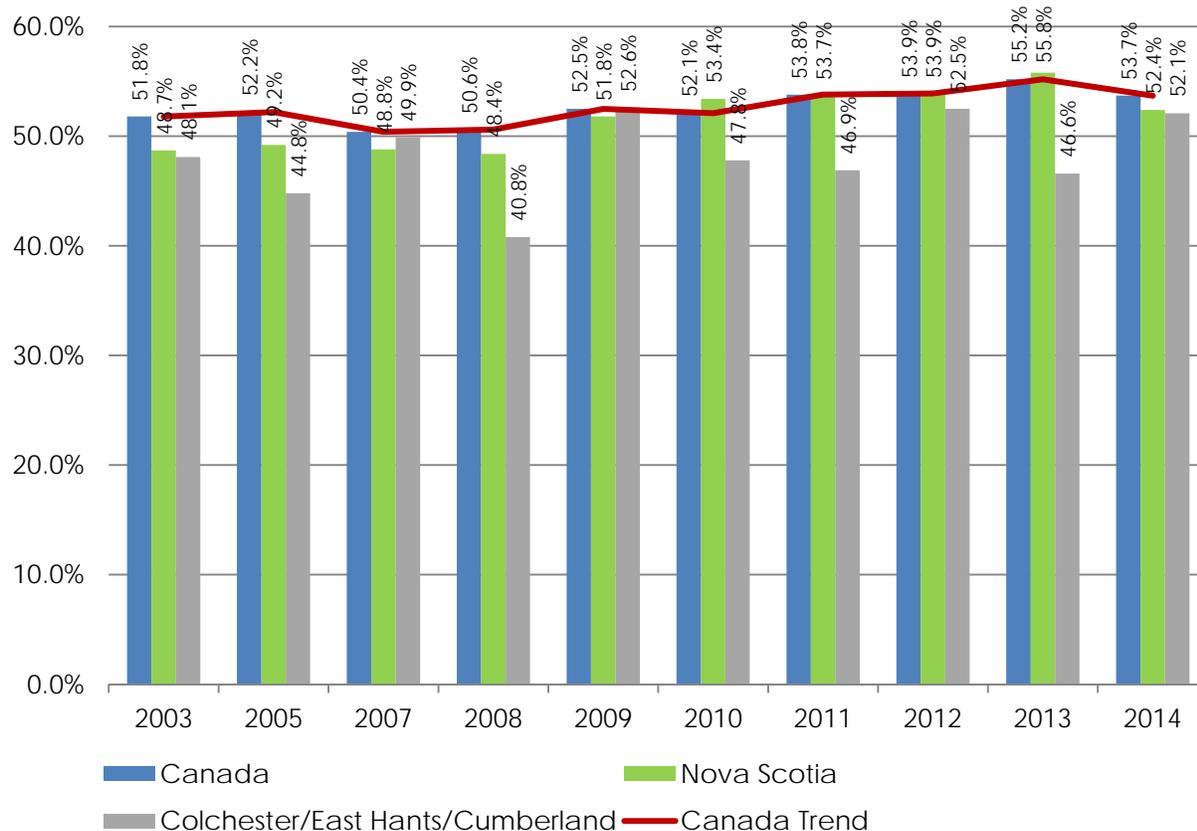
<sup>10</sup> National Recreation and Park Association, *The Economic Impact of Local Parks An Examination of the Economic Impacts of Operations and Capital Spending on the United States Economy*, 2015, p. iii.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

## 2.4 RECREATION PARTICIPATION

Trends in recreation activity are an ongoing concern in Canada. Over the past decade barely half of Canadians aged 12 or more have indicated that they are “moderately active or active” during their leisure time.” While data collected semi-annually by Statistics Canada shows a marginal rise in participation, the level of involvement remains uncomfortably low. For Nova Scotians and residents of the Colchester/East Hants/Cumberland Health Region of which Amherst is a part, the data is even more discouraging.<sup>12</sup> Over ten surveys taken from 2003 to 2014, both the province and the region have lagged behind Canada as a whole. In fact, the Colchester/East Hants/Cumberland Health Region has only risen above 50% participation in three surveys, with the most recent survey for 2014 being the third time (**Figure 2-4**).

Figure 2-4 Physical Activity During Leisure Time, Moderately Active or Active, Canada, Nova Scotia and Colchester East Hants/Cumberland Health Region, Population 12 years +, 2003-2014



Source Census of Canada 1891-2011

<sup>12</sup> Data from Statistics Canada Health Indicators surveys is not available at the level of the Town of Amherst. The most local level provided is provincial health regions of which Nova Scotia has seven.

The behaviors and consequences associated with low levels of recreation participation are apparent in **Table 2-1**, which presents a variety of indicators from the 2014 survey. On every indicator other than “Sense of belonging to [your] local community,” Nova Scotia scored lower than Canada. The Health Region, furthermore, followed Nova Scotia on all 15 measures, even sense of community.<sup>13</sup>

Table 2-1 Selected Indicators of Health, Population 12 years and over, Canada, Nova Scotia and Colchester East Hants/Cumberland Health Region, 2014

Indicator	Canada		Nova Scotia		Colchester/East Hants/ Cumberland	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Perceived health, very good or excellent	17,791,201	59.0%	465,171	57.5%	49,872	54.5%
Perceived health, fair or poor	3,491,653	11.6%	113,377	14.0%	13,472	14.7%
Perceived mental health, very good or excellent	21,006,324	71.1%	551,250	69.7%	58,611	65.1%
Perceived mental health, fair or poor	1,872,214	6.3%	59,077	7.5%	11,058	12.3%
Life satisfaction, satisfied or very satisfied	27,124,563	92.2%	721,685	91.6%	81,778	91.5%
Participation and activity limitation, sometimes or often	9,790,570	32.6%	338,546	41.8%	39,410	43.0%
Current smoker, daily or occasional	5,410,937	18.1%	177,951	22.1%	19,425	21.4%
Exposure to second-hand smoke at home	962,682	3.9%	27,896	4.4%	7,581	10.5%
Exposure to second-hand smoke in the past month, in vehicles and/or public places	4,105,782	16.8%	94,055	14.9%	7,486	10.4%
Heavy drinking	5,281,113	17.9%	161,027	20.1%	20,898	23.0%
Fruit and vegetable consumption, 5 times or more per day	11,185,128	39.5%	236,239	30.9%	24,230	28.2%
Physical activity during leisure-time, moderately active or active	15,882,290	53.7%	415,090	52.4%	46,902	52.1%
Physical activity during leisure-time, inactive	13,682,781	46.3%	377,686	47.6%	43,198	47.9%
Body mass index, self-reported, adult (18 years and over), overweight or obese	14,222,521	54.0%	443,317	62.6%	51,757	64.7%
Body mass index, self-reported, youth (12 to 17 years old), overweight or obese	467,969	x	12,108	x	x	x
Sense of belonging to local community, somewhat strong or very strong	19,435,211	66.4%	580,289	73.8%	64,898	73.5%

Source Cansim Table 105-0501

The region lags in recreational activity (Physical activity during leisure time, moderately active or active in **Table 2-1**) and in most related negative behaviors and outcomes. Residents in the Health Region drink more and, while they smoke slightly less than the average Nova Scotian, they are more than twice as likely as other Nova Scotians to be exposed to secondhand smoke at home. As a result, it is not surprising to find

<sup>13</sup> While **Table 2-1** shows 16 measures, “Physical activity during leisure-time, inactive” is simply the residual of “Physical activity during leisure-time, moderately active or active.” Data are also lacking to compare obesity for population 12 to 17 years.

they are also more likely to suffer from generally poorer health, higher levels of obesity, lower levels of mental health, and, even, lower levels of life satisfaction.

## 2.5 AGE AND PARTICIPATION

One likely explanation for Nova Scotia's lagging positions in measures presented in **Table 2-1** is the relatively older age of the province's population. As **Table 2-2** indicates, physical activity declines with age. It is also generally lower for females than males. Participation rates for teenagers, on the other hand, can be very high. Across Canada, more than 70% of youth between 12 and 19 years participate in regular physical activity. In the Colchester/East Hants/ Cumberland Health Region, a very impressive 90.6% of youth were moderately active or active in 2014 according to Statistics Canada, but youth are a relatively small proportion of the local population.

Table 2-2 Physical Activity During Leisure Time, Moderately Active or Active by Age Group, Canada, Nova Scotia and Colchester East Hants/Cumberland Health Region, 2014

Age Group	Canada			Nova Scotia			Colchester/East Hants/ Cumberland		
	Both Sexes	Male	Female	Both Sexes	Male	Female	Both Sexes	Male	Female
12-19	70.4%	75.5%	65.1%	69.0%	75.5%	62.0%	90.6%	x	x
20-34	56.5%	61.0%	51.9%	58.6%	62.3%	55.0%	54.6%	x	45.4%
35-44	51.8%	53.2%	50.3%	56.6%	58.0%	55.3%	45.5%	x	x
45-64	50.5%	50.0%	50.9%	48.3%	52.3%	44.7%	49.8%	48.5%	51.0%
65 +	47.7%	53.4%	43.0%	41.5%	49.0%	35.5%	41.8%	41.7%	41.8%
<b>Total, 12 +</b>	<b>53.7%</b>	<b>56.5%</b>	<b>51.0%</b>	<b>52.4%</b>	<b>57.1%</b>	<b>48.0%</b>	<b>52.1%</b>	<b>54.3%</b>	<b>49.8%</b>

Source Cansim Table 105-0501

Recreation programs and facilities have traditionally been oriented to young people. Youth in the 12 to 19 age cohort not only have access to programs available through municipalities and related recreation organizations, they also have physical education classes in school and, often, opportunities to be involved in school-related recreation programs including competitive teams. With population aging, some youth programs have become undersubscribed and demand for facilities has shifted.

Balancing this trend is the apparent increase in recreation involvement among older adults who are more active than in the past. It has been suggested that, whereas seniors once required separate recreation facilities, they are now more likely to want access to the same facilities and similar programs as younger groups. Only older senior groups appear to prefer segregated facilities where they can participate in less active pursuits.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> dmA Consulting, *Town of Oromocto Future Sport, Recreation, and Cultural Facility Needs Assessment*, Final Report, October 2014, p. 22.

Statistics Canada data concerning participation indirectly support these presumptions. Canada-wide data on participation by age group from 2003 to 2014 suggests that youth participation has fallen slightly, while adult to middle aged groups have increased participation moderately and seniors have increased significantly. Each trend has progressed consistently over the past decade at the national level, although provincial and local data are much more erratic, probably owing to the smaller samples involved (Table 2-3).

Table 2-3 Physical Activity During Leisure Time, Moderately Active or Active, Canada, Nova Scotia and Colchester East Hants/Cumberland Health Region, 2003-2014

Age Group	2003	2005	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
<b>Canada</b>										
12-19	72.0%	71.1%	70.5%	69.2%	71.0%	70.6%	71.9%	71.3%	71.2%	70.4%
20-34	54.6%	55.5%	53.1%	52.9%	55.9%	55.5%	58.3%	56.5%	60.1%	56.5%
35-44	49.2%	48.8%	47.0%	47.1%	49.1%	49.8%	51.2%	51.9%	52.2%	51.8%
45-64	47.5%	48.2%	46.8%	47.6%	49.4%	49.0%	50.5%	51.0%	51.2%	50.5%
65 +	41.4%	43.0%	41.3%	42.6%	43.0%	41.9%	43.9%	46.1%	48.4%	47.7%
<b>Total, 12 +</b>	<b>51.8%</b>	<b>52.2%</b>	<b>50.4%</b>	<b>50.6%</b>	<b>52.5%</b>	<b>52.1%</b>	<b>53.8%</b>	<b>53.9%</b>	<b>55.2%</b>	<b>53.7%</b>
<b>Nova Scotia</b>										
12-19	71.3%	72.2%	70.9%	68.4%	70.6%	76.9%	71.2%	79.4%	78.4%	69.0%
20-34	56.4%	54.1%	50.5%	50.4%	59.0%	57.3%	63.7%	59.9%	60.8%	58.6%
35-44	46.2%	47.0%	47.9%	46.2%	58.4%	56.5%	54.2%	57.6%	59.3%	56.6%
45-64	41.5%	47.2%	46.8%	49.1%	44.4%	50.7%	47.8%	51.3%	52.6%	48.3%
65 +	34.3%	29.8%	35.3%	33.3%	39.5%	36.5%	42.7%	34.9%	41.7%	41.5%
<b>Total, 12 +</b>	<b>48.7%</b>	<b>49.2%</b>	<b>48.8%</b>	<b>48.4%</b>	<b>51.8%</b>	<b>53.4%</b>	<b>53.7%</b>	<b>53.9%</b>	<b>55.8%</b>	<b>52.4%</b>
<b>Colchester/East Hants/Cumberland Health Region</b>										
12-19	66.4%	67.1%	70.9%	48.5%	66.0%	80.0%	78.6%	69.6%	65.0%	90.6%
20-34	61.7%	38.5%	47.8%	45.8%	50.7%	55.0%	65.9%	40.6%	45.7%	54.6%
35-44	43.1%	45.4%	49.8%	38.7%	61.8%	59.7%	44.6%	37.2%	48.9%	45.5%
45-64	39.5%	43.3%	49.1%	44.9%	50.8%	40.2%	35.8%	65.5%	48.9%	49.8%
65 +	36.9%	38.2%	39.0%	24.8%	42.6%	28.5%	38.4%	37.2%	32.6%	41.8%
<b>Total, 12 +</b>	<b>48.1%</b>	<b>44.8%</b>	<b>49.9%</b>	<b>40.8%</b>	<b>52.6%</b>	<b>47.8%</b>	<b>46.9%</b>	<b>52.5%</b>	<b>46.6%</b>	<b>52.1%</b>

Source Cansim Table 105-0501

## 2.6 RECREATION ACTIVITY IN AMHERST

As noted, Statistics Canada does not report data on recreation participation at the level of the Town of Amherst (i.e., census subdivisions). The Province of Nova Scotia does however periodically survey recreation activity and physical fitness in communities involved in the MPAL program such as Amherst. The polling firm Ispos Reid conducted the most recent Provincial survey for Amherst in 2010.<sup>15</sup> The survey, which obtained responses from 300 Amherstonians, is a richer source of information on recreation activity in the town than the Statistics Canada national survey, although it does not break down data into refined age groups.

A critical component of the research executed by Stantec for this assignment was the conduct of a telephone survey of town residents similar to the Ispos Reid survey. Stantec's partner for this assignment, The Marketing Clinic, phoned residents from early November to November 28, 2015. They collected 384 responses consistent with the specifications of our proposal, a sample sufficient to ensure a confidence interval of  $\pm 5\%$  19 times in 20. The survey was household-based and collected information on 807 people living in the 384 homes contacted or 8.3% of Amherst's 2011 Census population.

The Stantec survey questionnaire posed 13 questions. Several collected demographic information needed to assess survey responses against known features of Amherst's population and to group responses to other survey questions. The core of the survey instrument was questions inquiring about recreation activities pursued within Amherst and outside of the town; recreation facilities used in Amherst; recreation interests in which respondents or their household members are interested but which they cannot pursue; and barriers to participation. Some questions were similar to inquiries posed by Ispos Reid and further illuminate its results, while others investigated additional issues, particularly the use of town facilities. Stantec does not have Nova Scotia or Canadian data equivalent to that used by Ispos Reid to compare the results they obtained for Amherst to broader populations.

Table 2-4 Demographic Comparison, Town of Amherst Recreation Phone Survey, 2015

Age Group	Survey Respondents				Survey Households			
	Amherst	%	Sample	%	Amherst	%	Sample	%
0-4 years					17	2.1%	520	5.4%
5-17 years					93	11.5%	1,280	13.2%
18-34 years	1,735	21.9%	21	5.5%	64	7.9%	1,735	17.9%
35-54 years	2,705	34.2%	88	23.0%	157	19.5%	2,705	27.9%
55+ years	3,470	43.9%	274	71.5%	476	59.0%	3,470	35.7%
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>7,910</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>383</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>807</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>9,710</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: Stantec Consulting Limited

<sup>15</sup> For Amherst see Ispos Reid, The Town of Amherst 2010 Recreation and Physical Fitness Survey, April 13, 2010.

The same questionnaire was provided online. It obtained 156 responses (118 identified as Amherst residents, 33 from other areas, and 5 who did not specify their residence). The online survey provided all residents with an opportunity to have convenient input to the Recreation Master Plan process. Because respondents are self-selected, we cannot infer the opinion of Amherst residents in general from its results. Responses, in any case, tend to reinforce the results of the telephone survey and are not discussed further in this section; however, detailed results for both surveys are provided in **Appendix A**. The following discussion mixes analysis of results from the separate Ispos Reid and Stantec telephone surveys. Subject matter addressed includes health, recreation activities pursued, and facilities used.

### 2.6.1 Health and Participation

In response to a question posed by Ispos Reid concerning self-rated physical fitness, 40% of Amherst respondents in 2010 rated themselves as being in Very Good or Good [shape], in contrast to Ispos Reid measures of 49% for Canada and 45% for Nova Scotia. The response is in rough alignment with outcomes that might be expected given somewhat lower levels of physical activity identified locally and for Nova Scotia by Statistics Canada as well as related Ispos Reid questions concerning the number of occasions that respondents participated in physical activity and the intensity of such activity (**Table 2-5**).

Table 2-5 Indicators of Physical Activity, Amherst, Nova Scotia and Canada, 2010

Indicator	Amherst	Canada	Nova Scotia
Average times per week participating in physical activity	3.7	4.0	4.2
Average duration of activity (minutes)	55	66	68
Proportion making intense effort in activity	18%	23%	22%

Source: Ispos Reid 2010

### 2.6.2 Recreation Activities

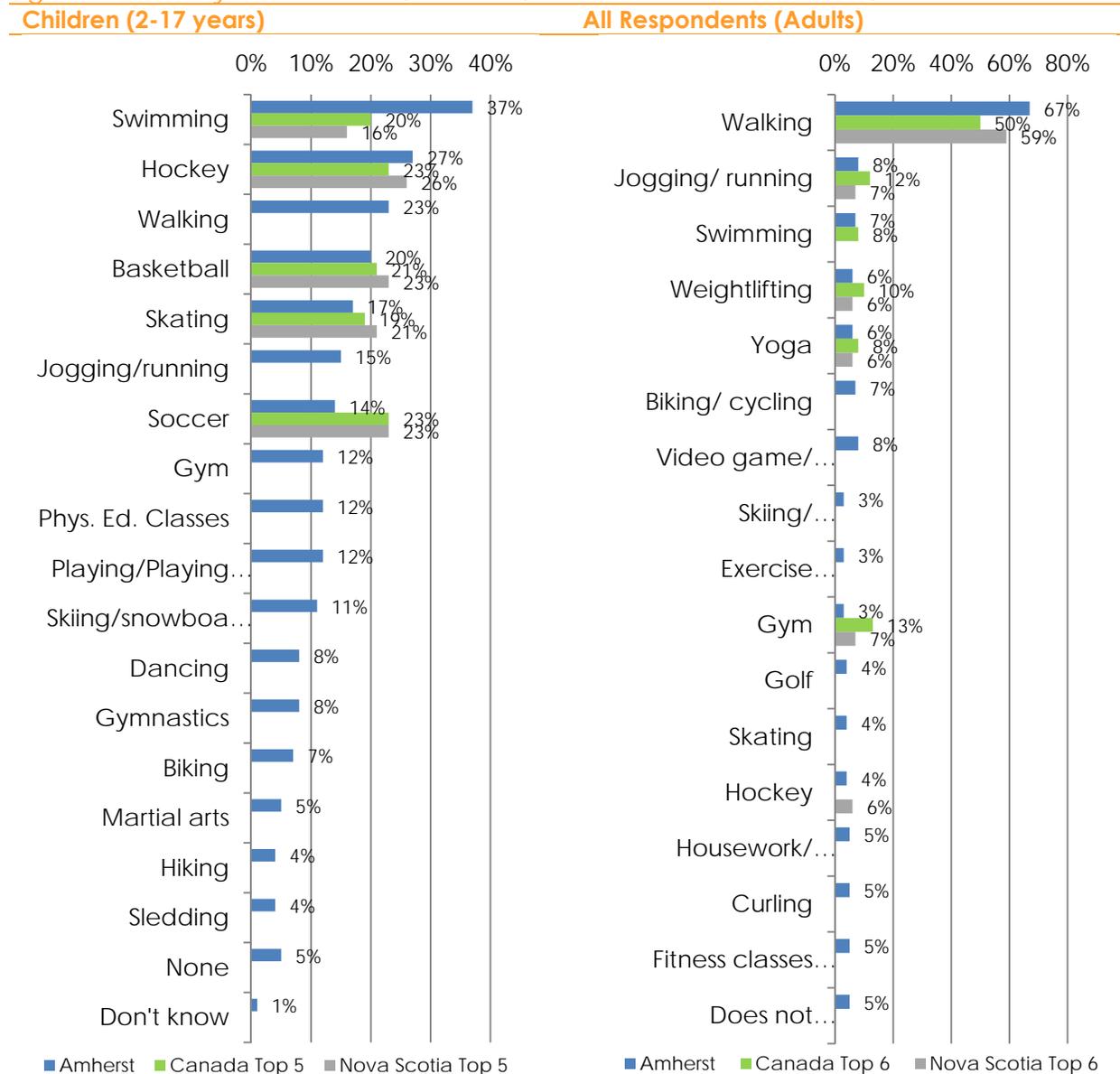
According to the 2010 Ispos Reid study, walking is by far the most popular adult recreation activity in Amherst. The survey found 67% of survey respondents walked regularly (see the right hand chart in **Figure 2-5**). Walking is almost universally the most popular form of recreation for adults, ranking first for both Canada (50%) and Nova Scotia (59%) but its popularity in Amherst is noteworthy, particularly as only three other activities are even one-tenth as frequently practiced by town residents.

Among children, swimming had a significant edge with 37% participating, ten percentage points more than hockey, the second most popular activity for children at the time of Ispos Reid's work (see the left hand chart in **Figure 2-5**). Walking was the third ranked activity for children in Amherst with 23% participation. Notably, walking does not show up as a top five activity for children in Nova Scotia or Canada.

**Table 2-6** lists the top ten recreation activities pursued by individual members of the households that responded to Stantec's community telephone survey. As with the Ispos Reid survey, walking is the most popular recreation pursuit in Amherst by a wide margin. Respondents indicated that household members in all age groups, aside from the very youngest, walk for recreation. The numbers of Amherst residents

who walk for exercise is nearly four times the number involved in swimming, the second most popular recreation activity in the town.<sup>16</sup> All age groups in the town enjoy swimming. Like Ispos Reid, we found swimming is more popular among youth than walking.

Figure 2-5 Physical Activities, Amherst, Nova Scotia and Canada, 2010



Source Ispos Reid 2010

<sup>16</sup> 313 of 807 members of responding households walk (38.8%). The numbers are not strictly comparable to the percentages derived by Ispos Reid as the Stantec survey asked for the top three recreation activities as opposed to all recreation activities pursued by residents.

Other activities shown in the right hand chart in **Figure 2-5** and in the top ten listed in **Table 2-6** are generally individual and non-competitive endeavors reflecting shifts in preferences identified in **Section 2.3** above. Only isolated team and competitive sports are in evidence. The ranking of some common and popular competitive sports for which the Amherst has specialized facilities follows the top ten in **Table 2-6**. While some of those activities have surprisingly low rankings, it is noteworthy that several are very popular with youth. Hockey, basketball, and soccer were all highly ranked for children in the Ipsos Reid survey. In the survey conducted for this study on behalf of Stantec, hockey, basketball, and soccer outrank all of the top ten listed activities for the general population among youth up to 19 years of age with the exception of swimming.

Table 2-6 Recreation Activities by Participation, Town of Amherst, 2015

Activity	0-4 yrs	5-14 yrs	15-19 yrs	20-39 yrs	40-64 yrs	65 yrs +	TOTALS	Rank
<b>Top 10 Activities</b>								
Walking	0	4	7	27	131	144	313	1
Swimming	5	22	8	15	19	17	86	2
Gardening	0	0	0	2	34	29	65	3
Reading	1	4	2	4	17	32	60	4
Home exercise	0	1	0	5	14	17	37	5
Exercise classes/ aerobics	0	2	0	9	16	9	36	6
Weight training	0	2	6	10	13	4	35	7
Skating	1	9	1	5	13	5	34	8
Bicycling	1	8	1	1	13	9	33	9
Golfing	0	1	0	3	12	13	29	10
<b>Selected Activities</b>								
Hockey	1	6	3	4	8	1	23	12
Basketball	0	8	5	3	0	0	16	16
Baseball/softball	1	4	2	1	4	3	15	17
Curling	0	2	1	0	4	7	14	20
Soccer	2	7	2	2	0	0	13	23
Football	1	2	1	2	0	0	6	31
Tennis	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	49

Source: Stantec Consulting Limited

The range of activities listed in **Table 2-6** and for Question 8, from which the table was derived (**Appendix A**) is extensive. Notably, substantial numbers of residents engage in every activity listed and respondents added many other activities in response to the other option.

Relatively few barriers appear to prevent participation. Table 2-7 lists the top six recreation activities that survey respondents stated members of their households would like to participate in but cannot. It is notable

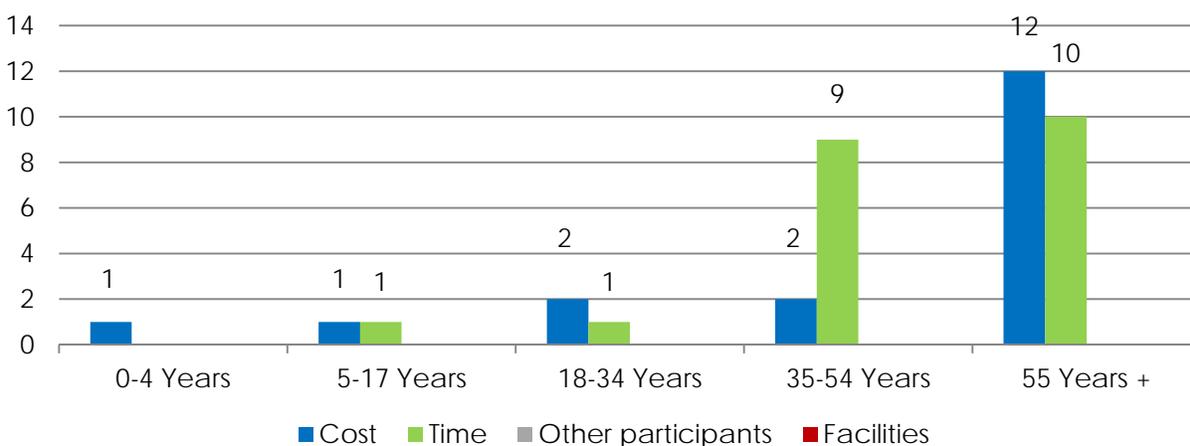
Table 2-7 Unmet Recreation Wants, Town of Amherst, 2015

Activity	0-4 yrs	5-17 yrs	18-34 yrs	35-54 yrs	55 yrs +	TOTALS
Swimming	1	1	0	3	11	16
Walking	0	0	0	1	14	15
Exercise classes/aerobics	0	0	2	3	9	14
Skating	1	0	1	2	6	10
Bicycling	1	2	0	1	2	6
Social dancing	0	0	1	3	2	6

Source: Stantec Consulting Limited

that facilities are available in Amherst for all six activities (to the extent that purpose-specific facilities are required for most of the activities listed). It is also notable that the numbers are modest. When asked for reasons for non-participation, no survey respondent cited lack of facilities or lack of other participants as a factor. Among the very small number who stated the reasons for their non-participation or the non-participation of other household members, all stated time or cost were the main causes (Figure 2-6).

