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Item 12.1

Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee November 20, 2025

TO: Chair and Members of the Community Planning & Economic Development Standing Committee

FROM: Jacqueline Hamilton, Acting Commissioner of Operations

DATE: October 16, 2025

SUBJECT: Rural Recreation Strategy -Year One Implementation Progress Report

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

January 9, 2024, motion of Halifax Regional Council

MOVED by Councillor Cuttell, seconded by Councillor Stoddard

THAT Halifax Regional Council:

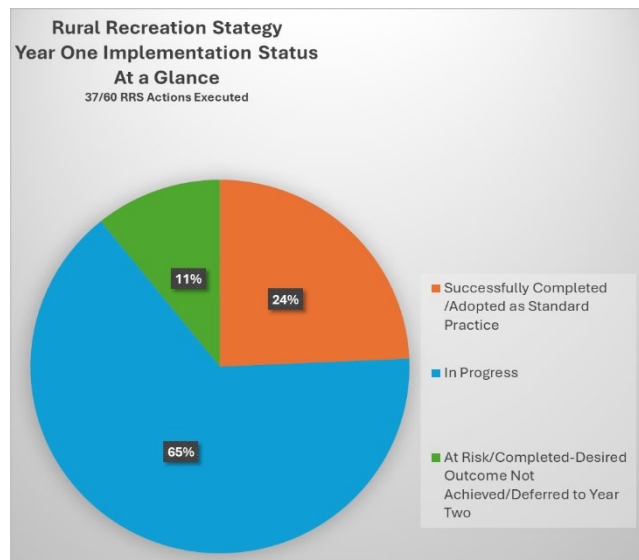
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2. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to carry out the actions contained in the Rural Recreation Strategy as part of the multi-year budgeting and business planning process.
3. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to return to Regional Council via Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee with a progress report after one year of the adoption of the Rural Recreation Strategy.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Approved by Regional Council in January 2024, the Rural Recreation Strategy (RRS) was designed to improve equitable access to recreation opportunities in rural HRM. This report outlines the progress that was achieved during year one (May 2024–June 2025), following the formal introduction of the RRS to staff.



The RRS identifies 60 action goals to be completed over a three-year period, with 37 of those actions prioritized for completion in the first year. At the time of reporting, nine of these actions have been successfully completed or adopted as standard practice by Parks and Recreation. An additional 24 actions are actively in progress and are on track for successful completion. The remaining five actions are either at risk, completed without achieving the intended outcomes, or have been deferred to the second year of implementation. Overall, more than 85 percent of Year One goals have been completed or are well underway, reflecting a strong and focused start to the strategy's Implementation.

Key accomplishments were realized, including the advancement of the Eastern Shore Lifestyle Centre, the piloting of Saturday school access,

and the delivery of programs in non-traditional venues. A revised asset rating process was implemented, and Regional Recreation Round Tables were established. Youth volunteerism was promoted through a leadership program that saw the participation of 54 youths from high- and medium-priority communities.

Rural service delivery was supported through the development of community profiles, the creation of a program proposal process, and the introduction of training materials for community groups. A Rural Communications Strategy was developed in response to challenges posed by limited communication infrastructure and digital exclusion.

In year two, further partnership development, the expansion of pilot initiatives, enhanced data collection, and improved infrastructure support will be prioritized. Continued support from Regional Council and collaboration across business units will be required to maintain momentum and to ensure alignment with the broader strategic objectives.

BACKGROUND

The Rural Recreation Strategy has been developed to enhance recreational opportunities in rural areas by addressing unique community needs and promoting equitable access to facilities and programs. Approved by Regional Council in January of 2024, rural areas were defined in the strategy as all areas located outside the urban and suburban tax boundaries. These rural areas have been further divided into four geographical regions: Commuter East, Commuter West, Musquodoboit Valley, and the Eastern Shore. Barriers to participation in recreation were identified through research and community engagement, which enabled the classification of high, medium, and low priority areas within rural HRM for targeted support. Six common themes were outlined based on public engagement priorities: equitable access to indoor facilities, access to outdoor recreation opportunities, volunteer support, programming that meets rural needs, inter-departmental and inter-governmental partnerships, and advertising and communications reflective of rural communities. There are 60 actions that have been identified for both short-term and long-term implementation, with a focus on enhancing services and ensuring engagement from rural communities. A three-year implementation plan is currently in place.

The full document is available at [cc_rec_rrs_strategy_document_january2024-web.pdf](https://www.musquodoboitvalley.ca/cc_rec_rrs_strategy_document_january2024-web.pdf)

DISCUSSION

Significant progress has been made in year one of the Rural Recreation Strategy (RRS) Implementation.

