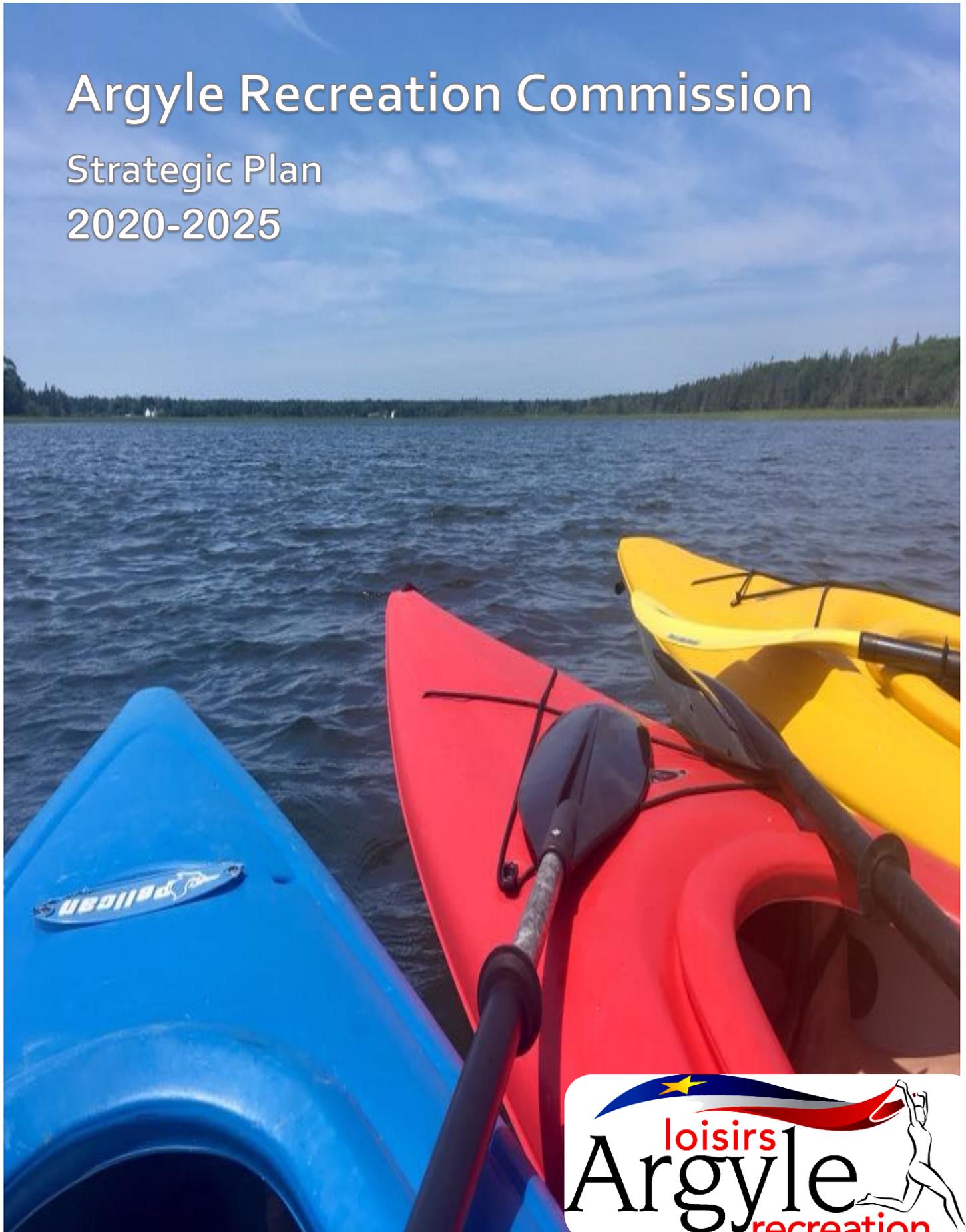


# Argyle Recreation Commission

Strategic Plan

2020-2025



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# INTRODUCTION

## GETTING STARTED

In January 2018, the members of the Argyle Recreation Commission reviewed their completed strategic plan. The commission was very pleased with the accomplishments and successes that came from this plan. It was decided that ARC would refresh their strategy for another five-year building on the successes and challenges learned from the past five years.

