



MUNICIPALITY OF THE DISTRICT OF LUNENBURG: ACTIVE LIVING STRATEGIC PLAN

December 2022



Table of Contents

Table of Contents	i
I. Introduction	1
The Need for an Active Living Strategic Plan	1
Glossary of Terms.....	3
Strategy Development Process	5
II. Background and Context	7
Let's Get Moving	7
Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Access	8
Citizen Survey	10
III. Vision, Mission, and Values	12
Vision	12
Mission	12
Values	12
IV. Strategic Directions.....	13
The Framework	13
Strategic Direction 1: Communication and Promotion.....	14
Strategic Direction 2: Community Capacity and Leadership	15
Strategic Direction 3: Natural and Built Environments.....	16
Strategic Direction 4: Social Environments and Inclusion	18
V. Moving Forward	19

I. Introduction

The Need for an Active Living Strategic Plan

Physical activity, sport, and recreation have significant benefits for both individuals and communities such as:

- Improved individual health through chronic disease prevention and management, enhanced growth and development, improved sleep, and improved mental health.
- Improved education outcomes and academic performance.
- Improved social connection by bringing people together, reducing isolation and encouraging civic engagement through volunteering.
- Environmental support through fewer greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions as more people walk or bike as a mode of transportation.
- Economic development by creating walkable and bikeable communities as well as indoor and outdoor infrastructure which supports tourism and attracts new residents.

Despite these well-known benefits, one in two Canadian adults aged 18 to 79 do not meet the recommended 150 minutes of heart pumping physical activity a week.¹ Less than half of the children and youth aged 5 to 19 are meeting the recommended guidelines of 60 minutes a day of physical activity most days of the week.²

Challenges to being physically active include more sedentary work environments, community design focused on automobile use, busy lifestyles, and safety fears. Despite these challenges, there is good news and opportunity! There are many assets in communities across Nova Scotia, including in the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg (MODL). For example, there is an experienced sport, recreation, and physical activity sector with innovative leaders. We are a small province where communities can pool resources and learn from one another.

The time is right to renew the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg's strategic plan for active living by building on what we have accomplished over the last few years and identifying opportunities to help us achieve our vision *MODL: Where residents move and play every day.*

This report provides information on the strategy development process; background information including an overview of the Let's Get Moving (the provincial physical activity strategy), the importance of equity and inclusion, and the findings from the citizen survey; the strategic plan

¹ Statistics Canada. Canadian Health Measures Survey: Activity monitor data, 2018-2019.
<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/210901/dq210901c-eng.htm>.

² Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute. Physical activity levels of Canadian children and youth.
<https://cflri.ca/physical-activity-levels/children-and-youth>.
MODL Active Living Strategic Plan (2022-2027)
October 2022

vision, mission, and values; the strategic directions and associated goals, objectives, and actions; and next steps.



Glossary of Terms

Access

Understanding the ways people interact with their environment and recognizing the barriers that prevent equitable participation in active living.

Active Living

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), active living is a way of life in which physical, social, mental, emotional, and spiritual activities are valued and are integrated into daily living.

Barrier

Something that makes it harder for some people to participate. Nova Scotia's Accessibility Act defines a barrier as "anything that hinders or challenges the full and effective participation in society of persons with disabilities, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy, or a practice."

Disability

As defined in Nova Scotia's Accessibility Act: "a physical, mental, intellectual, learning or sensory impairment, including an episodic disability that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders an individual's full and effective participation in society."

Diversity

As defined by the Government of Canada, individuals who have an array of identities, abilities, backgrounds, cultures, skills, perspectives, and experiences that are representative of Canada's current and evolving population.

Equity

A commitment to fairness. Equitable access is different from equal access. Equality means everybody is treated the same; equity means everybody is treated fairly, based on their needs and abilities. Equity recognizes and values differences, removing systemic barriers and accommodating individual differences, as needed.

Inclusion

As defined by Government of Canada, a fair, equitable, supportive, welcoming, and respectful space. It recognizes, values and leverages differences in identities, abilities, backgrounds, cultures, skills, experiences, and perspectives that support and reinforce Canada's evolving human rights framework.

Leisure

Leisure refers to the free time that people can spend away from their everyday responsibilities (e.g. work and domestic tasks) to rest, relax, and enjoy life.

Movement

A variety of types and intensities of physical activity and muscle strengthening activities that occur where we live, work, and play. For this strategy, the term movement encompasses movement as simple as breaking up sitting time by standing, to light activity (e.g. light household chores), to moderate to vigorous activity like brisk walking or more intense fitness or sport activities.