Important developments have been made regarding access to indoor facilities, for example, phase one of the Eastern Shore Lifestyle Centre construction being underway. User-friendly facility evaluation toolkits have been developed and piloted to support data collection for municipally owned, board-operated, and community-operated facilities. These tools are expected to improve funding leverage and operational planning. Collaborative relationships with rural school principals and custodians have been maintained to support access to school gymnasiums for community recreation. Repurposing of existing indoor spaces, including community halls and closed school gyms, has been actively supported, and additional transportation options, such as a new recreation bus, have been introduced to improve access for rural residents.

In the area of equitable access to outdoor recreation opportunities, ongoing updates to the rural parks inventory and condition assessments have been conducted to enhance understanding of asset needs. Challenges related to maintenance travel times and lack of partners available to participate in the community support partnership program have been addressed through exploration of satellite maintenance depots. The rural lens for recreation service delivery has been applied to guide improvements in accessible and adaptable equipment availability. Collaboration with Active Transportation planning has progressed, with safe walking paths being developed and rural considerations integrated into broader active transportation initiatives. Aquatic programming pilots, including lifeguard certification courses and rural swim lessons, have been expanded in rural areas, supported by partnerships with provincial agencies. Advocacy for year-round access to provincial parks has been pursued.

Efforts to support volunteer capacity in rural communities have been prioritized. Volunteer Support Services has been directed to assist groups in high and medium priority areas identified by the Rural Lens. Training workshops, the lending of event kits, and logistical support have been provided to build sustainable volunteer organizations. The Youth Leadership Program successfully engaged over 50 rural youth in volunteer experiences during the summer of 2024, contributing to workforce readiness and community connection.

Programming has been adapted to meet rural recreation needs through the development of community profiles for all rural service areas, which have been used to inform program planning and funding requests. Expansion of free and low-cost community programming is underway, while further work to recruit rural instructors and build local leadership capacity is ongoing. Leadership for RRS implementation within Parks & Recreation has been strengthened by the reassignment of a staff person as a dedicated Community Recreation Coordinator for rural areas in May 2024. A Regional Round Table Committee has been established to facilitate collaboration among rural staff and community groups which has enhanced program delivery and coordination amongst service providers.

Strengthening of Intergovernmental and Interdepartmental Partnerships has been achieved through various initiatives. Data collection and analysis have been undertaken to benchmark service delivery equity across rural regions. An inaugural cross-departmental meeting was held in June 2025, identifying strong interest with ongoing collaboration, which led to a scheduled October 2025 workshop aimed at improving coordination and building relationships among government and community partners. The internal Rural Recreation Advisory Committee was successfully established to ensure alignment and guidance on RRS priorities within municipal business units.

Challenges and opportunities in advertising and communications tailored to rural needs have been addressed. Despite the ongoing challenges with rural communication, multiple communication channels have been used, including print, digital, and school-based outreach. A new Rural Communications Strategy has been developed to provide greater flexibility and targeted promotion of rural recreation programs. Digital exclusion has been identified as a priority, and hybrid communication approaches are being improved.

Partnerships with schools and community organizations have been enhanced to increase program awareness.

In summary, meaningful progress has been demonstrated across all strategic themes during Year One of the Rural Recreation Strategy Implementation, despite challenges related to policy constraints, staff capacity changes, and resource limitations. Continued collaboration, communication innovation, and community engagement are expected to be essential for fully realizing the vision of equitable, accessible, and vibrant rural recreation in Halifax Regional Municipality.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this report. All financial implications associated with individual recommendations will be assessed and brought forward to Regional Council on a project-specific basis through the annual Budget and Business Planning process.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Not Applicable

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipal Charter

- 7A The purposes of the Municipality are to ...
(b) provide services, facilities, and other things that, in the opinion of the Council, are necessary or desirable for all or part of the Municipality; ...

ATTACHMENT

Attachment 1: Rural Recreation Strategy Year One Implementation Status Report

Report Prepared by: Mickie McDow, Community Recreation Coordinator, Parks & Recreation 902
221-4176

Approved by: Maggie MacDonald, Executive Director, Parks and Recreation, 902.490.4933

Rural Recreation Strategy Year One Implementation Status Report

The charts below contain an outline of the progress achieved for those actions identified within the Rural Recreation Strategy to be completed the first year of its implementation.