Prior to the Argyle Recreation meeting on February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018, the ARC members received an email outlining homework to be done prior to the meeting. Three questions were given.

1. In your opinion, what are we doing right? What are some of our successes and why?
2. In your opinion, when are we functioning at our best and why?
3. Describe three (3) concrete wishes for the future of Argyle Recreation?

Along with these questions were resources that to be reviewed.

- a. Framework for Recreation in Canada
- b. Shared Strategy for the Advancement of Recreation in Nova Scotia.
- c. 2014-2017 Argyle Recreation Commission Goals
- d. Recreation Staff 2018 Priorities
- e. Stats Canada 2016
- f. Citizen survey, 2014

### **What are we doing right? What are our successes?**

- We have a clear focus on all age groups.
- Sledge hockey, new, inclusion program.
- Increased number of participations in rec activities – i.e.: baseball.
- There is an increased awareness of recreation opportunities, (increased presence on social media and different platforms).
- Supporting community major infrastructure (tennis courts, playgrounds, ball fields, trails).
- Family focused activities.
- More activities at no cost.
- Supporting local committees hosting major tournaments.
- Increased maintenance of the recreation infrastructure.
- The ARC strategic Plan - having a vision.
- An increase in recreation equipment inventory for loan (snowshoes, pickleball, kayaks).
- We are being innovative and creative. Keeping up with the fads (Poke Man Go).
- We have had increased financial assistance through grant programs such as Thrive allowing us to provide try-it, drop-in sessions at no cost in different communities.

## When are we functioning at our best?

- We are working smarter. The strategic plan helps us to focus on what needs to be done and provides direction. Guides the everyday planning.
- We hire summer staff with specific responsibilities to achieve our strategic goals: ie: Outdoor Program Coordinator – Connecting to Nature goal.
- The communication between Council and ARC has increased.
- We have a desire to push and promote recreation opportunities on a larger scale.
- We have a better relationship with our regional partners working on many different projects that could not be done otherwise.
- We function at our best when the social media is strong especially in the 25 -45 age group.
- We function at our best when we have community champions that can lead and encourage others to participate.

## VISION

We envision a community where people of all abilities, experience the joy and the freedom to be found through daily participation in a wide variety of unstructured and structured opportunities for play, recreation and physical activity in our beautiful natural surroundings, recreation spaces and quality facilities. Individuals appreciate the benefits of recreation and are aware of the opportunities. Leaders and community organizations collaborate to provide recreation opportunities for the youngest to the eldest in all seasons of the year.

## MISSION

The mission statement is:

It is critical for the Argyle Recreation Department to have acceptable results in the following areas:

- Participation in recreation activities
- Access to recreation opportunities
- Client and public safety
- Impact on healthy lifestyles
- Customer satisfaction
- Costs
- Revenue
- Condition of finances
- Number of volunteers and volunteer satisfaction
- Quality leaders

- Quality and condition of facilities
- Access to infrastructure
- Connection to nature
- Awareness of benefits and opportunities
- Community representation

## DEFINING RECREATION

Argyle Recreation Commission adopted the definition of Recreation from the framework for Recreation in Canada:

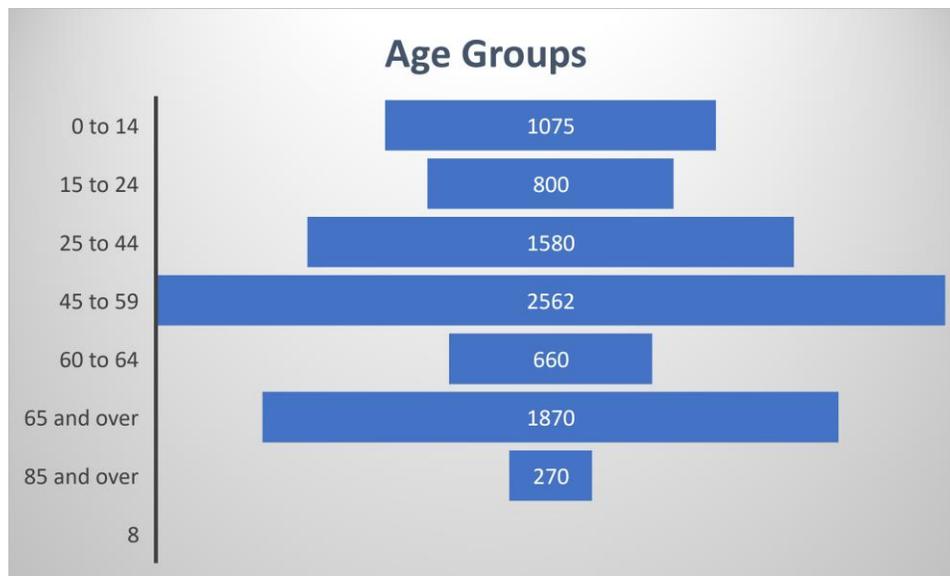
“The experience that results from freely – chosen participation in physical, social and intellectual, creative and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community well-being” (2015)

