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# ACTIVE LIVING STRATEGY 2013 - 2016

Municipality of the District of West Hants  
in partnership with  
NS Department of Health and Wellness



## WEST HANTS ACTIVE LIVING STRATEGY

In 1971, *ParticipAction* launched its campaign to encourage Canadians to be more physically active. 40 years later, physical activity levels continue to fall. Why? Because we are too busy, the weather is not ideal, it costs too much, we don't like to get sweaty, we would rather sit in front of a screen...but mainly because collectively we have created an environment where neither physical activity, disease prevention nor individual responsibility for health are encouraged. There are few sidewalks or bike lanes so that we could use active transportation to travel to our destination, our work environments require us to sit in front of a screen all day, physical education programs are not a daily requirement in schools, sports teams and activities are expensive, both parents commute to full time jobs and our leisure time is consumed with electronic communications and games.

And yet we know that physical activity is an important part of a healthy lifestyle. Most recently, the 2012 *Thrive! A plan for a healthier Nova Scotia* identified physical activity as essential to a long and healthy life ([thrive.novascotia.ca](http://thrive.novascotia.ca)). The Public Health Agency of Canada states that “*Regular physical activity can help to reduce the risk of premature death and chronic diseases such as coronary heart disease, stroke, hypertension, colon cancer, breast cancer, type-2 diabetes and osteoporosis*” ([www.publichealth.gc.ca/paguide](http://www.publichealth.gc.ca/paguide)). A recent report from the Ontario Brain Institute states that “*more than 1 in 7 cases of Alzheimer’s disease could be prevented if everyone who is currently inactive were to become physically active*”. Furthermore, physical inactivity cost Canadian taxpayers \$6.8 billion in 2009, or 3.7% of all health care costs (Janssen 2012).

We can turn this around! All it takes is a collective effort and commitment to making physical activity a part of our lives and our community. Envision a West Hants where schools and community halls host a variety of affordable programs at a variety of times, and where residents make use of these programs; where equipment, facilities and coaches are available for a multitude of outdoor recreation possibilities and where residents of all ages are outdoors in all seasons and all sorts of weather; where trails entice us to explore woods, waterways and coast; where it is both safe and acceptable to use active transportation to get to our destinations; where work places and schools schedule physical activity breaks throughout the day; and, ultimately, where more people live longer and healthier lives.

West Hants is well positioned to be a leader in outdoor recreation. We are fortunate to have access to beaches, lakes, woodland, hills and farmland. Already many residents walk, swim, fish, hike, canoe, snowshoe, cross country and downhill ski. Provincial associations are available to provide skill development, and our proximity to Halifax allows us to attract more people to make use of our recreation sites. Throughout our consultations, residents expressed a desire to be active outdoors.

This plan outlines the steps to be taken to provide all residents with the opportunities and knowledge needed to participate in more physical activities more often. From federal to provincial to municipal organizations there is support for increased physical activity. Individuals will benefit from these supports as they move to a more physically active lifestyle.

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# THE STRATEGY

## INTRODUCTION

The West Hants Active Living Strategy results from a partnership between the NS Department of Health and Wellness (DHW) and the Municipality of the District of West Hants through the Municipal Physical Activity Leader (MPAL) program. It is informed by extensive research indicating that a physically active lifestyle is essential for a long and healthy life by preventing many chronic diseases (Health Canada); and also that only 15% of Canadian adults and 7% of Canadian children and youth are active enough to meet the minimum physical activity (PA) guidelines (Colley et al). It acknowledges that there is a Canadian epidemic of physical inactivity (Janssen 2012) and that West Hants (WH) is not immune to this epidemic. The Strategy also recognizes that action to address this crisis is most likely to be successful at the community level.



The Strategy is a plan of action to support active living within the Municipality over the next five years. It was developed in 2012 through a series of consultations with individuals and groups representing a range of ages, interests and communities. The consultations were led by the Municipal Physical Activity Leader (MPAL) with advice and guidance from the West Hants Active Living Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee was established in recognition of the importance of partnerships in developing and implementing the action plan. Since the issues

causing the crisis in physical inactivity are many and varied, therefore the combined effort, expertise and resources of a variety of organizations is needed to address those issues.

The goals and actions described in the Strategy support Municipal priorities as identified in the Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP), the Municipal Planning Strategy and the Municipal Council Policy. They also support priorities identified by the DHW's Thrive! Strategy.

In creating this Strategy, West Hants joins municipalities around the province that have partnered with DHW through the MPAL program to develop an action plan to get people moving. While all Strategies share the common goal of increased physical activity, each one identifies actions specific to their own municipality. Thus the West Hants Active Living Strategy has been informed by community consultations, guided by representatives of local organizations and developed for the people of West Hants.

## THE PROCESS

In August 2011, WH Municipal Council agreed to enter into an agreement under the MPAL Program with DHW to develop an Active Living Strategy as well as a plan to enhance and establish trails in West Hants and identify Active Transportation opportunities. The Active Living Coordinator (ALC) began work in February 2012, with the task in year one of developing two Strategic Plans: one to address physical activity and the other active transportation and trails. Implementation of the Plans will take place over the following 4 years. The ALC reports to and supplements the work of the Recreation Director, formerly the sole member of the Recreation Department.

During the spring of 2012, key informants were consulted for their input to the Strategy. Recognizing that schools are key providers of physical activity opportunities and that school principals have a deep understanding of the challenges facing children, youth and families, the principals of all 7 schools in West Hants were interviewed. Other service providers within West Hants were also consulted; these are listed in Appendix 3.

From these interviews grew the West Hants Active Living Advisory Committee, which met 6 times from May 2012 to June 2013. The dedication and contribution of the Advisory Committee members were greatly appreciated in guiding this process.