Figure 2-6 Reasons for Non-participation in Recreation Activities, Amherst, 2015



Source: Stantec Consulting Limited

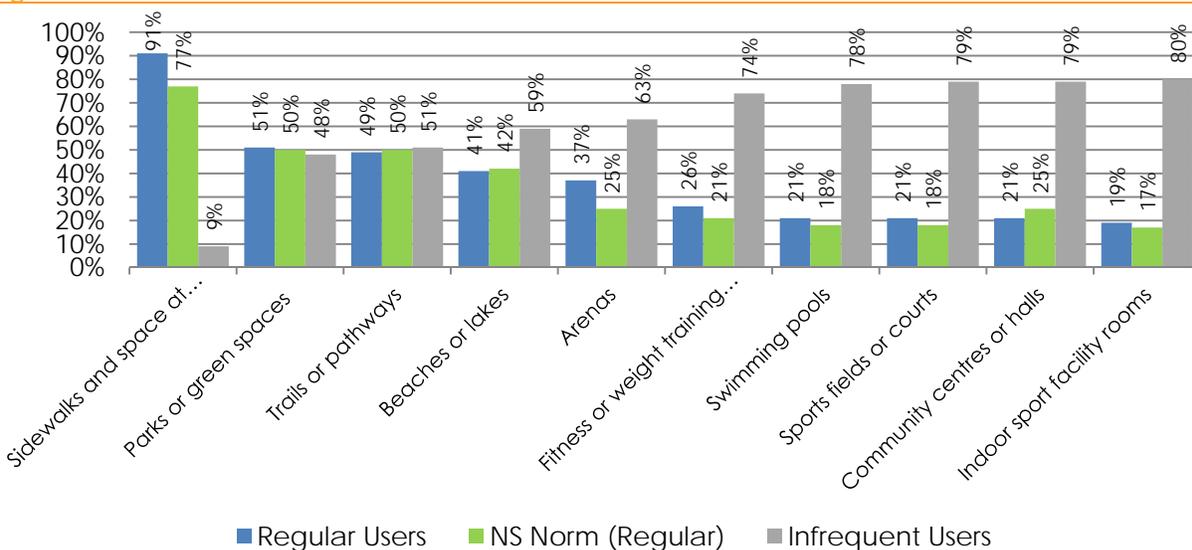
### 2.6.3 Recreation Facilities Use

Notwithstanding lower levels of personal fitness, Amherst residents, on the whole, appear to be reasonably satisfied with the facilities offered by the Town. Of 300 respondents to Ipsos Reid, 72% declared themselves Very Satisfied (18%) or Somewhat Satisfied (54%) with recreation facilities in the community. In contrast, only 61% of Nova Scotians consider themselves satisfied with their community's facilities (18% Very Satisfied and 43% Somewhat Satisfied). The Canadian norm is higher than Amherst at 76% (28% Very Satisfied and 48% Somewhat Satisfied).

With respect to facilities for children, respondents in Amherst were even more positive with 84% stating they were satisfied (20% Very Satisfied and 65% Somewhat Satisfied), in contrast to 73% for Nova Scotia (21%/52%) and 73% for Canada (21%/52%). Respondents to Ispos Reid in Amherst did not mention lack of facilities as a barrier to participating in physical activities, whereas it was referenced by 8% of respondents to other surveys they conducted Canada-wide (the fifth most frequently mentioned barrier for Canada as a whole). For Nova Scotia, “lack of places to exercise” was cited by 13% of respondents and was tied for third among top barriers to recreation participation in the province.

The facilities most often used are not necessarily those that are purpose designed for recreation. The most popular recreation facilities in Amherst according to Ispos Reid are sidewalks and roadsides used for walking and running, on which 91% of the town’s residents regularly exercise (respondents who stated they used these facilities at least once a month to as often as daily). Other outdoor recreation spaces follow. They all outperformed arenas, which are the most popular indoor facility with town residents (Figure 2-7). Arenas, however, are frequented by just 37% of town residents and are followed by other indoor facilities attracting only 19 to 26% of residents at least once a month. About three-quarters of the town’s residents only use those facilities a few times a year or not at all.

Figure 2-7 Use of Facilities for Recreation, Town of Amherst, 2010



Source Ispos Reid 2010

Indoor facilities, on the other hand, are important for children. Facility use summarized in Figure 2-7, above, reflects use by survey respondents whom Ispos Reid states were all 18 years or over. Answering on behalf of their children, respondents indicated that the two most popular activities for town residents 17 or under are swimming and hockey, which rely to a considerable extent on the two leading indoor facilities in the town: the Cumberland YMCA and Amherst Stadium. It is noteworthy that walking and jogging rank fourth and sixth among children’s activities in Amherst but do not show up in the top six activities for children in Canada and Nova Scotia as a whole. It is also notable that neither softball nor baseball shows up on either list.

Stantec's survey posed a more direct question concerning the use of specific recreation facilities provided by or supported with assistance from the Town of Amherst. Unsurprisingly, given the dominance of walking in Amherst, the leading recreation facility in the town according to survey results is the Amherst Stadium Walking Track (**Table 2-8**). Indeed, walkers use four of the top five facilities in the town ranked by level of use determined by our survey. The high ranking of the Y reflects its range of facilities and the popularity of swimming in the community.

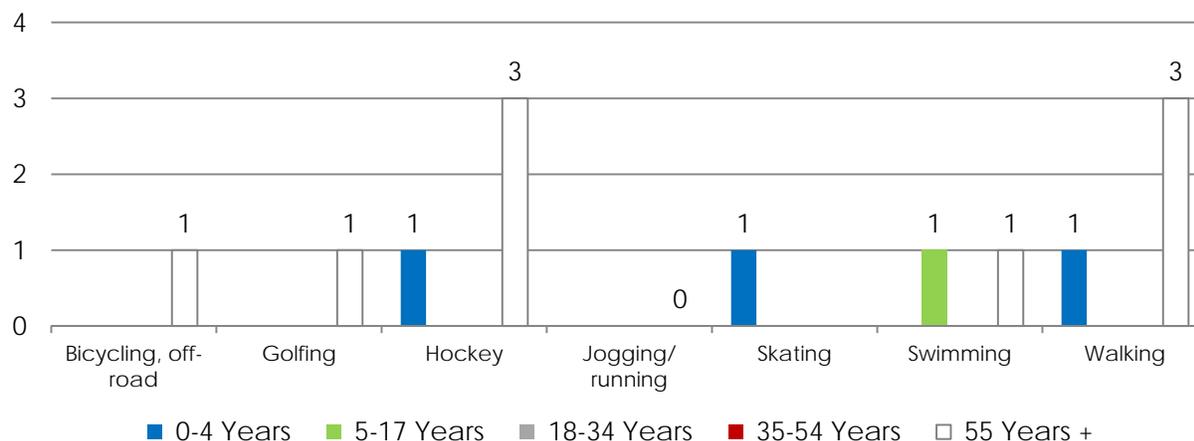
Table 2-8 Recreation Facilities Ranked by Relative Use, Town of Amherst, 2015

Facility	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Few Times/ Year	TOTALS	Never	% Use
Amherst Stadium Walking Track	34	52	26	76	188	194	49.2%
Dickey Park Track	17	44	28	63	152	230	39.8%
Community Y	26	47	25	37	135	246	35.4%
Town Trails	10	27	25	37	99	282	26.0%
Rotary Park Track	8	8	17	54	87	292	23.0%
Amherst Stadium Recreational Skating	2	19	12	42	75	304	19.8%
Amherst Stadium Hockey	0	33	7	26	66	317	17.2%
Beacon Street Park	4	14	18	23	59	323	15.4%
Rotary Park Children's Play Area	0	8	9	31	48	334	12.6%
Rotary Park Exercise Equipment	1	4	12	28	45	338	11.7%
Amherst Curling Club	6	13	1	23	43	338	11.3%
Robb Fields Baseball or Softball	1	19	4	18	42	341	11.0%
Rotary Park Green Space	2	6	9	18	35	348	9.1%
Soccer Fields	3	20	3	5	31	352	8.1%
Curry Park	5	2	5	10	22	360	5.8%
Strawberry Fields	2	1	6	9	18	363	4.7%
Harding Park	0	2	2	12	16	366	4.2%
Tennis Courts	0	1	4	9	14	369	3.7%
Lions Skate Park	1	4	2	5	12	371	3.1%
Copp Avenue Park	1	3	1	6	11	371	2.9%
Robb Fields Basketball Court	0	2	2	6	10	373	2.6%
Amherst Stadium Figure Skating	0	2	2	3	7	374	1.8%
Robb Fields Football	1	4	1	1	7	375	1.8%
Jerry Park	1	0	1	5	7	373	1.8%
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>547</b>	<b>1,229</b>		

Source: Stantec Consulting Limited

The very low reliance of survey respondents on facilities located outside of the town illuminates the excellent availability of recreation activities in Amherst (**Figure 2-8**). Survey respondents noted only 14 activities that residents pursue outside of the Town of Amherst. Facilities are present within the town for all of the activities listed with the exception of golf, for which an 18-hole course is available just beyond the Town Limits.

Figure 2-8 Recreation Activities Pursued Outside of Amherst, Town of Amherst, 2015



Source: Stantec Consulting Limited

The Town, furthermore, puts on a variety of well-attended events. Question 7 in Stantec’s survey asked if respondents or members of their households attended any of seven Town-sponsored events in the past year. The leading events are the Santa Claus Parade and Canada Day Celebrations (**Figure 2-9**). Based on 807 members in responding households, one-third of Amherst residents attend the Santa Claus Parade (33.7%) and Canada Day draws 28.5%. Only 10.9% of respondents stated that no one in their household attended any event put on by the Town.

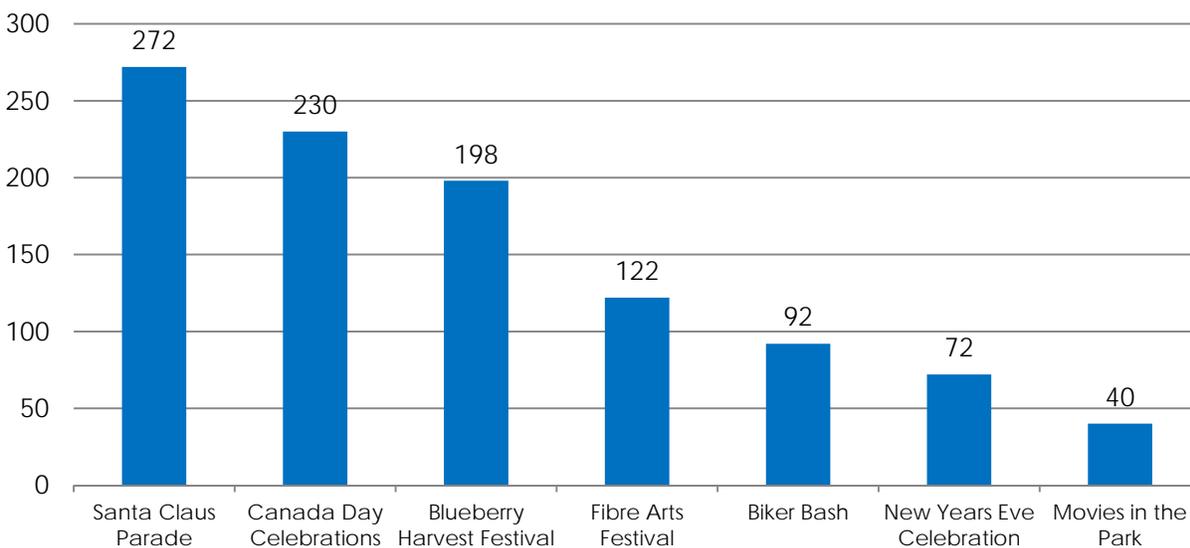
## 2.7 FUTURE RECREATION INTERESTS

Recreation demands can be expected to shift in Amherst as population changes. As **Table 2-2** and **Table 2-3** suggest above, shifts in the town’s age-sex structure will alter levels of participation. We can, in fact, calculate the influence of changes in age and sex composition by applying the rates in the foregoing tables to the population projections discussed in the second chapter of this report, recognizing that a great many other factors are likely to influence recreation participation and preferences.

To assess the likely effects of changing age and sex structure on recreation participation in Amherst, we projected the rates in **Table 2-3**, above, for the Colchester/East Hants/Cumberland Health Region and Nova Scotia into the future using a five-year moving average. We projected both sets of rates because, while the Health Region numbers are more local and, therefore, prospectively a better reflection of recreation participation in Amherst, Statistics Canada frequently deemed past estimates for the separate sexes to be unreliable so that gender-based estimates could not be projected. Consequently, estimates by

age for the Health Region were projected for both sexes only, while estimates for Nova Scotia were calculated for both males and females as well as for the two sexes combined.

Figure 2-9 Participation in Town Events, Town of Amherst, 2015



Source: Stantec Consulting Limited

Estimates based on the two geographies were surprisingly disparate. As noted above, the Health Region has had very high recreation participation rates for youth but relatively low participation rates for its young adult and middle-aged groups. Applying projected rates for the Health Region consequently generated much higher future estimates of youth participants but much lower estimates of participation for older age groups (Table 2-9).

Estimates of total youth participants in Amherst ran 150 to 200 more when we applied participation rates based on the Health Region as opposed to estimates based on province-wide participation. Conversely, estimates for older age groups are slightly to markedly lower. Overall, using Health Region rates, we estimate the number of active recreation participants in the town will generally rise from just over 4,000 to just over 4,300 during the next 20 years. Using Nova Scotia rates, on the other hand, we estimate current participation at 4,856 and expect that it will increase to 5,005 in 2016 but eventually fall back to essentially its current level by 2031 (Table 2-9).

In either case, the numbers generated suggest that the total number of active residents will remain at or slightly above current levels. While we might expect that aging in the population and a moderate increase in the proportion of females indicated by our population projections would result in a decline in participation, projected increases in participation in most age groups but especially among older adults are sufficient to compensate.

Table 2-9 Estimated Active Recreation Participants, Town of Amherst, 2011-2031

	2011			2016			2021			2026			2031		
	M	F	Both												
<b>Colchester/East Hants/Cumberland</b>															
12-19			637			571			554			552			514
20-34			1,002			710			613			525			504
35-44			526			505			476			453			392
45-64			1,060			1,488			1,517			1,449			1,335
65 +			787			880			997			1,151			1,291
<b>Total, 12 +</b>			<b>4,012</b>			<b>4,263</b>			<b>4,315</b>			<b>4,342</b>			<b>4,304</b>
<b>Nova Scotia</b>															
12-19	249	189	439	248	162	410	231	161	392	231	159	389	213	149	362
20-34	553	524	1,077	504	512	1,016	460	434	895	409	357	766	405	333	737
35-44	374	378	752	358	327	686	340	293	633	324	275	599	274	243	517
45-64	877	733	1,610	873	839	1,712	873	855	1,729	853	804	1,657	813	718	1,531
65 +	386	593	979	495	687	1,181	574	770	1,344	665	885	1,551	743	994	1,737
<b>Total, 12 +</b>	<b>2,440</b>	<b>2,417</b>	<b>4,856</b>	<b>2,477</b>	<b>2,527</b>	<b>5,005</b>	<b>2,478</b>	<b>2,513</b>	<b>4,992</b>	<b>2,482</b>	<b>2,480</b>	<b>4,961</b>	<b>2,448</b>	<b>2,437</b>	<b>4,884</b>

Source: Stantec Consulting Ltd.

Whichever data set we use to estimate future recreation participation, a shift from younger to older participants is clear. Based on Health Region data, we estimate that 15.9% of current active recreation participants are youth but this proportion will fall to 11.9% by 2031, while the proportion of seniors will increase from 19.6% to 30.0%. Using Nova Scotia-wide data, the shift is even more pronounced with youth participation declining from 9.0% to 7.4%, while participation of seniors is estimated to rise from 20.2% to 35.6%. In both cases, we expect the relative representation of the young adult and middle-aged groups to decline moderately.

As the overall age of recreation participants advances, activity preferences are likely to change. **Table 2-10** provides estimated future numbers of participants in activities for which the 2010 Ispos Reid survey provided participation rates (see **Figure 2-5** above). On the whole, the numbers do not show any marked increase in participation in any specific activity. Although the calculations in **Table 2-10** are not strictly comparable to figures in **Table 2-9**, which only cover population beginning at 12 years of age and include activities for which Ispos Reid does not provide participation rates, the flat trend is similar.

In **Table 2-10**, adults engage in all activities with increasing participation. We project walking to continue to have by far the largest number of adherents. While we expect swimming to continue to be a strong second, we calculate a significant decline in the number of participants given the typically much higher participation in swimming by children. Other sports – particularly organized team sports like hockey, basketball, and soccer that are skewed heavily to youth – are the most likely to decline, although soccer may be sold short in this case as it seems reasonable to assume that some young adults raised with

the sport over the past 20 to 25 years will continue to participate as they age. Canadians born before 1990 largely missed the soccer boom, which is reflected in the absence of adult soccer participation from **Figure 2-5**. A further argument may be made that if facility time becomes available owing to declining youth participation in sports like hockey and softball and baseball, as well as soccer, adult groups may fill the void, particularly adults who participated in these sports as they grew up.

Table 2-10 Estimated Participants by Recreation Activity, Town of Amherst, 2011-2031

Activity	Predominant Participants	2011	2016	2021	2026	2031	Change
Walking	Both	5,304	5,400	5,450	5,491	5,467	3.1%
Swimming	Both	1,139	1,123	1,102	1,068	1,012	-11.1%
Jogging/running	Both	870	871	867	856	832	-4.5%
Hockey	Both	744	730	714	689	648	-12.8%
Biking/cycling	Both	586	589	589	585	573	-2.1%
Gym	Both	586	584	579	570	551	-5.9%
Skating	Both	585	579	570	555	529	-9.6%
Skiing/ snowboarding	Both	570	569	565	557	539	-5.4%
Weightlifting	Adult	554	564	569	574	571	3.1%
Yoga	Adult	475	484	488	492	490	3.1%
Physical education/ fitness classes	Both	427	423	417	406	388	-9.2%
Exercise machines	Adult	396	403	407	410	408	3.1%
Video game/DVD/TV exercises (Incl. Wii Fit)	Adult	396	403	407	410	408	3.1%
Golf	Adult	317	322	325	328	326	3.1%
Basketball	Child	316	302	288	267	238	-24.6%
Curling	Adult	237	242	244	246	245	3.1%
Housework/yardwork	Adult	237	242	244	246	245	3.1%
Soccer	Child	221	212	201	187	167	-24.6%
Playing/ playing outside	Child	190	181	173	160	143	-24.6%
Dancing	Child	126	121	115	107	95	-24.6%
Gymnastics	Child	126	121	115	107	95	-24.6%
Martial arts	Child	79	76	72	67	60	-24.6%
Hiking	Child	63	60	58	53	48	-24.6%
Sledding	Child	63	60	58	53	48	-24.6%
None	Both	712	720	723	722	712	0.0%

Source Stantec Consulting Ltd.



## 3.0 CONSULTATION IN AMHERST

Stantec undertook a variety of consultations as part of the Recreation Master Plan process. We directly interviewed leading service providers and volunteers in the community at the outset of the project. In Phase 2, we held a focused workshop with professionals engaged in recreation service delivery to help us set the framework for considering recreation issues in the town. An open workshop concluded Phase 2 and addressed specifics of recreation facility and program improvements with a broader range of interested citizens.

### 3.1 PAST STUDIES

The Town of Amherst has undertaken several studies since 2000 pertinent to this Recreation Master Plan. The 2004 Recreation Master Plan recognized that the Town is a coordinator of recreation services and must collaborate with a range of community organizations and volunteers, a circumstance common to local governments across Nova Scotia and still the condition in Amherst. While some commitments of the past Master Plan are difficult to track, several have been achieved. Accomplishments related to the plan include rehabilitation of Amherst Stadium, development of a skate park in the town, and extension of the Town's trails system.

More recently in 2010, the Town prepared a Physical Activity Strategy under the Provincially funded Municipal Physical Activity Leadership (MPAL) program. The Strategy's mission statement is

*“to create physical and recreational opportunities for growth and enhancement by developing diverse services and programs that promote citizen involvement and a strong sense of community while striving to increase the social, cultural, and physical well-being of its residents regardless of income, background, and ability.”*

The four stated goals of the strategy are to increase physical activity across age groups, reduce barriers to participation in physical activity, enhance the built environment to support physical activity, and increase awareness of the importance of physical activity. The goals align well with the national Framework for Recreation presented in **Figure 2-3** above.

An important study in relation to the goals of the Physical Activity Strategy was the Active Transportation (AT) Plan completed in 2012 by staff with the Town's Planning and Development Services Department. The AT Plan identified proposed networks of trails, pedestrian connections (including sidewalks), and bicycle routes. It also incorporates a variety of past trails schemes elaborating the primary trails loop to be developed within the town, which is discussed in depth below, and extending the network to sites of natural, scenic, and recreational interest beyond the Town Limits.

Although the AT Plan provides a comprehensive overview of trails needs, standards, and potential solutions, Town Council has not adopted it. As discussed throughout this document, walking, running, and bicycling are high participation recreation activities that are already well-established in Amherst and

Consultation in Amherst  
October 31, 2016

are well-suited to many of the rising number of older residents in the town. Many recreation providers and citizen contacts noted the need to develop an effective trails network for the community.

In 2013, the Cumberland Regional Development Authority and Cumberland Sportsplex Development Society commissioned a consultant study to assess the need for and feasibility of a multi-use artificial turf sport field to be located in either the Town of Amherst or the County of Cumberland. Contacts involved in football and soccer interviewed for the study were critical of the quality of current fields for their sports in the community. The All-Weather Sport field Feasibility Study prepared by the consulting firms WSP and dmA confirmed local demand for such a facility and the Town set aside money toward its potential development in its most recent capital budget. The County's focus subsequently shifted to the dissolutions of the Towns of Springhill and Parrsboro, which were both completed as the Recreation Master Plan process reached its close.

The Town has proceeded with upgrades to Dickey Park that were under construction when Stantec staff conducted inspection of Town facilities for this study. Separate from this work on Dickey Park, the 2010 Dickey Brook Rehabilitation Plan completed for the Town by Ekistics Planning and Design has proposed further improvements to complement planned improvements to the watercourse, which runs extensively through the community. The plan calls for trails development, a historic park around Christie Pond, and development of an Outdoor Learning Centre as components of a broad plan to conserve lands in the riparian zone flanking the watercourse.

The Centre First Downtown Action Strategy, which Ekistics prepared in the same year, recommended improvements to Victoria Square to enhance its functionality. The Strategy also includes recommendations to develop a multi-use trail to connect the Downtown to the Tantramar Marsh and prepare an Urban Forestry Plan. It notes that the "trail should eventually connect to other active transportation routes in the Town."<sup>17</sup> The Urban Forestry Plan addresses inadequate tree cover in the Downtown and much of the balance of the town. Ekistics recommended that the Town hire a full-time arborist to lead the preparation of an Urban Forest Management Master Plan and, presumably, oversee the implementation of its recommendations.

In 2010, dmA Planning and Management prepared an Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy for Amherst. The strategy calls for the Town to encourage the development of Amherst as a "creative community." Similar to the findings of this study with respect to recreation facilities, the Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy concluded that "[arts, culture, and heritage] spaces already exist in the Town, but because of lack of awareness, access agreements, policies, and practices, they are not accessible to the organizations and individuals involved in providing arts and cultural services."<sup>18</sup> The strategy calls for the integration of other Town initiatives with the objective of making Amherst a creative centre.

---

<sup>17</sup> Ekistics Planning and Design, *Centre First: Downtown Amherst Action Strategy: Final Report*, February 2010, p. 37.

<sup>18</sup> dmA Planning and Management Services, *Town of Amherst Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy*, January 13, 2010, p. 15.

Consultation in Amherst  
October 31, 2016

Two studies have focused on age-related issues in Amherst. The 2013 Future Visions for Youth report prepared by the Town with input from the Amherst Youth Town Council and youth in the community and assistance from Dr. Lena Walker addressed the needs of young people from 11 to 19 years of age. The study made a variety of recommendations to integrate this age group into the community including the formation of a Youth Led Network and pursuit of a variety of initiatives to improve understanding of youth issues within the community. It also included a proposal to create a "Youth Neighbourhood Hub," which would provide a place in which young volunteers would work with other young people to deliver youth-related programs, particularly dealing with mental health and addiction issues.

The Town's Seniors Strategy was prepared in the same year as the Visions for Youth report. The World Health Organization's (WHO) age-friendly community initiative started in 2006 and the Nova Scotia Strategy for Positive Aging both influenced its creation. The two contextual strategies emphasized the dignified integration of seniors in the broader society. Both contained principals highly relevant to this recreation study. The Provincial strategy emphasizes the importance of "supports and services [that enable] seniors to optimize their health and wellbeing." The WHO identifies "[o]utdoor spaces and public buildings [that] are pleasant, clean, secure and physically accessible" as a leading feature of an age-friendly community. In the context of the WHO's emphasis on public spaces, the Town's recommendations recognize the value of accessible trails and sidewalks. The Seniors Strategy notes the importance of lighting and snow clearing, and recognizes the park and open space assets within Amherst that address the needs of older residents.

## 3.2 STAKEHOLDER VIEWS

In addition to discussion with Recreation Department staff, Stantec's initial consultation included a round of interviews with the following 17 leading community stakeholders:

- Amherst Aerial Gymnastics – Michelle Landry
- Amherst Curling Club – Robin Keith
- Amherst Golf Club – Frank MacShane
- Amherst Public Library – Denise Corey
- Badminton Club – Cheryl & Ian Mackintosh
- Baptist Church – Donnie Miller
- Basketball Association – Paul Cormier & Dwayne Starratt
- Fundy Youth Soccer – Ronald Gould
- Hockey Association – Billie Chapman
- King Pin Bowling Alley – Doug Thompson
- Lions Club – Rubin Millard
- Little League Baseball Fields – Sonny Foster

Consultation in Amherst  
October 31, 2016

- Maggie's Place Family Resource Centre – Carolyn d'Entremont
- Softball League – Judy McGregor
- Tae Kwon Do – Jim Ripley
- Wolfpack Football Association – Travis Dow
- Community Y – Trina Clarke
- Youth Club – Donnie Miller

The listed stakeholders include managers of recreation and cultural facilities in the town as well as professional and volunteer organizers with leading sports and recreation groups in the community. Their input echoed many of the concerns and aspirations expressed by Town staff.

Most of the organizations consulted are focused on building stronger communities through engagement and by providing opportunities for community members to enjoy a healthier lifestyle by promoting physical activity. All but one organization identified issues associated with securing volunteers. Many attributed the decline in volunteerism to a change in household dynamics as an increasing number of households have two income earners and deal with increasingly busy lifestyles that reduce the time available to volunteer.

Most respondents consider the range of facilities available in the town more than adequate. In the words of one interview subject there are:

*... Lots of gymnasiums, a great rink, a new football field. Overall, for the size of the town, there is an acceptable and reasonable amount of recreational facilities available for residents of the town.*

Others made similar statements and many noted the low cost of access. Volunteers in badminton and basketball pointed out that schools are freely available to them with few limitations.

Several stakeholders interviewed reported plentiful opportunities for families of all income levels to participate in recreation activities in Amherst. The Y provides a subsidized program that provides recreational opportunities for all children regardless of income level. The Minor Hockey Association provides a hockey program free of charge for all new players for the first two years of play. The program is designed to give all children a chance to participate in the sport of hockey, which is becoming increasingly expensive. Additionally, the Little League Baseball Association provides a free program for all players between the ages of 5 and 12 years. The Town, furthermore, provides free public skating at Amherst Stadium and pays the YMCA to provide free open swimming during the summer.

Contacts spoke positively about the Town and the Recreation Department. Several noted that the department has recently raised its profile. The Y and Maggie's Place Family Resource Centre both attributed the success of their respective facilities and organizations to support from the Town. The Director of the YMCA, which receives substantial financial assistance annually from the Town, said that the facility could not survive without this aid. In return, of course, the Y provides a swimming pool and

Consultation in Amherst  
October 31, 2016

exercise facilities that would otherwise be difficult for the community to afford. Some, however, do feel the Town should do more.

Many of the programs, organizations, and facilities are experiencing a decline in memberships and active participants. Many contacts noted that the population of the community has been stagnant with little to no growth. One interviewee suggested the town is becoming a retirement community, with no economic stimulus to attract young people. A common theme was that the recreation needs of the town are changing due to its aging population and the Town needs to increase its efforts to understand and engage that section of the population. One older participant, however, stated that activities for seniors do not have to be as organized as the participants are presumably mature and self-policing, and are less interested in keeping standings and statistics. Her response suggested that older residents would benefit from less structure and the ability to create impromptu events when weather and/or the availability of participants will allow.

Aging infrastructure is an ongoing problem. The following comment from one participant sums up a variety of perspectives:

*“... some facilities are excellent, such as the Stadium and the YMCA. There are issues around good playing surfaces, such as soccer and football. There are lots of natural surfaces, but the quality is lacking. As a family, we travel a lot, and we have seen other communities with good quality play surfaces. If we had better natural surfaces, we could bring in revenue with tournaments, etc. The quality isn't there.”*

This particular respondent was not alone in saying that many outdoor playing surfaces in the community need improved maintenance and, in some cases, comprehensive renewal. The soccer association contact as well others interviewed suggested that natural play surfaces provided by the Town are not conducive to all sports including soccer. While five fields are available for soccer within Amherst, the Town owns only one. Organizers involved in field sports (i.e., soccer, football, softball, and baseball) were generally critical of the available venues going so far, in one case, as to give a rating of 0 to every feature from availability to cost (in contrast to those involved with indoor sports). Town staff and several interview contacts noted that the Town cannot host tournaments involving out of town and out of province teams because of the poor quality of existing fields. The decline of these events detracts from activity in the community as well as the image of the town, and costs the Town potential revenue.

Most contacts involved in the delivery of sports programs also stated that 20% to as many as 40% of their participants come from the county or the other towns within Cumberland. None seemed to regard this as a strain on their offerings. It appears that outside participants are valued for their contributions to revenue and to maintenance of competition.