Nova Scotia fully embraces the national framework as their guide. While the Municipality of the District of Argyle is on a much smaller scale, the members of the Argyle Recreation Commission adopted the guiding principles and goals of NS Strategy for advancing recreation in Nova to advance recreation in the Municipality of Argyle.

## DEMONOGRAPHICS OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF ARGYLE

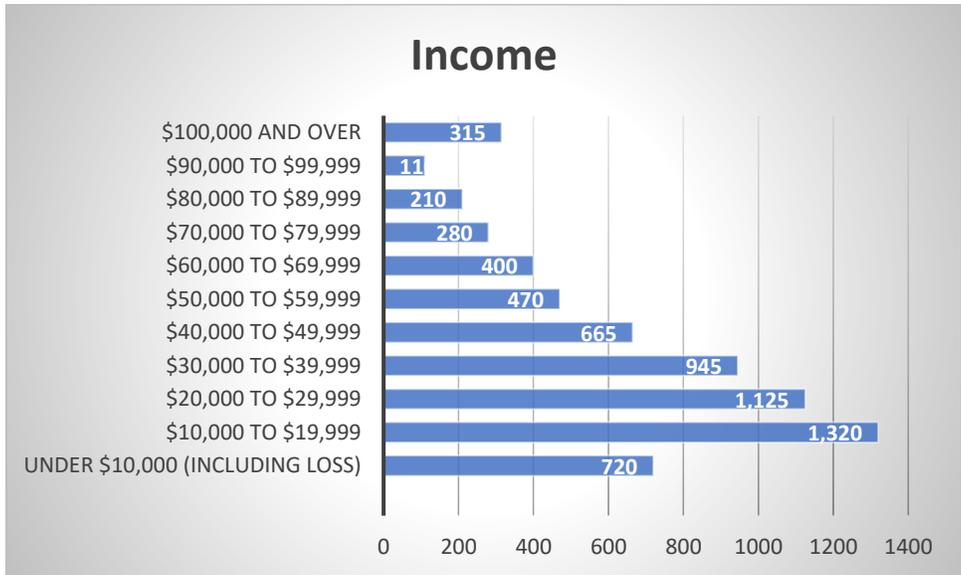
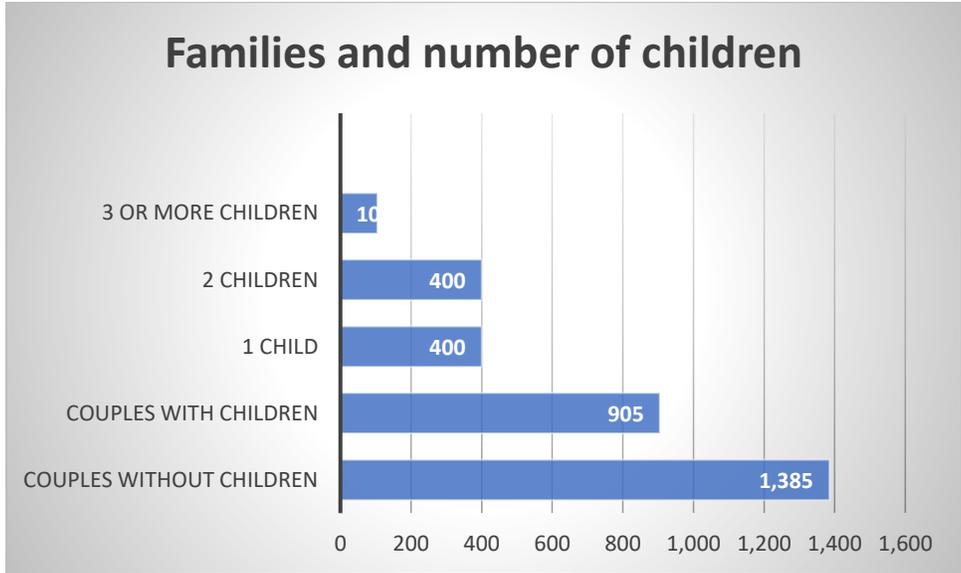
**Census 2016: Stats Canada**