### **Active Living Advisory Committee**

- \*Carolyn Whitby, Coordinator, Health Promoting Schools Program, AVRSB
- Janice Dempsey-Stewart, Youth Health Centre Coordinator, Public Health
- Kathy Kehoe, Director of Recreation, Municipality of West Hants
- Lynn Davis, Director of Planning, Municipality of West Hants
- Pat Miller, Education Coordinator, Windsor Elms Village
- Sandra Milbury, Coordinator, West Hants/Uniacke Community Health Board
- \*Terry Fogarty, Community Policing Officer, RCMP
- Tracy Burgess, Community Health Promotion Coordinator, Heart and Stroke Foundation, NS

*\*Two members resigned from the committee in 2012 due to a change in job responsibilities.*

From September to November of 2012, eleven consultation meetings were conducted. As well, a survey was posted on the West Hants Recreation website. The organizations consulted along with the demographic represented can be found in Appendix 4. Information and ideas gathered at these consultations, along with relevant research and reports, formed the basis of this Strategy.

## RATIONALE

### MUNICIPAL PRIORITIES

The Active Living Strategy supports the Community Vision Statement identified in the ICSP (Municipality of West Hants 2010): *“Looking at a horizon of 20 to 30 years the Municipality of the District of West Hants will strive to become more sustainable, a place where residents of all ages live active, healthy, vibrant lives and are highly engaged in their communities.”*

The Active Living Strategy supports goals identified in the ICSP under Economic and Social and Cultural, touching on these areas:

- 4.4: Encourage backyard and community gardens;
- 4.7: Promote Tourism (includes bicycle routes);
- 5.1: Provide recreational programs and opportunities for all residents;
- 5.2: Support community groups;
- 5.5 Encourage volunteerism; and
- 5.6: Promote active transportation;

The Municipal Planning Strategy provides the framework to guide growth and development in West Hants. Physical activity is supported in Section 13.0 of the Strategy, which deals with community use areas including parks, open space and municipal recreation facilities. Policy 13.2.1 establishes an Open Space zone which applies to parks and other public outdoor recreation uses. Policy 13.2.3 permits parks and playgrounds in any zone. Section 13.3 (Recreation Commercial) informs us that *“Council wishes to encourage the provision of a variety of recreation facilities in West Hants, both public and private.”* Policy 13.3.2 sets out criteria for establishment of new recreation commercial uses. (Municipality of West Hants, 2008)

The Municipal Council Policy lays out how Council is to function. Section 29 states that *“The role of Municipal Council shall be to provide strategic planning for the Municipality with the goals: (b) to provide services, facilities and other things that, in the opinion of Council, are necessary or desirable for all or part of the Municipality.* The Active Living Strategy addresses the provision of recreational services and facilities. <http://www.westhants.ca/>

### RESEARCH AND REPORTS

There is no shortage of research, reports and organizations addressing the issue of physical inactivity. Following are some of the most recent and relevant findings.

Originally founded in 1971, **ParticipAction** was reinvigorated in 2007 to help deal with the crisis of physical inactivity in Canada. [www.participaction.com](http://www.participaction.com) At the 2007 launch, the President and CEO of *ParticipAction* stated: *“There has never been a more critical time for Canadians to get off their*

*couches and get in motion. If we don't deal with this inactivity crisis, we could soon see a generation of children who have shorter life expectancies than ours... Today marks the start of a new movement in Canada – a movement to move. We urge Canadians to join.”*

<http://www.newswire.ca/fr/story/54319/participation-launches-national-movement-to-move>

***The Canadian Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines Handbook*** (Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology, 2012) sets the recommendations for moderate to vigorous physical activity as well as limits for sedentary time for all age groups. It also gives examples of appropriate activities, weekly schedules and individual stories. The guidelines basically recommend that children accumulate a minimum of 60 minutes per day of moderate to vigorous PA, and that adults accumulate 150 minutes per week of moderate to vigorous PA; the activity can be accumulated in bouts of 10 minutes or more.

[http://www.csep.ca/CMFiles/Guidelines/CSEP\\_Guidelines\\_Handbook.pdf](http://www.csep.ca/CMFiles/Guidelines/CSEP_Guidelines_Handbook.pdf)

***Active Healthy Kids Canada***, established in 1994, is “committed to inspiring the nation to engage all children and youth in physical activity”. The 2012 Report Card states that 93% of Canadian children and youth are not meeting the new Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines of at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity (MVPA) per day. The report itself is entitled “Is Active Play Extinct?”, pointing out that 46% of Canadian kids get 3 hours or less of active play per week, including weekends; and that Canadian kids spend 63% of their free time, after school and on weekends, being sedentary. [www.activehealthykids.ca](http://www.activehealthykids.ca)

***The Heart and Stroke Foundation*** “leads in eliminating heart disease and stroke and reducing their impact...” Its website states: “Physical activity can be a lifesaver – literally. Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines recommend that you accumulate at least 150 minutes of moderate- to vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity per week, in bouts of 10 minutes or more. Moderate intensity activities include brisk walking or bike riding. Vigorous intensity may mean jogging or cross-country skiing. To derive the most benefit, spread your activity out over several days of the week. By doing so, you can dramatically lower your risk of heart disease and stroke. Regular activity also helps prevent and control risk factors such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis, certain types of cancer and obesity”. [www.heartandstroke.com](http://www.heartandstroke.com)

***The Alzheimer Society of Canada*** supports individuals and families living with this disease. It promotes physical activity as prevention, stating that: “Research is showing that moderate physical activity promotes brain health. People who exercise regularly are less likely to develop heart disease, stroke and diabetes, which are all conditions that are associated with an increased risk of developing Alzheimer’s disease.” <http://www.alzheimer.ca/en>

***Keeping Pace: Physical Activity and Healthy Eating Among Children and Youth, Key Findings from 2009-2010 Study*** (Province of Nova Scotia, 2012) states: “The standard for physical activity for children and youth in this project is that they accumulate a minimum of 60 minutes of physical activity at a moderate or greater intensity level per day, at least 5 days of the week. Although a large proportion of girls and boys in Grade 3 achieve that standard (82% of Grade 3 boys and 80% of Grade

3 girls), the proportion meeting the standard declines sharply in the older grades. Less than a third of boys (28%) and less than a fifth of girls (13%) in Grade 7 met the standard, and by Grade 11, fewer than one in 100 girls (1%) and one in 20 boys (5%) met the standard. Moreover, in Grade 11, 61% of girls and almost two-fifths of boys (38%) did not obtain 60 minutes of physical activity of moderate or greater intensity on any day of the week". [www.gov.ns.ca/hpp/pasr/KeepingPaceReport.pdf](http://www.gov.ns.ca/hpp/pasr/KeepingPaceReport.pdf)