### 3.3 FRAMEWORK SETTING WORKSHOP

Stantec held a Framework Setting Workshop with key stakeholders in Amherst on November 5, 2015. The objective of the workshop was to discuss recreation issues and opportunities in the community so as to develop a framework for assessing other evidence collected through secondary research, survey work, and public consultations. The session included Town staff involved in and/or influenced by recreation

Consultation in Amherst  
October 31, 2016

services, including a member of the Amherst Police Force; a representative of the YMCA; and representatives of local community groups.

Participants first agreed that the array of services in Amherst is good, although there are opportunities to create programs that would meet specific community needs (e.g., a cross-country skiing/snowshoeing club for older residents was suggested). Cost is also low and several participants noted that many programs for which fees are levied elsewhere are free in Amherst (e.g., public skating, summer swimming at the Y). The group also concurred that the town has a good range of facilities but many recreation properties are in need of better maintenance.

The session then moved to a discussion of issues related to the aging of Amherst's population. The age of group participants (i.e., predominantly thirties and forties) inclined them to an immediate discussion of children's needs. Several noted that contemporary parenting is more protective as characterized by the tendency to drive children to all activities. This approach, which arises from both a desire for involvement with children who are typically fewer in individual families than in the past and a concern for child safety, unfortunately not only restricts the freedom of young people to pursue recreation activities casually but also tends to reduce the opportunities for parents to pursue their own recreation interests.

Participants also noted that adult leagues tend to attract competitive personalities who may over time drive out others who are simply interested in exercise. While excessive competitiveness is undoubtedly a challenge in sports like ice hockey, the activities that have shown the most pronounced declines such as baseball and softball, and curling are characterized by less direct competition (i.e., where there is frequent physical contact and sometimes even a social element within the games). Why these "adult sports" in which many participants have traditionally continued into their senior years have become embattled is a perplexing issue for recreation professionals as well as participants in the sports.

The stakeholders present recognized that there is a trend toward non-competitive, individual sports among both youth and adults. They noted that skateboarding, free swimming at the YMCA, and other unstructured activities like walking and running are growing. They suggested that coordination of these activities would yield benefits. Communication of recreation opportunities came up repeatedly over the course of the session as many participants felt that the key issue for many town residents is awareness of the recreation programs and events that are available.

This discussion aligned with much of the input gained through the community telephone survey and the Public Workshop, which is discussed following. Input led us to conclude that the central recreation concern in Amherst is not the availability of facilities. It is also not the range of programs offered, although there is likely room for fine tuning. Residents have access to recreation opportunities with few notable barriers. Increasing participation is much more a matter of communication and motivation.

The community does not lack energy. There is an active runners club, a youth football organization has sprung up despite the absence of football at Amherst High School, and a trails group recently formed to name just a few examples of community efforts to encourage a variety of recreation pursuits. The

Consultation in Amherst  
October 31, 2016

Recreation Department is eager to work with the community to facilitate increased participation and more satisfying recreation experiences.

The framework that emerged from the session was an emphasis on improving and more effectively allocating the recreation resources available in Amherst. Data from the telephone survey that became available after the workshop demonstrated quantitatively that residents participate in many different activities and very few face significant impediments to their participation. Our review of facilities, which is summarized in **Chapter 4.0**, further established the variety of facilities available within the town, although it highlighted the need to address a clear maintenance deficit.

### 3.4 PUBLIC WORKSHOP

Stantec hosted a Public Workshop on Tuesday, December 2, 2015, at the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) Cumberland Campus in Amherst. Stantec's Project Manager facilitated the session, which included Town staff and other invited guests totaling 40 to 50 attendees. Town of Amherst Recreation staff invited participants, who included the Mayor and several Town Councillors, as well as a wide range of representatives from sports and cultural groups in the community.

Stantec began the meeting by presenting information derived from our Phase 1 Situation Assessment Report dealing with Amherst's demography, recreational activity, and infrastructure. Following the presentation, participants were encouraged to collaborate in groups of 5 to 8 to address tasks posed to them. The challenges presented in order were to:

- Identify the three highest priority recreation facility improvements needed in the town
- Identify the three highest priority trails improvements
- Specify an additional recreation facility (if any) that should be pursued for the town
- Identify programs required in the town.

Common themes noted through roundtable discussions included trail improvements, lack of maintenance of existing facilities, aging infrastructure, and additional program and service needs throughout the community (e.g., lack of meeting space).

#### 3.4.1 Facilities Improvements

Many of those in attendance identified aging infrastructure as a pressing issue. The Amherst Curling Club was identified as integral to the community and in need of major repairs. Outdoor playing surfaces, particularly the tennis courts on Church Street, were discussed as being in need of complete replacement and, possibly, a new location. Additionally, workshop participants felt that natural playing surfaces (i.e., multi-purpose sport fields) are not maintained to a standard that will allow the Town to host tournaments and attract out-of-area teams. Without suitable facilities, the community is losing potential revenue. Suggestions were made to allow for and promote a broader range of activities (e.g., ultimate frisbee and lawn bowling) at both the Robb Fields and Dickey Park.

Consultation in Amherst  
October 31, 2016

### 3.4.2 Trail Improvements

Participants emphasized development of the existing trail system, including improvements such as linkage, maintenance, signage, and promotion. The network of trails within the town provides development opportunities aligned with the Municipal Planning Strategy, and the conceptual route defined in the draft AT Plan. Participants suggested developing the planned trail network into a complete loop, including connections with local schools and parks. Some also suggested development of a trails system reaching the marshland beyond the Town Limits, as Ekistics recommended in the Centre First plan for the Downtown. Possible locations included the existing railway corridor, West Pleasant Street, Mill Street, Victoria Street, and the marshlands area.

### 3.4.3 New Facilities

Attendees supported revitalization of downtown Amherst. Several cited the potential adaptation of existing centrally located vacant structures (e.g., Bank of Nova Scotia) as a potential drawing card for the town. Sites in the downtown offer ease of access combined with cost savings to the Town. Suggestions for new facilities included a community centre for community programming (e.g., Boys and Girls Club); meeting space to facilitate events similar to the Workshop itself; an art gallery to promote local artists and possibly attract tourists; and a larger and/or new library.

Some groups suggested the construction of a major facility such as a multi-purpose dome or community recreation centre, similar to those in neighbouring communities such as Truro, Moncton, and Stratford, PEI, although many participants were aware that such an undertaking would be difficult for the Town of Amherst on its own. They appreciated that projects on the scale of the recently studied sport fields complex or a community recreation centre would only be possible in the context of an inter-municipal partnership.

Many participants nevertheless felt that Amherst would benefit from a facility that will meet the needs of its residents while also attracting people from outside the area. Construction of an appropriate facility could create opportunities to host major sporting, cultural, and recreational events. Many participants suggested that this could generate revenue for the community.

### 3.4.4 Program Improvements

Participants suggested a variety of opportunities they would like to see developed within the town. Among them were the creation of an outdoor facility that would offer aquatic programming such as kayak, canoe, and paddleboard rentals, adult instructional programs, and summer camps. Some also suggested an indoor climbing wall as a possible upgrade to the Spring Street Academy School to facilitate climbing programs such as single-session or multi-day recreational programs for youth and adults in the community.

Others mentioned the important role of the Amherst Public Library in providing recreational opportunities, information, and a meeting place for all age groups. The Library also offers a variety of free programming to all age groups within the community. The library has many partnerships with related community organizations such as Maggie's Place. Some participants suggested that the Town should

Consultation in Amherst  
October 31, 2016

collaborate more closely with the Library to avoid scheduling activities in time slots that compete with community events at the Library. In particular, securing volunteers has been difficult due to competing events (e.g., children's summer camps).

Though not identified as a program need within the community, sidewalk improvements were suggested in terms of maintenance and policy surrounding maintenance. Safety was listed as the main catalyst for this need. Contacts noted the need for clearing, in particular snow removal, to minimize potential health and safety hazards. Snow clearing is also critical to ensuring walking and running opportunities continue to be available outdoors during the winter.



## 4.0 RECREATION SERVICES AND FACILITIES IN AMHERST

The Town of Amherst Recreation Department is housed in office space added to Amherst Stadium as part of its recent renovations. The Department aims to enhance the quality of life and meet the needs of every citizen within the community by providing leisure opportunities for all. Recreation Department staff are also responsible for communications, marketing, promotions, and special events within the town. Operational staff are responsible for maintenance of the Stadium and its daily operations as well as maintenance of other recreational structures, parks, and open spaces.

### 4.1 RECREATION DEPARTMENT STAFFING

The Amherst Recreation Department is one of six municipal departments serving Amherst residents. Town Council created the Department in September 2014 when the recreation function was separated from the Community and Economic Development Department in the interest of improving the Town's focus on recreation services. The Town's administration and Council felt that enhanced facilities and services would be beneficial to promoting the town and retaining town residents, and that a separate department would be more likely to achieve the Town's goals.

Like most small town and rural municipal recreation organizations, the Amherst Recreation Department works closely with community organizations and volunteers on facilities programming and maintenance. It cooperates and supports recreation, culture, and sports organizations that provide important facilities to the community. It also works with a range of sports organizations that use Town-owned recreation facilities for training and competition.

As a separate department within the Town of Amherst's municipal structure the Recreation Department is led by the Director of Recreation. An Administrative Assistant supports the Department. The Director supervises the Physical Activity Coordinator and seven operations staff. The Physical Activity Coordinator's position is 50% funded under the MPAL Program. Under the program, the current Coordinator prepared the Town of Amherst Physical Activity Strategy referenced in **Section 3.1**, above, in 2010.

The Department also supports a term position for a Marketing Coordinator through a series of term positions, the latest of which ended in September 2015. The position was budgeted by the Department and should be filled in the near future. The seven operational personnel are responsible for aspects of building and property maintenance, particularly at Amherst Stadium. During the summer months, several of these individuals are assigned to outdoor maintenance functions in parks and open spaces within the town. Three operational staff are qualified to maintain and operate ice-making equipment at Amherst Stadium.

The Amherst Recreation Department’s structure is typical of larger municipal recreation organizations in Nova Scotia. **Table 4-1** summarizes administrative positions with several recreation organizations across the province serving similar populations to Amherst. They include three other larger towns and two area recreation commissions. Truro, Bridgewater, and Kentville are respectively the largest, fourth largest, and sixth largest towns in Nova Scotia. Yarmouth Recreation serves the Town of Yarmouth, which is the fifth largest town in the province, as well as the Municipal District of Yarmouth with which it has a combined population of 16,866. The Digby Area Recreation Commission serves the Town and Municipal District of Digby, which have a combined population of 9,615 (i.e., similar to Amherst’s 9,717).

**Table 4-1 Administrative Staff, Selected Recreation Organizations, Nova Scotia, 2015**

Admin Position	Town of Truro	Town of Bridgewater	Town of Kentville	Yarmouth Recreation	Digby ARC
Director/Manager	X	X	X	X	X
Administrative Assistant	X	X	X	X	X
Communications/Events	X	X	X		
Physical Activity/Active Living				2	X
Facilities	2	X	X	X	X
Population Served	12,059	8,241	6,094	16,866	9,615
<b>TOTAL POSITIONS</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>

Source: Stantec Consulting Limited

All have a director or manager and an administrative assistant like Amherst. Two have three people in coordinator positions and three have two coordinator positions, although none has an identical deployment to Amherst’s (i.e., a Physical Activity Coordinator and a marketing/communications position). On the other hand, New Glasgow, which is Nova Scotia’s third largest town and has a very similar population to Amherst, has only a Program Coordinator reporting to the Town’s Director of Community Development in an organization structure similar to the arrangement that Amherst has just replaced. We would note that Truro and Bridgewater staff are not significantly involved in the management or operations of their respective community centres, which are the responsibility in both cases of regional organizations separated from the participating municipal units.

By comparison with other arenas surveyed for this assignment, Amherst Stadium appears to have substantial staffing (**Table 4-2**). In general, single surface arenas have half the personnel complement found at Amherst Stadium, although we acknowledge that the new arenas in Truro and Bridgewater use new technologies requiring less operational oversight than traditional ice-making machinery used at Amherst’s much older facility. We would also note that Amherst staff do a good job maintaining the Stadium building as discussed in **Section 4.3**, below, and several are deployed to outdoor maintenance functions during summer months as mentioned above. On the other hand, no Amherst Recreation Department staff members have specific training for outdoor grounds planning or maintenance. Departments consulted in other Nova Scotia towns have half a dozen or more workers dedicated to outdoor roles.

Table 4-2 Arena Staffing, Selected Facilities, Nova Scotia, 2015

Facility	Municipal Participants	Ice Surfaces	Full-time	Operators		Per Shift
				Part-time	With Refrigeration Ticket	
Amherst Stadium	Amherst	1	7	0	3 FT	
Colchester Legion Stadium	Truro/ County of Colchester	1	3 (plus 1 FT cleaner)		1 FT**	1 day/2 evening
Halifax Forum	HRM	2	8	1	8 FT	2
BMO Centre	HRM	4	8	3	1 FT/1 PT	4*
Lebrun	HRM	1	2	1	1 FT/1 PT	1
Devonshire	HRM	1	1	2	1 PT	1
Lunenburg County Lifestyle Centre	Bridgewater/ District of Lunenburg	1	4		1 FT**	

\* Shifts are 4 days on, 4 days off, 10 hrs/day

\*\* Use glycol heat pumps and technically do not require ticketed operators

Source Stantec Consulting Ltd.

## 4.2 FINANCIAL

According to the Town of Amherst 2015 Financial Statements, the Town spent \$1,955,321 on recreation and cultural services up from \$1,828,644 in 2014 or by 6.9%. Key expenditures by the Town include approximately \$350,000 annually to cover the operating deficit of Amherst Stadium and an annual subsidy of just over \$100,000 to support the operations of the Cumberland YMCA, which provides the community's primary indoor pool, as well as important gym and exercise spaces and community services.

### 4.2.1 Expenditures

The 2015-2016 Town budget proposes spending \$1,950,665 for operations and \$531,340 for capital. A major portion of this capital (\$350,000) was intended to support the joint development of the proposed Sportsplex with the County of Cumberland pursuant to the WSP/dmA study referenced in **Section 3.1**, above. The idea was shelved, as noted, because the County is dealing with the dissolutions of the Towns of Springhill and Parrsboro, and the allocated monies will not be spent.

Actual expenditure recorded in the Town's 2015-2016 Financial Statements shows that the Stadium is the focus of a large portion of recreation expenditures accounting for nearly 40% of net costs in 2015-2016. Remaining cost centres identified in the Town's Financial Statements are ranked by net cost in **Table 4-3**.<sup>19</sup> Parks account for over a quarter of net costs and support to the Y and community events each account for about 10%. The four items account for 85.9% of net expenditure. The largest expenditure category, however, is Recreation Administration, which required expenditure of \$533,695 in 2015-2016 for services that generally support the remaining cost centres.

Table 4-3 Actual Recreation Program Revenues and Expenditures, Town of Amherst, 2015-2016

Cost Centre	Revenue	% of Total	Cost	% of Total	Net Cost	% of Total
Stadium (incl. canteen)	\$210,364	73.0%	\$617,204	48.4%	\$414,040	38.9%
Parks	\$0	0.0%	\$288,834	22.6%	\$285,475	26.8%
YMCA	\$5,635	2.0%	\$115,402	9.0%	\$115,402	10.8%
Community Events	\$675	0.2%	\$100,662	7.9%	\$99,987	9.4%
MPAL	\$61,913	21.5%	\$59,913	4.7%	\$59,913	5.6%
Youth Programs	\$3,320	1.2%	\$39,314	3.1%	\$35,994	3.4%
Tourism	\$0	0.0%	\$13,556	1.1%	\$13,556	1.3%
Robbs Fields (incl. canteen)	\$0	0.0%	\$13,024	1.0%	\$13,024	1.2%
Other Athletics	\$0	0.0%	\$9,703	0.8%	\$9,703	0.9%
Seniors Program	\$2,753	1.0%	\$8,731	0.7%	\$8,731	0.8%
Wellness	\$0	0.0%	\$8,702	0.7%	\$8,702	0.8%
Playgrounds	\$3,358	1.2%	\$2,976	0.2%	\$2,976	0.3%
Arts and Culture	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
Downtown	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
Swimming Pool	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
Other Programs	\$0	0.0%	-\$2,515	-0.2%	-\$2,515	-0.2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$288,018</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>\$1,275,507</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>\$1,064,990</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: Town of Amherst

<sup>19</sup> Revenues from the canteens in the Stadium and at Robb Fields are folded into total revenues for each facility, although they are separated in the financial statements.

According to the Province of Nova Scotia annual publication *Municipal Statistics*, Amherst spent an annual average of nearly \$1.7 million for recreation and cultural services over the three years from 2011 through 2013.<sup>20</sup> On a per capita basis, Town expenditures, which declined moderately over the period, averaged \$172.54 per resident. In comparison with Nova Scotia's 29 other towns, Amherst's expenditure per capita ranked 15<sup>th</sup> (**Table 4-4**). The Town's investment was actually more than most of the province's other larger towns: Truro, the only town larger than Amherst, ranked 17<sup>th</sup>, Kentville ranked 22<sup>nd</sup>, and New Glasgow 29<sup>th</sup>. The only large Nova Scotia town that ranked ahead of Amherst in terms of recreation expenditure is Bridgewater, which has a population of 8,241 and ranks 12<sup>th</sup>.

The balance between capital and operating expenditure in Amherst over the period was 20.5% on capital and 79.5% on operating, which was moderately more than the average for towns in the province (17.2% spent on capital). The current budget of \$1,600,665 for 2015-2016 (i.e., exclusive of the unspent Sportsplex allocation) is marginally behind previous years, largely because of a decreased commitment to capital. Without the commitment to the proposed Sportsplex, only 11.3% of the current budget is devoted to capital even though the capital budget includes the development of a new sport field suitable for soccer and football at Dickey Park along with other improvements.

The Town of Amherst Recreation Department has incorporated the maintenance and upgrading expenditures recommended by Stantec in the following section of this report (see **Table 4-8**, below) into its current proposed Ten-year Capital Budget provided in **Appendix C**. The budget shows expenditures in the first five years averaging about \$250,000 annually; however, while it carries the Dickey Brook Rehabilitation as a line item, costs have not been defined. Ekistics' estimate for the first five years of its proposed Dickey Brook implementation plan is \$962,625 or close to \$200,000 per year. The first five years of development will provide stream crossings and walkway improvements. The complete plan is estimated at \$2.3 million to be spent over 20 years. The Outdoor Learning Centre and related improvements estimated at \$674,781.25 are specified for years 10 to 20 or outside the current capital budget period. The addition of \$200,000 for Dickey Brook will take the annual capital budget to approximately \$450,000 or about \$100,000 more than the Town has spent on recreation capital in the recent past.

In addition to improvements specified by Stantec, the budget calls for \$12,500 of annual expenditure on trails development over the entire ten-year period. Additional expenditures have been specified by Recreation Department staff to address established commitments (e.g., a dog park and replacement of the sound system at Amherst Stadium) and its additional economic development and tourism mandates (e.g., street banners and themed lights for Christmas).

---

<sup>20</sup> See Nova Scotia, *Annual Report of Municipal Statistics for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2013* and equivalent publications for the 2011 and 2012 fiscal years.

Table 4-4 Recreation Expenditures per Capita, Nova Scotia Towns, 2011-2013  
Average Recreation Expenditures, 2011-2013

Town	2011 Census Population	Capital Expenditure	Operating Expenditure	TOTAL Expenditure	% Capital	TOTAL per Capita	Rank
Truro	12,059	\$220,717	\$1,751,467	\$1,972,184	11.20%	\$163.54	17
<b>Amherst</b>	<b>9,717</b>	<b>\$343,475</b>	<b>\$1,333,110</b>	<b>\$1,676,585</b>	<b>20.50%</b>	<b>\$172.54</b>	<b>15</b>
New Glasgow	9,562	\$193,332	\$891,927	\$1,085,259	17.80%	\$113.50	29
Bridgewater	8,241	\$97,863	\$1,567,860	\$1,665,724	5.90%	\$202.13	12
Yarmouth	6,761	\$230,495	\$812,434	\$1,042,929	22.10%	\$154.26	24
Kentville	6,094	\$125,243	\$827,313	\$952,556	13.10%	\$156.31	22
Antigonish	4,524	\$65,304	\$497,934	\$563,238	11.60%	\$124.50	28
Stellarton	4,485	\$200,118	\$495,846	\$695,963	28.80%	\$155.18	23
Wolfville	4,269	\$37,794	\$688,559	\$726,353	5.20%	\$170.15	16
Springhill	3,868	\$177,234	\$646,627	\$823,861	21.50%	\$212.99	9
Westville	3,798	\$59,690	\$723,929	\$783,619	7.60%	\$206.32	11
Windsor	3,785	\$56,985	\$538,537	\$595,522	9.60%	\$157.34	21
Pictou	3,437	\$74,373	\$409,092	\$483,465	15.40%	\$140.66	25
Port Hawkesbury	3,366	\$500,426	\$1,266,179	\$1,766,605	28.30%	\$524.84	4
Trenton	2,616	\$82,664	\$549,545	\$632,209	13.10%	\$241.67	7
Berwick	2,454	\$21,908	\$246,151	\$268,059	8.20%	\$109.23	30
Lunenburg	2,313	\$99,594	\$413,984	\$513,578	19.40%	\$222.04	8
Digby	2,152	\$68,148	\$209,356	\$277,504	24.60%	\$128.95	27
Middleton	1,749	\$21,113	\$206,561	\$227,673	9.30%	\$130.17	26
Shelburne	1,686	\$339,433	\$616,727	\$956,159	35.50%	\$567.12	2
Stewiacke	1,438	\$68,963	\$201,545	\$270,508	25.50%	\$188.11	14
Parrsboro	1,305	\$9,468	\$196,528	\$205,996	4.60%	\$157.85	20
Hantsport	1,159	\$47,147	\$182,743	\$229,890	20.50%	\$198.35	13
Oxford	1,151	\$92,346	\$545,328	\$637,673	14.50%	\$554.02	3
Bridgetown	949	\$22,050	\$131,589	\$153,639	14.40%	\$161.90	19
Mahone Bay	943	\$48,959	\$215,579	\$264,538	18.50%	\$280.53	5
Clark's Harbour	820	\$45,174	\$87,789	\$132,963	34.00%	\$162.15	18
Mulgrave	794	\$11,945	\$196,932	\$208,877	5.70%	\$263.07	6
Lockeport	588	\$86,459	\$505,749	\$592,208	14.60%	\$1,007.16	1
Annapolis Royal	481	\$36,956	\$62,617	\$99,574	37.10%	\$207.01	10
<b>All Towns</b>	<b>106,564</b>	<b>\$2,508,590</b>	<b>\$12,106,743</b>	<b>\$14,615,333</b>	<b>17.2%</b>	<b>\$137.15</b>	

Source Nova Scotia Municipal Statistics, 2011-2013

## 4.2.2 Revenues

Most municipalities cover the bulk of operating expenditures for recreation and cultural services through general municipal tax revenues, the majority of which is obtained through property taxes. Sales of services are, however, an important supplement to tax revenues for many. In 2013, Nova Scotia towns obtained 5% of their revenues from sales of services as opposed to 75% from taxes including property taxes. Recreation and cultural services were an important contributor to sales revenues for many communities.

**Table 4-5** summarizes sales of recreation and cultural services from 2011 to 2013 by Nova Scotia towns ranked by population. Amherst, as noted in several locations in this document, provides several services free of charge. Unsurprisingly, given this context, the Town ranks 21<sup>st</sup> of 30 towns in the province in terms of revenue per capita from recreation and cultural services. The annual average of \$1.75 per capita collected by the Town from 2011 through 2013 outranks only Mahone Bay, which generated \$0.94 from its recreation and cultural facilities, and eight towns that derive no revenue from recreation and cultural sales.

The importance of revenues from recreation sales and services is clearly a policy decision for each town. The Province reported no revenues from sales of services in the 2011-2013 period for three large towns comparable to Amherst (i.e., Kentville, New Glasgow, and Yarmouth). Oxford, near Amherst, also collected no revenue from sales of recreation and cultural services; however, Parrsboro and Springhill, which have both dissolved, ranked tenth and seventh among Nova Scotia towns in terms of revenue gained from the source (respectively, \$49.92 and \$60.96 per capita). Port Hawkesbury led provincial towns with \$293.16 per resident and only two other towns (i.e., Trenton and Lunenburg) collected more than \$100 per person.

Towns with large recreation centres serving nearby communities and surrounding rural areas, as well as their own populations are among the leaders in terms of sales of recreation and cultural services (e.g., Bridgewater and Truro, as well as Port Hawkesbury). Smaller towns with limited tax bases also show up among the top ten (e.g., Annapolis Royal, Pictou, and Trenton, in addition to Parrsboro and Springhill).

The consultants interviewed several recreation leaders to assess revenue generation from recreation facilities and services. We interviewed representatives from the Towns of Bridgewater, Port Hawkesbury, and Truro, which are among the leaders in sales of recreation and cultural services, and also contacted the towns of New Glasgow, Yarmouth, and Kentville, which generated no revenue from recreation and cultural sources. None of the towns collecting significant monies from recreation and cultural services characterized themselves as aggressive in pursuit of this revenue. All focus on cost recovery. Port Hawkesbury's substantial revenue is attributable to the presence of the Port Hawkesbury Civic Centre, which is co-located with the Strait Area Education Recreation Centre within the town. The Civic Centre draws from a substantial surrounding area including Antigonish, Guysborough, Inverness, and Richmond counties.

AMHERST RECREATION MASTER PLAN  
FINAL REPORT

Recreation Services and Facilities in Amherst  
October 31, 2016

Table 4-5 Sales of Recreation and Cultural Services, Nova Scotia Towns, 2011-2013  
Averages, 2011-2013

Town	2011 Census Population	Rec. & Cultural Sales	Total Sales of Services	Total Revenue	Rec. & Cultural Sales per Capita	Rank	Total Sales % of Total Revenue
Truro	12,059	\$688,481	\$870,247	\$22,067,658	\$57.09	8	3.9%
<b>Amherst</b>	<b>9,717</b>	<b>\$17,019</b>	<b>\$1,005,290</b>	<b>\$14,919,638</b>	<b>\$1.75</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>6.7%</b>
New Glasgow	9,562	\$0	\$283,707	\$14,905,269	\$0.00	23	1.9%
Bridgewater	8,241	\$516,604	\$1,271,943	\$16,330,477	\$62.69	6	7.8%
Yarmouth	6,761	\$0	\$110,230	\$15,653,815	\$0.00	23	0.7%
Kentville	6,094	\$0	\$710,033	\$10,998,856	\$0.00	23	6.5%
Antigonish	4,524	\$38,766	\$430,888	\$5,465,200	\$8.57	16	7.9%
Stellarton	4,485	\$16,517	\$179,006	\$5,921,950	\$3.68	18	3.0%
Wolfville	4,269	\$67,293	\$683,562	\$7,751,110	\$15.76	13	8.8%
Springhill	3,868	\$235,802	\$708,988	\$6,251,015	\$60.96	7	11.3%
Westville	3,798	\$29,712	\$258,895	\$3,956,414	\$7.82	17	6.5%
Windsor	3,785	\$311,133	\$311,779	\$6,134,325	\$82.20	4	5.1%
Pictou	3,437	\$233,004	\$233,004	\$4,758,217	\$67.79	5	4.9%
Port Hawkesbury	3,366	\$986,769	\$1,109,876	\$6,819,081	\$293.16	1	16.3%
Trenton	2,616	\$301,931	\$321,559	\$3,721,291	\$115.42	2	8.6%
Berwick	2,454	\$50,409	\$313,885	\$3,181,799	\$20.54	12	9.9%
Lunenburg	2,313	\$256,210	\$327,203	\$4,647,391	\$110.77	3	7.0%
Digby	2,152	\$0	\$102,507	\$3,918,369	\$0.00	23	2.6%
Middleton	1,749	\$25,649	\$128,060	\$3,142,430	\$14.67	15	4.1%
Shelburne	1,686	\$5,962	\$5,962	\$2,692,657	\$3.54	19	0.2%
Stewiacke	1,438	\$0	\$108,331	\$1,824,049	\$0.00	23	5.9%
Parrsboro	1,305	\$65,151	\$220,435	\$1,922,817	\$49.92	10	11.5%
Hantsport	1,159	\$17,482	\$95,756	\$2,360,092	\$15.08	14	4.1%
Oxford	1,151	\$0	\$0	\$2,152,448	\$0.00	23	0.0%
Bridgetown	949	\$2,464	\$123,966	\$1,682,760	\$2.60	20	7.4%
Mahone Bay	943	\$882	\$4,987	\$1,928,880	\$0.94	22	0.3%
Clark's Harbour	820	\$0	\$0	\$1,146,290	\$0.00	23	0.0%
Mulgrave	794	\$0	\$637	\$1,642,331	\$0.00	23	0.0%
Lockeport	588	\$28,961	\$42,385	\$1,356,817	\$49.25	11	3.1%
Annapolis Royal	481	\$25,568	\$67,365	\$1,745,567	\$53.16	9	3.9%
<b>All Towns</b>	<b>106,564</b>	<b>\$3,939,972</b>	<b>\$10,082,419</b>	<b>\$181,703,929</b>	<b>\$36.97</b>		<b>5.5%</b>

Source: Nova Scotia Municipal Statistics, 2011-2013

Neither Bridgewater nor Truro draws revenue from the large community centres located within their boundaries. In both cases, regionally oriented community organizations operate the centres and collect revenues to cover costs for which they are responsible. Recreation staff in Truro indicated that ice rentals and rental of ballfields to adults are their primary sources of revenue. They said they base their calculation of appropriate rates on scans of rates charged by nearby municipalities and the cost of service provision. Notwithstanding the concern for cost recovery, Truro representatives indicated they collected just over \$500,000 in the last fiscal year against costs of roughly \$2 million.