Simple Movement

Simple physical activity and movement that can be easily incorporated throughout the day in small amounts (at a minimum). It includes but is not limited to incidental physical activity that occurs as a by product of other activities in daily life. This movement does not necessarily require any learned skills, and the degree of difficulty can be adapted to suit an individual's available time and needs, such as lifestyle and ability. This simple movement can occur within the four domains of physical activity (home, transportation, workplace/school and leisure).

Strategy Development Process

The Municipality of the District of Lunenburg developed an Active Living Strategy in 2014 through the Municipal/Mi'kmaw Physical Activity Leadership (MPAL) program. MPAL is a cost-sharing agreement between the Province of Nova Scotia and participating municipalities or First Nation communities. The purpose of the MPAL program is to support the development, implementation and evaluation of community wide plans that will increase participation in physical activity and decrease sedentary behaviour.

The priority of the program is the integration of less structured movement in bouts throughout the day. There are five outcome areas for the MPAL program. These include:

1. Physical environment supports for walking
2. Social supports for walking
3. Physical environment supports for other less structured physical activity
4. Social supports for other less structured physical activity
5. Policies to support physical activity

Priority principles of MPAL are equity (eliminating disparities in access) and supporting inactive populations (moving from no or light activity to more activity).

Given that it has been some time since the Active Living Strategy was developed, coupled with the fact that most of the strategies within the plan have been completed, the Municipality embarked on a second strategic planning process, supported through Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage (CCTH).

A working group consisting of representatives from the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg, CCTH, and Public Health was formed to lead the development of the updated Active Living Strategic Plan. The strategic plan development process consisted of the following:

- A review of the previous strategic plan to identify strategies completed and opportunities for continued development.
- A review of other relevant strategies to identify opportunities for alignment/synergy including [*Let's Get Moving Nova Scotia*](#) (a provincial action plan for increasing physical activity in Nova Scotia); the [*Shared Strategy for Advancing Recreation in Nova Scotia*](#); and other plans and surveys (e.g., [*Council Strategic Priorities*](#), [*Lunenburg County Accessibility Plan*](#), [*Open Spaces Plan*](#), [*NS Quality of Life Survey*](#), [*Culture Index Study Report*](#)).
- A review of findings from the Active Living Refresh Strategy Survey completed from March 2020 to April 2021 and Physical Activity Community Survey (Citizen Survey) completed in 2021 for the Municipality.
- Development of draft strategic directions and associated objectives and actions for the active living strategic plan (2022 to 2027) by the working group based on the findings from the review of materials (bullets one to three).

- A consultation session with stakeholders to obtain feedback into the draft strategic directions and associated objectives and actions.
- The feedback from the consultation session was compiled and used to create a strategic plan report which was reviewed and finalized by the working group.

II. Background and Context

Let's Get Moving

Let's Get Moving Nova Scotia (LGMNS) is a plan to encourage Nova Scotians to include more movement in their daily lives. It is a five-year cross-departmental plan released in November 2018. As described in the plan, Let's Get Moving Nova Scotia supports programs in communities that:

- Help Nova Scotians find more ways to join in activities that fit their lifestyles, abilities, and interests, as well as those that are an important part of their culture
- Remove barriers that keep some people from participating
- Consider the needs of the less active, aging, and other priority groups

The plan has five goals:

- Goal 1: Redefine movement
- Goal 2: Reach Nova Scotians where they learn, work, and access health care
- Goal 3: Advance quality community leadership
- Goal 4: Enhance opportunities and address inclusion
- Goal 5: Measure progress

Each goal also has several actions which are outlined in the plan. The MPAL program is guided by Goal 3: *Advance quality community leadership*.

The aim of Let's Get Moving is to help Nova Scotians be more active in their everyday lives. This will be done by improving and increasing opportunities for Nova Scotians to be active in their communities, workplaces, schools, and through the healthcare setting; improving understanding of movement; and improving supports, and spaces, and policies that encourage movement. In the end, the goal of the strategy is to foster a culture where daily movement is the new normal for Nova Scotians of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds.³



³ Province of Nova Scotia. Let's Get Moving Nova Scotia. novascotia.ca/letsgetmoving.
MODL Active Living Strategic Plan (2022-2027)
October 2022

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Access

Equity is a notion acknowledging that equal treatment and opportunities do not lead to equal outcomes and recognizes that some populations have diverse needs. Health inequities are differences in health status between groups and populations that are socially and systemically produced by unequal distribution across the population, often linked to the social determinants of health – where we live, grow, learn, work, play, and age.