***Our Healthy Future...Realizing our Promise, A Community Health Plan for 2010 – 2013*** reports on the health priorities identified by all Community Health Boards within Capital Health. Findings relating to PA include: “Physical activity, healthy eating and healthy weights are the top health priorities for Capital Health to focus on in the coming years”. Furthermore, “Bike and walking trails, free and universally accessible recreation programs and opening schools to the community to allow for more physical activity are important”. Also, “Workplace health initiatives increase physical activity and healthy eating among employees”. (Capital Health 2010) [www.cdha.nshealth.ca/west-hantsuniacke-community-health-board](http://www.cdha.nshealth.ca/west-hantsuniacke-community-health-board)

***Thrive! A plan for a healthier Nova Scotia*** was released by the NS Department of Health and Wellness in June 2012. “The plan ... outlines priority actions to create environments that make it easier for Nova Scotians to eat well and be active. The two factors ... are among the most important ways to help all Nova Scotians be happier and healthier today and reduce the impacts of chronic disease in the future.” Objectives to address physical activity include:

- Increase physical education and physical literacy (includes plans to provide every child with an opportunity to learn to bike and swim);
- Increase physical activity and decrease sedentary time in childcare settings and schools;
- Increase participation in after-school programs;
- Enhance the built environment to better support healthy eating and physical activity;
- Increase walking, cycling, and other forms of active transportation;
- Support local governments to implement physical activity plans; and
- Improve access to facilities and places to be active

The *Thrive!* report also points out that being active means more than exercising and that “new evidence on the harmful effects of being sedentary tells us that what we do – or don’t do - the rest of the day matters as much.” (<https://thrive.novascotia.ca/>)

Clearly there is sufficient research indicating the magnitude of the problem. As the *Thrive!* report concludes: “Our greatest challenge lies in addressing the disconnect between what we know needs to be done and our willingness and capacity to do it”.

The logo for 'Thrive!' features the word 'Thrive!' in a bold, sans-serif font. Each letter is a different color: 'T' is blue, 'h' is red, 'r' is purple, 'i' is green, 'v' is yellow, 'e' is light green, and '!' is yellow.

## SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS

### Outdoor Recreation

The potential for outdoor recreation in West Hants was identified at every consultation. Trails were of particular interest, but also a full range of other outdoor activities including swimming, kayaking, canoeing, snowshoeing, hiking and orienteering. The Municipality could provide support in the form of a variety of well-maintained recreation sites and trails along with equipment, lessons and information about public access to waterways and trails.



### Safe Places to Walk

The most consistent message from the community was the need for safe places to walk. Residents believe that our roads do not provide safe walking, and therefore they are very interested in the development and promotion of trails, including consistent signage. Indoor walking is of interest, as are lit outdoor areas for walking in the evenings. The issue of danger from animals and people needs to be addressed in order to assure residents that trails are safe.

### Family Events

Respondents spoke to the need for parents to set the example for their children to be physically active. Family events and activities which are affordable and accessible were suggested, as well as community playgrounds which include opportunities for adults to be active. In addition, it was felt that parents are responsible for setting limits for screen time, and for finding the time for physical activity. The issue of motivation for all ages was discussed, along with the challenge of changing lifestyle behaviours.

### School-based Programs

All seven school principals support and encourage physical activity within the school day. After school programs, active recess and lunch times and additional Physical Education time are provided whenever possible. Daily physical activity would be embraced if resources and personnel were available through Department of Education. Schools need support in the form of grant writing and program administration to provide additional opportunities for children and youth.

Youth requested playgrounds at both the Middle School and High School. Youth also want a variety of non-competitive activities available at school. The majority are interested in individual outdoor pursuits on their own time. The need for access by all (including wheelchair access) to programs and facilities was identified by youth.

### Community Halls and Programs

Cost, distance and availability of programs are seen as barriers to being active. It was suggested that the Municipality support programs in each community that are affordable and well-advertised. Community Halls should be supported by the Municipality; in particular, the issue of insurance for community halls needs to be addressed. The lack of volunteers to run programs and maintain infrastructure was seen as a problem with no obvious solution.

### Rinks and Swimming Pools

There is a desire for an indoor swimming pool and an additional rink by many, while others recognize that these facilities are currently beyond the scope of Municipal finances and possibly not needed. Instead, it would be of value to assess schedules and access to the KES swimming pool and Brooklyn arena with the goal of providing more public time.

### Government Cooperation

Respondents expressed frustration with the lack of cooperation between the Municipality of West Hants and the Town of Windsor in providing programs and services. They also see an inconsistency in DHW promoting physical activity while the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal (TIR) does not build active transportation lanes along provincial roads. Cooperation among departments and jurisdictions at all levels is required to address the physical inactivity crisis. In addition, public education and promotion about the importance of physical activity are seen to be provincial and federal responsibilities.



## IPSOS REID SURVEY

In February 2012, Ipsos Reid conducted a telephone survey of 300 West Hants residents 18 years of age and older. Questions related to many aspects of recreation programs and facilities, not only those provided by the Municipality. Some relevant findings and their implications are reported here.