Consultation with the Directors of Finance and Recreation in Bridgewater illuminated the difficulty of comparing municipal financial data. Although *Municipal Statistics* data shows an average of more than \$500,000 per year in recreation and cultural services revenue from 2011 through 2013, Bridgewater's Director stated that their revenue over the past three years (i.e., 2013-2016) has been in the range of \$170,000 to \$185,000 from aquatics, recreation programming, special events, and operation of the DesBrisay Museum and a cemetery. That being said, the Town's own posted financial statements show past "service revenue" from recreation over \$500,000 for each year since 2013 reaching \$732,124 in 2015. In its most recent budget document, which breaks out revenues in six lines for general recreation programming, the Town's pool and arena, its parks, and two major events shows \$373,672 in actual revenue in 2014-2015 and \$203,369 in 2015-2016, along with a budget estimate of \$243,288 for 2016-2017. A major factor in the decline in revenues from 2015 to 2016 was the phasing out of Bridgewater Memorial Arena, which generated \$177,219 in 2015 but was closed in favour of a new ice surface at the Lunenburg Lifestyle Centre, which is located in Bridgewater.

Inquiries with the low revenue towns revealed similar challenges reconciling municipal information with Provincial data. Contacts from both Kentville and New Glasgow stated that they *do* collect recreation revenues. For New Glasgow it is only about \$12,000 drawn from summer programming. Kentville, however, reported more than \$280,000 from the Town's arena (\$200,000 from users and \$40,000 from sponsors), soccer and ballfields (\$25,000), and day camps (\$18,000). In both cases, further inquiries determined that each town rolls up recreation revenues into "other revenues" in their financial statements. In the case of New Glasgow, therefore, revenues per capita (\$1.25 in 2015-2016) are similar to but less than Amherst. On a per capita basis, current revenue reported to us for Kentville (i.e., \$283,000 in 2016-2017) would place the Town 12<sup>th</sup> on the 2011-2013 list provided in **Table 4-5**.

Recognizing the flaws in available data, the importance of sales of recreation and cultural services varies considerable across Nova Scotia towns. According to *Municipal Statistics*, Port Hawkesbury recovered 77.9% of its recreation operating expenditures from 2011-2013 through sales of services. Four other towns (Lunenburg, Windsor, Pictou, and Trenton) recovered more than half of their expenditures. Most, however, collected much less. Amherst was one of 18 towns that retrieved less than 10% of its costs but ten towns recouped even less than Amherst according to data summarized in **Table 4-5**.

Several of the communities contacted were interested in Amherst’s decision to provide free ice time. Some indicated that they could not afford to forego the revenue. Recreation providers in general, though, are advocates of maximizing accessibility to recreation programs and services in the interest of community health. Amherst Town Council recently renewed the one-year pilot program to waive ice-time fees for youth, which Amherst Recreation Department staff originally proposed. Other towns appear to be interested in the initiative to sustain youth hockey and skating programs as the numbers of children decline in their communities, as well to enhance the inclusion of the economically disadvantaged.

Each town must decide how it will finance recreation and cultural services. Amherst has chosen to rely more heavily of tax revenues than many towns in Nova Scotia, although it is far from alone. Only five towns place more emphasis on user fees than on taxes. Two of the five have relatively low levels of recreation expenditure (Windsor and Pictou rank 21<sup>st</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> by recreation expenditure per capita), while the other three (Port Hawkesbury, Trenton, and Lunenburg) are in the top ten. Four of the five are in regions where several other towns are nearby and use of facilities by residents from those other communities is likely high. Port Hawkesbury, which spends the most and recovers the most, stands alone because it provides the major regional recreation facility on its own. Amherst is not in a comparable situation.

### 4.3 RECREATION FACILITIES

The supply of recreation facilities in Amherst can be roughly assessed against recreation facility standards. Standards can be debated in depth given that the circumstances of different communities and the interests of citizens. They do however give a broad measure of adequacy. Ontario Ministry of Culture and Recreation compiled a comprehensive list of recreation standards that we use regularly (similarly, comprehensive alternative Canadian standards are not available to our knowledge).

**Table 4-6** provides Ontario facility standards for most of the facility types prominent in Amherst. A quick perusal of the table confirms the adequacy of provisions in Amherst based on comparison to standards for a community of 10,000 residents (i.e., roughly the current population of Amherst). First,

Table 4-6 Recreation Facilities Standards and Town of Amherst Supply, 2015

Facility	Standard per 10,000	Amherst Supply	Variance from Standard
Arena	0.5	1	0.5
Baseball Field	2	5	3
Basketball Court	2	1	-1
Bowling Lanes	4	16	12
Curling Sheets	5	4	-1
Football Field	0.5	1	0.5
Gymnasium	1 per school	5	1
Indoor Pool	0.2	1	0.8
Library	0.5	1	0.5
Soccer Fields	2	4	2
Youth Centre	0.5	0	-0.5

Source: Ontario Ministry of Culture and Recreation, Sports and Fitness Division, *Guidelines for Developing, Public Recreation Facility Standards*, 2004, p. 22 (adapted from CPRA Open Space Study, 1973) and Stantec Consulting Ltd.

Amherst has facilities in all of the categories listed. Second, the town’s current supply meets or exceeds the standard in seven of the ten categories.

In curling, Amherst is “deficient” by one ice sheet, although the more critical issue is likely the condition of the Curling Club building, which the Town does not own. For basketball, only one facility is specifically designated for the sport; however, gyms at all four schools as well as a gym at the YMCA are available, recognizing that the elementary school and Y courts are not regulation size. Finally, the standards suggest a youth centre should be expected in a community of 20,000. As noted, several stakeholders in Amherst would like to see a building designated for the purpose pursuant to the Futures for Youth study. In the remaining categories, Amherst meets or significantly exceeds the standards. The surplus of baseball/softball fields is particularly notable.

**Table 4-7** presents the Ministry’s parks typology and standards with Amherst’s current supply in each type. Based on direct comparison, Amherst is below the standard acreage for a community of 10,000 in Tot-lots and Neighbourhood Parks. It has more Parkettes (also called Vest Pocket Parks) and substantially more Municipal Parks than typical, and roughly the standard area of Community Parks.

Deficiencies may be more definitional than real. Given the small area of the town, Community and Municipal Parks can double in local roles. Nearly 90% of the parks within the town are active recreation areas (190.3 acres or 87.7% of all outdoor recreation space within Amherst) used for baseball/softball and field sports. Many of these spaces also accommodate trails, benches, and open areas that meet the needs of surrounding residential areas. Overall, the Town inventory includes 216.5 acres of parkland or 16.5 acres more than the upper end of the range defined by the Ontario Ministry. A major qualification, however, is that 125 acres that we have classified as “Municipal Park” is the Dolan Family Fields soccer complex, which is on privately owned land just beyond the Town Limits. Without the Dolan property, the inventory consists of 91.5 acres or 26 acres less than the bottom of the Ontario range.

Table 4-7 Parks and Open Standards and Town of Amherst Supply, 2015

Park Type	Radius of Service Area	Typical Area	Amherst		
			Acres	Share	Standard Acres per 10,000
Tot-lot	0.2 to 0.4 km (usually 0.4 km)	0.6 to 2.0 ac (usually 0.5 ac)	1.0	0.4%	2.5 to 5
Parkette	0.2 to 0.4 km	0.6 to 1.0 ac (usually 0.5 ac)	7.6	3.5%	5
Neighbourhood	0.8 to 5 km (usually 1.6 km)	1/4 to 20 ac (usually 6 ac)	3.4	1.6%	10 to 20
Community	0.8 to 5 km (usually 1.6 km)	4 to 100 ac (usually 8 to 25 ac)	11.2	5.2%	10 to 20
Municipal	0.4 to 5 km (usually 3 km or 1/2 hour driving time)	25 to 200 ac (usually 100 ac)	193.4	89.3%	50
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>216.5</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>117.5 to 200</b>

Source Ontario Ministry of Culture and Recreation, Sports and Fitness Division and Stantec Consulting Ltd.

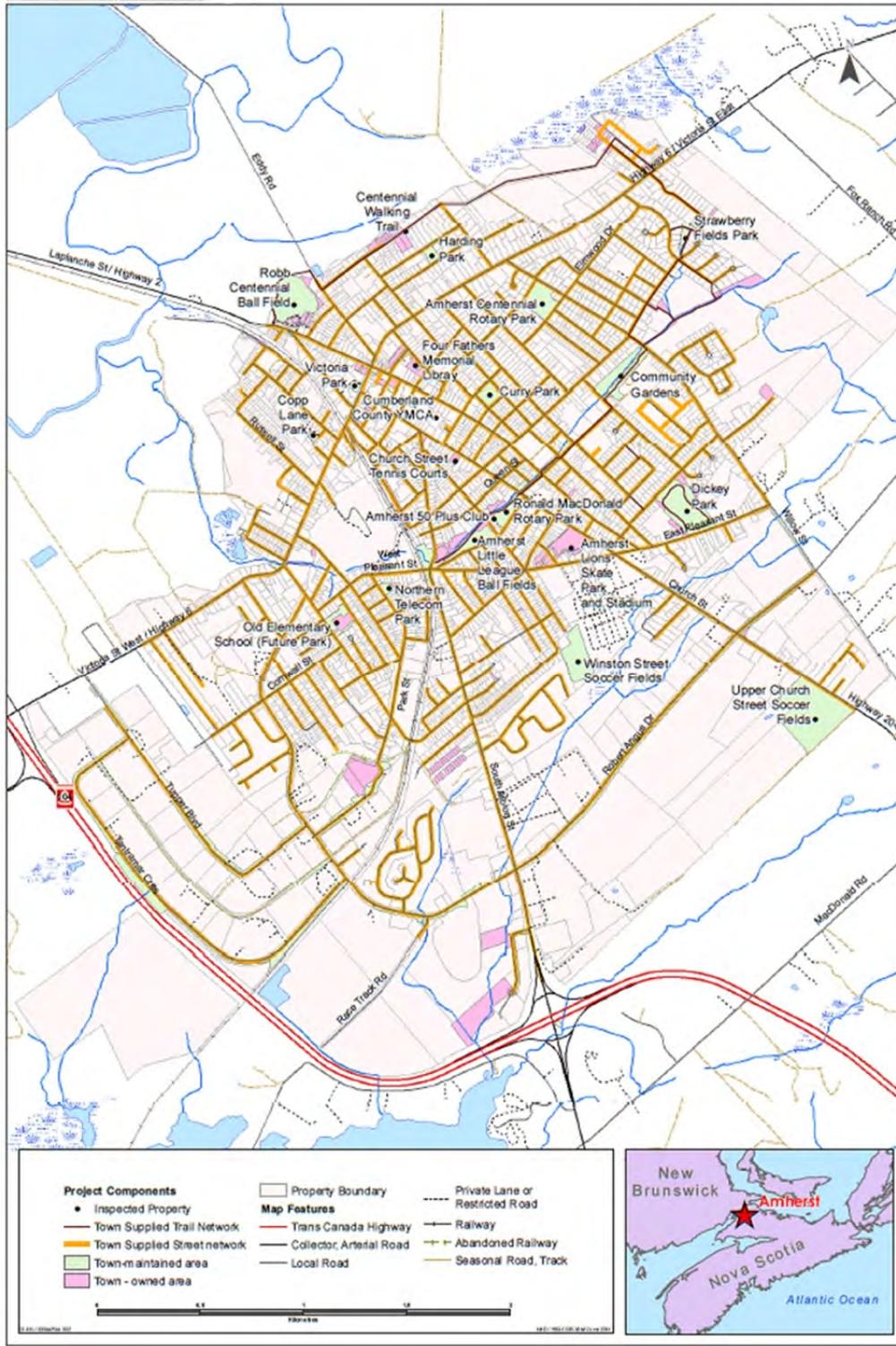
Other facilities of interest are a trails network, a community recreation centre, and a multi-purpose sport field. Standards for the first pair call for “one per region.” Amherst has an existing trails network, although it has not yet developed a regional scope. A community recreation centre or sportsplex is desired by some residents but is generally acknowledged to require regional commitment (i.e., participation of at least Cumberland County). The Ontario standards suggest that an “athletic field” should be provided for a population of 20,000. They also suggest a running track, which was a component of the Sportsplex proposal studied by WSP and dma, should serve 20,000, again suggesting a need for inter-municipal collaboration.

Stantec sent a member of our engineering staff to Amherst to inspect recreation and community facilities identified by Town staff and shown in **Figure 4-1**. Our inspector inspected and assessed 21 sites on September 5, and September 9 and 10, 2015. He viewed and photographed all 21 properties and rated sites and buildings on a simple Poor/Fair/Good/Excellent scale. Ratings were based strictly on high level, onsite visual assessment.

Our inspector rated ten of the 21 properties as being in Fair condition and ten as Good, while he rated one as Fair to Good. Of seven sites with buildings, structures on five were rated Good, one was rated Fair to Good, and one was rated Fair (see **Appendix B**). No site or building was rated either Excellent or Poor. The overall impression is that facilities available within the town are sound but that additional maintenance if not rehabilitation is required for at least half of the properties inspected, which is consistent with the assessments provided by Town staff and community stakeholders interviewed and consulted in the course of the project.

At the request of Recreation Department staff, Stantec identified desirable upgrades to the inspected facilities summarized in **Table 4-8**. Listed upgrades apply to eight of the 21 properties inspected. Upgrades are primarily repairs to existing infrastructure, although some involve replacement. The Church Street Tennis Courts property requires the most substantial overhaul with Medium and High priority projects estimated at nearly \$100,000. Although not as far reaching, work for the Robb Centennial Ballfields has a higher estimated value at \$130,000. Altogether, Stantec estimates suggested upgrades at \$414,000 more or less evenly divided between Medium (\$209,000) and High (\$205,000) priority projects. As noted previously, Town staff have incorporated this work in the proposed Ten-year Capital Budget provided in **Appendix C**.

Figure 4-1 Selected Recreation Facilities, Town of Amherst, 2015



Source: Town of Amherst

Table 4-8 Suggested Upgrades with Costing, Recreation Facilities, Town of Amherst, 2015

Facility Name	Description	Cost per unit	Units	Quantity	Estimated Total Cost	Priority
Robb Centennial Ball Field	Replace 6 Dugouts	\$10,000.00	Ea	6	\$60,000	High
	Repair approximately 30% of the fencing	\$16.50	LF	4,260	\$70,000	Medium
	Replace basketball court	\$40,000.00	Ea	1	\$40,000	High
Ronald MacDonald / Rotary Park (Accessible Park)	Repair approximately 20 % of damaged accessible rubber base for playground equipment	\$14.80	SF	700	\$10,000	High
	Repair community walking trail in this property as there is heavy vegetation growth	\$4.50	SF	3,900	\$18,000	Medium
Amherst Centennial Rotary Park	Repair gravel walkways as there is vegetation growing through most of the paths	\$4.50	SF	6,750	\$30,000	Medium
Northern Telecom Park	Replace asphalt walkway	\$5.00	SF	380	\$2,000	Medium
Centennial Walking Trails	Repair gravel trails along the marsh area to the north of the town as there is heavy vegetation growth on approximately 50% of the trails	\$4.50	SF	8,000	\$36,000	Medium
Amherst Little League Ball Fields	Repair backstop fencing on both ball fields	\$5,500.00	Ea	2	\$11,000	Medium
	Replace bleachers	\$3,500.00	Ea	6	\$21,000	High
Strawberry Fields Park	Repair community walking trail in this property as there is heavy vegetation growth	\$4.50	SF	3,700	\$17,000	Medium
Church Street Tennis Courts	Replace Tennis Fencing	\$1.00	LS	23,700	\$24,000	High
	Resurface Tennis Courts	\$4.00	SF	12,500	\$50,000	High
	Resurface parking area	\$4.50	SF	5,600	\$25,000	Medium

**Summary**

Low Priority	Low impact on recreation activities if not repaired/ replaced	\$0
Medium Priority	Medium impact on recreation activities if not repaired/replaced	\$209,000
High Priority	High impact on recreation activities if not repaired/ replaced	\$205,000

Source Stantec Consulting Ltd.

## 4.4 RECREATION PROGRAMMING

With a wide array of recreation facilities, Amherst is able to support diverse programs. HRM's Community Recreation Services Service Review in 2010 set out a service delivery dichotomy characterized by two forms of recreation service delivery:

- *Direct Programming* – [Municipal recreation] staff coordinate services directly to citizens throughout the municipality. Staff plan, design, deliver and evaluate the service.
- *Community Development* - Staff enable and support communities to plan, design and deliver their own recreation services. Services are [led] by the community- for the community with [municipal] staff playing a supporting role. Capacity building, partnership development, and support to community groups.<sup>21</sup>

The Halifax presentation indicates that the models represent opposite ends of a continuum. Halifax uses a mixture of the two models with many programs delivered directly by the Municipality but many more provided collaboratively with community groups or entirely by local organizations.

Like most small towns and rural municipalities, Amherst tends toward the “community development” end of the continuum. Community organizations in Amherst are primarily responsible for program delivery. The role of the Amherst Recreation Department, in addition to providing and maintaining facilities, is to assist local organizations and coordinate their offerings. In some cases, although the Department does not own facilities, it provides some maintenance assistance.

Amherst has strong organizations providing hockey, baseball, and soccer programs. It also has a curling club that owns its own four-sheet rink. Important commercial recreation providers include the King Pin Bowling Alley, which has twelve lanes, Atlantic Dance Academy, JC Taekwon Do and Kickboxing, Amherst Aerials Gymnastics Club, and Hatha Yoga Room.

Many analysts are concerned that declining volunteerism will challenge the “community development” approach. Available data, however, are mixed. Recent surveys suggest that more Canadians are volunteering and their contributions are significant. The 2012 Statistics Canada report, *Volunteering in Canada*, which was based on the 2010 General Social Survey, reported that the percentage of individuals volunteering in Canada rose from 46% in 2007 and 45% in 2004.<sup>22</sup> Total hours contributed increased too; however, the average number of hours per volunteer declined from 168 hours in 2004 to 156 hours in 2010. More recent data from the 2013 survey, which Statistics Canada has not reported at the same level of detail, indicates that volunteer rates have fallen back to 2004 levels (44%) but volunteer hours have held steady.<sup>23</sup> It is also noteworthy that Nova Scotians volunteer at a higher rate

---

<sup>21</sup> Halifax Regional Municipality, “Community Recreation Services Service Review Presentation,” July 6, 2010, slide 4, <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/documents/100810cow3.pdf>.

<sup>22</sup> Mireille Vézina and Susan Crompton, *Volunteering in Canada*, Statistics Canada, April 16, 2012. p. 38.

<sup>23</sup> Maire Sinha, *Volunteering in Canada, 2004 to 2013*, Statistics Canada, June 18, 2015, p. 4.

than Canadians as a whole (54% in 2010 down from 55% in 2007) and that volunteering in support of recreation and sport activities, which is the second most common form of volunteering in Canada, has held steady while some other types of volunteering (e.g., with religious groups) have been declining.

The 2012 report notes that a relatively small proportion of volunteers makes large contributions. In 2010, 10% of volunteers accounted for 53% of all volunteer hours. Data further indicates that while older adults volunteer at much lower rates than young adults they make large contributions in time.<sup>24</sup> Both factors contribute significantly to volunteer burn out, which many stakeholders consulted for this study cited as a concern notwithstanding the current very strong commitment of most.

While continued reliance on community support is probably essential for Amherst, the Town will have to monitor these challenges. While the Town and local recreation organization can count on older adults to make large contributions, they may become over-burdened. Inevitably, regardless of the support they receive, members of this group will “age out.” The Recreation Department will have a major role to maintain interest in the established volunteer group and cultivate their successors.

The Town sponsors an impressive array of events. While the special occasions listed in **Figure 2-9**, above, highlight the recreation schedule, many other programs and events provide everyday opportunities for activity. The Recreation Department’s 2015 Summer Events Bulletin lists eleven programs offered by the Department and/or community organizations within Amherst in July and August. They are further supplemented by “Theme Days” (Tuesdays and Thursdays), which are day-long events oriented to children; special recreation trips arranged by the Department; and activity offerings in Town parks (e.g., evening yoga in Dickey Park). Winter program summaries produced by the Department are not as extensive but still include a full schedule of activities including ice hockey games, public skating, and walking track hours. In both seasons, programs are available that are specifically geared by the Department to youth, seniors, and families.

Consultation input on recreation program needs was limited. **Subsection 3.4.4** summarizes program-related comments from the Public Workshop. The limited program interests identified related to desires for specific facilities. While comments in response to the telephone and online surveys included many references to perceived facility needs and many more to the sufficiency of existing facilities, no comments referred to any aspect of existing programs, beyond some positive comments on the efforts of the Recreation Department and interest in better communication. With respect to the latter issue, several respondents expressed interest in an improved program guide. While the Department provides event and program guides such as the aforementioned Summer Events Guide, Recreation Department staff recognize the need for improvement.

---

<sup>24</sup> See Table 2 in Mireille Vézina and Susan Crompton, *op cit.*, p. 41.

Incorporation of registration information as opposed to referral to the Department's phone number seems likely to be a particularly valuable improvement. It may in any case be that the dissemination of program information would now be better and more cost effectively accomplished through electronic means such as the Town's Web site and Facebook page. As with printed material, a better structured long-term summary of recreation opportunities would be valuable.

Comments from stakeholders addressed support from the Town. Most consider the Town a good partner and are appreciative of the financial support and professional assistance that the Town provides. Some however would like to see more support and expressed specific complaints concerning the Town's attention to their concerns.



## 5.0 ACTION PLAN

Interviewing, analysis, and inspection present a consistent picture of the recreation situation in Amherst. Existing infrastructure appears to be generally sufficient to meet the needs of the community's stable but aging population. Recreation stakeholders are appreciative of the support that the Town provides but the condition of facilities is a concern. Assessment by Stantec staff corroborated these perceptions. While facilities are generally acceptable for current use, maintenance and renewal are required in many cases. The condition of parks and open spaces, furthermore, does not enhance the appearance and, therefore, the attraction of the town.

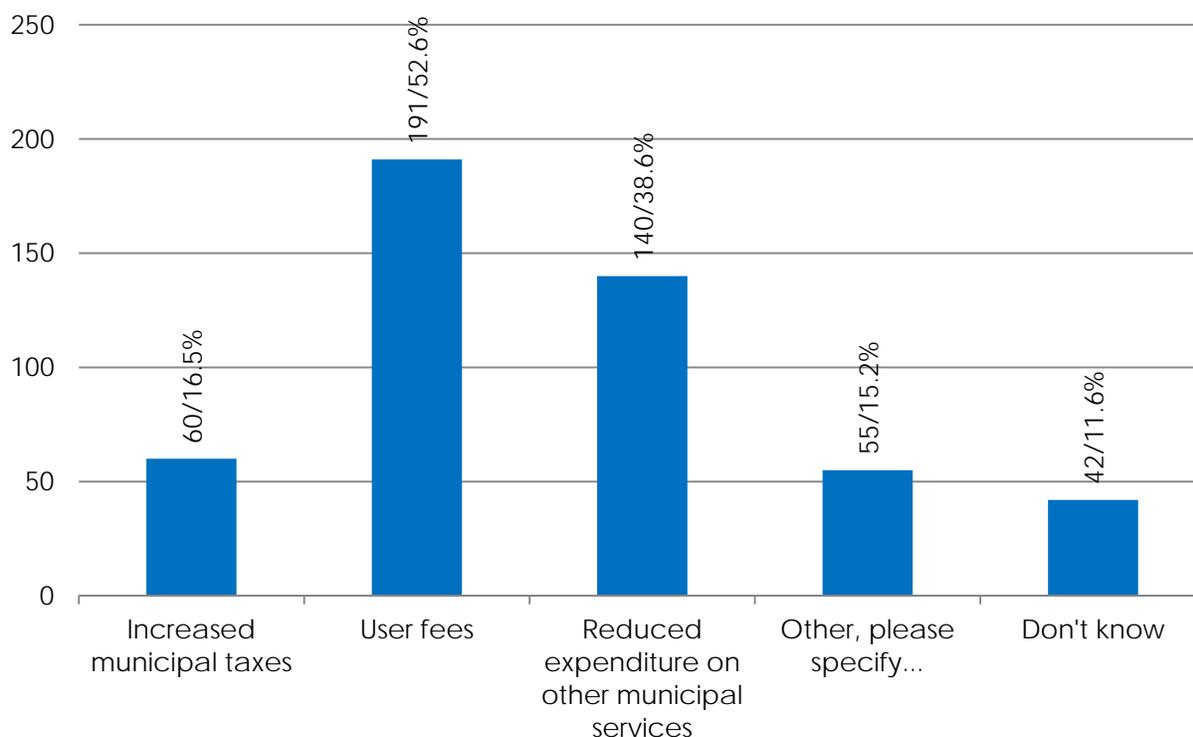
As the number of young people in the town decreases, it seems likely that demand for the most prominent recreation facilities provided by the Recreation Department will decline. Hockey, which is the primary activity supported by Amherst Stadium, seems particularly vulnerable. Baseball and softball, to which two major parks in the town are devoted, are likely in even more jeopardy, given that neither showed up among leading recreation activities in either the 2010 Ispos Reid survey or the more recent survey work for this study. Soccer and basketball, which have increased in popularity in recent years, may even be affected as both sports, while enjoyed by many adults, tend to peak in participation before adulthood.

The aging of the local population, which is well-recognized in the community, is already shifting recreation needs moderately. Walking stands out as by far the most popular form of recreation in the community and its preeminence is likely to increase as the average age in Amherst advances. Improved maintenance of existing trails and pedestrian connections is called for in this respect. Encouragement of adult participation in team sports may also be justified considering the availability of facilities and the declining need to meet the needs of youth as well as the benefits of increasing adult activity levels for health.

### 5.1 FUNDING OPTIONS

There is little appetite for increased taxes to fund improved recreation facilities. Respondents to the telephone survey strongly favoured user fees to pay for recreation facilities and services (52.5% of 363 residents who responded to survey question 12). A notable proportion (38.6%) would prefer to reallocate funds from other municipal services (**Figure 5-1**). The majority of "Other" answers reinforced the reluctance of citizens to see taxes increased. Some responses suggested that funds should be raised in the community, presumably through special events and sales, and a few suggested senior governments should participate more; however, most indicated that they did not think additional money is required for recreation services. Many recreation programs in Amherst, particularly those for children, are provided free, as noted in **Section 3.2**.

Figure 5-1 Support for Recreation Financing Methods, Town of Amherst, 2015



Source Stantec Consulting Limited

Discussion of recreation revenues in **subsection 4.2.2**, above, establishes that Amherst makes relatively modest use of user fees. The Town, in fact, has recently waived ice-time fees for youth, a move we endorse as benefit to access and inclusion and community health, as well as encouraging continued use of the facility, which absorbs more funds than any other recreation facility that the Town has (a net cost of \$414,040 in 2015-2016). Our recommendations, below, emphasize a shift from more costly indoor facilities to parks and grounds needed for walking and cycling, and as attractions for visitors to the community. The improvement and maintenance costs for outdoor facilities should be less in the long-run but their initial expansion and upgrading will have immediate costs, as will a needed commitment to improved maintenance. Funding these upgrades through increased fees for use of facilities for which we expect demand will diminish based on demographic trends does not seem advisable as it may well draw those facilities, particularly the Stadium, into a damaging downward spiral.

Expenditures required to implement and support improvements outlined below are reasonable. Annual expenditures set out in the 10-year Capital Budget in **Appendix C** average \$308,950 compared to an average of \$343,475 per year from 2011-2013 as documented in **Table 4-4**, above. Their implications for future operations and maintenance should also be modest. Careful management of available funding should be the first option to support new initiatives. The Department should pursue all opportunities to increase revenue through increased participation and should take advantage of all opportunities to reduce costs without compromising service quality. Substantial additional funds should not be required.

