



# Strategic Plan

## 2021 – 2025

Approved by the Mariners Board of Directors on 03/17/21

Endorsed by Municipality of the District of Yarmouth on DD/MM/YY

Endorsed by the Town of Yarmouth on DD/MM/YY

Endorsed by the Municipality of the District of Argyle on DD/MM/YY

## Background

*"It is important that we know where we come from because if you do not know where you come from, then you don't know where you are, and if you don't know where you are, you don't know where you're going. And if you don't know where you're going, you're probably going wrong." Terry Pratchett*

The Mariners Centre is a multi-purpose sport, recreation, and event facility in Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, Canada. It officially opened on November 28, 2001. The Mariners Centre is the home facility to several hockey teams and has a proud history as a venue for sport, recreation, community, and entrainment events. The Mariners Centre draws participants from all over Yarmouth County and residents in Digby and Shelburne counties. The Mariners Centre has had a substantial and positive impact on the life of its community. Many people state that they grew up at the Mariners Centre and want similar experiences for their children.

The community is changing. In a survey of residents, there is an increasingly high level of community spirit. Yarmouth sees growth in real estate sales and prices as more people move back or into the area. The community is looking for increased opportunities to play and connect. The community hopes that the Mariners Centre can be expanded to provide a swimming pool and other fitness, sport, recreation facilities, and programs. They also expect the Mariners Centre can grow the number of events it brings to the community.

The Mariners Centre is also changing. A new CEO has been brought in with a mandate to reimagine the Mariners Centre experience and find ways to improve the facility's services to its community. There is considerable excitement about expanding the facility, especially a swimming pool suitable for leisure and competitive purposes. A community group has also been championing the installation of a splash park on the site that will occur in the next few years.

With the demand and expectation for change, the Mariners Centre Board of Directors, its new CEO, and the Town of Yarmouth, Municipality of the District of Yarmouth, and Municipality of the District of Argyle have decided that a new strategic plan is needed to guide the facility into its bright future.

## Commitment to Good Governance

*"Lots of times, we are afraid to ask our board members to do too much because we're afraid they will be scared off. I have long observed that more board members resign for lack of meaningful work than from being overworked!" Linda Lysakowski*

The Mariners Centre is a diverse group of community volunteers and staff. The Board of Directors embraces its leadership role in the community and is committed to excellence in organizational governance. The Board of Directors is focused on:

- Outward vision in place of internal preoccupation;
- Hosting and participating in difficult conversations;
- Encouragement of diverse points of view;
- Sound financial management;
- Safety and respect for all;
- Evidence-based decision making;
- Transparency and open communication with stakeholders and the community;
- A collective community development-based approach to our work;
- Strong succession planning;
- The pursuit of best and promising practices.

The governance structure of the Mariners Centre has several levels, each with specific responsibilities. The Board of Directors of the Mariners Centre knows that good governance only happens when there is clarity around which parties are responsible for which duties. As such, the Board Directors provide this overview of their understanding of each party's significant roles and responsibilities in the overall governance structure.

The first level of governance is the ownership of the facility. The Mariners Centre is owned by the Town of Yarmouth and the Municipality of the District of Yarmouth. In April 2014, the Municipality of the District of Argyle joined as an equal partner in the management, operation, and capital funding of the Marines Centre.

The second level in the Mariners Centre's governance structure is the Board of Directors of the Mariners Centre. The Board of Directors consists of 9 members. Each Municipality appoints three members of the Board. For each Municipality, one of their three appointments is an elected official, and two are general community members.

Finally, the Board of Directors hires a CEO to manage the Center's day-to-day operation.

The specific responsibilities of each group are summarized below.

*The roles and responsibilities of the Municipalities are:*

- The Municipalities own the Mariners Center's assets and provide a subsidy to support the facility's operation.
- The Municipalities approve the subsidy they provide to the facility.
- Municipalities approve capital requests and funding for the Mariners Centre.
- Each Municipality appoints three people to the Board of Directors. One of those appointments should be an elected official from their municipal council, and two should be members of the community.
- Members for the Board are recruited in consultation with the Mariners Centre Board of Directors and are based on a competency-based recruitment strategy.
- Municipalities set the term for their appointees to the Board of Directors.
- The CAO of each Municipality is available to support the Mariners Center's governance and serve on both the Human Resources and Nominating Committees.

*The roles and responsibilities of the Board of Directors are:*

- Provide recommendations to the Municipalities for the recruitment and appointment of new board members.
- Appoint the officers for the Mariners Centre Board from the members of the Board of Directors.
- The Board of Directors appoints all Board Committees, including a Human Resources and Nominating Committee. The Board of Directors can appoint non-board members to board committees.
- Maintain a competency-based matrix to guide both Board and Committee recommendations and appointments.
- Using a policy-based structure, the Board is responsible for administering and managing all matters related to the operation, including repairs, renovations, maintenance, use, and activities.
- Approve an operation budget, a capital budget and plan, and a management plan for the Mariners Centre.
- Conduct a yearly audit of the finances.
- Hire, support, and evaluate a Chief Executive Officer for the facility.
- Provide clear direction to the CEO around the administration, plans, policies, and programs of the Mariners Centre. The majority of this direction is provided by developing, approving, implementing, and monitoring policies, plans, and budgets.