2012 Ipsos Reid Survey Results	
How many times do you participate in moderate physical activity or exercise for a period of 30 minutes or more?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 31% 5 days or more</li> <li>➤ 39% 3 - 4 days</li> <li>➤ 29% 0 - 2 days</li> </ul> <p>(CHMS data indicates that only 5% of Canadian adults accumulate 30 minutes of MVPA on 5 days per week)</p>
What types of Physical Activity or exercise do you participate in on a regular basis?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 60% Walking</li> <li>➤ 9% Swimming</li> <li>➤ 7% Biking</li> </ul>
What would you say is the main barrier to you participating in physical activity and exercise?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 33% Don't have enough time</li> <li>➤ 12% Weather</li> <li>➤ 7% Lack of facilities/activities/programs/trails</li> <li>➤ 5% Cost/financial</li> </ul>
Overall, how important would...be in helping you become physically active?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 84% Access to paths, trails, and green spaces</li> <li>➤ 80% Affordable recreational services, facilities, and programs</li> </ul>
How often do you use each of the following types of facilities to participate in physical activities yourself?	<p>Percent using once a month or more:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 67% Sidewalks and space at side of the road</li> <li>➤ 56% Trails or pathways</li> <li>➤ 47% Parks or green spaces</li> <li>➤ 37% Beaches or lakes</li> <li>➤ 25% Community centres or halls</li> <li>➤ 23% Arenas</li> </ul>
Overall, how satisfied are you with your community's recreation facilities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 12% Very satisfied</li> <li>➤ 43% Somewhat satisfied</li> </ul>
Please rate each of the following aspects of walking in your community.	<p>Rated as very good or good:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 40% Safety from accidents and injury</li> <li>➤ 37% Availability of trails and pathways</li> <li>➤ 27% Space at the side of the road or sidewalks</li> <li>➤ 24% Walking events, programs or clubs</li> <li>➤ 19% Availability of indoor places that offer walking</li> </ul>
How many times does your child (2 - 17 years of age) participate in MVPA for a period of 30 minutes or more, including physical education classes during school?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 34% 6 days or more</li> <li>➤ 53% 3 - 5 days</li> <li>➤ 13% 0 - 2 days</li> </ul> <p>(CHMS data indicates that only 7% of Canadian children accumulate at least 60 minutes of MVPA at least 6 days a week).</p>
What types of physical activities does your child participate in on a regular basis?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 25% Skiing/snowboarding</li> <li>➤ 25% Soccer</li> <li>➤ 23% Swimming</li> <li>➤ 17% Walking/running/jogging</li> <li>➤ 5% Playing outside</li> <li>➤ 5% Bike/biking</li> </ul>
How often does your child use each of the following?	<p>Percent using every day:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 85% Television</li> <li>➤ 48% Video or computer games</li> <li>➤ 39% Gyms</li> <li>➤ 21% Sports fields or courts</li> <li>➤ 38% Playgrounds</li> <li>➤ 16% Arenas</li> </ul>

## Implications of Survey Results

- In comparison to CHMS data (Colley et al), it is probable that West Hants residents are vastly overestimating both their own and their children's participation in physical activities. This point needs to be made in order for residents to recognize the need to be more active.
- The most common activity is walking and yet the majority of residents are not satisfied with the availability and safety of walking routes. There is a desire for safe walking trails and for additional indoor walking programs.
- Most physical activity for adults involves outdoor recreation. There is a need to provide information and guides for accessing outdoor recreation opportunities.
- Two of the main barriers to participation are weather and lack of time. The latter should be addressed through provision of physical activity opportunities at schools and workplaces, as well as in community settings at appropriate times. Tapping in to programs such as *"Take the Roof Off Winter"* can help convince residents to be outdoors in all weather.
- Cost and lack of facilities and programs were not seen as major barriers. This contradicts the finding that 80% said affordable recreational services, facilities, and programs would help them become more active.
- 55% were somewhat satisfied or satisfied with the community's recreation facilities. This compares to a satisfaction rate of 63% provincially. It should be noted that there was no indication of which recreation facilities were considered; many residents do not distinguish between Windsor and West Hants, and WH does not own an arena or swimming pool.
- Only 5% of parents reported that their child played outdoors on a regular basis. Parents need to understand the importance of outdoor play and to have access to safe outdoor play spaces. Whether the dangers of outdoor play are real or perceived, the issues need to be addressed.
- Children spend too much time in front of a screen.
- There is interest in swimming. In addition to one indoor and one outdoor pool in Windsor, there is opportunity to access the Minas Basin as well as lakes and rivers in West Hants. Access to these natural swimming areas needs to be maintained and promoted.

## MUNICIPAL PROFILE

### POPULATION

Based on the 2011 Census of Population, the population of the District of West Hants is 14,258, an increase of 3.5% since 2001. In 2011, 22.8% of the population was under the age of 20 and 16.0% was 65 years or older. This is similar to Nova Scotia as a whole, with 21.2% under the age of 20 and 16.6% 65 years or older. <http://www.gov.ns.ca/finance/communitycounts/>

2011 income and employment data was not yet available at time of writing. 2006 statistics indicated that both median and average incomes were only slightly below provincial figures. However, it is likely that the gap has widened since 2006 as several major employers in WH have closed. Lack of employment and decreased revenue to the Municipality must be considered in planning services.

### PUBLIC LANDS

West Hants covers 124,200 hectares of land. Within the Municipality, the Avon River empties into the Minas Basin where the world's highest tides rise and fall along 160 km of shoreline and the banks of tidal rivers. Thirty km of dykes protect 2436 hectares of land. A variety of lakes and rivers provide opportunities for swimming, canoeing, kayaking, fishing and boating. There are 2 Provincial Parks (Smileys and Falls Lake), 2 Park Reserves (Cheverie and Ste. Croix), wilderness areas, potential 12% protected lands (as identified by Environment NS) and Crown land within the Municipality. Along the borders with Kings and Lunenburg Counties the land rises in low hills and here the mountain bikers are building trails to pursue their passion.

The Municipality owns 95 parcels of land totaling 860 hectares. Currently 9 sites are developed and maintained as recreation sites: Kempt Quarry, Hobarts Beach, Avondale Wharf, Ste. Croix Ball Field, Irishman's Rd, Falmouth Mini Park, Eldridge Rd, Armstrong Lake, and Halewood Dr (see Appendix 5 for more information about these sites). There is no clear plan for the majority of the remaining lands, most of which were acquired through the parkland dedication provisions of the Subdivision By-law. An analysis of these lands (including value and liability) and development of a Parks and Open Spaces Plan is needed to identify opportunities and priorities.

## TOWN OF WINDSOR

Residents of West Hants have access to facilities located in the Town of Windsor, including an outdoor and an indoor swimming pool, an arena, tennis courts, canoe club, curling club and baseball fields; some are owned by the Town and some by community groups, with varying degrees of support from Windsor and West Hants. Windsor Recreation programs are open to residents of West Hants as well. The reverse is also true, with Windsor residents welcome at West Hants programs and recreation sites.