## 5.2 A FRAMEWORK FOR RECREATION IN AMHERST

Our research and discussions with Town staff and community members has led us to a framework for provision of recreation and cultural services in Amherst that while superficially modest can be transformative for the community (**Figure 5-2**). It rests on the following Vision:

*The Town of Amherst will work with its citizens and neighbouring municipalities to provide a range of well-maintained recreation facilities that support services tailored to the interests and needs of all community members, and will enhance the image and attraction of Amherst.*

The Town endorses the values of **Public Good**, **Inclusion and Equity**, and **Sustainability** contained in the *Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015* (see **Figure 2-3**, above). In the Canadian Framework, commitment to the **Public Good** means ensuring that recreation services fulfill broad social goals for the benefit of the disadvantaged and the improvement of the community in which context ability to pay cannot be a determinant of access. **Inclusion and Equity** reinforces this commitment but extends to populations within the community whose participation in recreation is inhibited by non-monetary factors such as age and physical and mental challenges. **Sustainability** adds to these values a commitment to respect and value the environment in developing, operating, and delivering recreation facilities and services.

In our opinion, recreation operations in Amherst already reflect these values. Several key recreation services are provided to youth without charge and the Town subsidizes many others. Very few Amherst residents consider cost to be a barrier to their participation or the participation of their family members in recreation activities. Similarly, although it is more difficult to establish, residents have access to facilities that they need for the activities that appear to interest them.

Sustainability, which is defined as “meeting current needs without sacrificing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs by balancing environmental, economic, and social concerns,” is closely tied with stewardship or the responsible management of that which is entrusted to one’s care. Amherst has the recreation assets it needs. The immediate responsibility of its Recreation Department is to stabilize and then improve the physical condition of this infrastructure. New facilities will be valuable as additions to a healthy well-maintained recreation system not as replacements for existing neglected assets.

The Principles of Operation for Amherst are inter-related, as they should be:

- **Prudent Management** – Enhancement and integration of the Town’s existing parks, open, spaces, and facilities should be the foundation of this Recreation Master Plan
- **Cost-effective** –With limited financial resources, the Town of Amherst should direct recreation investments to initiatives that will produce the greatest benefit for the community per dollar expended

- **Engaged** – Communication with the community and involvement of citizens as recreation providers as well as users is vital to cost-effective and appropriately targeted recreation service provision
- **Quality** – The differentiator for recreation services and facilities in Amherst should be the quality delivered in terms of facility condition and maintenance, and service delivery
- **Collaboration** – The Town of Amherst should continue to work with its citizens, with senior governments, and neighbouring municipal units to augment and enhance the recreation facilities and services available to its citizens.

Amherst has the facilities it needs and which its residents appear to want. The Town needs to adjust to its aging demographics, as do most Canadian communities, but the real key for the Town is to make the facilities that Amherst has better through rehabilitation, strategic upgrading, and improved maintenance. The focus of initiatives to improve recreation in Amherst should be its parks and open space system – particularly the Town’s trails network. The trails system is well-used by a wide range of residents but is incomplete and needs better maintenance.

In many ways, trails exemplify the recreation system in Amherst. The network is one of the best-used recreation facilities in the town. The Town has an apparently sound concept for development of the system. Full implementation of the planned system, as discussed below, has a reasonable price tag. Improvement of the trails network, furthermore, has a variety of secondary benefits from beautification of outdoor spaces, to tying together the Town’s fields and facilities, and providing an attractive feature to draw visitors to the community and facilitate their movement within it. It meets both current and future needs, and its augmentation is one of the key areas in which the Town can benefit from collaboration with community groups and the County of Cumberland.

While trails development is a core recommendation of this Master Plan, it will not complete the picture. Other elements of the Town’s parks and recreation system also need upgrading and consistent with recommendations below. The upgrading process required and the long-term maintenance of a quality recreation system must, furthermore, be sustained through professional recreation staff who are properly trained and deployed. **Section 5.3**, immediately following, addresses Recreation Department staffing.

It is also not the intention of this Recreation Master Plan to suppress the aspirations of community members to develop new facilities that may enhance the community and/or add to the range of recreation opportunities available to residents. The critical issue is the market for additional facilities and services and the capacity to deliver them. Assistance from senior levels of government appears essential to the viability of initiatives such as a sportsfield complex or a community recreation centre. Cooperation with adjacent municipalities will be particularly important not only to spread costs but also to maximize use. **Figure 5-2** provides Goals and Priorities to reflect and implement the Principles of Operation.

Action Plan  
October 31, 2016

Figure 5-2 A Framework for Recreation in Amherst



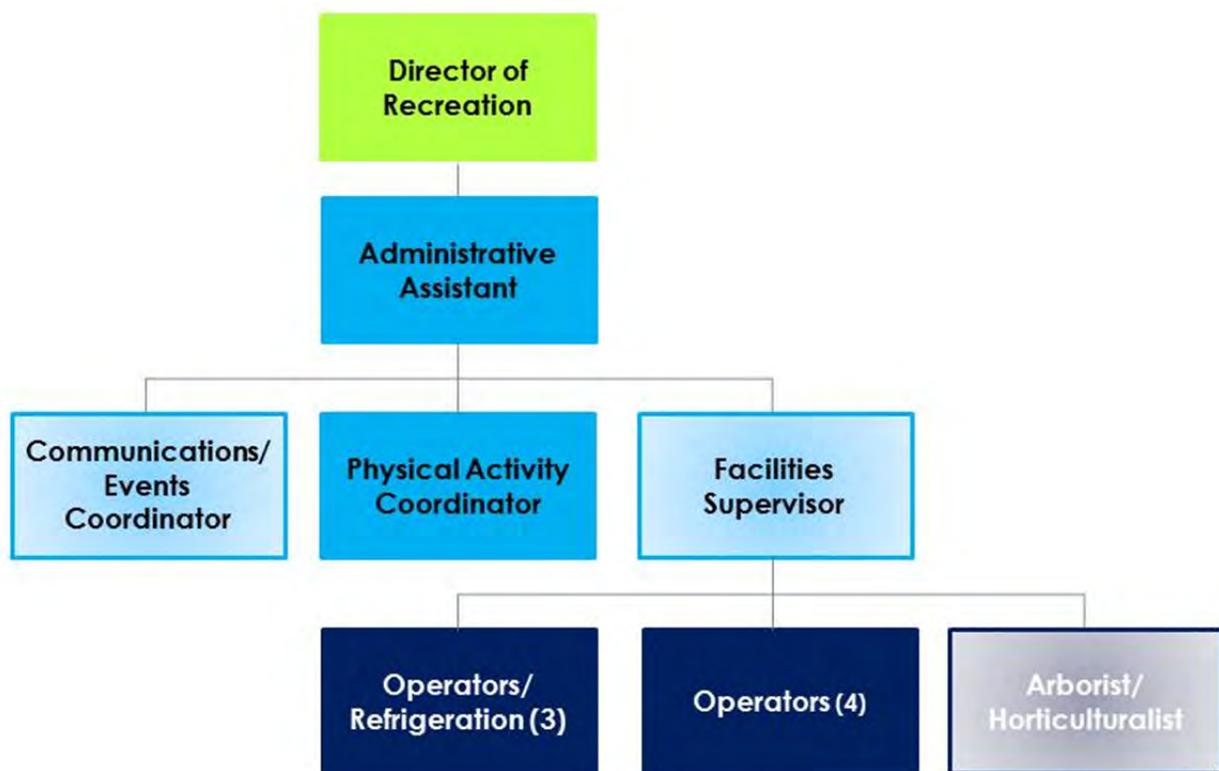
Source Stantec Consulting Ltd.

### 5.3 ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE

As discussed in **Section 4.1**, the current staff complement in the Amherst Recreation Department compares reasonably with similar sized towns in Nova Scotia. On the other hand, we have noted that the staff complement at Amherst Stadium is relatively large. **Figure 5-3** depicts a proposed organization for the Amherst Recreation Department. It shows all current positions in solid coloured boxes. Shaded boxes denote unfilled and additional positions.

A key proposed addition is a Facilities Supervisor dedicated to oversight of operational staff. This position would relieve the Department’s Director and Physical Activity Coordinator of responsibility for supervising operational staff. We estimate based on data for another Nova Scotia town and current Town of Amherst compensation that salary and benefits for the position will cost about \$55,000 per annum.

Figure 5-3 Proposed Organization Chart, Town of Amherst Recreation Department



Source: Town of Amherst/Stantec Consulting Ltd.

In the proposed structure, a permanent Communications and Events Coordinator will fill the heretofore sporadically filled marketing position. The individual would be responsible for marketing and promotion through social media and other avenues, as well as the organization of Town special events, a responsibility recently shifted to the Recreation Department from Economic and Community

Action Plan  
October 31, 2016

**Development.** The Physical Activity Coordinator, who would be expected to work closely with the Communications and Events Coordinator, will be responsible for recreation programming as well as MPAL program duties.

In the summer months, the Town assigns Stadium staff to parks and grounds maintenance, which involves cleaning, mowing, and planting of parks as well as general maintenance of built facilities within parks (i.e., washrooms, dugouts, etc.). While this justifies the number of Stadium staff, the ice-makers are not trained for the outdoor aspects of this work and it appears that the Town's parks and public open spaces have suffered as a result. We recommend either training these personnel for outdoor duties or reassigning them to Public Works during the summer so that the Recreation Department can hire appropriately skilled landscape workers for the summer period. A horticulturalist/arborist with skills in selecting and cultivating plants and trees would guide retrained or new outdoor staff. Ekistics' Downtown Strategy recommended hiring an arborist to prepare and implement an Urban Forestry Strategy for the Town.

In addition to the planning and management role envisioned by Ekistics, the horticulturalist/arborist position shown in the figure would have operational responsibility for parks and grounds under the Facilities Supervisor. We do not have a good comparable on which to base a compensation estimate for a horticulturalist/arborist but would assume it would fall somewhat below the Coordinator positions for which Amherst currently pays \$55,000 per year in salaries and benefits at about \$48,000 in salary and benefits.

## Recommendations

1. Fill the Marketing Coordinator position with a Communications/Events Coordinator.
2. Create and fill a Facilities Coordinator position.
3. Hire a Horticulturalist/Arborist to plan and coordinate maintenance of the urban forest, and parks and grounds within the town.
4. Train current operations staff to improve outdoor maintenance skills and/or hire landscape workers with appropriate skills.

## 5.4 SERVICE DELIVERY

A new recreation administration leading a dedicated department in the Town of Amherst appears to have energized service delivery. Many survey respondents and workshop participants commented on the rising profile of recreation in the community and complemented recreation staff accordingly. Some, however, suggested that "more than talk is required." The Town has taken a major step by creating an independent Recreation Department. Its purpose in doing so, as stated, was to use recreation programs and facilities as a tool to encourage economic development and tourism, and encourage new residents to consider Amherst as a place to live. The action desired by residents, as we have emphasized, is not onerous. It should not strain the Town's means.

Action Plan  
October 31, 2016

The Framework for Recreation in Amherst reproduced in **Figure 2-3** provides values and goals that set the thrust of this Master Plan. The focus of the Master Plan is the Town's parks and open space system and its emphasis is quality rather than quantity. The Town has the space and facilities needed to provide for the needs and interests of residents. Strategic improvement is needed combined with better ongoing maintenance to elevate these assets from standard and adequate to outstanding.

## Recommendations

1. Reinforce the position of the Town of Amherst Recreation Department as the leading coordinator of recreation services and programs within the Town of Amherst.
2. Develop and maintain parks and recreation services in Amherst for the benefit of residents and an attraction to the community.
3. Make Amherst a provincial leader in the provision of parks, open spaces, and trails to serve not only residents but also visitors and potential new residents.

## 5.5 TRAILS DEVELOPMENT

Given the foregoing considerations, emphasis needs to be placed on improved maintenance and upgrading of existing facilities without major increases in expenditure. Recognizing that walking is by far the leading recreation activity in Amherst, the trails system should be the highest priority. While trails in the town are well used, the network depicted in **Figure 5-4** remains a concept. Key connections have been developed but many are in poor shape, some are missing, and some awkwardly fringe private property.

Development of the trails system nevertheless has clear benefits. It appeals to the town's growing older population without excluding youth. It should also beautify the community for the benefit of residents and as an attraction to tourists. In this context, it should also encourage increased use of several Town parks that it connects and through which it travels. Costs for construction and maintenance, furthermore, are relatively modest.

The first priority is to address maintenance issues with existing connections. Trails related repairs for Rotary Park, Centennial Park, Northern Telecom Park, Centennial Walking Trails, and Strawberry Fields Park are listed in **Table 4-8**, above, followed by development of planned connections missing from the concept route. Further development should include creation of a complete loop that would carry the trail back to Robb Centennial Fields. Based on preliminary analysis, an immediate and low cost approach to accomplish this would appear to be via Church and Lawrence Streets, a route that would also involve a connecting section of Victoria Street. The use of Church Street would reinforce the Mural Walk that the Town promotes with potential benefits to tourism and would bring walkers directly to Victoria Park.

Additional sidewalk links within the Downtown along Victoria Street would facilitate pedestrian trips to workplaces and retail opportunities for residents, as well as exposing murals and sites of interest to tourists. As the current project approached completion, a member of the Amherst Trails Society advanced

Action Plan  
October 31, 2016

the idea of a “Big Block” Loop within the Downtown that would provide a marked, measured, and specially maintained route for walkers. The suggested loop bounded by East Victoria, Havelock, Prince Arthur, and Church Streets would have priority for clearance and should be monitored to ensure that it remains in good condition.

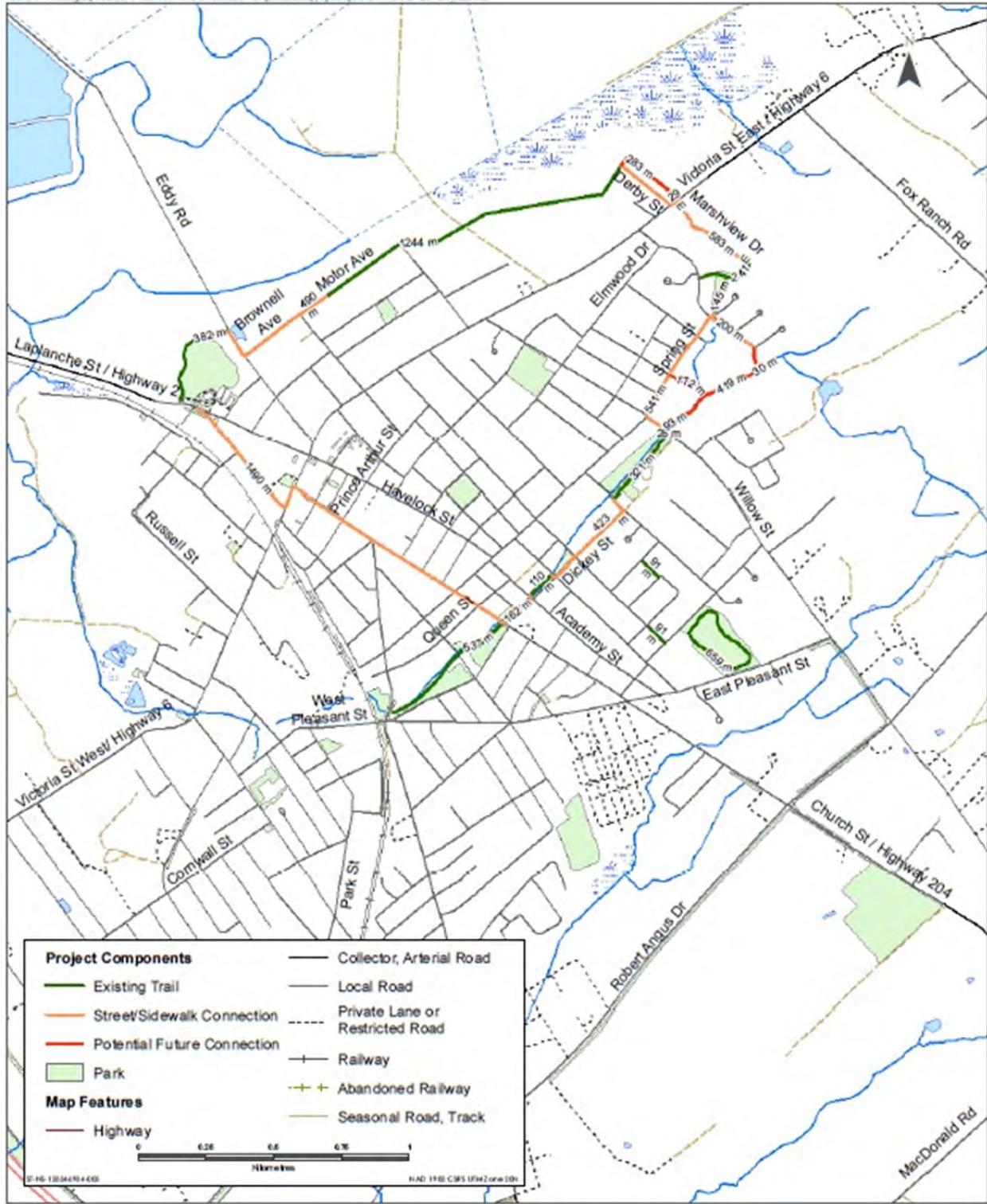
The suggestion points up the importance of sidewalk maintenance, which is the responsibility of the Department of Public Works. The 2010 Ispos Reid Study found sidewalks are highly valued for recreation purposes. To be useful, particularly for seniors, they must however be effectively cleared of snow and ice in the wintertime. In the longer term, proper maintenance is also important to ensure walking is comfortable and safe. While the Recreation Master Plan process did not include inspection of sidewalks within the town, we have observed some to be in poor condition with cracked, crumbling, and unstable surfaces.

The Town should also explore linkages to parks off the currently planned loop such as the strategic links already identified to Dickey Park. Connections to natural areas such as the Marshlands, which participants in the Public Workshop referenced and which Ekistics identified as a desirable amenity in their Downtown Amherst Action Strategy, are similarly important. Notably a “Marshlands Trail” route should be defined and its development pursued in consultation with Cumberland County. In a similar light, maintenance of sidewalks, which the Ispos Reid survey found to be the number one “recreation facility” in Amherst, should be reinforced. To maximize use, the Town should install appropriate lighting on some portions if not all of the trails network.

The current conceptual trails network is 7,274 metres long. The addition of the proposed sidewalk route in the Church/Lawrence corridor will add 1,490 metres, bringing the network to 8,764 metres. Most of the roughly 8.8-kilometre route exists in the form of 3,914 metres of existing trails (44.7% of the proposed network) and 3,946 metres of street/sidewalk connections (45.0%). Although much of the existing network needs attention and would benefit from improved signage and lighting, only 10.3% of the links shown on **Figure 5-4** need to be built and none of these additions is critical to the usability of the route. The 2011 Dickey Brook Rehabilitation Plan estimated the cost of providing a 2-meter wide “stone dust” trail within the proposed Christie Historical Park at \$40 per metre. Adjusting Ekistics’ unit cost to \$42.50 to account for inflation, we would estimate the cost to add currently unbuilt links of the conceptual trail network at just \$38,500. For concrete sidewalks needed for the same Dickey Brook project, Ekistics estimated \$125/metre or roughly \$135/metre adjusted for inflation, or more than three times the cost of stone dust.

Action Plan  
October 31, 2016

Figure 5-4 Existing and Potential Trails Network, Town of Amherst, 2015



Source: Town of Amherst and Stantec Consulting Ltd.

Action Plan  
October 31, 2016

Stantec also investigated the cost of lighting trails. Stantec staff reviewed existing lighting along the Town's proposed trails loop using

Table 5-1 New Lighting Equipment Requirements, Amherst Trails, 2015

Trail Segment Type	Pole	Anchor	Light	Capital Cost	Electricity Usage/yr.
Existing Trails	64	7	69	\$159,850	\$3,709
Street / Sidewalk Connections	2	17	1	\$30,800	\$914
Potential Future Connections	16	2	16	\$38,900	\$860
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>\$229,550</b>	<b>\$5,484</b>

Source: Stantec Consulting Ltd.

Google Street Map to determine where light standards are already in place (all existing lighting was assumed to be of satisfactory intensity). We identified unlighted sections and calculated required light standards to illuminate the loop fully. Requirements include poles, bracing where necessary, and LED fixtures. Stantec estimates 86 lights and 82 poles are required with additional anchoring needed for 26 poles (poles carrying other services on which lighting can be mounted are available in some locations). Installed costs based on estimates prepared for HRM in 2011 (adjusted to 2014\$) total nearly \$230,000. Based on current Nova Scotia Power rates, we estimate operating costs at \$5,484 per annum (Table 5-1).

The Town needs a more detailed trails/active transportation plan to guide this initiative. The current AT Plan should be reviewed at the earliest opportunity and a decision made to either upgrade or replace it to provide an effective framework for development of a first class trails network for Amherstonians. The scope should include consideration of signage requirements and lighting, and provision for multi-use, particularly the accommodation of bicycling and winter activities (e.g., cross-country skiing and snowshoeing), as well as strategic links from the main loop to Town recreation facilities and the construction of links to sites outside the Town Limits. The latter consideration would suggest at least consultative involvement of Cumberland County officials and residents.

## Recommendations

1. Make trails development and improvement the leading recreation development priority.
2. Review and adjust or replace the existing Town of Amherst Active Transportation Plan to serve as a guide for comprehensive trails development.
3. Improve sidewalk renewal, maintenance, and clearing.
4. Immediately address maintenance issues identified with existing trails links.
5. Complete development of the trails loop and all related trails links, including the proposed sidewalk connection from the intersection of Dickey and Church Streets to the Robb Fields.
6. Ensure provision of overhead lighting throughout the completed trails loop.

## 5.6 PARKS AND OPEN SPACE IMPROVEMENTS

Development of an improved comprehensive trails network should not be at the expense of other facilities. The current trails loop passes through a variety of Town-owned parks and recreation facilities including several slated for upgrades among the maintenance projects specified by Stantec in **Table 4-8**, above. Strategic links from the loop also connect it to Dickey Park. The parks involved contain critical portions of the loop, and trails use by residents should increase awareness of and commitment to the overall open space system. A steady flow of walkers, especially on lighted trails, furthermore, enhances safety for all users.

Enhancement of the trails network aligns with other Town initiatives. Notably, the southern terminal of the trails loop coincides with the location of improvements proposed in the Dickey Brook Rehabilitation Master Plan to develop Christie Historical Park. The plan includes the partial restoration of Christie Pond, which was filled in the 1950s, and the construction of an outdoor learning centre to explain the environmental lessons of the brook's restoration. The park would create a unique entry/exit point on the trails loop stretching from the Fire Station through the Little League Park.

Overall, the rehabilitation of Dickey Brook is critical to differentiating Amherst's trails and parks system. Named after one of the four Fathers of Confederation who hailed from Amherst, the watercourse connects to the rich history that distinguishes the community. The brook is an appealing feature within the urban environment and the proposed Christie Park would add a feature that would draw visitors who could link to many other attractions through the trails loop.

While this Master Plan emphasizes outdoor recreation facilities, additional enhancements of the Town's park system are not considered critical. The Lions Club is working with the Town to redevelop the former site of the West Highlands Elementary School on Hickman Street as a community park. Plans for the roughly 1.8-acre (7,500 m<sup>2</sup>) site include a seniors and family area with benches, an area for basketball, open play areas for Frisbees and similar activities, and a walking trail around the play area. The site is also expected to include parking, washroom facilities, and a drinking fountain. Community suggestions for the site in response to a survey prepared by the Lions include a swimming pool and a tennis court, which could be used as a skating rink in the winter. According to a Lions Club representative interviewed by Stantec, Club members have committed \$25,000 to the project and are hoping for additional funding from the Town.

The Town has also built a new sport field at Dickey Park during the preparation of this Master Plan that is suitable for the Wolfpack football program as well as for Fundy soccer. Consideration should be given to lighting the field. Stantec has obtained a supplier's estimate of \$190,000 for installation of lighting for a standard Canadian football field. Assuming 400 hours per year of operation, Stantec estimates this lighting will cost \$22,520 annually for electricity. Other park and open space enhancements do not appear to be required beyond the recommended maintenance upgrades previously outlined.

Action Plan  
October 31, 2016

The potential consolidation of the Little League Park with the ballparks at Robb Centennial Fields was raised as a possible means to economize recreation maintenance costs given the apparent decline in interest in softball and baseball within the community and estimates by Stantec totaling \$179,000 to upgrade both facilities (see **Table 4-8** above). Closer examination of the Little League and Robb properties found that the three Robb fields consume nearly all of the 10.2 acres within the Robb property leaving no room for additional fields. While two Little League-sized diamonds, which require 1.2 acres each, could replace a single adult field within the Robb Complex, given that full-size diamonds require about 3 acres, access and orientation requirements would probably make the results unsatisfactory. In addition, the Little League program continues to attract about 140 children and is well-supported by enthusiastic adult volunteers.

If field space is no longer required on the Robb lands, it should be reallocated to another recreation use, such as the dog park identified in the long-term capital budget. The Town could allocate many different parks for use by dog owners; however, noise and safety concerns suggest locations away from residential areas, particularly avoiding parklands that directly abut residential property. The Robb property is on the edge of the developed area of the town. Most of the bordering land is occupied by either commercial land uses or is undeveloped. It is also on the trails loop so that dog walkers can use the trail to access the site and/or to combine a visit to the dog park with an exercise walk. The Town could retain the existing ballpark fencing to contain dogs (a minimum height of six feet is recommended to contain dogs).

The ballparks are not used in late fall or through the winter. Even in-season, consultation suggests they are frequently inactive. Rambunctious dogs can however be irritating to ballplayers, even when they can be kept separate. Rules should be established to ensure dogs are kept reasonably quiet and under control, and that dog litter is removed. Other Town parks may be options for a dog park but have established uses, lack sufficient area, and/or are within residential neighbourhoods.

The Church Street Tennis Courts were the outdoor facility deemed to be most in need of rehabilitation by Stantec's inspector. Upgrades required to rehabilitate the facility are estimated at \$99,000 in **Table 4-8**. Given the standard of one tennis court per 5,000 population used in the Province of Ontario, the two courts on Church Street meet the expected need for Amherst.

The current soccer pitches on Dolan Fields off the extension of Church Street are outside the Town Limits on privately owned properties. While the current arrangement satisfies community needs, ensuring its long-term availability is a concern. To ensure alternative sites, the Town should pursue shared use agreements with town schools. The Province of Nova Scotia has advanced the concept of "community use of schools" to address this desire in many communities. The Chignecto-Central School Board, which administers schools in Amherst, has a detailed policy encouraging the use of schools by municipalities and not-for-profit groups. The policy identifies community use as secondary to use by students but clearly establishes the obligation of school administrators to facilitate access to facilities within guidelines set by Board policy (<http://www.ccsrb.ca/sites/default/files/OS-G-09%20Use%20of%20School%20Facilities.pdf>). The policy document expects that community use will be cost neutral to the Board and also includes prescribed fees for use of typical facilities by specific user groups (e.g., non-profit and commercial organizations).

Action Plan  
October 31, 2016

The Town had a formal joint use agreement with Spring Street Academy that established a Community Use Committee consisting of the School Principal and the Town's CAO. It recognized the Town's contribution of \$383, 000 to construction of the school. The agreement gave the Town priority over all eligible users of the facility other than the school itself outside of school hours, although other eligible users are permitted access as a secondary priority. Other than the priority given to school activities, the agreement was essentially open-ended and placed few limitations on the Town.

Re-establishing the agreement with Spring Street Academy should be a priority for the Recreation Department. Given its established policy, the School Board should be receptive to representations from the Town not only for Spring Street Academy but also for the new West Highlands Elementary, E. B. Chandler Junior High School, and Amherst Regional High School. Effective use of all four public schools within the Town Limits would significantly expand the options for delivery of town recreation services not only to supplement existing outdoor fields (the new West Highlands School and the High School both have soccer fields) but also to provide spaces for indoor sports requiring gymnasium spaces and classrooms needed for cultural activities in support of the Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy.

## Recommendations

1. Proceed with the Dickey Park Rehabilitation Plan.
2. Support the redevelopment of the former West Highlands Elementary School property by the Lions Club.
3. Provide lighting for the new Dickey Park sport field.
4. Convert one the three Robb Field diamonds for use as a dog park.
5. Rehabilitate the existing Church Street tennis courts.
6. Pursue joint use agreements with the Chignecto-Central School Board for all existing public schools within the Town of Amherst.

## 5.7 INDOOR FACILITIES

The Town of Amherst has limited indoor recreation facilities. Amherst Stadium is the dominant recreation structure. The only other buildings of note included in the recreation inventory surveyed by Stantec are the Four Fathers Library and the 50+ Club. Other structures rated in **Appendix C** are dugouts, washrooms, and storage buildings. The Stadium was built in 1965 and was rated by Stantec's inspector as being in Good condition. The arena and seating are particularly impressive considering the age of the building. Recent renovations enhanced the appearance of the building façade. The addition of the walking track as part of the renovations appears to have been very well-advised as the track has become the community's most used recreation facility. The 50+ Club building was rated as being Fair to Good and, while the library building was not rated, it is clearly in at least Good condition.