*The roles and responsibilities of the CEO Mariners Centre are:*

- Operate the facility on behalf of the Board of Directors within the guidelines provided by them.
- Hire and supervise staff and volunteers.
- Be the connection between the Board of Directors and staff and volunteers. It is important to note that the Board has the right to seek information from staff if necessary in their governance duties.
- Develop a yearly management plan to guide the operation of the facility.
- Develop an operating budget that outlines the resources required to support the management plan.
- Develop a capital plan and budget to support the long-term sustainability of the facility.
- Supervise the day-to-day operations and management of the facility.
- Be the primary representative and spokesperson for the facility.
- Ensure a comprehensive and pro-active risk management system is in place and followed.
- Design a customer experience that supports the goals and values of the Mariner's Centre.

## Vision and Mission

*"If we were 100% successful, what would our community look like? What would be different? For whom?" Hildy Gottlieb*

### Vision

Yarmouth County is a vibrant, active, socially-connected, and healthy community.

### Mission

The Mariners Centre is a community gathering place in Yarmouth County that provides sports, recreation, and cultural and community events. Through these activities, the Mariners Centre makes a substantial contribution to our communities and their residents' health and wellness.

## Strategic Priorities

*"You cannot be everything to everyone. If you decide to go north, you cannot go south at the same time." Jeroen De Flander*

### Strategic Priority 1: Facility expansion

- 1.1 The Mariners Centre needs to expand and upgrade its facility to meet the community's needs and expectations. This work should include the following considerations:
  - an aquatic centre;
  - additional features such as fitness centre, and other sport and rec opportunities;
  - utilizing the entire property to create a campus-style community hub for a broad base of community events and sport and recreation opportunities;
  - incorporate the pending splash pad installation into the larger plans for the facility and site.
- 1.2 The Mariners Centre needs to expand its operating model to include a pro-active programming mindset, maximizing the use of its spaces and providing the programs and services desired by the community.

### Strategic Priority 2: Customer experience

- 2.1 The Mariners Centre needs to create an engaging customer experience.
- 2.2 The Mariners Centre needs to embrace its role as a community hub and focus on ensuring a welcome, safe, social, accessible, and inclusive experience for all. Everyone in the community should see themselves in the Mariners Centre and have an opportunity to access programs and services.

### Strategic Priority 3: Excellence in governance

- 3.1 The ownership, governance, and management model's core elements are clearly defined, actioned, and regularly discussed and reviewed.
- 3.2 The organization utilizes a competency-based recruitment strategy.
- 3.3 The Board of Directors actively seeks to enhance its knowledge and skills through regular evaluation and training.
- 3.3 The Mariners Centre Board of Directors champions the efforts to realize the facility's potential.

### Strategic Priority 4: Engagement

- 4.1 The owners, governors, and management of the Mariners Centre regularly engage the community in its operations.
- 4.2 The Mariners Centre believes in transparency and continually seeks opportunities to support this belief where appropriate.

### Strategic Priority 5: Culture

- 5.1 The Mariners Centre's operating model includes a pro-active focus on revenue development and the programming of its spaces.
- 5.2 In planning, the Mariners Centre's first focus is on what is best for the community and facility.

Note: The strategic priorities are not listed in a particular order of importance.

## Key Performance Indicators

*"I think the soundest management advice I've heard is the old saw; "What gets measured gets done." Tom Peters*

The Mariners Centre believes in evidence-based decision-making and makes decisions based on sound data. We are committed to a rigorous feedback process that provides a balanced view of the entire Association. The Mariners Centre uses the following measures to monitor performance.

- In large projects, we set key milestones and build them into our monitoring plans. We adjust future milestones as required.
- Tracking usage and attendance figures.
- Point in time counts of programs, services, and facilities usage, done on a pre-determined schedule.
- Separate tracking of drop-in opportunities, rentals, and Mariners Centre sponsored programs.
- Ongoing feedback systems such as immediate response tools, surveys, comment cards, and focus groups.
- We have an engagement plan that ensures that we understand our community's wants and needs and use that information when designing programs, services, and experiences.
- We monitor engagement and responses on social media and other marketing efforts or communication efforts.
- We monitor the demographic statistics of our client base.
- We actively attempt to gain insights from non-users of the facility.
- The Board of Directors monitors its performance. Part of this evaluation process includes consulting with and involving the Municipalities. This process provides for the setting of training and development objectives for the Board of Directors.
- An ongoing matrix is used to ensure board diversity.
- The Board and staff maintain and monitor a yearly training plan for senior leadership staff and Board volunteers.