## OTHER SPORT AND RECREATION

There are several commercial recreation opportunities within the Municipality, including a considerable number of equestrian and trail riding ventures, several golf clubs, Ski Martock and On Tree.

In addition to these assets, there are a variety of active Community Sport Organizations (Appendix 6) and Community Hall Associations (Appendix 7) providing activities on a volunteer basis. Community groups are also responsible for the arena in Brooklyn and for several walking trails. Parent groups have revived school playgrounds and these are open to community after school hours. Hants West Wildlife Association (HWWA) offers a variety of outdoor skills training programs along with a wetlands trail. The Windsor Rotary Club operates Camp Mockingee where children and youth can experience year-round camping and outdoor recreation activities. These are just some of the valuable community organizations that exist as the result of dedicated volunteers who devote an enormous amount of time and energy to providing activities and facilities in their communities.



## OUTDOOR RECREATION

Outdoor recreation was a recurring theme in all consultations. Benefits of outdoor recreation include economic, social capital, health and environmental. These in turn are the main pillars of the West Hants ICSP (Municipality of West Hants, 2010). Outdoor Recreation therefore can be seen as the thread that weaves together many of the ICSP goals and the method of delivering on some recommendations. Outdoor recreation is also the recurring theme that unites the Active Living Strategy with the Trails and Active Transportation Plans. While each plan has a different focus, they all include aspects of non-competitive physical activity in the outdoors.

Outdoor recreation can address the growing concern over “nature-deficit disorder” by encouraging our children and youth to be outdoors in their leisure time. Being active in the outdoors provides mental as well as physical health benefits for all ages by reducing stress and reconnecting us to nature.

Gardening is a form of outdoor recreation that not only is available to most residents but also may provide the added benefit of nutritious and affordable food. Several schools in WH have initiated school gardens, and in 2012 the first community garden was established for the residents of Windsor and West Hants.



West Hants is ideally located to take advantage of the many outdoor recreation possibilities. Highway 101 runs through the Municipality, moving people quickly from Halifax and the Kentville area, two of the province’s population centres. With development encroaching on recreational lands in these adjacent areas, West Hants could benefit economically from creating and advertising outdoor recreation sites and opportunities.

Along with the opportunities, there are many challenges to outdoor recreation in WH:

- There exists a growing culture of motorized recreation on both land and water. While there can be physical benefits from these activities, they may impact negatively on the environment, and on the enjoyment of those seeking a peaceful outdoor activity.
- Housing developments along the shores of several lakes and the Minas Basin have decreased public access to these waters. It is imperative that the Municipality maintains access to these waters for public use through a Parks and Open Spaces Plan.
- The knowledge and skills necessary to be confident in the outdoors in all seasons have not been developed in many of our residents. In particular, the fear of animals is an issue that must be addressed.
- Insurance is an issue when providing outdoor recreation activities and access to private and public lands.

Outdoor recreation does not necessarily require expensive infrastructure. There are sites in most communities so transportation need not be a barrier to participation. Individuals of all ages and abilities can participate in all seasons. Numerous associations (e.g., Hike NS, CanoeKayak NS) already exist and are available to offer advice and experience to grow their activities in our area. In short, outdoor recreation has good potential for increasing physical activity as well as supporting health, environmental, economic and social goals.



## ACTION PLAN

The Action Plan defines the work to be done to increase physical activity levels in WH. It is based on the research, reports, consultations and surveys discussed previously. It recognizes that our community did not single out the needs of a particular age group or gender but rather envisioned families and friends being active together, often in the outdoors, and parents providing the role model and opportunities for children. Therefore, the actions to be provided by West Hants Recreation are aimed to support activity throughout the life span with a focus on outdoor recreation. While West Hants Recreation will take the lead in the actions identified below, it is understood some of the implementation will be undertaken by partners.

## VISION AND GOALS

### Vision for Physical Activity

West Hants is a community where being active is the norm throughout the four seasons, where residents have the skills to benefit from recreation opportunities, and where individuals and families are willing and able to access physical activity opportunities and infrastructure.

Four goals have been identified to reach the Vision for Physical Activity:

1. Public Awareness: To educate West Hants residents about the benefits of physical activity and to provide information about recreation opportunities.
2. Supportive Social Environment: To provide opportunities for West Hants residents to participate in a variety of physical activities in their communities, workplaces and schools.
3. Supportive Physical Environments: To create, maintain and enhance physical environments, both built and natural, that support physical activity.
4. Leadership, Partnerships and Sustainability: To lead initiatives, build partnerships and develop policies that will sustain physical activity opportunities.

## GOAL 1: PUBLIC AWARENESS

*To educate West Hants residents about the benefits of physical activity and to provide information about recreation opportunities.*

Objective	Action <i>WH Recreation will:</i>	Partners	Year to Implement	Indicator of Success
Explore and develop a branding name for Active Living Strategy				
	Evaluate existing campaigns and choose a slogan	Advisory Committee	2013	A slogan is chosen for the WH campaign.
	Create a logo for the WH campaign	Advisory Committee	2013	A logo is created.
	Organize a launch for the PA campaign in WH	Advisory Committee	2013	A public launch is held.
Provide public with educational materials about the benefits of PA				
	Provide links to existing websites on the WH Recreation website & thru social media	ParticipAction DHW (Thrive!) Heart and Stroke	2014 Ongoing	WH website includes links to information about the benefits of PA
	Build on Provincial and Federal education campaigns	ParticipAction DHW Heart and Stroke	2014 Ongoing	Provincial and Federal campaigns provide the foundation for educational initiatives
	Distribute existing literature at events and programs		2014 Ongoing	Materials are distributed at community events
	Provide local media with articles on the benefits of PA	Hants Journal What's Going On	2014 Ongoing	2 articles per year are published
Publish an annual listing of recreation opportunities				
	Collaborate with Windsor and East Hants to consider a joint publication	Windsor Rec East Hants Rec	2014	Opportunities for collaboration are identified
	Work with Community Halls and Sport organizations to set up a communications tool to include updates on their programs	Community Hall Associations Community Sport Organizations	2014 Ongoing	Communications amongst organizations re programming is established
	Develop an electronic version for public use	Community Hall Associations Community Sport Organizations	2014 Ongoing	Information about community hall and sport programs is available electronically to public
	Print hard copies to distribute free to residents	Community Hall Associations Community Sport Organizations Businesses	2014 Ongoing	Brochure listing recreation opportunities is published annually
Create materials to identify trails and sites for outdoor recreation				
	Create and publish a Trails map/pamphlet	Trails Assoc	2014	Trails map/brochure is available to public
	Create and publish a Canoe and Kayak map/pamphlet	CanoeKayak NS	2015	Canoe and kayak map/brochure is available to public
	Create and publish a Bicycle WH map/pamphlet	Bicycle NS Wolfville Rec	2016	Bicycle map/pamphlet is available to public
Promote AT				
	Participate on West Hants Active Transportation Working Group to promote opportunities and awareness for AT	WHAT Working Group	2013 Ongoing	Newspaper articles, signage and activities promote AT