RRS Reference	Recommendation	Status
Theme 1: Access to Indoor Facilities		
1.1	Continue to implement Regional Council's direction related to the Eastern Shore Lifestyle Centre	In Progress The design of the Eastern Shore Lifestyle Centre was completed by Architecture49 (awarded Nov 2023), and public input occurred in spring & fall 2024, with the construction contract being awarded to Avondale Construction Limited and construction starting in July 2025. Construction completion of the Fire Station is anticipated in the late summer of 2026. Then the existing fire station will be demolished to make way for the Community Centre which is expected to open in the fall of 2027.
1.4	Require municipally owned and board-operated facilities to collect rental and participant usage data on an annual basis to leverage funding and other supports.	In Progress A document detailing the information required to be collected has been drafted and will be included in the roll out of the tool kit as outlined in Action 1.5
1.5	Develop user-friendly facility evaluation toolkits to assist in collecting information needed for funding and grant applications, such as participation rates, program offerings, state of good repair, plans and financial statements. Provide educational training to municipal-owned and board-operated facilities on how to use the facility evaluation toolkit.	In Progress The contents of the tool kit have been drafted. The document was reviewed by facility managers and staff. Suggestions for improvement and format were reviewed, and staff are currently working on the formatting and design of the tool kit. These tools will be introduced to municipal owned and volunteer managed facilities in the fall of 2025.
1.6	Encourage and support community-operated facilities to collect rental and participant usage data on an annual basis to leverage funding and other supports. Develop user friendly facility evaluation toolkits to assist in collecting information needed for funding and grant applications, such as participation rates, program offerings, state of good repair, future plans and financial statements. Provide educational training to community-	In Progress The draft contents of the tool kits were reviewed by a rural community owned and operated facility. They feel that the contents will be helpful in guiding their operations. As the content and design of the kit is like the kit outlined in 1.5, it will be introduced to groups in the fall of 2025.

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	owned facilities on how to use the facility evaluation toolkit.	
1.7	Develop future Parks and Recreation strategies that consider the value of not-for-profit community-operated facilities as assets in the delivery of rural recreation.	At Risk New strategies that consider how community-operated facilities may be further assisted, including with additional financial supports, have yet to have been scoped. In the meantime, municipal programs that support community owned and operated facilities will continue to be identified in the municipality's budget plans.
1.9	Engage with HRCE on how to improve HRM's community access to HRCE schools in the most rural areas to provide better community access to gymnasiums for evening, weekend and summer use	In Progress HRCE piloted a different approach to Saturday Access whereby HRM could either maintain 6 schools in the municipality for full day access, request 12 schools with only morning access or some combination of both. Saturday morning use of the Musquodoboit Valley Education Centre was included in this pilot. HRCE was open to granting additional access to rural schools but barriers remain, such as increased costs & custodial scheduling. HRM will continue to investigate rural school access with HRCE through ongoing discussion on the Service Exchange Agreement.
1.10	Establish relationships with local school principals and custodians to collaborate on the use of schools for rural community recreation programming.	Practice has been adopted as the standard School leadership in rural communities changes regularly. Community Recreation Coordinators are aware of the need to build relationships with the rural schools and continue to do so. Rural recreation staff have requested to be on school advisory councils, have provided staff and equipment to support school events, and continue to engage school leadership on program development. These initiatives help to establish strong relationships with the school principals and custodians.
1.11	Investigate the possibility of creating an after-hours Building Monitor Program in collaboration with HRCE.	At Risk There remain barriers to developing a building monitor program in rural schools where access would be beneficial to the community. Staff will continue to leverage the Service Exchange Agreement (SEA) discussions as a means of

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		gaining after-hours access to rural schools where required. Staff will continue to investigate ways to ensure after-hours access to rural schools.
1.12	Recognizing the unique circumstances of rural communities, explore opportunities for repurposing existing indoor spaces in the most underserved areas to better meet the recreation space needs for additional programming and improved service delivery. Consider partnering with related service providers.	Practice has been adopted as the standard Recreation programming is being delivered in Community Halls and Church basements throughout rural areas. Examples include: open gym programming at the Upper Musquodoboit Community Hall and staff training conducted at the Chaswood Educational Wood Lot by the Adventure Earth Centre. The possibility of community access to the gymnasium in the now-closed Eastern Shore District High may be explored pending provincial actions and further internal direction. Community groups working to repurpose buildings such as the Middleton United Church (Middle Musquodoboit) and Eastern Shore District High are being supported by staff.
1.14	Explore additional transportation options to meet the needs of rural residents.	In Progress The addition of a second recreation bus has been approved to supplement rural recreation programming. Rural Transit is made accessible to residents of the Musquodoboit Valley and Eastern Shore to attend recreation programming by booking one week in advance.