**Average age is 46 years old: 45% of women and 46.8% of men**



50.25% Female

49.75% Male



## Key Learnings

Factors influencing engagement in physical activity can vary across age groups and gender. It is important that opportunities, scheduling, and communications be designed with these differences in mind. *These findings apply to women as well as the full population. Any significant differences are highlighted.*

**Activity Types** – The following types of activities are of interest to a large proportion of the adult population. *(Degree of interest may vary within specific age groups)*

- Walking: Top of the wish list for future activity
- Swimming: A distant second

**Challenges** – Aspects relating to social barriers and infrastructure top the list of challenges in this community.

- Having someone to go with to activities
- Condition and maintenance of bicycle lanes and roadsides for walking (especially among females)

**Physical Activity Opportunities** – Top opportunities that would encourage greater participation in physical activities include:

- More family-friendly spaces
- More programs for children to participate near their parent during activities
- More common spaces to meet friends for activities (especially for females)
- Non-competitive opportunities among females in particular

**Active Transportation** – One-quarter of adults walk at least weekly, but bicycling activity is negligible.

- Two-thirds would like to walk more often (somewhat higher among females). This decision would be most affected by sidewalk maintenance, trails, and condition of roads.
- Two-fifths would like to bicycle more often if safe areas and routes can be identified.

1. With walking as the most popular activity for future participation in general as well as for Active Transportation, there is a significant opportunity to increase activity in this community by prioritizing support for walking.
2. Swimming is also commonly mentioned as a wish list item for increased participation.
3. Infrastructure for walking and cycling is a clear need based on identified physical activity challenges in general and Active Transportation facilitators.
4. Intervention to support social connections are important.
5. Time (availability and scheduling) is an important barrier to consider in planning interventions.
6. There may be a role for health care providers in supporting participation in physical activity given the proportion who perceive their current health status as a challenge.

**Improving accessibility of community-based physical activity opportunities by offering flexible, non-competitive, and low-cost activities may engage more community members.**

Although the citizen survey was done in 2014, ARC members felt that the information is very relevant. The 2014-2017 Strategic Plan achieved many of its goals by following the recommendations and key learnings of the Citizen survey. The 2020-2021 Strategic Plan will take a closer look and what else we could do to help the residents of the Municipality of Argyle become more active.

In September of 2018, an online survey was released asking 5 questions:

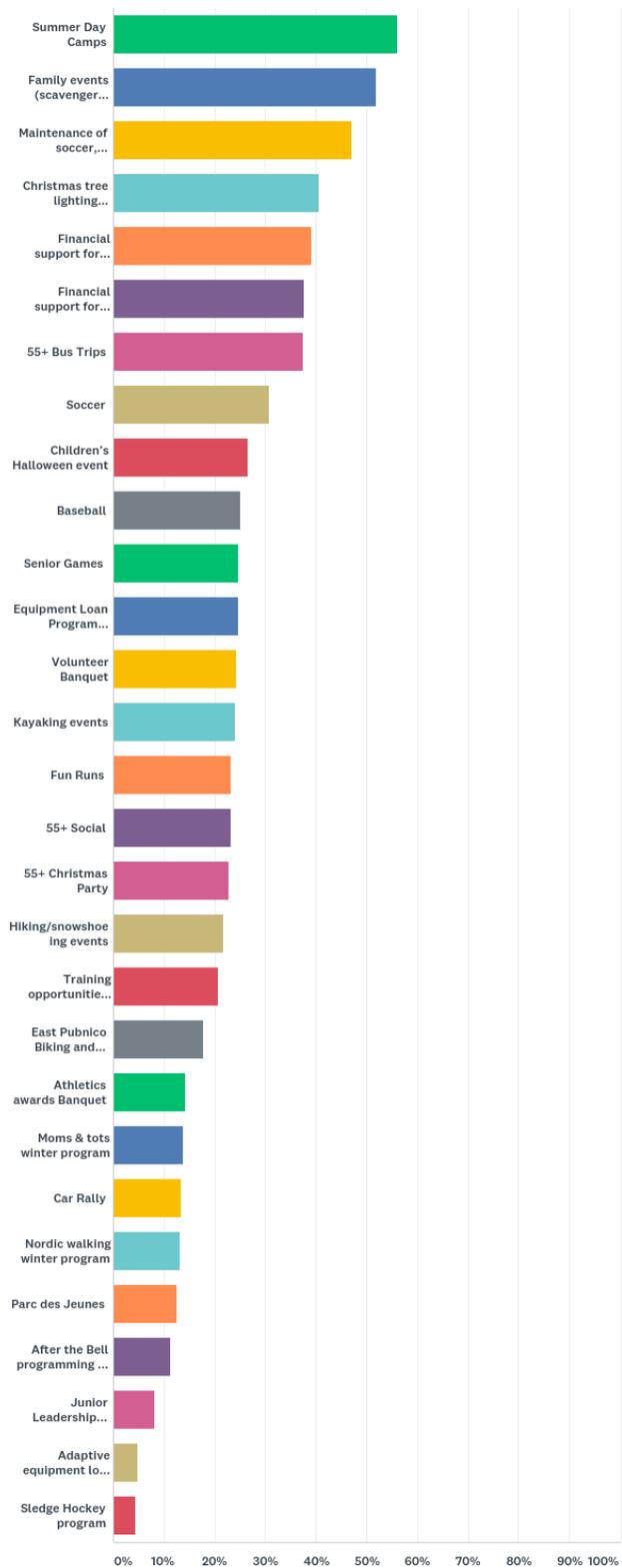
1. Do you live in the Municipality of Argyle?
2. What are your (family) top 10 program and services the Recreation Department offers?
3. What age category best describes you?
4. Based on Argyle Recreation Commission priorities mentioned are we on the right track?  
Are we missing an important priority?
5. What would you like to see Argyle Recreation improve on?

In addition to the online survey, staff organize 4 senior's focus groups where a paper copy of the survey was distributed. The data of the paper surveys was added to online survey.

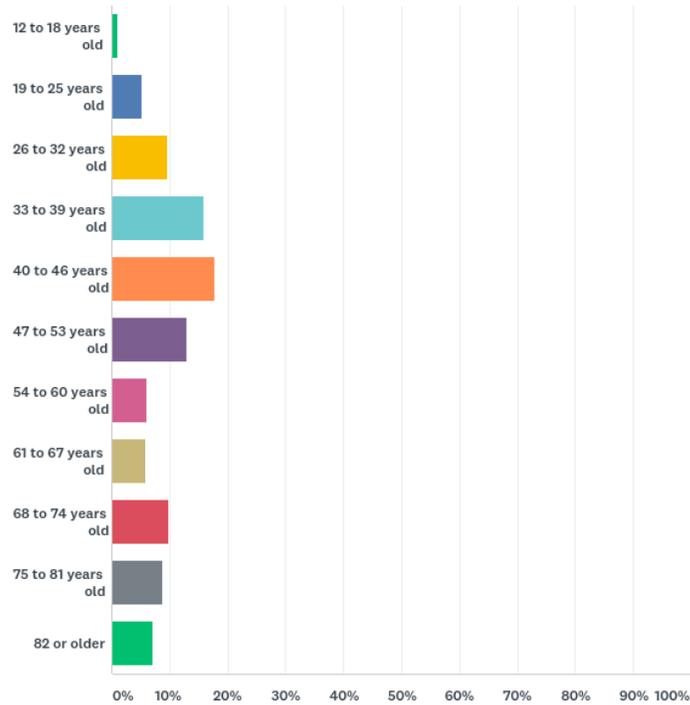
## RESULTS OF THE ONLINE SURVEY – JANUARY 2019

457 people responded to the survey (5% of MODA Population). 50 people were not from the Municipality of Argyle.