## GOAL 2: SUPPORTIVE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

*To provide opportunities for West Hants residents to participate in a variety of physical activities in their communities, workplaces and schools.*

Objective	Action <i>WH Recreation will:</i>	Partners	Year to Implement	Indicator of Success
Communities				
Support Community Halls to provide a variety of PA programs for all ages				
	Explore methods of facilitating communications about PA programs amongst halls, including formation of a Community Hall Association	Community Halls	2014 Ongoing	Better communication results in increased cooperation in providing a variety of PA programs
	Support Community Halls by assisting with grant applications for PA programs	Community Halls Funding organizations	2014 Ongoing	Community halls access grants to run PA programs
	Explore possible methods of support for insurance costs	Community Halls	2014	The burden on volunteers of insurance costs for Community Halls is decreased
Offer a variety of family events with PA as focus				
	Organize biking at Smileys Provincial Park	DNR, RCMP, Bicycle NS, WHAT Working Group	2014 Annually	One family biking event is held per year
	Organize snowshoeing and/or cross country skiing event	Ski Martock DNR	2014 Annually	One event is held per year
	Support community gardens	WHUCHB	2013 Ongoing	2 community gardens are established by 2015 At least 20 families manage a community garden plot
	Organize beach walks to include information about tides and safe walking	Heart&Stroke Walkabout WHUCHB	2014	At least one event per year; increased number of residents are familiar with beaches and tides and walk more often.
Emphasize physical activities in the Summer Camp program				
	Train Summer Camp Leaders in High 5, Fundamental Movement Skills		2013 Ongoing	Summer Camp leaders are trained annually to deliver PA programs
	Schedule Summer Camps to include 60 minutes of MVPA		2013 Ongoing	A minimum of 60 min MVPA is scheduled daily
Create opportunities for spontaneous unstructured outdoor recreation				
	Develop an equipment lending program and guidelines (identify equipment needed, find funding, advertise)	DNR Schools Community Halls	2015 Ongoing	Equipment such as snowshoes, skates, bikes and helmets are available for loan to the public
	Develop a directory of lending equipment	DNR Schools Community Halls	2015	Directory is created and advertised to public

	Provide skill development for outdoor recreation activities such as snowshoeing, biking, canoeing, kayaking, mountain biking, orienteering, fishing	HWWA CanoeKayak NS Bicycle NS	2014 Ongoing	At least 2 skill development opportunities are offered per year.
Increase swimming in outdoor locations				
	Apply for grants to offer a pilot of swimming lessons in lakes	Red Cross DHW	2014	Swimming lessons are offered in 2 locations
	Identify and promote public swimming sites		2014 Ongoing	More residents are aware of public swimming areas
	Continue to support Hants Aquatic Centre Governance Committee	Windsor Rec	2013 Ongoing	Town swimming pool remains open to public with lessons during the summer
<b>Workplaces</b>				
Implement workplace wellness programs at Municipal office (lead by example)				
	Develop and implement a workplace wellness policy for WH	Wellness Committee	2014	Council and senior staff approve a wellness policy
	Provide educational resources for staff re the benefits of PA	Heart&Stroke Walkabout ParticipAction	2013 Ongoing	The resources are used by staff and awareness is increased
	Develop and implement workplace wellness programs and activities for WH employees	Wellness Committee	2013 Ongoing	At least 3 activities are offered per year.
	Implement a PA break at WH Council meetings	Wellness Committee	2014	PA breaks are included in Council meetings
Encourage and support workplaces to adopt policies and practices that support physical activity				
	Develop and implement an awareness campaign for employers and employees	Heart&Stroke Walkabout WH businesses	2015	Presentations are made at a minimum of 6 workplaces.
	Provide tools and resources to workplaces to promote PA	Heart&Stroke Walkabout	2015	Resource kits are available to WH workplaces.
	Promote annual PA challenges for WH businesses	WHUCHB Heart and Stroke WH businesses	2013 Ongoing	Staff from at least 6 workplaces participate
<b>Schools</b>				
Support committees that promote PA in schools				
	Participate on After School Activities committee to direct funding to schools		2013 Ongoing	Funding continues to support after school PA programs
	Participate on the Health Promoting School Communities Committee		2013 Ongoing	PA remains a priority in schools
Support schools to create and maintain vegetable gardens, trails and playgrounds				
	Assist schools with writing of grant applications	Home and School	2014	Grants help to fund school gardens, trails and playgrounds
	Provide schools with educational resources, expertise and promotional materials about gardening	DOA	2014	A package of educational resources and promotional materials are available to interested schools
Continue to support after school programs				

	Manage Thrive ASTP program for girls at WHMS	DHW WHMS	2013	At least 15 girls participate in 12 weeks of PA.
	Manage finances, develop leaders for after school programs	DHW Schools	2013 Ongoing	After school programs at all elementary schools at least 1 day per week
<b>General</b>				
Respond to funding opportunities as they arise				
	Watch for funding opportunities, assist with applications and administration	Schools Community Organizations	2013 Ongoing	Flexibility allows WH to benefit from unexpected opportunities