Figure 1: Equality vs Equity (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation)

The unequal distribution of supports and resources make it more difficult for some individuals and populations to participate in physical activity and recreation opportunities. For this reason, it is important to apply an equity and inclusion lens when planning, implementing, and evaluating physical activity and recreation programs, resources, and policies. In order to ensure that equitable programs and services are offered, the following considerations are important to apply as necessary:

- Fair and just distribution of resources needed to participate
- Fair and just access to opportunities to participate
- Fair and appropriate supports and services offered for those with diverse needs

According to the [2021 ParticipACTION Report Card](#), new evidence supports that any movement throughout the day – light, moderate, or vigorous physical activity – even in short bouts (i.e., a few minutes at a time) is beneficial. This notion is particularly important when considering how to reach the less active population. When we support this population to move from low activity to more activity, there are significant outcome improvements for them. Policies and cross setting

actions will consider the needs of the less active and provide low-barrier opportunities for them to integrate more movement throughout the day.

Inclusive physical activity and recreation opportunities are a priority throughout Nova Scotia. The Shared Strategy for Advancing Recreation in NS and Let's Get Moving NS both have goals to address inclusion and access. All individuals deserve to have a fair chance to participate, regardless of their physical abilities, socioeconomic status or ethnic background, and municipalities can play a key leadership role to help break down barriers.

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Access (EDIA) are recognized as key principles that steer all strategic directions in the MODL Active Living Strategic Plan. EDIA is specifically highlighted within two strategic directions: Natural and Built Environment, and Social Environments and Inclusion. The MODL Active Living Strategic Plan recognizes the need to apply an EDIA lens throughout all stages of strategic planning and implementation to ensure the strategic directions taken are safe and supportive to everybody.

Citizen Survey

The purpose of the Physical Activity Citizen's Survey was to inform the active living strategies in the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg. The full report is available through MODL's Active Living Coordinator in the Municipality with key findings and conclusions presented below.

The following graphic presents a summary of the top activities desired by respondents (wish list), most common challenges to participation in physical activity, potential opportunities, and motivators for active transportation (AT).

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.

Top Activities on Wish List

Walking: Top of the wish list for future activity, especially for females.
Swimming: Second highest interest overall.

Most Common Challenges

Infrastructure: Condition and maintenance of bicycle lanes and roadsides for walking
Social barriers: Having someone to be active with.
Finding time: Working activity into daily life and around schedules

Physical Activity Opportunities

Non-competitive (recreational) activities (especially among females)
Drop-in sport and recreation activities
Female-only activities (especially swimming)
Rec office support to help make connections

AT Motivators

Two-in-five walk at least weekly. One-in-ten bicycle weekly.
More than half would like to **walk more often**, affected by sidewalk maintenance, trails, and condition of roads.
About two-in-five would like to **bicycle more often** with bicycle lanes, better road conditions, and off-road paths.

The following conclusions were presented within the report of the survey findings:

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 by prioritizing support for walking.
2. Swimming is also mentioned as a wish list item for increased participation, but to a far lesser degree than walking.

3. Infrastructure for walking and cycling is a clear need based on identified physical activity challenges in general and active transportation facilitators.
4. Interventions to support social connections are important. They address significant barriers and garner significant interest among programming concepts (i.e., drop-in and female only options).
5. Time (availability of residents, scheduling of programs) 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.

More community members may be engaged by improving accessibility of community-based physical activity opportunities through offering flexible, non-competitive, and family-friendly activities that incorporate social interactions.



III. Vision, Mission, and Values

Vision

MODL: Where residents move and play every day.

Mission

The Municipality of the District of Lunenburg is committed to improving opportunities and creating supportive environments for physical activity and movement to foster healthy communities and citizens.

Values

The Municipality of the District of Lunenburg values the idea that recreation exists for everyone:

- A culture that supports healthy, active lifestyles throughout the lifespan.
- Removing barriers and providing necessary supports to decrease sedentary behaviours, specifically for the less active population.
- Strong working partnerships with the community in a spirit of collaboration with our regional partners.
- Access to the pristine natural beauty of our region's coastline, lakes, and forests.
- Healthy, active lifestyles are built on a strong volunteer base and social connection that enhances the quality of life in our region.
- Equitable opportunities for everyone to access recreation, through a mix of structured and unstructured play for all ages and demographics.
- Inclusive and welcoming access to places and spaces promotes social interaction and the pure joy of participation, with active recreation opportunities for all.