Other than the ambitious possibility of a multi-purpose community centre discussed in the following subsection, the primary building project in which community members expressed interest was a youth centre. According to the Survey of Nova Scotia Youth Drop-In Centres prepared by the Nova Scotia Sport and Recreation Commission in 1999, Amherst had a youth centre at the time.<sup>25</sup> The former youth centre was not mentioned by any contact consulted by Stantec for this assignment.

The idea of a new youth centre for Amherst was advanced in the 2013 Future Visions for Youth report and several stakeholders involved with community youth reinforced the need during our consultations. The Future Visions report does not reference any previous youth centre. The report describes the proposed new centre as “[a] safe accessible space staffed by youth volunteers primarily along with a very small adult cognate of service providers [that] will act as a one-stop shopping model for ALL youth programs and programmers.” While the Future Visions report does not address the location of the facility, it would probably be ideally housed in an existing building in an area of the town frequented by young people, perhaps within or on the periphery of the Downtown.

The report does not provide a cost estimate for renting, acquiring, or building the required facility and only loosely identifies funding sources. Facilities of this type are usually operated by not-for-profit community organizations or are created as purpose-based not-for-profit entities. If the focus is on addictions and rehabilitation, as the Future Visions report suggests, the function of the centre largely aligns with the mandate of the Provincial Department of Community Services, which delivers addiction and mental health services through the Cumberland Health Authority. The drop in aspect, on the other hand, does correspond to the municipal recreation mandate. Sport Nova Scotia and municipal governments often provide funding assistance to youth drop in centres and the Town may see fit to assist with the development and operation of a youth centre in the same manner as it assists the Cumberland YMCA and other organizations contributing positively to the community. Better definition of the facility, its mandate, and its costs is however needed for the Town to make such a commitment.

## Recommendations

1. Consider appropriate funding support for a youth centre if a more detailed definition of its mandate, accommodation needs, and costs can be provided.

## 5.8 NEW FACILITIES

While survey research and many stakeholder interviews indicated that residents are generally satisfied with the array of facilities available in Amherst, workshop participants and some other contacts expressed interest in development of a major new facility in or near the town: either the multi-purpose sport fields complex studied by WSP and dmA or a multi-purpose community recreation centre. Either type of facility would obviously enhance recreation experiences in Amherst. Although the WSP/dmA All-Weather Sport field Feasibility Study concluded that the complex assessed would have modest operating costs, they

<sup>25</sup> Nova Scotia Sport & Recreation Commission, *Survey of Nova Scotia Youth Drop-In Centres*, February 1999, pp. 16-17. The report identifies Sharon Bristol as the coordinator and states that the centre had five staff at the time.

assumed it would be co-funded by the County and Town, and operated through a joint municipal body or a not-for-profit organization in which both municipal governments would participate.

The sport fields would respond to expressed criticisms of existing natural fields. While the Town is developing a new sport field as part of the Dickey Park upgrades, its lack of control over soccer venues and the condition of those fields are causes for concern. While the costs of construction are much more substantial, turf fields require substantially less maintenance and can be used much more frequently and in a wider variety of conditions than natural grass surfaces. WSP/dmA estimated that a site developed with a single artificial field, ultimately surrounded by an artificial track and complemented by a natural grass field, would cost \$5.1 million including engineering design and contingency.

If the Town cannot obtain a joint commitment from Cumberland County for the proposed complex, the Town could consider replacement of one or more of its existing natural fields with turf. Evidence presented in Halifax's 2008 Community Facility Master Plan indicated that five artificial surfaces in HRM at the time accounted for close to 20% of all hours booked on the Municipality's 121 outdoor fields. The average maintenance cost for artificial turf fields furthermore was just \$2.92 per booked hour compared to \$15 to more than \$70 per hour for natural grass fields of varying classifications provided by the Regional Municipality.

The feasibility of a community recreation centre in Cumberland has not been assessed to date. A sportsplex with a pool and indoor ice surface similar to the new Truro and Bridgewater facilities could be expected to cost \$30 to \$40 million and would require a substantial ongoing staff complement. In addition to funding assistance from senior governments, it would unquestionably require mutual commitment to both its construction and operation from Cumberland County and Amherst, and, possibly, the Town of Oxford.

Consolidated facilities using modern technologies can usually reduce administrative, and operations and maintenance costs (e.g., note small staffs required to maintain ice services at the Rath Centre in Truro and the Lunenburg Lifestyle Centre in **Table 4-2**, above); however, such a complex would likely supplant existing facilities. Amherst Stadium and other local arenas might well be redundant if an ice surface were included in a new community. Similarly, it could be expected to challenge the Cumberland YMCA, if it incorporated a swimming pool. The new centre might well cannibalize these existing facilities, which are currently in good condition and satisfying community needs.

## Recommendations

1. Consider the use of artificial turf for new outdoor fields or replacement of existing fields where cost effective.

## 5.9 REGIONAL COOPERATION

The central purpose of the priorities outlined above is to create an outstanding parks and open space system that will not only accommodate the priority interests of town residents but also beautify Amherst and enhance its attraction to visitors and potential new residents. A critical challenge to implementing and sustaining outdoor facilities, as mentioned above, appears to be staffing. Appropriate assignment of Stadium staff to building and public works functions to which their training is suited, as well as the engagement of a horticulturalist/arborist and at least two qualified seasonally employed outdoor workers would assist with planning of needed upgrades and enhancement of ongoing maintenance. Establishing a Facilities Supervisor who can focus on management and deployment of new staff would facilitate the required transition.

Stakeholders, survey respondents, and other citizens contacted through this study frequently cited awareness of recreation opportunities in Amherst as an issue for them. Engagement of an energetic Communications and Events Coordinator is required to ensure awareness of recreation opportunities available in the town. The Coordinator should work closely with other recreation providers in the community and, to a lesser degree, with Cumberland County and the Town of Oxford. The work of the Physical Activity Coordinator, who will continue research and planning work under the MPAL program and take responsibility for overall recreation programming for the community, would complement the initiatives of the Communications and Events Coordinator.

The potential of regional cooperation should be greater than program coordination and publicity. Residents from Cumberland County clearly participate in recreation programs offered in Amherst, although none of the many Amherst-based recreation providers consulted referenced any negative effect from the inclusion of county residents. Frequently, towns are subject to pressures from surrounding suburban and rural areas where children are often more numerous and recreation facilities may not be adequate or even present. In Amherst, however, it appears that surrounding communities contribute needed clients who support the Town's facilities. Certainly, registrants from the County were referenced among Little League players, Wolfpack Football players, users of the Y, and other programs oriented to youth and apparently welcomed by the organizers.

Examination of **Table 4-4**, above, suggests there are significant economies of scale in recreation service provision. Small towns generally spend substantially more per capita than their larger counterparts. Oxford, as a matter of fact, spent the third most per capita on recreation services among Nova Scotia's towns between 2011 and 2013. Amherst collaborated with Cumberland County on the sport field study and both parties appear willing to share the cost of such a facility should it proceed. Larger facilities such as the proposed sport fields or a multi-purpose sportsplex require the more substantial financial resources available to municipalities as a group.

Inter-municipal arrangements to provide recreation services take a variety of forms in Nova Scotia. The Town of Truro and the Municipality of the County of Colchester recently developed the \$48-million Rath Eastlink Centre and now jointly operate the facility. The Town of Bridgewater and the Municipal District of Lunenburg, likewise, co-funded and now co-manage the \$30-million Lunenburg Lifestyle Centre. The

two Colchester municipalities also collaborated on Move On Colchester to promote Active Transportation. The six municipal units in Pictou County similarly collaborated on the five-year Active Pictou County project to promote healthy living within the six municipal units in their region. On an ongoing basis, the Digby Area Recreation Commission cooperatively manages and programs facilities in both the Town and Municipal District of Digby as does Yarmouth Recreation on behalf of the Town and Municipal District of Yarmouth.

Cooperative arrangements are almost essential to building and operating major facilities like the Rath Eastlink and Lunenburg Lifestyle centres, which require a large market base. It also makes sense for trails development projects, which invariably involve linking facilities in urban and rural areas. Arrangements such as the Digby Commission and Recreation Yarmouth offer obvious benefits in sharing resources and coordinating programming; however, they can be difficult to sustain. The Town and County of Antigonish, for example, once participated in a joint commission similar to Digby's and Yarmouth's but disbanded it.

A commission incorporating Amherst, Cumberland County, and, potentially, the Town of Oxford would offer obvious benefits for the participants, particularly with respect to coordinating and promoting programs and events. Cooperative arrangements on some level are essential if the Town is to pursue more ambitious projects such as the sport fields complex or the type of recreation complexes that have been built in Truro and Bridgetown, which we do not recommend in the short-term. Cooperation between the Town and County would also be beneficial to trails development by both municipal units, which we do consider to be an immediate priority.

## Recommendations

1. Pursue opportunities to collaborate with Cumberland County and the Town of Oxford to coordinate and jointly provide recreation services, to fund and jointly manage recreation facilities, and to plan and jointly develop regional trail links.

## 5.10 CAPITAL BUDGET

Recommended expenditures derived from Stantec estimates of required upgrades, projects identified and costed above, as well as projects identified in consultation with Recreation Department staff are consolidated in the proposed Ten-year Capital Budget in **Appendix C**. The capital budget proposes expenditures averaging just over \$330,000 per year over its first five years. It includes an annual allocation of \$12,500 for trails development.

The costs of implementing the Dickey Brook Rehabilitation Plan, which complements the recommendations of this Master Plan for trails upgrading, are the major components of the second five-years of the budget. The first five years of the Ekistics implementation plan for brook rehabilitation, which includes wayfinding and walkway improvements, has a total price tag close to \$1 million, suggesting an annual investment of \$200,000, allocated to years 6 through 10. In year 6, the capital budget is estimated at \$327,000 of which the investment in Dickey Brook will constitute 61.2% of the proposed expenditure. Through the balance of the budget period to year 10, we estimate total annual expenditures at \$277,500, of which brook rehabilitation accounts for 72.1%.

Action Plan  
October 31, 2016

Stantec’s complementary Ten-year Action Plan, which is summarized in **Table 5-2**, emphasizes the completion and enhancement of the Town’s trails network within the context of a renewed commitment to maintenance of the Town’s overall parks and open space system. Recreation buildings are in good condition and meet established community needs. While some stakeholders are interested in an all season sport field complex and/or a multi-purpose community centre, the feasibility of such projects requires the involvement of the County of Cumberland and, perhaps, the Town of Oxford. The primary short-term building need is a dedicated youth centre but it requires more detailed study of its purpose and costs to provide a basis to assess the involvement of the Town’s Recreation Department.

Table 5-2 Summary of Recommendations with Phasing, 2016-2026

Type	Recommendation	Timing
Organization Structure 1	Fill the Marketing Coordinator position with a Communications/Events Coordinator.	Year 1
Organization Structure 2	Create and fill a Facilities Coordinator position.	Year 1
Trails Development 1	Make trails development and improvement the Town’s trails the leading recreation development priority.	Year 1
Trails Development 2	Review and adjust or replace the existing Town of Amherst Active Transportation Plan to serve as a guide for comprehensive trails development.	Year 1
Trails Development 3	Improve sidewalk clearing and maintenance	Year 1
Parks and Open Space Improvements 5	Assess the costs and benefits of developing two tennis courts on the former West Highlands Elementary School property as an alternative to rehabilitating the existing Church Street tennis courts.	Year 1
Parks and Open Space Improvements 6	Pursue joint use agreements with the Chignecto-Central School Board for all existing public schools within the Town of Amherst.	Year 1
Organization Structure 3	Hire a Horticulturalist/Arborist to plan and coordinate maintenance of the urban forest, and parks and grounds within the town.	Year 2
Parks and Open Space Improvements 4	Convert one the three Robb Field diamonds for use as a dog park.	Year 3
Parks and Open Space Improvements 3	Provide lighting for the new Dickey Park sport field	Year 5
Type	Recommendation	Timing
Organization Structure 4	Train current operations staff to improve outdoor maintenance skills and/or hire landscape workers with appropriate skills.	Years 1 and 2
Trails Development 4	Immediately address maintenance issues identified with existing trails links.	Years 1 and 2
Parks and Open Space Improvements 2	Support the redevelopment of the former West Highlands Elementary School property by the Lions Club.	Years 2 to 5

AMHERST RECREATION MASTER PLAN  
FINAL REPORT

Action Plan  
October 31, 2016

Service Delivery 1	Reinforce the position of the Town of Amherst Recreation Department as the leading coordinator of recreation services and programs within the Town of Amherst.	Years 1 to 10
Service Delivery 2	Make the leading priority of the Town of Amherst Recreation Department the upgrading and maintenance of parks, open spaces, and trails to enhance their value as attractions within Amherst and position the Town as a leader in the provision of outdoor recreation services among Nova Scotia municipalities.	Years 1 to 10
Service Delivery 3	Make Amherst a provincial leader in the provision of parks, open spaces, and trails to serve not only residents but also visitors and potential new residents.	Years 1 to 10
Trails Development 5	Complete development of the trails loop and all related trails links, including the proposed sidewalk connection from the intersection of Dickey and Church Streets to the Robb Fields.	Years 1 to 10
Trails Development 6	Ensure provision of overhead lighting throughout the completed trails loop.	Years 1 to 10
Parks and Open Space Improvements 1	Proceed with the Dickey Park Rehabilitation Plan.	Years 1 to 10
Indoor Facilities 1	Consider appropriate funding support for a youth centre if a more detailed definition of its mandate, accommodation needs, and costs can be provided.	As opportune
New Facilities 1	Consider the use of artificial turf for new outdoor fields or replacement of existing fields where cost effective.	As opportune
Regional Cooperation 1	Pursue opportunities to collaborate with Cumberland County and the Town of Oxford to coordinate and jointly provide recreation services, to fund and jointly manage recreation facilities, and to plan and jointly develop regional trail links.	As opportune

Source Stantec Consulting Ltd.

**Appendix A COMMUNITY RECREATION SURVEY SUMMARY**



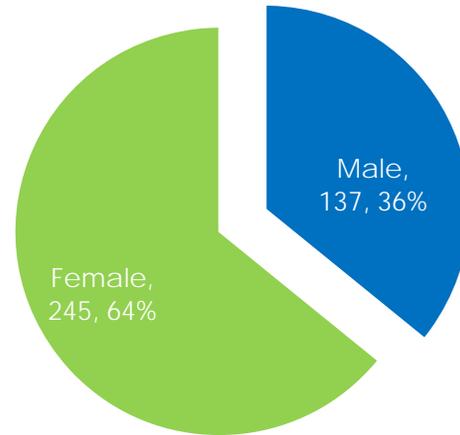
## AMHERST RECREATION MASTER PLAN - TELEPHONE SURVEY RESULTS

1. Do you currently live within the Town Limits?

Yes 384

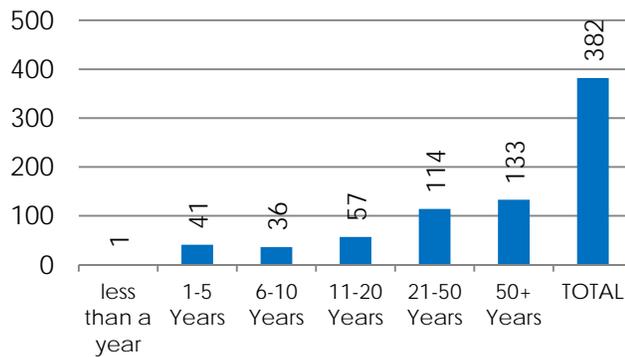
2. Are you?

Gender	No.	%
Male	137	35.9%
Female	245	64.1%
RTOTAL	382	100.0%



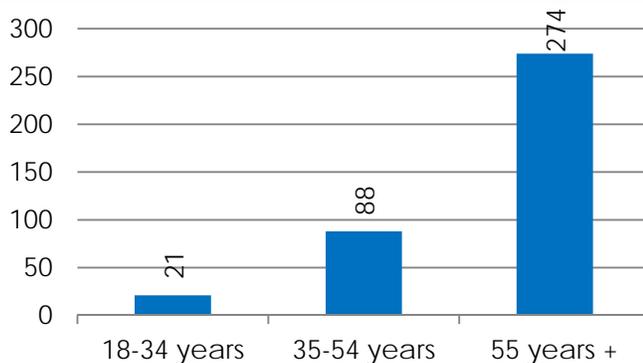
3. How long have you lived in the Town of Amherst?

Residence	No.	%
less than a year	1	0.3%
1-5 Years	41	10.7%
6-10 Years	36	9.4%
11-20 Years	57	14.9%
21-50 Years	114	29.8%
50+ Years	133	34.8%
TOTAL	382	100.0%



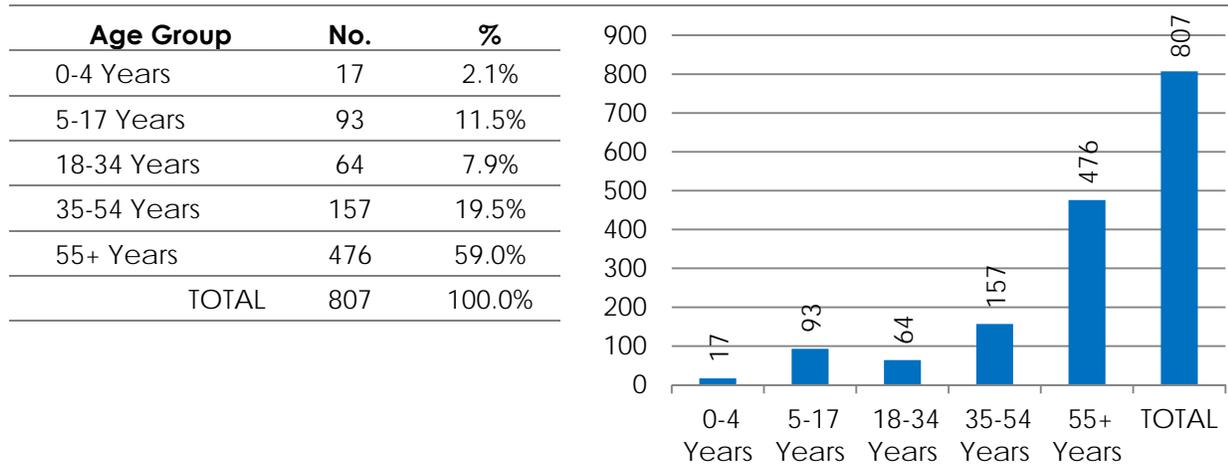
4. To which age group do you belong?

Age Group	No.	%
18-34 years	21	5.5%
35-54 years	88	23.0%
55 years +	274	71.5%
TOTAL	383	100.0%



## AMHERST RECREATION MASTER PLAN - TELEPHONE SURVEY RESULTS

5. How many people in your household are in the following age groups (including yourself)?

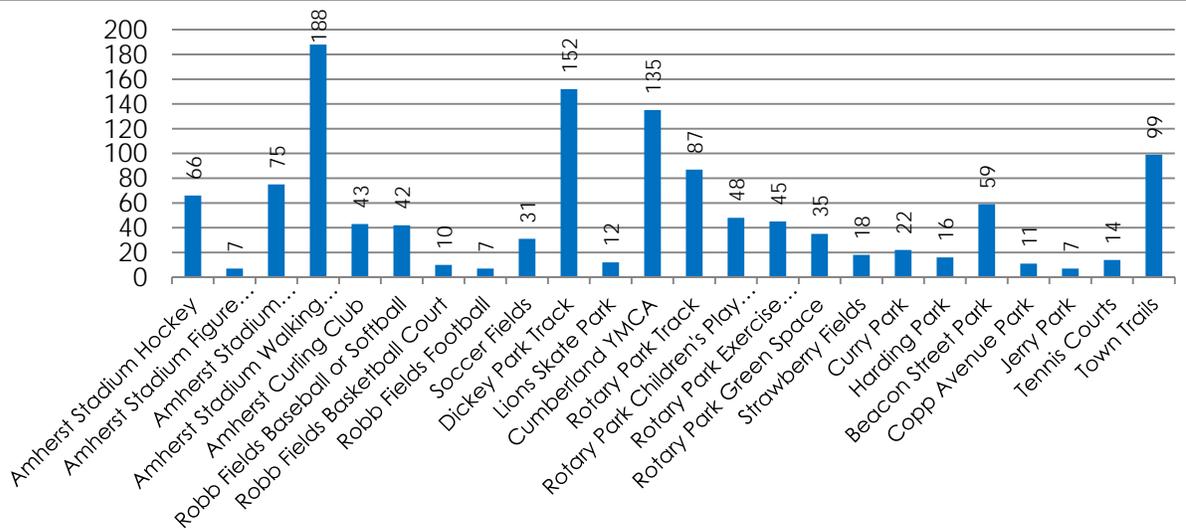
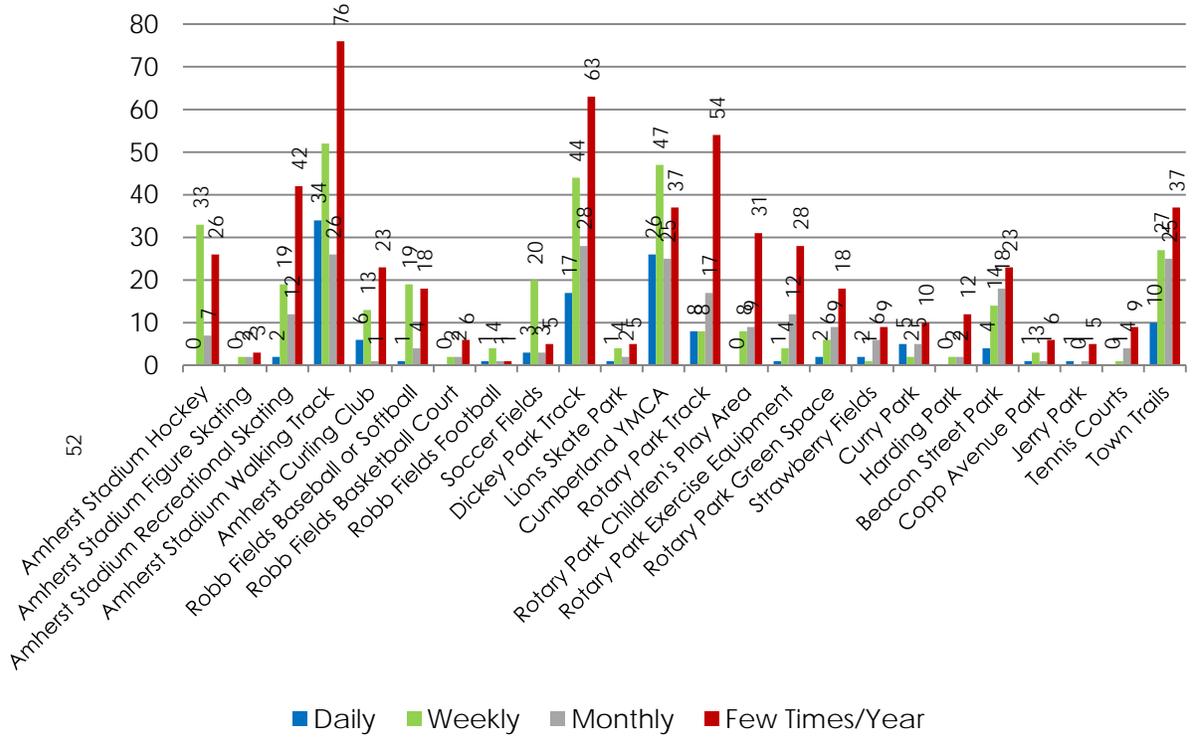


6. How frequently have members of your household used the following recreation facilities during the past year (i.e., since October 2014)?

Facility	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Few Times/Year	TOTALS	Never
Amherst Stadium Hockey	0	33	7	26	66	317
Amherst Stadium Figure Skating	0	2	2	3	7	374
Amherst Stadium Recreational Skating	2	19	12	42	75	304
Amherst Stadium Walking Track	34	52	26	76	188	194
Amherst Curling Club	6	13	1	23	43	338
Robb Fields Baseball or Softball	1	19	4	18	42	341
Robb Fields Basketball Court	0	2	2	6	10	373
Robb Fields Football	1	4	1	1	7	375
Soccer Fields	3	20	3	5	31	352
Dickey Park Track	17	44	28	63	152	230
Lions Skate Park	1	4	2	5	12	371
Cumberland YMCA	26	47	25	37	135	246
Rotary Park Track	8	8	17	54	87	292
Rotary Park Children's Play Area	0	8	9	31	48	334
Rotary Park Exercise Equipment	1	4	12	28	45	338
Rotary Park Green Space	2	6	9	18	35	348
Strawberry Fields	2	1	6	9	18	363
Curry Park	5	2	5	10	22	360
Harding Park	0	2	2	12	16	366

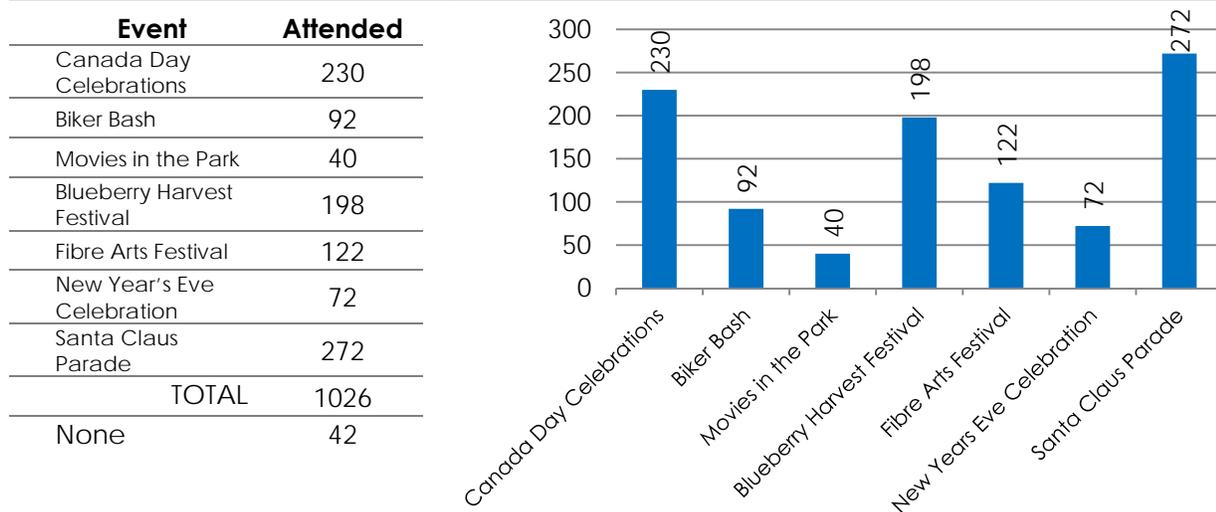
## AMHERST RECREATION MASTER PLAN - TELEPHONE SURVEY RESULTS

Beacon Street Park	4	14	18	23	59	323
Copp Avenue Park	1	3	1	6	11	371
Jerry Park	1	0	1	5	7	373
Tennis Courts	0	1	4	9	14	369
Town Trails	10	27	25	37	99	282
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>547</b>	<b>1229</b>	



## AMHERST RECREATION MASTER PLAN - TELEPHONE SURVEY RESULTS

7. Have any members of your household participated in any of the following activities/events in the Town of Amherst during the past year? (SELECT AS MANY AS APPLY)



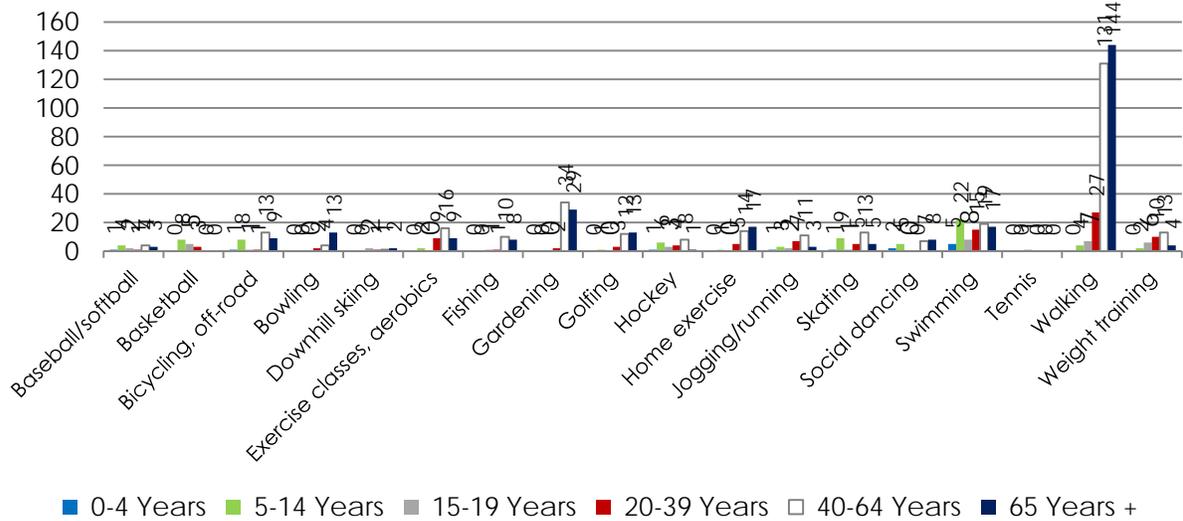
8. What are the top three recreation activities pursued by the following age groups within your household?