### GOAL 3: SUPPORTIVE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTS

*To create, maintain and enhance physical environments, both built and natural, that support PA.*

Objective	Action <i>WH Recreation will:</i>	Partners	Year to Implement	Indicator of Success
Develop and implement a Trails Plan				
	Compile a list of existing trails	DNR HWWA	2012	A minimum of 15 existing trails are identified
	Contract with Trails Consultant to assess existing trails		2012	A contract is in place with an experienced Trails Consultant
	Write Trails Plan for approval by Council	Trails Consultant Community Trail Organizations	2013	Trails Plan is approved by Council
Develop and implement an Active Transportation Plan				
	Host an Active Transportation workshop	EAC Heart and Stroke Town of Windsor Town of Hantsport	2012	A minimum of 20 community members and Municipal Reps attend
	Form an Active Transportation Working Group for Windsor/WH	EAC Heart and Stroke Town of Windsor Town of Hantsport	2013 Ongoing	Working Group is established and goals are set
	Write Active Transportation Plan for approval by Council	AT Working Group	2015	An AT Plan is presented to Council for approval
Develop and implement a Parks and Open Spaces Plan				
	Assess existing Municipal Recreation Sites	Planning Dept.	2014	Evaluation of recreation sites is completed
	Assess public access to coast and waterways	DNR Environment	2014	Public access to coast and waterways is established
	Write Parks and Open Spaces Plan		2015	Plan is presented to Council for approval
Increase public access to swimming and skating facilities				
	Explore opportunities for increased public skate time at Newport Rink	Newport & District Rink Commission	2014	Increased time and participation in public skating
	Explore opportunity for public swim time at KES Pool	KES	2014	Increased time and participation in indoor swimming
	Support increased use of school facilities	AVRSB	2014	Increased use of school gyms, particularly on weekends

#### GOAL 4: LEADERSHIP, PARTNERSHIPS AND SUSTAINABILITY

*To lead initiatives, build partnerships and develop policies that will sustain physical activity opportunities.*

Objective	Action <i>WH Recreation will:</i>	Partners	Year to Implement	Indicator of Success
Establish organizations that link groups with common purpose				
	WH Active Living Advisory Committee agrees to continue to advise on implementation of Strategy; draw in additional partners	WHCHB Heart and Stroke Foundation Public Health Windsor Elms RCMP DNR	2013 Ongoing	Implementation of strategy is supported by local service providers representing a range of ages and needs
	Assist with the establishment of a WH Sports Organizations Network; participate in meetings	Sport NS WH Com Sport Organizations	2013 Ongoing	Network is formed and at least 1 meeting is held per year resulting in increased collaboration
	Organize a meeting of individuals and organizations interested in trail development and promotion; encourage establishment of an association	Community Trail groups	2013 Ongoing	WH Trail Association is formed to support trail development and maintenance
Support existing community partnership committees				
	Participate on the WHUCHB's Community Partnership Network	WHUCHB	2013 Ongoing	Collaboration with local service providers continues
	Participate on VACC	VACC	2013 Ongoing	Collaboration with Valley MPALs continues
Develop Municipal Policies that support PA				
	Write a Workplace Wellness Policy for approval by Council	WH Wellness Committee	2014	Workplace Wellness Policy approved by Council.
	Work with Planning to identify opportunities for inclusion of PA supports in Planning documents	Planning Dept.	2014	PA supported in Planning documents
	Propose inclusion of PA goals in Municipal Council documents		2014	By-Law amendment presented to Council
Partner with local organizations to provide infrastructure, equipment and skill building				
	Partner with DNR to create and promote trails on Crown land and in Provincial Parks (refer to Trails Plan)	DNR	2014	Trails in Falls Lake Provincial Park and Cheverie Park Reserve expanded Promotion results in increased use of trails in Smileys Park
	Partner with DNR to establish lending program of snowshoes and bikes at Smileys Provincial Park	DNR DHW	2015	Lending program is established and used by community
	Partner with HWWA to support programs to build outdoor skills, including orienteering	HWWA	2015	Orienteering workshops are offered in WH
	Partner with Heart and Stroke to support and expand walking programs	Heart&Stroke Walkabout	2013	Indoor/outdoor walking programs are established in at least 4 WH communities

	Partner to deliver bike safety programs at schools and in community	RCMP EAC CAN-Bike	2014	Bike safety programs held at least once a year
Promote and/or administer funding programs to support PA				
	Continue to budget for and administer Recreation Grants		2013 Ongoing	Budget for Rec grants is maintained and distributed to community groups annually
	Continue to promote and support applications to KidSport and JumpStart	KidSport JumpStart	2013 Ongoing	Community members access funding through these programs
	Continue to participate in funding programs through Active Kids Healthy Kids	AKHK Committee	2013 Ongoing	AKHK funding supports community activities
Promote leadership development opportunities				
	Research and advertise leadership training opportunities	Government Departments and NGOs	2014 Ongoing	Increased number of trained leaders for programs and events
	Continue to fund leadership training thru WH Recreation grants		2013 Ongoing	Budget for Recreation grants is maintained and accessed
Provide ongoing opportunities for community input				
	Hold community meetings/focus groups to get feedback on implementation of Strategy	Community groups Schools Workplaces	2014 Ongoing	A minimum of 2 focus groups are held annually

## APPENDIX 1: ACRONYMS

AHKC	Active Healthy Kids Canada
AKHK	Active Kids Healthy Kids
ALC	Active Living Coordinator
AT	Active Transportation
AVRSB	Annapolis Valley Regional School Board
BDES	Brooklyn District Elementary School
CHB	Community Health Board
CHMS	Canadian Health Measures Survey
DHW	Department of Health and Wellness
DNR	Department of Natural Resources
DOA	Department of Agriculture
DOE	Department of Education
EAC	Ecology Action Centre
ECE	Early Childhood Education
ICSP	Integrated Community Sustainability Plan
HSCHC	Hants Shore Community Health Centre
KES	Kings Edgehill School
MDWH	Municipality of the District of West Hants
MPAL	Municipal Physical Activity Leader
MVPA	Moderate to Vigorous Physical Activity
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
PA	Physical activity
PHAC	Public Health Agency of Canada
TIR	Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal
ToR	Terms of Reference
VACC	Valley Active Communities Committee
WHAT	West Hants Active Transportation
WHUCHB	West Hants/Uniacke Community Health Board
WH	West Hants
WHMS	West Hants Middle School