IV. Strategic Directions

The Framework

The figure below provides the framework for the strategic plan, with details including the strategic directions, goals, objectives, and high-level actions. The five outcome areas for the MPAL program are emphasized throughout each level of the framework.⁴



⁴ The five MPAL outcomes are as follows: 1. Physical environment supports for walking; 2. Social supports for walking; 3. Physical environment supports for other less structured physical activity; 4. Social supports for other less structured physical activity; 5. Policies to support physical activity

Strategic Direction 1: Communication and Promotion

Goal: Community members who value active living and are motivated to move more everyday.

Objectives and High-Level Actions

Objectives	High Level Actions
1.1 Develop and implement communication strategies to promote opportunities for active living and daily movement	• Use a variety of mechanisms and target communication to ensure different population groups and all communities in MODL are reached • Promote and showcase assets within MODL that support active living and daily movement, ensuring that the accessibility of facilities and outdoor spaces is communicated • Partner with community organizations and leaders in active living across the Municipality to support coordinated communication and education efforts • Recognize and celebrate community members to share success stories related to active living that profile a variety of experiences and identities • Review communication and promotional material with an equity lens to ensure inclusive language and images that reflect diversity
1.2 Develop and implement communication strategies to promote the value and possibilities for active living and daily movement	• Leverage provincial and national campaigns to support the promoting the value of active living and daily movement within MODL • Partner with the province and others to educate the public about the value of daily movement • Support municipal staff and Council to become role models and champions for active living and daily movement

Strategic Direction 2: Community Capacity and Leadership

Goal: A network of leaders and partners across MODL who support active living opportunities.

Objectives and High-Level Actions

Objectives	High Level Actions
2.1 Build leadership within communities and organizations across the Municipality to support active living and daily movement	• Identify and support community champions as needed to facilitate their work in active living and daily movement, ensuring representation across diverse community demographics • Develop a recruitment plan/strategy to engage more community members as champions for active living and daily movement, with an emphasis on walking • Partner with stakeholders to provide leadership training and skill development to community champions that will help them support fellow residents in active living and daily movement
2.2 Build youth leaders (11 to 25 years) within communities across the Municipality to support active living and daily movement	• Partner with schools and community organizations including youth-serving organizations to support youth to become more physically active and develop youth leaders for active living and daily movement • Conduct a needs assessment on active living, daily movement and leadership and establish strategic relationships to better understand youth strengths and needs across their diverse identities • Provide and expand training opportunities and mentorship for youth to support the development of youth leaders for active living and daily movement • Continue to promote and support integration of physically active learning in schools across MODL through Active Smarter Kids (ASK)
2.3 Engage communities across the Municipality to facilitate and enhance active living and daily movement opportunities	• Continue to conduct outreach to communities in MODL to disseminate programs and initiatives and include targeted work for distinct demographics (e.g., Women on Wheels) • Build partnerships with businesses and employers to support simple movement in the workplace setting • Enhance partnerships with community organizations and businesses to support active living and daily movement in the community • Incorporate active living within community events, particularly those that may be more sedentary (e.g., firehall breakfast, bingo, rug-hooker get-togethers, etc.)

Strategic Direction 3: Natural and Built Environments

Goal: A sustainable, connected, and safe network of trails, parks, open spaces, waterways, and recreation facilities within MODL.

Objectives and High-Level Actions

Objectives	High Level Actions
3.1 Enhance community use of natural spaces such as trails, parks, open spaces, waterways, etc. across MODL	• Identify potential improvements for walkability and access to trails and parks and support municipal implementation of changes (e.g., lighting, parking, grooming, signage, etc.) • Promote existing trails, parks, and open spaces in MODL to increase use of existing spaces and walking • Partner with community groups, neighbouring municipalities and towns, provincial organizations, and private landowners to support year-round maintenance and growth of natural spaces in MODL (e.g., hiking associations, Canoe/Kayak, Natural Resources, etc.) • Promote grants and funding opportunities to local communities to facilitate the development of natural spaces • Use an equity lens when developing or expanding parks, trails, and open spaces (e.g., reference adaptable equipment, equipment loan, and play boxes)
3.2 Enhance opportunities for safe and active routes within communities across MODL	• Collaborate with the other municipal departments to optimize plans, strategies, and policies to support the natural and built environment including enhancing connectivity of transportation routes for active transportation • Initiate innovative approaches to address barriers to access due to lack of transportation, and transportation infrastructure, in rural areas • Partner with local communities to support and enhance safe walking and wheeling options in rural areas across MODL • Support the development and implementation of a plan to improve trail etiquette and safety • Partner with stakeholders to optimize the use of provincial planning and funding to enhance walkability, wheeling, and safe routes within MODL
3.3 Promote the use of indoor infrastructure for active living and daily movement	• Promote the use of the Lunenburg County Lifestyle Centre (LCLC) for simple movement (i.e., standing to watch practice, walking around the indoor track) to both MODL residents and visitors who may be at the LCLC for other reasons (i.e., children's programming) • Advocate for and optimize community use of schools