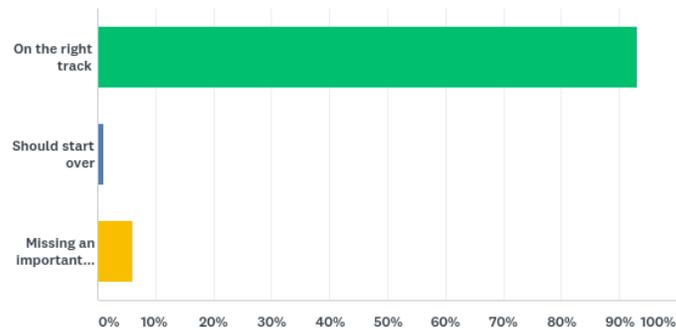
Q2 Argyle Recreation currently offers the following programs and services. Keeping your immediate family in mind, please select what you find most important (Up to 10)



### Q3 What age category best describes you?



### Q4 Based on the above priorities, the Argyle Recreation Commission is ...



#### THE TOP THREE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR 55+ WERE

1. 55+ Bus Trips
2. 55+ Christmas Party
3. Senior Games

#### TOP THREE ANSWERS FOR 26 TO 46-YEAR-OLD

1. Family events

2. Summer day camps
3. Maintenance of fields

### TOP THREE ANSWERS FOR 12 TO 32

1. Summer day camps
2. Family events
3. Soccer and baseball

### COMMON THEMES FOR IMPROVEMENT

1. Fitness center in Tusket
2. More family events
3. Better promotion
4. More youth activities
5. Leadership development for coaches and volunteer organizations
6. Improved infrastructure for walking and biking (trails)

### GOALS

#### **Goal 1: Promotion**

To increase awareness of recreation opportunities.

To use the right media to promote activities for different target groups

To create partnerships with the local media.

#### **Goal 2: Infrastructure**

To improve the quality of existing infrastructure.

To identify if there is a need for new infrastructure.

#### **Goal 3: Connecting people to nature**

To increase opportunities for connecting people with nature.

#### **Goal 4: Inclusion and Accessibility**

To decrease barriers to participating in recreation opportunities.

## Goal 5: Active Transportation

To educate the residents and council on the importance and benefits of active transportation to MODA.

To increase awareness of the active transportation opportunities.

To improve active transportation infrastructure in MODA.

## PRIORITIES AND AREAS OF FOCUS

### GOAL 1: PROMOTION

To increase awareness of recreation opportunities.

To use the right media to promote activities for different target groups

To create partnerships with the local media.

Argyle Recreation is aware that promotion of their programs and services is essential to participation. By better understanding each media platform we believe we will be able to reach more people.

#### Priority 1.1

##### Leadership development

1. Recreation staff will attend workshops, information session and/or webinars on Social media.
2. Summer staff will continue to help full time staff on the use of social media for the younger generation.
3. To develop a promotional checklist for activities, programs and events.

#### Priority 1.2

##### Create partnerships to increase Argyle Recreation's media presence

1. Increase the number of free radio ads as well as paid ads.
2. Create a Social Media Team.
3. Engage the local newspapers
4. Integrate Argyle Recreation events on South Shore Connect.
5. Face to face meetings with seniors and school.
6. Promote Senior's events on the Lobster Bay Shopper.
7. As much as possible use the Municipal quarterly newsletter to promote recreation opportunities.

#### Priority 1.3

##### Increase engagement on social media on all platforms

1. Create videos of recreation events/ activities/ programs, and infrastructure by hiring a professional.
2. Create a "like and share" contest on Facebook to increase the number of people "liking" Argyle Recreation- Active Living Facebook Page.
3. Hire a "Social Media" person for events to take pictures and post on twitter, Instagram and snapchat when appropriate.
4. Invite people to Argyle Recreation events through Facebook.
5. Schedule events to appear on Facebook at peak times.

#### **Priority 1.4**

##### **Argyle Recreation upholds a culture of promotion and partnership**

1. Develop a promotional plan that determines the best practices & communication strategy for each target group.
2. Strengthen the relationship with target group networks.
3. Increase cross postings of recreation opportunities.

## **GOAL 2: INFRASTRUCTURE**

To improve the quality of existing infrastructure.

To identify if there is a need for new infrastructure.

Argyle Recreation recognizes that the recreation infrastructure plays an important role in unstructured and structure play. The infrastructure in our communities is what brings people together for physical activity. This gives people a place for recreation opportunities in their back yard. Argyle Recreation has made major improvements over the last five years and the benefits are becoming apparent. It is Argyle Recreation's belief that we need to maintain and continue to improve the recreation Infrastructure.