Activity	0-4 Years	5-14 Years	15-19 Years	20-39 Years	40-64 Years	65 Years +	TOTALS
Baseball/softball	1	4	2	1	4	3	15
Basketball	0	8	6	3	0	0	17
Bicycling, on road/trail	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bicycling, off-road	1	7	0	1	12	7	28
Bowling	0	0	0	2	4	13	19
Downhill skiing	0	0	2	1	1	2	6
Exercise classes, aerobics	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fishing	0	0	1	1	10	8	20
Gardening	0	0	0	2	34	28	64
Golfing	0	1	0	3	13	12	29
Hockey	1	6	3	4	8	1	23
Home exercise	0	1	0	5	14	17	37
In line skating	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jogging/running	0	2	2	6	11	2	23
Skating	1	9	1	5	13	5	34
Social dancing	2	3	0	0	5	7	17
Swimming	5	21	8	15	20	17	86
Tennis	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Volleyball	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Walking	0	4	7	27	132	145	315
Weight training	0	1	6	9	13	4	33
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>767</b>

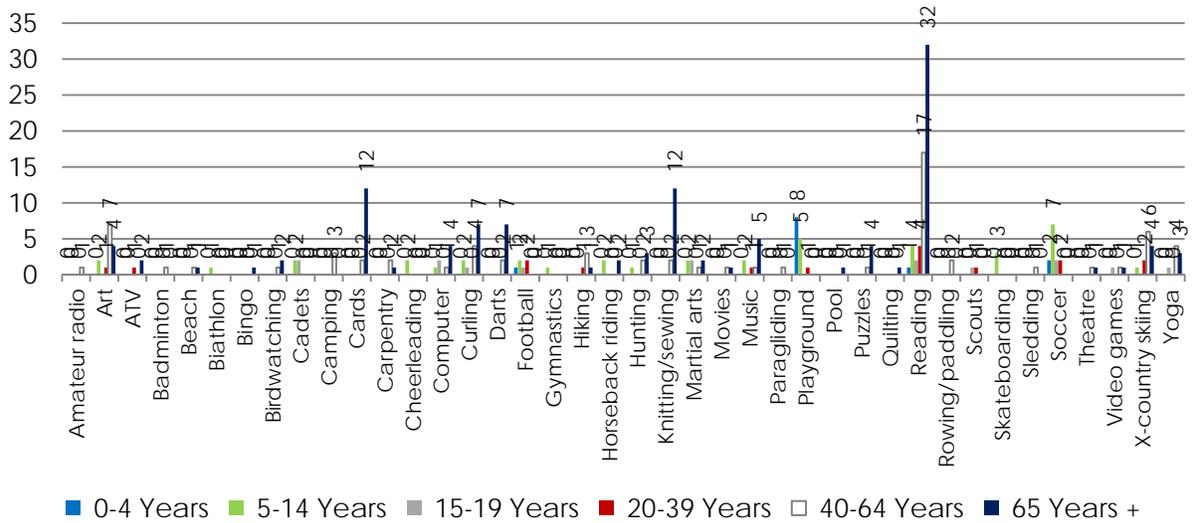
## AMHERST RECREATION MASTER PLAN - TELEPHONE SURVEY RESULTS

<b>OTHER</b>							
Adult education	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Amateur radio	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Art	0	2	0	1	7	4	14
ATV	0	0	0	1	0	2	3
Badminton	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Beach	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
Biathlon	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Bingo	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Birdwatching	0	0	0	0	1	2	3
Cadets	0	2	2	0	0	0	4
Camping	0	0	0	0	3	0	3
Cards	0	0	0	0	2	12	14
Carpentry	0	0	0	0	2	1	3
Cheerleading	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
Coaching	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Computer	0	1	2	0	1	4	8
Curling	0	2	1	0	4	7	14
Darts	0	0	0	0	2	7	9
Football	1	2	1	2	0	0	6
Gymnastics	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Hiking	0	0	0	1	3	1	5
Horseback riding	0	2	0	0	0	2	4
Hunting	0	1	0	0	2	3	6
Knitting/sewing	0	0	0	0	2	12	14
Martial arts	0	2	2	0	1	2	7
Movies	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
Music	0	2	0	1	1	5	9
Paragliding	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Playground	8	5	0	1	0	0	14
Pool	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Puzzles	0	0	0	0	1	4	5
Quilting	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Reading	1	4	2	4	17	32	60
Ringette	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rowing/paddling	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Scouts	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
Skateboarding	0	3	0	0	0	0	3
OTHER TOTALS	0	52	20	33	105	118	328

## AMHERST RECREATION MASTER PLAN - TELEPHONE SURVEY RESULTS



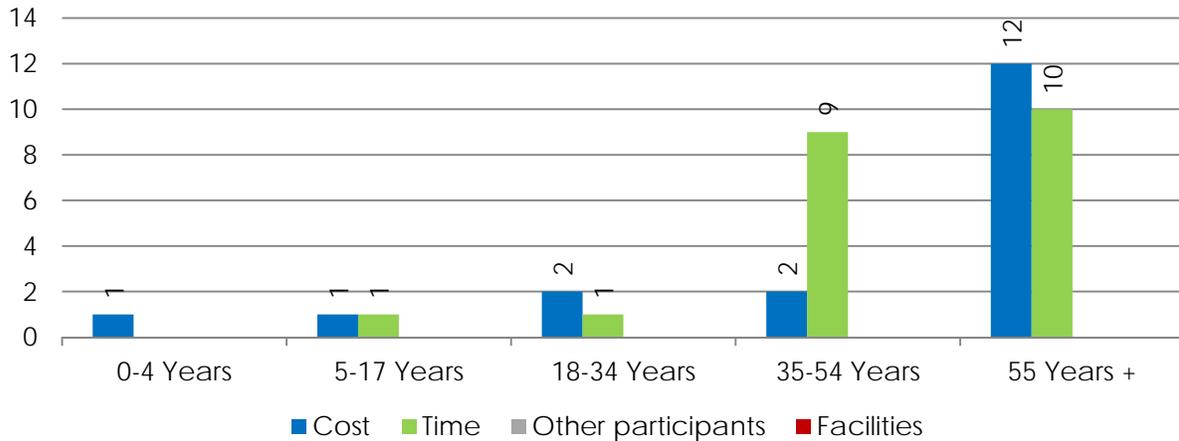
### Other Responses



9. If members of your household are not participating in recreation activities, what are the main reasons?

Age Group	Cost	Time	Other participants	Facilities	TOTALS	Responses
0-4 Years	1	0	0	0	1	1
5-17 Years	1	1	0	0	2	3
18-34 Years	2	1	0	0	3	3
35-54 Years	2	9	0	0	11	11
55 Years +	12	10	0	0	22	25
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>43</b>

## AMHERST RECREATION MASTER PLAN - TELEPHONE SURVEY RESULTS

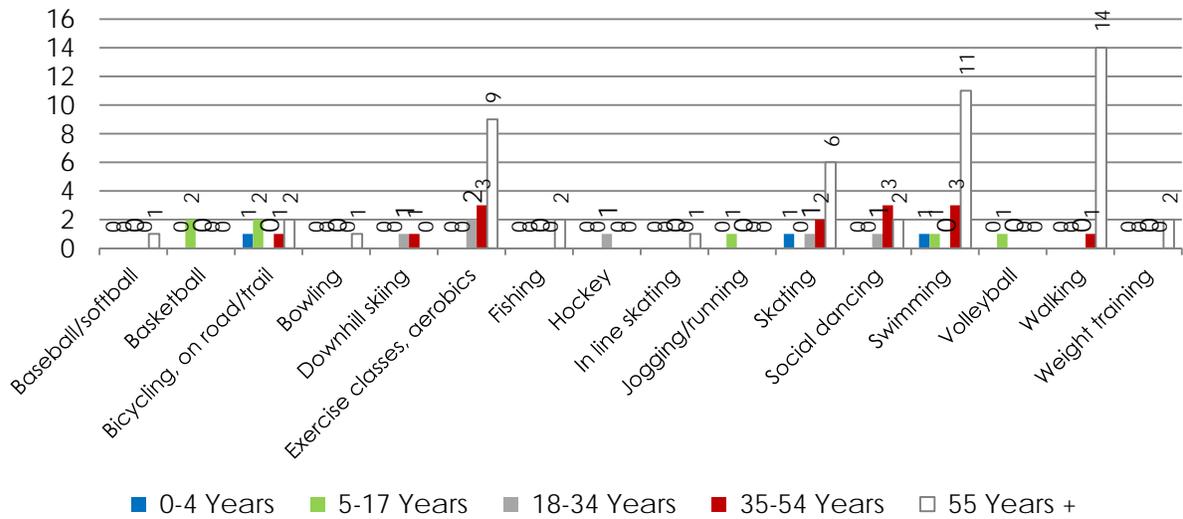


10. What recreation activities would the following age groups within your household like to participate in but do not now?

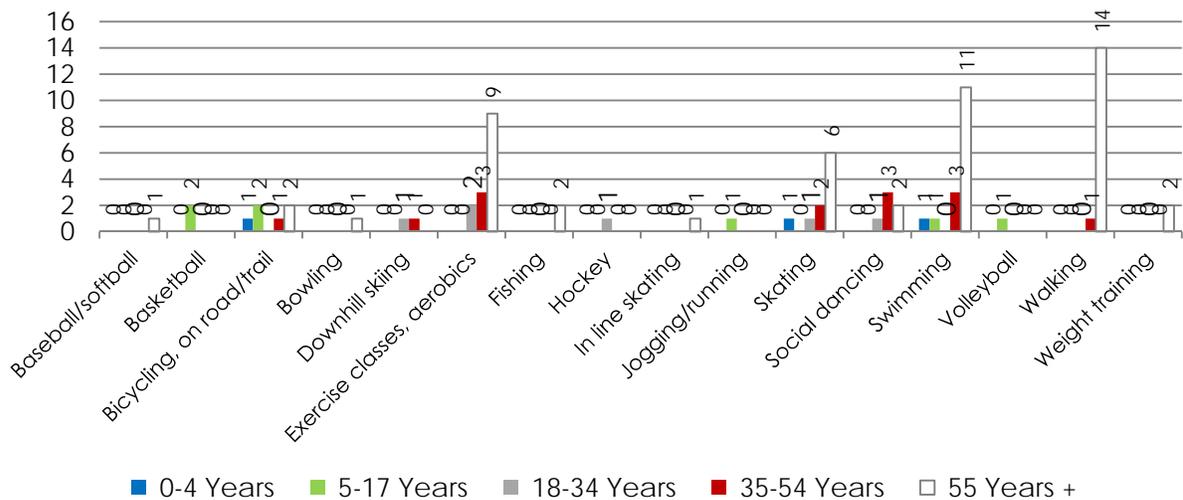
Activity	0-4 Years	5-17 Years	18-34 Years	35-54 Years	55 Years +	TOTALS
Baseball/softball	0	0	0	0	1	1
Basketball	0	2	0	0	0	2
Bicycling, on road/trail	1	2	0	1	2	6
Bowling	0	0	0	0	1	1
Downhill skiing	0	0	1	1	0	2
Exercise classes, aerobics	0	0	2	3	9	14
Fishing	0	0	0	0	2	2
Hockey	0	0	1	0	0	1
Home exercise	0	0	0	0	0	0
In line skating	0	0	0	0	1	1
Jogging/running	0	1	0	0	0	1
Skating	1	0	1	2	6	10
Social dancing	0	0	1	3	2	6
Swimming	1	1	0	3	11	16
Volleyball	0	1	0	0	0	1
Walking	0	0	0	1	14	15
Weight training	0	0	0	0	2	2
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>OTHER</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>37</b>
Adult education	0	0	0	1	1	2
Art	0	0	0	1	4	5
Badminton	0	0	0	0	1	1
Coaching	0	0	1	0	1	2
Computer	0	0	0	0	1	1
Curling	0	0	0	0	1	1
Football	0	1	0	0	0	1

## AMHERST RECREATION MASTER PLAN - TELEPHONE SURVEY RESULTS

Gymnastics	2	0	0	0	0	2
Horseback riding	0	1	0	0	0	1
Movies	0	1	1	2	0	4
Music	0	1	0	0	0	1
Pool	0	0	0	0	1	1
Quilting	0	0	0	0	1	1
Ringette	0	1	0	0	0	1
Rowing/paddling	0	1	0	0	1	2
Soccer	0	0	1	0	0	1
X-country skiing	0	0	0	0	5	5
Yoga	0	0	1	0	4	5
<b>OTHER TOTALS</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>37</b>



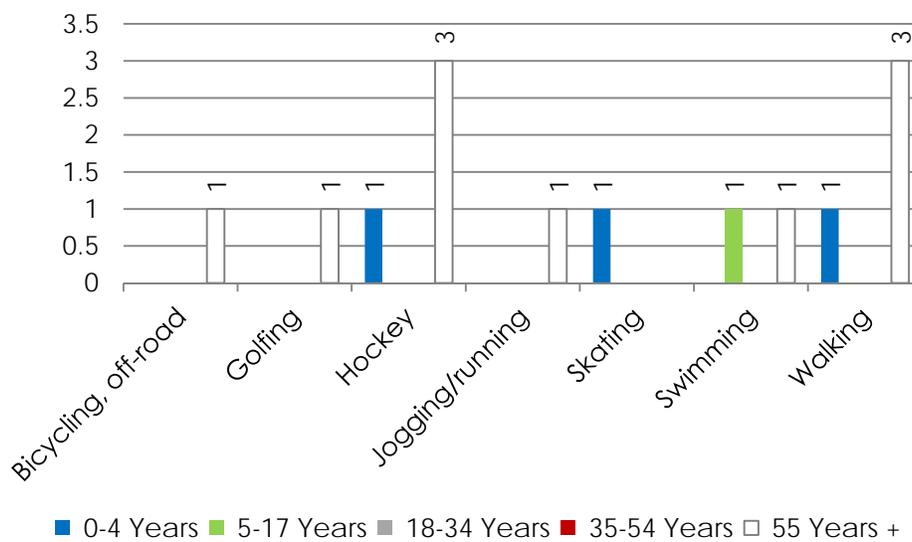
### Other Responses



## AMHERST RECREATION MASTER PLAN - TELEPHONE SURVEY RESULTS

11. Are there recreation activities that members of your household participate in outside of the Town of Amherst?

Activity	0-4 Years	5-17 Years	18-34 Years	35-54 Years	55 Years +	TOTALS
Bicycling, off-road	0	0	0	0	1	1
Golfing	0	0	0	0	1	1
Hockey	1	0	0	0	3	4
Jogging/running	0	0	0	0	1	1
Skating	1	0	0	0	0	1
Swimming	0	1	0	0	1	2
Walking	1	0	0	0	3	4
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>14</b>



12. Which of the following alternatives do you support or would you support for the building and/or operating of the recreational facilities in the Town of Amherst? (CHECK ALL METHODS THAT YOU WOULD SUPPORT)

Funding Method	No.	%
Increased municipal taxes	60	16.5%
User fees	191	52.6%
Reduced expenditure on other municipal services	140	38.6%
Other, please specify...	55	15.2%
Don't know	42	11.6%

Funding Method	Number of Respondents
Increased municipal taxes	60
User fees	191
Reduced expenditure on...	140
Other, please specify...	55
Don't know	42

13. Do you have any final comments on recreation facilities or services in the Town of Amherst?

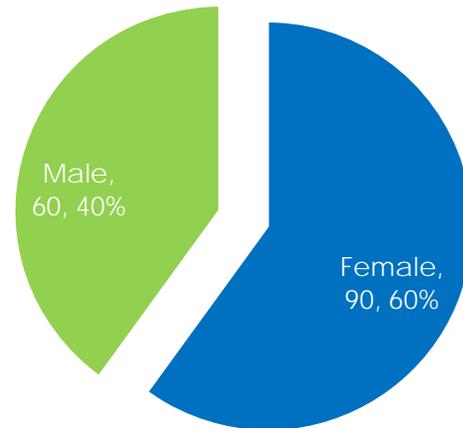
## AMHERST RECREATION MASTER PLAN - ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS

### 1. Do you currently live within the Town Limits?

Yes	118 (78.2%)	No	33 (21.8%)	TOTAL	151 (100.0%)
-----	-------------	----	------------	-------	--------------

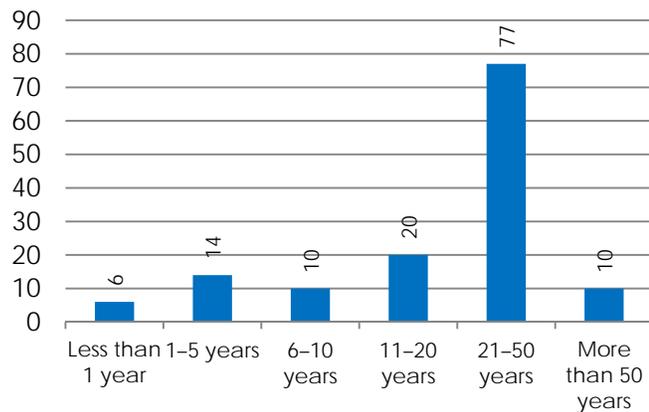
### 2. Are you?

Gender	No.	%
Male	90	60.0%
Female	60	40.0%
TOTAL	150	100.0%



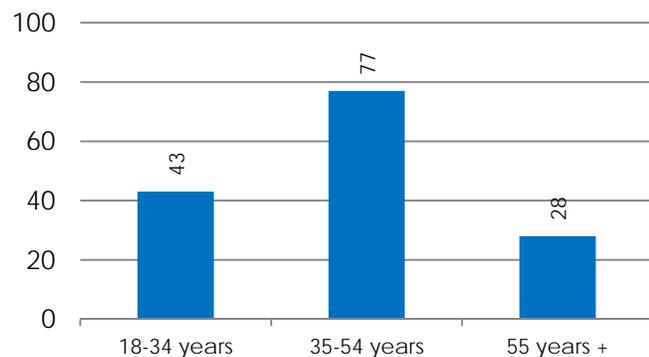
### 3. How long have you lived in the Town of Amherst?

Residence	No.	%
less than a year	6	4.4%
1-5 Years	14	10.2%
6-10 Years	10	7.3%
11-20 Years	20	14.6%
21-50 Years	77	56.2%
50+ Years	10	7.3%
TOTAL	137	100.0%



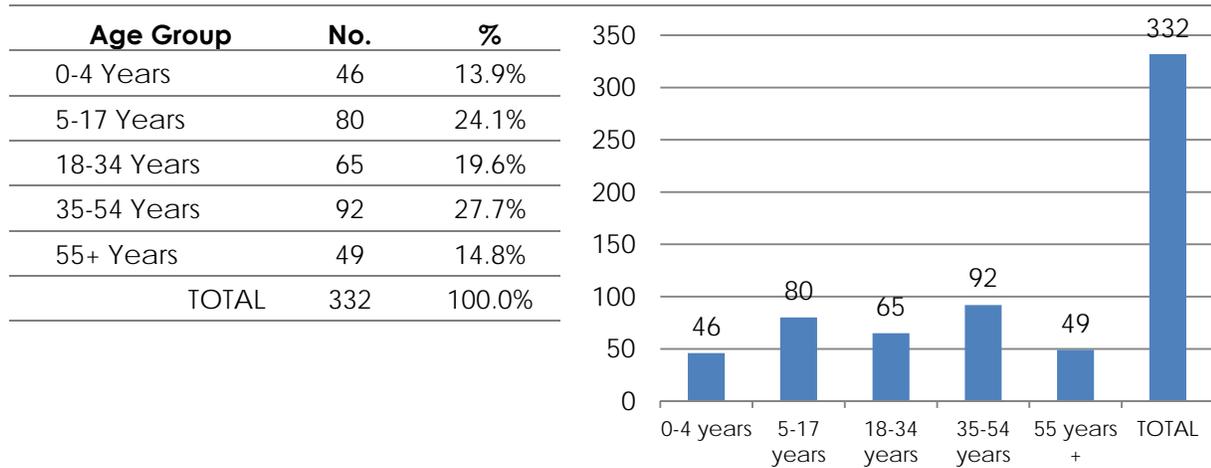
### 4. To which age group do you belong?

Age Group	No.	%
18-34 years	43	29.1%
35-54 years	77	52.0%
55 years +	28	18.9%
TOTAL	148	100.0%



## AMHERST RECREATION MASTER PLAN - ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS

5. How many people in your household are in the following age groups (including yourself)?

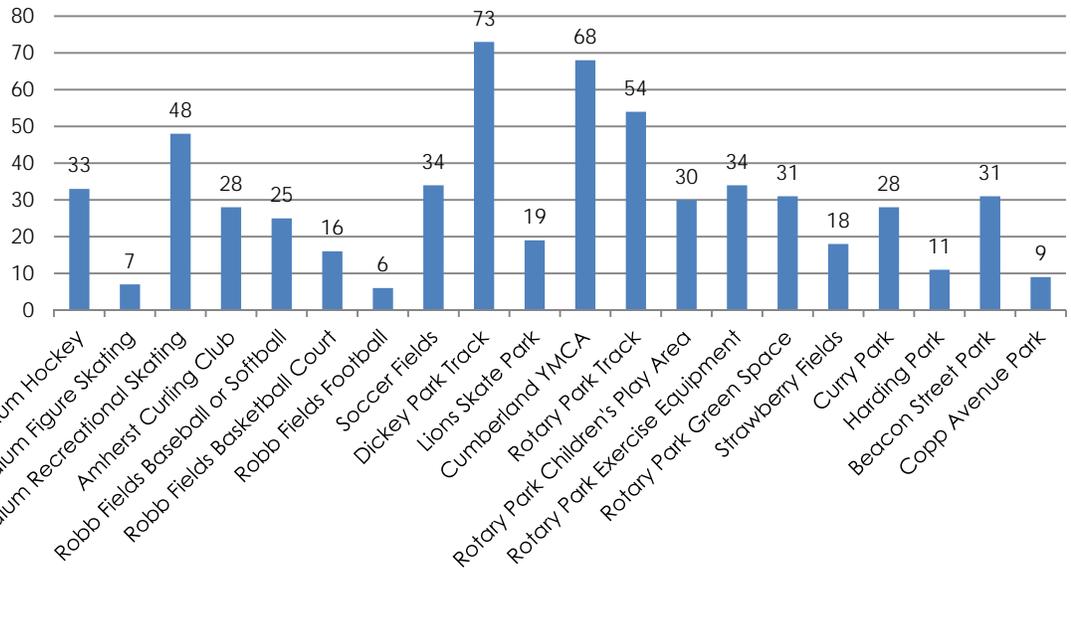
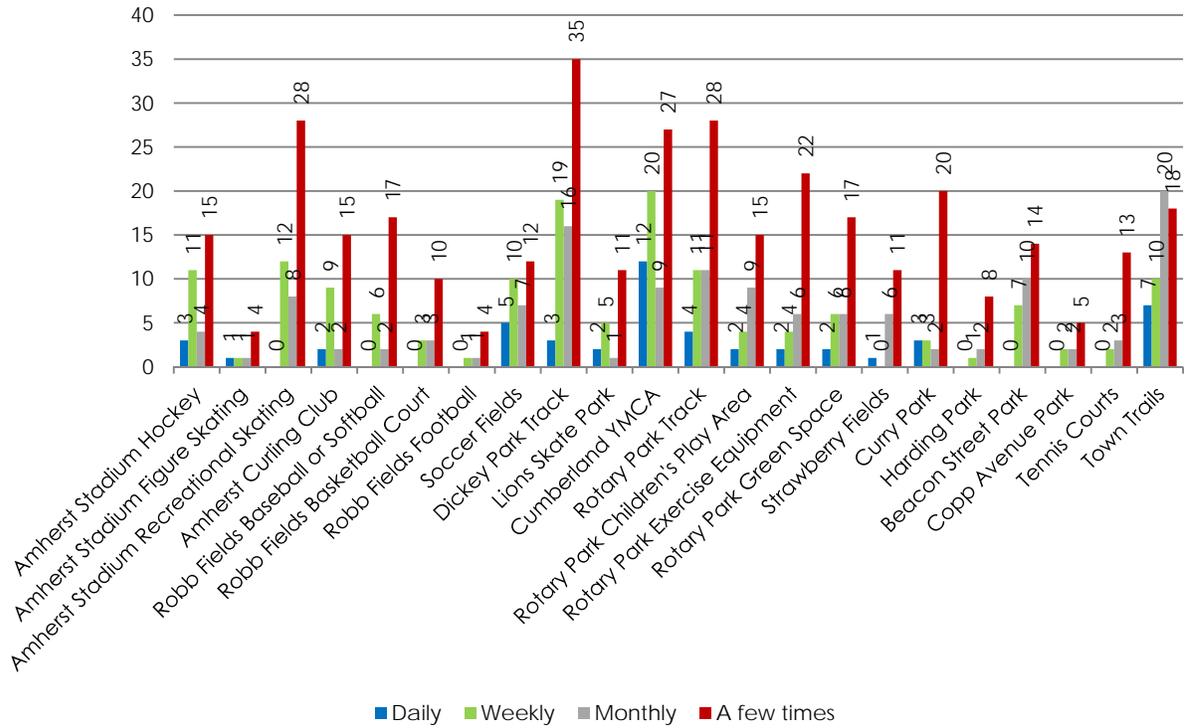


6. How frequently have members of your household used the following recreation facilities during the past year (i.e., since October 2014)?

Facility	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Few Times/Year	TOTALS	Never
Amherst Stadium Hockey	3	11	4	15	87	33
Amherst Stadium Figure Skating	1	1	1	4	86	7
Amherst Stadium Recreational Skating	0	12	8	28	88	48
Amherst Curling Club	2	9	2	15	84	28
Robb Fields Baseball or Softball	0	6	2	17	87	25
Robb Fields Basketball Court	0	3	3	10	84	16
Robb Fields Football	0	1	1	4	85	6
Soccer Fields	5	10	7	12	89	34
Dickey Park Track	3	19	16	35	88	73
Lions Skate Park	2	5	1	11	83	19
Cumberland YMCA	12	20	9	27	88	68
Rotary Park Track	4	11	11	28	86	54
Rotary Park Children's Play Area	2	4	9	15	86	30
Rotary Park Exercise Equipment	2	4	6	22	86	34
Rotary Park Green Space	2	6	6	17	84	31
Strawberry Fields	1	0	6	11	85	18
Curry Park	3	3	2	20	84	28
Harding Park	0	1	2	8	11	62
Beacon Street Park	0	7	10	14	31	49

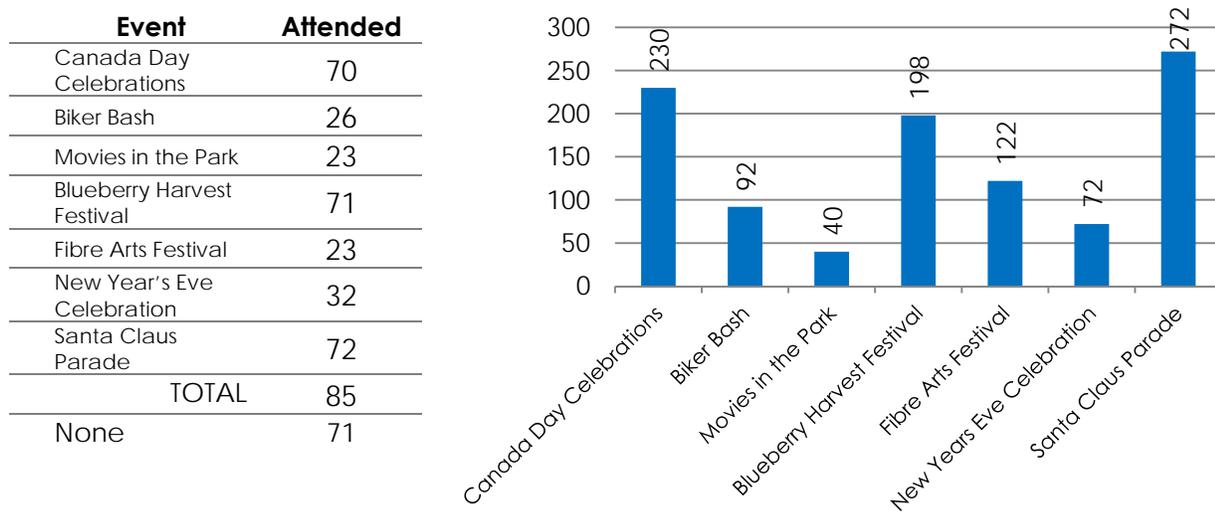
## AMHERST RECREATION MASTER PLAN - ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS

Copp Avenue Park	0	2	2	5	9	66
Tennis Courts	0	2	3	13	18	63
Town Trails	7	10	20	18	55	31
Harding Park	0	1	2	8	11	62
Beacon Street Park	0	7	10	14	31	49
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>349</b>	<b>676</b>	



## AMHERST RECREATION MASTER PLAN - ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS

7. Have any members of your household participated in any of the following activities/events in the Town of Amherst during the past year? (SELECT AS MANY AS APPLY)



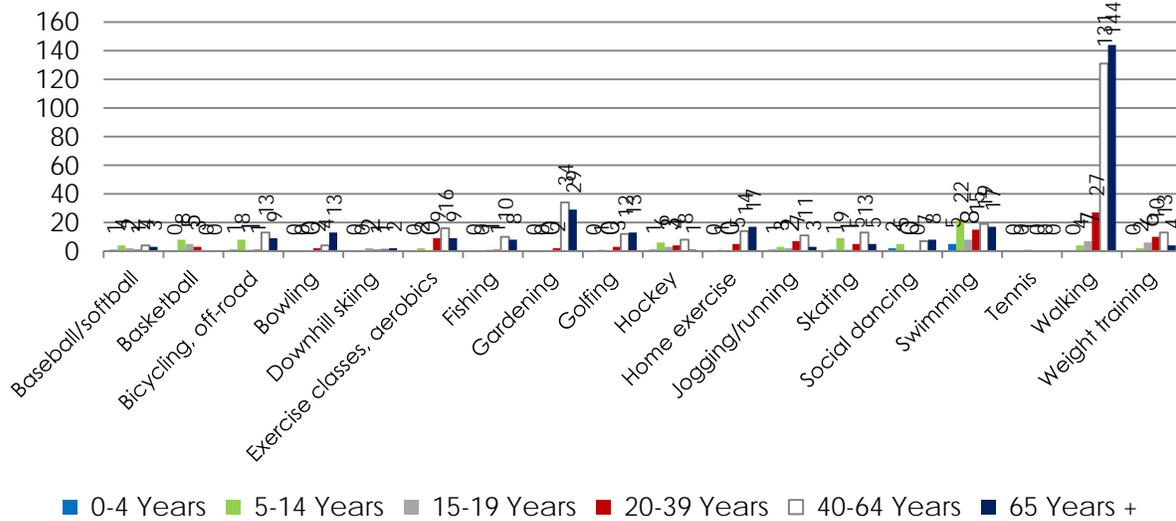
8. What are the top three recreation activities pursued by the following age groups within your household?