	• Promote and encourage residents to use local indoor facilities for daily movement (HB Studios Sports Centre, LCLC, community halls, stores, office, etc.) where they live, work, learn, and play
--	--

Strategic Direction 4: Social Environments and Inclusion

Goal: Accessible and inclusive opportunities for active living that provide opportunities for social connection within MODL.

Objectives and High-level Actions

Objectives	High Level Actions
4.1 Build supportive social environments to facilitate active living and daily movement	• Include opportunity for social connection within active living opportunities, considering the need for targeted options • Continue to support and enhance walking groups in MODL • Develop and implement community initiatives that provide opportunities for social connection and provide incentives to be physically active (e.g., community challenges, workplace challenges, etc.)
4.2 Reduce barriers to participation in active living and daily movement to help ensure equitable access	• Partner with organizations that work with populations that face barriers to engaging in physical activity to facilitate opportunities for active living within programming and services (e.g., Family Resource Centres, VON, Community Services) • Identify and use an equity lens in consultation with stakeholders in planning and programming to support inclusion, diversity, and accessibility (i.e., the creation of safe spaces – anti-racist, gender and ability inclusive, etc.) • Support low-income populations by offering free and subsidized opportunities, and assist with funding opportunities (e.g. ProKids)
4.3 Support the implementation of the provincial <i>Access by Design 2030: Achieving an Accessible Nova Scotian</i> plan for accessibility and the <i>Lunenburg County Accessibility Plan</i>	• Include universal design within new physical activity and recreation infrastructure • Use municipal toolkits for accessibility in active living planning • Support Lunenburg County Accessibility Advisory Committee
4.4 Develop strategies to enhance values of inclusive attitudes among staff, council, and the community	• Develop and implement policies and procedures, including an inclusion policy for the Municipality, which are non-discriminatory, gender and ability inclusive, etc. • Incorporate universal design in program planning, infrastructure development, etc. • Provide training opportunities on inclusion (e.g., non-discriminatory, gender, and ability inclusive, etc.)

V. Moving Forward

Moving forward, the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg will continue to work with both new and established partners to support the implementation of the updated Active Living Strategic Plan. Where established partners exist, MODL will share this updated strategy and determine ways to continue or expand the work together. In some instances, MODL will pursue important new partnerships to advance these objectives. A more detailed operational plan will be developed to identify specific actions, timelines, accountability, responsibility, and indicators of success for the objectives and actions within the strategic plan.

To help ensure successful implementation of the strategic plan, key enablers have been identified including:

- **Leadership** from the Municipality and partner organizations. While the Active Living Coordinator has an important role to play in guiding the work, Council, fellow MODL colleagues, and partners need to champion the actions within the strategic plan. The strategic plan was developed through a collaborative process that engaged stakeholders from within the community and the actions reflect that shared work. Shared responsibility to support implementation of the strategic plan will help to ensure success.
- **Resources** including human, financial, and physical are key enablers for the implementation of the strategic plan. Based on the actions and priorities identified, resources will be sought out and dedicated to support implementation of the plan, including collaboration across departments within MODL.
- **Accountability** is another key enabler to support implementation of the strategic plan. As noted above, an operational plan will identify indicators of success, which are the foundation for monitoring implementation of the actions and success of the strategic plan. Through ongoing tracking of the actions, adjustments can be made to continually improve the implementation process. Annual reports will be produced to track progress and share success.
- **Communication** with our partners and community will be critical throughout the implementation of the strategic plan. Effective communication, including status updates, will help to build shared responsibility for the strategic plan and to celebrate and build on achievements.

Many people contributed to developing MODL's Active Living Strategic Plan. The contributions made by partners in the community have been invaluable. The ongoing support and dedication of all these individuals will be essential in helping to move the strategic directions and associated objectives of the strategic plan forward and to help to ensure the vision and goals are achieved.