#### **Priority 2.1**

##### **Fitness facility in Tusket area**

1. Share the results of the recreation online survey with Council outlining the common theme of a fitness center in Tusket.
2. Organize and support a group of interested individuals who would like to pursue the possibility of a fitness center.
3. Determine what is meant by the term fitness center from the group.
4. Create awareness around the results of the online survey to the public.
5. Try to determine whether there may be interest from the business sector.

## **Priority 2.2**

### **Continue to maintain the existing infrastructure**

1. Develop a yearly budget for facility maintenance with Facility Maintenance staff.
2. Apply for funding to repair the dugouts at Kemptville ballfield.
3. Apply for funding for a summer maintenance student.
4. Create a sharable maintenance checklist between recreation staff and facility maintenance staff.
5. Develop a 3-year priority maintenance improvement plan.
6. Install basketball hoop(s) at the Pubnico multi-purpose court.

## **Priority 2.3**

### **Planning programs and events using the new infrastructure as well as the upgraded infrastructure**

1. Organize tennis lessons on the upgraded tennis courts.
2. Organize a family-oriented event at the East Pubnico Biking & Walking Park.
3. Organize hiking events on the trails in the municipality.

## **Priority 2.4**

### **Building leadership capacity to provide quality programming using the infrastructure**

1. Provide financial assistance for residents who seek out training.
2. Offer yearly High Five training.
3. Offer sport specific training for leaders in our Municipality (or Yarmouth County).

## **Priority 2.5**

### **Build an outdoor volleyball court at Glenwood Provincial Park**

1. Research the specs for an outdoor Volleyball court
2. Gather quotes for materials and labor.
3. Seek financial assistance from the Provincial.
4. Hire to build or seek volunteers.

## **GOAL 3: CONNECTING PEOPLE TO NATURE**

To increase opportunities for connecting people with nature.

The benefits of connecting people to nature are very well documented. Connecting to nature plays a role in improving your physical and mental health. It also helps your ability to think, learn and remember. Being in nature has also been linked to positive social behaviors and enhance your

creativity. The Municipality of Argyle has beautiful natural surroundings, where people can enjoy being connected to nature through recreation opportunities.

### **Priority 3.1**

#### **Increase public awareness of outdoor recreation opportunities**

1. Promote southshoreconnect.ca to search for outdoor recreation opportunities.
2. Create a social media campaign around the benefits of connecting to nature.
3. Distribute the Yarmouth County Trail brochures at strategic places in MODA (i.e. restaurant, gas stations).

### **Priority 3.2**

#### **Offer a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities**

1. Promote Argyle Recreation Kayak Loan Program.
2. Promote Argyle Recreation Bike Loan Program.
3. Promote Argyle Recreation free loan of snowshoes and Nordic walking poles.
4. Offer a variety of different guided hikes for different skill levels and target groups.
5. Hire an outdoor program coordinator summer staff person.
6. Offer group kayaking events.
7. Create an outdoor play policy for Argyle Recreation day camps.
8. Create and drop-in outdoor play evening program for parents and toddlers at École Pubnico -Ouest.
9. Provide an outdoor recreation summer program for youth ages 12 to 15.

### **Priority 3.3**

#### **Leadership development**

1. Offer outdoor recreation courses for the public.
2. Train staff/volunteers in outdoor specific areas such as kayaking, hiking, tennis, geocaching, orienteering, etc.
3. Provide some funding for volunteers willing to taking outdoor leadership training.

### **Priority 3.4**

#### **Support school outdoor play**

1. Help physical education teachers with their outdoor programming when appropriate.
2. Continue to support and provide leadership for outdoor school programs such as geocaching, snowshoeing, and skiing.
3. Continue to provide "After the Bell" outdoor program for junior high school girls.

### **Priority 3.5**

#### **Minimize negative impacts on the natural environment**

1. Create practices that ensures the least amount of footprint in natural settings.
2. Create a "leave no trace" policy for Argyle Recreation.

## **GOAL 4: INCLUSION AND ACCESSIBILITY**

To decrease barriers to participating in recreation opportunities.