Activity	0-4 Years	5-14 Years	15-19 Years	20-39 Years	40-64 Years	65 Years +	TOTALS
Baseball/softball	1	4	2	1	4	3	15
Basketball	0	8	6	3	0	0	17
Bicycling, on road/trail	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bicycling, off-road	1	7	0	1	12	7	28
Bowling	0	0	0	2	4	13	19
Downhill skiing	0	0	2	1	1	2	6
Exercise classes, aerobics	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fishing	0	0	1	1	10	8	20
Gardening	0	0	0	2	34	28	64
Golfing	0	1	0	3	13	12	29
Hockey	1	6	3	4	8	1	23
Home exercise	0	1	0	5	14	17	37
In line skating	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jogging/running	0	2	2	6	11	2	23
Skating	1	9	1	5	13	5	34
Social dancing	2	3	0	0	5	7	17
Swimming	5	21	8	15	20	17	86
Tennis	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Volleyball	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Walking	0	4	7	27	132	145	315
Weight training	0	1	6	9	13	4	33
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>767</b>

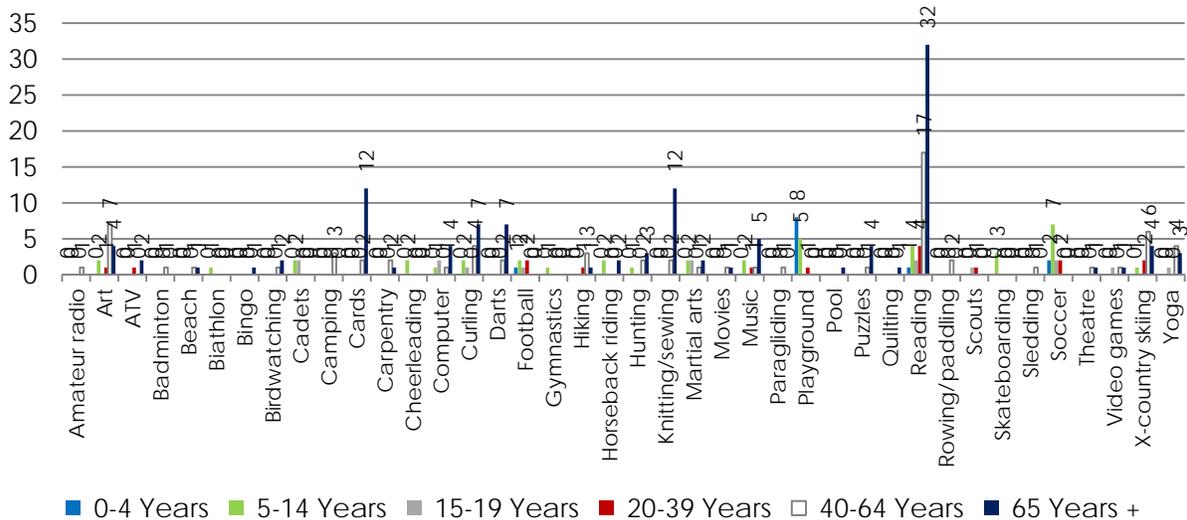
## AMHERST RECREATION MASTER PLAN - ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS

<b>OTHER</b>							
Adult education	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Amateur radio	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Art	0	2	0	1	7	4	14
ATV	0	0	0	1	0	2	3
Badminton	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Beach	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
Biathlon	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Bingo	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Birdwatching	0	0	0	0	1	2	3
Cadets	0	2	2	0	0	0	4
Camping	0	0	0	0	3	0	3
Cards	0	0	0	0	2	12	14
Carpentry	0	0	0	0	2	1	3
Cheerleading	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
Coaching	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Computer	0	1	2	0	1	4	8
Curling	0	2	1	0	4	7	14
Darts	0	0	0	0	2	7	9
Football	1	2	1	2	0	0	6
Gymnastics	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Hiking	0	0	0	1	3	1	5
Horseback riding	0	2	0	0	0	2	4
Hunting	0	1	0	0	2	3	6
Knitting/sewing	0	0	0	0	2	12	14
Martial arts	0	2	2	0	1	2	7
Movies	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
Music	0	2	0	1	1	5	9
Paragliding	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Playground	8	5	0	1	0	0	14
Pool	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Puzzles	0	0	0	0	1	4	5
Quilting	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Reading	1	4	2	4	17	32	60
Ringette	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rowing/paddling	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Scouts	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
Skateboarding	0	3	0	0	0	0	3
OTHER TOTALS	0	52	20	33	105	118	328

## AMHERST RECREATION MASTER PLAN - ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS



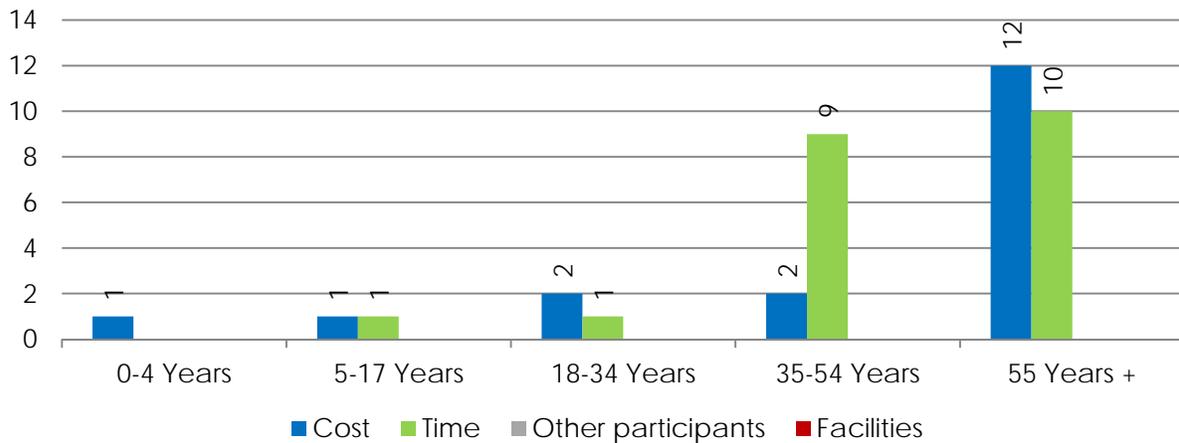
### Other Responses



9. If members of your household are not participating in recreation activities, what are the main reasons?

Age Group	Cost	Time	Other participants	Facilities	TOTALS
0-4 Years	1	1	0	2	4
5-17 Years	12	8	3	6	29
18-34 Years	8	16	2	9	35
35-54 Years	14	24	6	10	54
55 Years +	8	14	2	11	35
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>157</b>

## AMHERST RECREATION MASTER PLAN - ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS



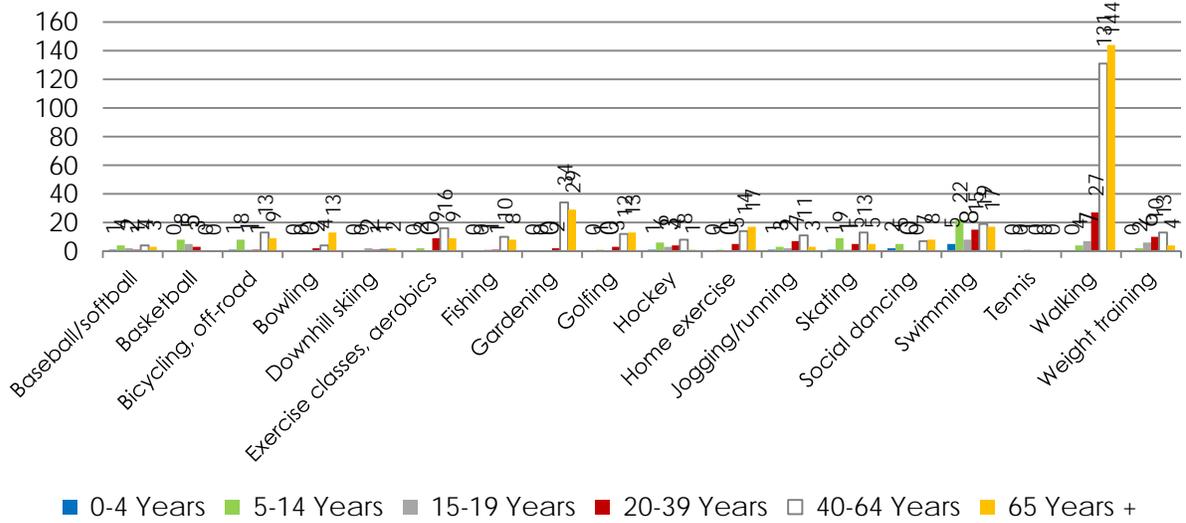
10. What recreation activities would the following age groups within your household like to participate in but do not now?

Activity	0-4 Years	5-17 Years	18-34 Years	35-54 Years	55 Years +	TOTALS
Baseball/softball	1	4	2	1	4	3
Basketball	0	8	5	3	0	0
Bicycling, off-road	1	8	1	1	13	9
Bowling	0	0	0	2	4	13
Downhill skiing	0	0	2	1	1	2
Exercise classes, aerobics	0	2	0	9	16	9
Fishing	0	0	1	1	10	8
Gardening	0	0	0	2	34	29
Golfing	0	1	0	3	12	13
Hockey	1	6	3	4	8	1
Home exercise	0	1	0	5	14	17
Jogging/running	1	3	2	7	11	3
Skating	1	9	1	5	13	5
Social dancing	2	5	0	0	7	8
Swimming	5	22	8	15	19	17
Tennis	0	0	1	0	0	0
Walking	0	4	7	27	131	144
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>285</b>
Other (please specify)	12	43	15	16	69	114
Amateur radio	0	0	0	0	1	0
Art	0	2	0	1	7	4
ATV	0	0	0	1	0	2
Badminton	0	0	0	0	1	0
Beach	0	0	0	0	1	1
Biathlon	0	1	0	0	0	0
Bingo	0	0	0	0	0	1

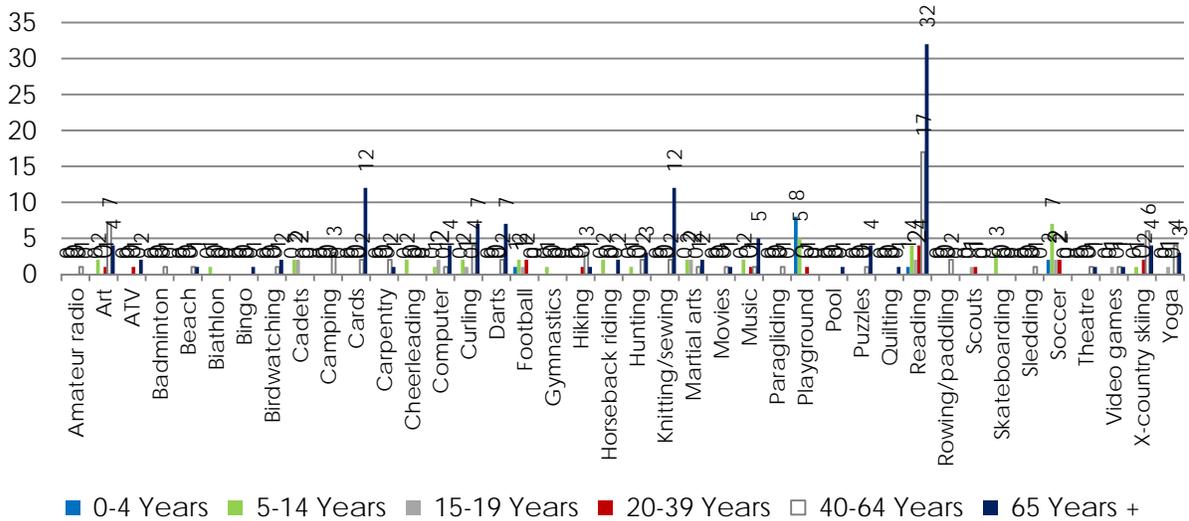
## AMHERST RECREATION MASTER PLAN - ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS

Birdwatching	0	0	0	0	1	2
Cadets	0	2	2	0	0	0
Camping	0	0	0	0	3	0
Cards	0	0	0	0	2	12
Carpentry	0	0	0	0	2	1
Cheerleading	0	2	0	0	0	0
Computer	0	1	2	0	1	4
Curling	0	2	1	0	4	7
Darts	0	0	0	0	2	7
Football	1	2	1	2	0	0
Gymnastics	0	1	0	0	0	0
Hiking	0	0	0	1	3	1
Horseback riding	0	2	0	0	0	2
Hunting	0	1	0	0	2	3
Knitting/sewing	0	0	0	0	2	12
Martial arts	0	2	2	0	1	2
Movies	0	0	0	0	1	1
Music	0	2	0	1	1	5
Paragliding	0	0	0	0	1	0
Playground	8	5	0	1	0	0
Pool	0	0	0	0	0	1
Puzzles	0	0	0	0	1	4
Quilting	0	0	0	0	0	1
Reading	1	4	2	4	17	32
Rowing/paddling	0	0	0	0	2	0
Scouts	0	0	1	1	0	0
Skateboarding	0	3	0	0	0	0
Sledding	0	0	0	0	1	0
Soccer	2	7	2	2	0	0
Theatre	0	0	0	0	1	1
Video games	0	0	1	0	1	1
X-country skiing	0	1	0	2	6	4
Yoga	0	0	1	0	4	3
OTHER TOTALS	12	40	15	16	69	114

## AMHERST RECREATION MASTER PLAN - ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS



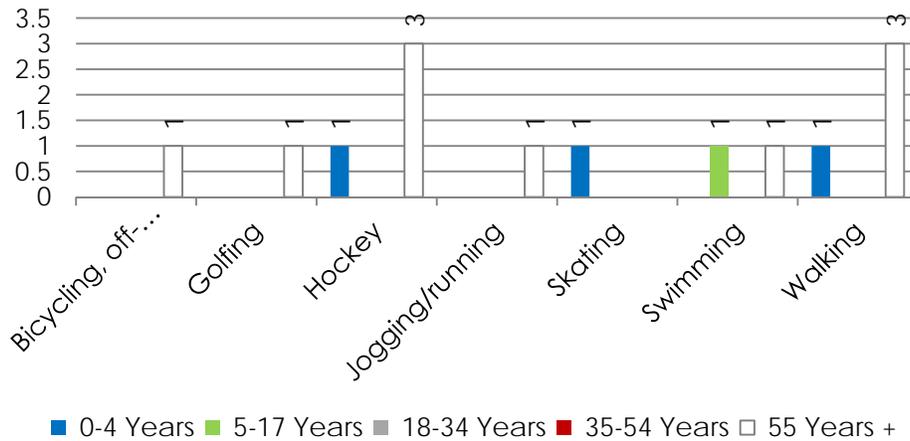
### Other Responses



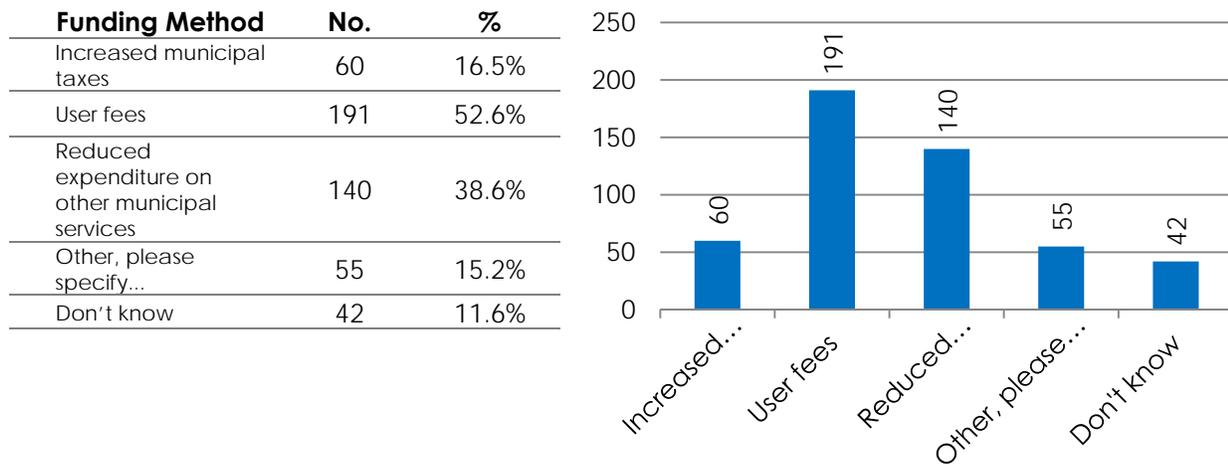
11. Are there recreation activities that members of your household participate in outside of the Town of Amherst?

Activity	0-4 Years	5-17 Years	18-34 Years	35-54 Years	55 Years +	TOTALS
Bicycling, off-road	0	0	0	0	1	1
Golfing	0	0	0	0	1	1
Hockey	1	0	0	0	3	4
Jogging/running	0	0	0	0	1	1
Skating	1	0	0	0	0	1
Swimming	0	1	0	0	1	2
Walking	1	0	0	0	3	4
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>14</b>

## AMHERST RECREATION MASTER PLAN - ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS



12. Which of the following alternatives do you support or would you support for the building and/or operating of the recreational facilities in the Town of Amherst? (CHECK ALL METHODS THAT YOU WOULD SUPPORT)



13. Do you have any final comments on recreation facilities or services in the Town of Amherst?

## Appendix B RECREATION FACILITY SUMMARY



Facility Name	Location Description	Civic Address	Written Description	Area	Condition	
				(m <sup>2</sup> )	Site	Bldgs
Robb Centennial Ball Field	On the northwest edge of town just north of the railway tracks	53 Laplanche St	The property consists of three ball diamonds, each with concrete block dugouts and asphalt shingle roofs. Male and female "site trailer" type washrooms, a canteen building, a storage shed, and a groundskeeping storage shed are also provided. A basketball court is south of the ball diamonds inside 10-foot chain link fencing.	41,278	Fair	Fair
Amherst Little League Ball Fields	North of the Amherst Fire Hall	TBD	The property has two ball fields, each with dugouts. A little league clubhouse is on the north side.	17,602	Good	Good
Ronald MacDonald / Rotary Park (Accessible Park)	North of the Fifty Plus Club	44 Beacon St	The property has two sets of swings, each with two adult and two toddler swings. Playground equipment designed for accessibility includes climbing towers, ramps, two slides, and stairs. A permanent male and female washroom building also houses storage and a mechanical/electrical room. On the north and south sides of the property are significant green spaces. The town-maintained trails run through the property.	9,181	Fair	Good
Copp Lane Park	West side of the railway tracks off of Copp Lane	6 Copp Ln	The park consists of playground equipment and chain link fencing along its north and west sides. The playground equipment consists of a climbing tower with landings, stairs, and two slides.	668	Fair	
Curry Park	Centre of town boxed within Melrose Street to the south, Clarence Street to the north, Belmont Street to the east, and Robie Street to the west	TBD	The property consists of interlocking brick walkways from the corner of each street intersection that lead to the center of the property. In the centre is a segmental block planter with a lamp post. Trees are planted along the perimeter.	6,697	Fair	
Community Gardens	Next to west edge of the E B Chandler Junior High School	TBD	A small area of the large lot is used as community gardens. A small wood-framed shed appears to be used for tool storage.	14,609	Good	

Strawberry Fields Park	East side of the town between Abbey Road and Garden Court	28 Abbey Rd	The property accommodates three benches, two sets of swings, and a piece of playground equipment, a large amount of open green space. There are two toddler swings and two adult swings. Other playground equipment consists of a slide and two climbing towers connected by a plastic tube. Both the swings and playground equipment sit on pea gravel bases.	4,930	Good	
Amherst Centennial Rotary Park	Northeast side of the town and is boxed in by Agnew Street to the west, Willow Street to the north, Elmwood to the east, and residences to south	TBD	The property includes multiple workout playground areas distributed through the park. A wood-framed gazebo is in the center of the property and a gravel walking track runs around the perimeter. Gravel walkways throughout the property terminate at the concrete planters to the north of the gazebo. Playground equipment includes a slide, see-saws, swings, a climbing mesh, and a long jump pit along the east edge.	13,202	Fair	
Northern Telecom Park	Park Street close to the West Pleasant Street and Park Street Intersection	TBD	The property is an open green space fenced in on the north, east, and south edges. A narrow asphalt paved walkway parallels Park Street.	2,259	Fair	
Harding Park	Between Harding and Summit Streets approximately half-way between Lamy Street and North Adelaide Street (East and West).	22 Harding Av	The property has two sets of swings, each consisting of two toddler swings and two adult swings. Another piece of playground equipment consists of a slide, monkey bars, and climbing tower. Both the swings and playground equipment have pea gravel bases.	3,250	Good	
Dickey Park	Three blocks to the east of the Amherst Stadium	TBD	The property has a gravel walking path around its perimeter. To the west side of the property is a wooded area with picnic tables, metal BBQ stands, a covered stage area, and washrooms. On the north side of the property is a splash park and a covered picnic table. Along the path are wood benches.	40,823	Good	Good
Winston Street Soccer Fields	Located south of the large cemetery	42 Fairview Av	The property consists of one dedicated soccer field with two wood finished stands, each with five rows of seating. Three wood finished stands next to the parking area have six rows of seating. A small equipment storage shed and a portable toilet are also on-site.	194,613	Fair	

Upper Church Street Soccer Fields (Dolan Family Soccer Fields)	Located at east edge of town off Church Street	Church St Extension	The property incorporates separate football and a soccer fields. There are what appears to be practice fields and little league type fields throughout. There is limited to no seating at this field. Three sheds on-site appear to be used for storage and, perhaps, a canteen.	505,857	Fair	
Centennial Walking Trails	Extends throughout the community (primarily around the town perimeter)	TBD	The walking trails consist of roadways, sidewalks, and gravel walkways.	1,587	Fair	
Victoria Square	Intersection of Church and Victoria Streets next to the Courthouse	TBD	The property includes a large monument on the east property line. Small walkways from the monument and the four corners of the property lead to a red-roofed gazebo.	3,530	Good	
Amherst Lions Skate Park and Stadium	North of the large cemetery	TBD	The property is dominated by a large arena with an outdoor skate park in the northeast corner on the edge of a large parking area. The stadium has a small conference room and an indoor walking track around the perimeter of the building on the second floor. The Stadium houses offices for the Town's Recreation Department. The southwest side of the stadium is used as storage by the Department.	16,313	Good	Good
Church Street Tennis Courts	Across the street from Atlantic Dance Academy	106 Church St	The property incorporates two fenced in tennis courts with a small asphalt parking area to the northeast.	1,654	Poor-Fair	
50+ Club	Between the little league ball fields and the Accessible Park	52 Croft St	Building was reported to have a hall, a kitchen, and washrooms. It has a newly paved parking area with approximately 25 parking spaces of which 4 are accessible.	1,790	Good	Fair-Good
Cumberland County YMCA	Corner of Church and Albion Streets	92 Church St	Asphalt parking in the south and southeast sides of the property, small grass area with metal picnic tables and chairs, as well as an information board. The building includes workout facilities, a small gymnasium, cardio room, athletics class room, and a pool with change rooms, as well as a rentable activity room and a full kitchen. The child care section of the building houses classrooms and another kitchen, complemented by playing areas on the north side of the property.	5,967	Good	Good

Four Fathers Memorial Library (Police Office)	North of the Canada Government Office building	21 Acadia St	The property is a small green space to the east of the library building.	4,230	Good
West Highland Elementary School (Future Park)	Between Hickman and Hill Streets, close to the intersection of Hickman and West Pleasant	TBD	The property currently consists of a school building, open grass areas and a fenced in tennis/basketball court intended for future redevelopment	11,962	Fair

Source Stantec Consulting Ltd.

**Appendix C 10-YEAR RECREATION CAPITAL BUDGET**



Year 1	Cost	Year 2	Cost	Year 3	Cost	Year 4	Cost	Year 5	Cost
Robb Ball Field - replace 6 dugouts	60,000	Street Banner replacement (annual)	10,000						
Little League Field - replace bleachers	21,000	Themed lights (annual)	20,000						
Church St Tennis courts resurfacing	50,000	Victoria Square - light replacements and PA system upgrades (annual)	10,000	Victoria Square - light replacements and PA system upgrades (annual)	10,000	Victoria Square - light replacements and PA system upgrades (annual)	10,000	Victoria Square - light replacements and PA system upgrades (annual)	10,000
Town Hall signage and branding	10,000	Trail Development (annual)	12,500						
Street Banner replacement (annual)	10,000	Trails lighting	80,000						
Themed lights (annual)	20,000	Playground Equipment Replacement (annual)	15,000						
Trail Development (annual)	12,500	Outdoor Benches (annual)	10,000						
Victoria Square - light replacements and PA system upgrades (annual)	10,000	Basketball Court replacement	40,000	Stadium sound system replacement	50,000	Dickey Park - lights on sport field	250,000	Mobile bleachers	10,000
Playground Equipment Replacement (annual)	15,000	Ronald MacDonald / Rotary Park - washrooms	10,000	Robb Ball Field - repair 30% of fencing	70,000			Mobile movie screen	20,000
Outdoor Benches (annual)	10,000	Church St Tennis Courts - replace fencing	24,000	Dog Park	50,000			Little League ball field - repair backstop fencing on both fields	5,500
West Highland School Redevelopment	89,000	TOA tradeshow booth display	10,000					Synthetic Skating rink	75,000
		Skateboard Park shelter	100,000						
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>307,500</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>341,500</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>327,500</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>407,500</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>268,000</b>

Year 6	Cost	Year 7	Cost	Year 8	Cost	Year 9	Cost	Year 10	Cost
Street Banner replacement (annual)	10,000								
Themed lights (annual)	20,000								
Victoria Square - light replacements and PA system upgrades (annual)	10,000	Victoria Square - light replacements and PA system upgrades (annual)	10,000	Victoria Square - light replacements and PA system upgrades (annual)	10,000	Victoria Square - light replacements and PA system upgrades (annual)	10,000	Victoria Square - light replacements and PA system upgrades (annual)	10,000
Trail Development (annual)	12,500								
Playground Equipment Replacement (annual)	15,000								
Outdoor Benches (annual)	10,000								
LED sign - marketing TOA on TCH	50,000	Dickey Brook Rehabilitation **	200,000						
Dickey Brook Rehabilitation	200,000								
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>327,500</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>277,500</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>277,500</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>277,500</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>277,500</b>



102 – 40 Highfield Park Drive  
Dartmouth, Nova Scotia B3A 0A3  
902-468-7777  
[www.stantec.com](http://www.stantec.com)