## APPENDIX 2: REFERENCES

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## APPENDIX 3: KEY INFORMANTS

*These service providers were consulted individually for input to the Active Living Strategy.*

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Individual</b>
Alan Mumford Fitness Studio	Owner, Personal Trainer	Alan Mumford
Dept. of Natural Resources	District Supervisor Park Technician	Dana Orr Jason Chard
Hants West Wildlife Association	President	Mike O'Brien
Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada - Nova Scotia	Community Health Promotion Coordinator	Tracy Burgess
Municipality of the District of West Hants	Chief Administrative Officer Director of Planning Director of Public Works	Cheryl Chislett Lynn Davis Rick Sherrard
Public Health	Youth Health Centre Coordinator	Janice Dempsey-Stewart
RCMP	Community Policing Officer	Terry Fogarty
Ski Martock	Owner Operations Manager	Heather Boylan Andy MacLean
West Hants/Uniacke Community Health Board	Coordinator	Sandra Milbury
Windsor Elms Village	Education Coordinator	Pat Miller

## APPENDIX 4: COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS

<b>Date</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Demographic Represented</b>
2012-09-04	Hants Shore Women's Institute	8	Centre Burlington Hall	Women with families
2012-09-10	WH Community Partnerships Network	15	Hants Community Hospital	WH Service Providers
2012-10-14	Ardoise Community Hall Association	12	Ardoise Community Hall	Ardoise community members, families
2012-10-23	Newport Jolly Seniors	18	Brooklyn Civic Centre	Seniors
2012-10-29	Falmouth Community Hall Association and Public Meeting	10	Falmouth Community Hall	Falmouth community members, families
2012-11-07	Active Transportation Workshop	26	WH Municipal Council Chambers	WH residents and policy makers interested in AT
2012-11-15	Avon View High School focus group	10	Avon View High School	Youth in grades 10 - 12
2012-11-15	WH Sports Organizations	14	Brooklyn Civic Centre	Community sport
2012-11-20	WH Early Childhood Educators	7	Family Resource Centre	ECEs; families; pre-schoolers
2012-11-26	West Hants Middle School focus group	10	WH Middle School	Girls in grades 7 - 9
2012-11-27	Public	18	WH Middle School	WH residents, families, snowmobile organization, HWWA, WHMS Administration, BDES Phys Ed Teacher, HSCHC
	<b>Number of Participants</b>	<b>148</b>		
	<b>Number of Meetings</b>	<b>11</b>		

## APPENDIX 5: RECREATION SITES MAINTAINED BY THE MUNICIPALITY

Site	Community	Facilities
Armstrong Lake	Vaughan	Picnic tables, trail, lake access
Avondale Wharf	Avondale	Lighthouse, picnic tables, wharf, boat launch
Eldridge Rd	Upper Falmouth	Tennis courts, soccer fields, club house, tug-of-war practise facility, playground, walking path
Falmouth Mini Park	Falmouth	Playground equipment, picnic tables, trail
Halewood Drive	Falmouth	Open space
Hobart's Beach	Summerville	Picnic tables, boat launch area, beach
Irishman's Rd	Newport Station	Soccer fields, archery club, trail
Kempt Quarry	Kempt Shore	Swimming, picnic tables, trail
Ste. Croix Ball Park	Ste. Croix	2 Ball fields with lights, covered horseshoe pits, club house, fishing area

## APPENDIX 6: COMMUNITY SPORT ORGANIZATIONS

Alpine	Martock Ski Race Club
Archery	Glooscap Archery Club
Badminton	
Baseball	West Hants Baseball Association
Basketball	Shooting Stars Basketball
Biathlon and Cross Country Ski	Martock Nordic Ski Club
Canoe/Kayak	Pisiquid Canoe Club
Cheerleading	Ice All Stars Cheer
Curling	Windsor Curling Club
Equestrian	Avon Branch Appaloosa Horse Club
Figure Skating	Riverview Skating Club
Football	Windsor and Area Minor Football
Golf	Avon Valley Golf & Country Club Coyote Hill Minas View Golf Links Rosevale Par 3 Family Golf Course, Redden Road
Horseshoe	West Hants Horseshoe Club
Hockey	West Hants Minor Hockey Association
Karate	Hants Shore Karate Club Windsor Renshikan Karate Club
Orienteering	Annapolis Valley Orienteering Club (AVOC)
Rugby	Windsor Hants County Rugby Football Association
Snowboarding	Martock Snowboard Club
Soccer	West Hants United Soccer Assoc
Softball	West Hants Minor Softball Association
Swimming	Windsor Bluefins Parent Association
Tennis	Gordon Hughes Tennis Club
Tug-of-War	Falmouth & Martock Tug of War Teams
Volleyball	Windsor Volleyball Association

## APPENDIX 7: COMMUNITY HALLS

Ardoise Community Recreation Centre  
Avondale Community Hall/Avondale Wharf Committee  
Bramber New Horizons Hall  
Belmont Community Hall  
Brooklyn Civic Centre and Fire Hall  
Cambridge Community Hall  
Centre Burlington Community Hall  
Ellershous Community Hall  
Falmouth Community Hall  
Martock Community Hall  
Mt. Denson Community Hall  
Newport Corner Hall  
Newport Station Community Hall  
Pembroke Community Hall  
Poplar Grove Community Hall  
Scotch Village Community Hall  
Ste Croix Community Hall  
Sweets Corner Community Hall  
Summerville & District Fire Hall  
Three Mile Plains Community Hall  
Upper Burlington Community Hall  
Upper Falmouth Community Hall  
Upper Vaughans Community Hall  
Walton Shore Fire Hall Association  
West Hants Ground Search and Rescue  
Woodville/ Ashdale