As the Province of Nova Scotia moves toward an accessible province in 2030, Argyle Recreation wants to try to remove barriers to access and be inclusive as much as possible when providing recreation opportunities.

### **Priority 4.1**

#### **Developing and Access and Inclusion Policy for Argyle Recreation**

1. Collect inclusion and accessibility policies from other recreation departments.
2. Form a small committee to draft the policy.
3. Present the draft policy to ARC.
4. Present policy to Council for approval.
5. Begin to implement policy.

### **Priority 4.2**

#### **Maintain Kids first Fund**

1. Maintain a budget line for Kids First fund on a yearly basis
2. Funding should reflect the previous year's actual budget.
3. If budget line is exhausted and there are more demands, find other sources of funding.

### **Priority 4.3**

#### **Increase participation in recreation programs**

1. Train recreation staff on inclusion and accessibility.
2. Provide low cost or no cost programs.
3. Subsidize bus trips and Tusket island tours.
4. Promote the Adaptive Equipment Loan Program
5. Offer sledge hockey programming.
6. Provide programming, whenever possible at locations accessible to all.
7. Provide childcare for certain adult programs.
8. Provide a list of "what to bring and what to expect" for recreation programs.

9. Challenge the boundaries of sport. Create more opportunities for rural community sport by creating our own sport model that is more inclusive and meet the needs of our communities.

#### **Priority 4.4**

##### **Increase accessibility to Argyle’s recreation infrastructure**

1. Complete accessibility audits on Municipal recreation Infrastructure.
2. Create a yearly plan and budget to complete the upgrades.
3. Present the plan to Council for approval and to be part of the municipal accessibility plan.

#### **Priority 4.5**

##### **Increase Argyle Recreation Commission’s awareness on accessibility and inclusion**

1. Change ARC’s Terms of Reference membership to include a person with a disability or a person caring for person with a disability.
2. Recruit a member to serve on ARC to meet the new membership TOR.

#### **Priority 4.6**

##### **To provide a welcoming environment.**

1. Develop a checklist of what needs to happen in order to provide a welcoming environment.
2. Seek input from a diverse group to form the checklist.
3. Implement the checklist for Argyle Recreation programs and events.
4. Evaluate the effectiveness of the checklist by seeking input from participants.
5. Whenever possible ensure programs leaders are knowledgeable in creating a welcoming environment.
6. Offer High Five Principles of Healthy Aging to leaders dealing with Seniors.

### **GOAL 5: ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION**

To educate the residents and Council on the importance and benefits of active transportation to MODA.

To increase awareness of the active transportation opportunities.

To improve active transportation infrastructure in MODA.

To maintain communication between MODA and Department Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal regarding the Active Transportation Plan.

Argyle Recreation has an official Active Transportation Plan (July 2016) that was adopted by Council. This document was created to improve active transportation within the Municipality. With the right

infrastructure and setting, active transportation can be a wonderful way to connect with the environment, friends and neighbors, while at the same time increasing physical activity.

### **Priority 5.1**

#### **Education and communication of MODA Active Transportation Plan**

1. Present the active transportation yearly plan to Council.
2. Update Council on AT progress outlined in the plan through staff report to Council.
3. Invite staff and Council members to serve on the AT Committee.
4. Present capital budget for AT infrastructure improvements to council.
5. Apply for funding to improve AT infrastructure.
6. On a yearly basis, communicate with DTIR regional manager MODA's AT Plan commitment for that year.

### **Priority 5.2**

#### **Promote active transportation opportunities in the Municipality of Argyle**

1. Hire an external person to create videos of the trails in MODA and feature them on our social media platforms, southshoreconnect.ca, as well as our website.
2. Hire professionals to develop a series of brochures (web friendly) on the AT opportunities in MODA.
3. Work with Bicycle Nova Scotia to promote Bicycle Friendly Business certification program.
4. Provide bicycle rack contest for businesses who are certified as Bicycle Friendly.

### **Priority 5.3**

#### **Increase Active Transportation programs**

1. Purchase bicycles for new programming.
2. Plan a fun walk/ run for children.
3. Plan a youth active transportation event around biking and kayaking.
4. Plan fun runs/walks using the trails in MODA.
5. Plan family events around walking, hiking and snowshoeing.
6. Partner with the schools to promote activities such as biking and snowshoeing.