RRS Action Reference	Recommendation	Status
Theme 2: Equitable Access to Outdoor Recreation Opportunities		
2.1	Continue to update the inventory of all rural parks, park assets, park amenities, inspections, and maintenance. Using this inventory: • Maintain the publicly accessible Find a Park interactive map on an ongoing basis • Produce an analysis of the park inventory identifying: • High-level strengths and challenges of maintaining existing parks • A high-level summary of trends, gaps, risks and lifespan of park assets, amenities and services per rural region	In Progress The Find a Park inventory is automatically updated as new assets and amenities are entered into the Assess Registry. Travel time to perform maintenance and lack of partners available to participate in the Community Support Partnership Program in high priority areas have been identified as challenges to rural parks' upkeep. The 2025/2026 business plan has started to address this by investigating the placement of

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	Reproduce this analysis every five years.	satellite depots in Commuter West (Graves Oakley) and the Eastern Shore (Musquodoboit Harbour). Cost of trailers and additional equipment requirements will have to be considered in the 2026-27 budget process. Parks & Recreation staff are committed to working collaboratively to identify community partners once the level of partnership required has been determined. Many of the park assets in rural areas exceed the expected life span, however, are in acceptable condition because they are not heavily used. Staff have redesigned the current Asset Rating Process to ensure that there is additional emphasis applied to assets in rural areas. This will advance equitable recapitalization and the upgrading of rural assets. Staff are currently creating a visual representation of the park assets within the boundaries stated in the RRS. This will include the condition ratings of the outdoor assets. This will be completed in September of 2025.
2.5	Parks & Recreation to consider the Rural Lens for Recreation Service Delivery to guide future decision making regarding adaptable and accessible recreation equipment and inclusive services.	In Progress In conjunction with the formalization of the recreation programming equipment loan process, the availability of accessible equipment loans has been actively marketed within rural HRM. Accessible equipment can now be requested and picked up by rural residents at any HRM Recreation Facility or Office. Current courier contracts are used to transport equipment to rural pick-up locations. An analysis and evaluation of the Inclusion and Accessibility Services is being conducted by Recreation Programming. An advisory group, which includes rural representation, has been formed to assist with the review. The review is projected to be completed by Fall 2026.
2.8	Investigate the feasibility of increasing opportunities for safe walking in rural areas.	In Progress Active Transportation will be presenting a Recommendation Report to Regional Council: Report # 2025-0211, Sidewalks and On-Road Multi-Use Pathways in Rural Centres. This report will identify rural areas for sidewalk consideration. Externally, the development of a safe walking path from Musquodoboit Rural High to what is

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		known as “the Square” in Middle Musquodoboit is being explored by the Musquodoboit Communities Association.
2.9	Collaborate with the Active Transportation Planning team regarding safe walking and cycling on rural roads. The Active Transportation Planning team may use the Rural Lens for Recreation Service Delivery to help inform active transportation investments in rural communities	Practice has been adopted as the standard The Active Transportation Team have been made aware of the “Rural Lens” and are actively using the principles and research contained within the Rural Recreation Strategy to move Active Transportation initiatives and projects forward.
2.10	Address the immediate gaps in outdoor aquatic inventory and programming in rural communities with consideration to: - Using the Rural Lens for Recreation Service Delivery in tandem with Appendix D’s municipal beach evaluation tool of the Long-term Aquatics Strategy to guide decision-making, as it relates to the potential siting of the new supervised beach locations. - Establishing swimming lessons and lifeguards in rural outdoor locations. -Pursue partnering with the province to offer swimming lessons at provincial beaches.	In Progress Changes to rural program offerings are being piloted in the summer of 2025. To address the shortage of available lifeguards and swim instructors in rural areas, two-week Bronze Cross, Bronze Medallion, and First Aid certification courses are being offered at select rural beaches beginning in the summer of 2025. One-week Rural Access Swimming lessons and the “Swim to Survive” program are being offered at six rural locations. A marketing campaign to promote these opportunities in rural communities has been developed by Corporate Communications. Partnerships have been established with the Department of Natural Resources to facilitate aquatic programming at several locations.
2.13	Advocate for the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources and Renewables to allow access to provincial parks for year-round recreation.	In Progress It has been concluded through conversations and meetings with various levels within the Department of Natural Resources and Renewables that year-round access to provincial parks is limited due to financial constraints associated with undertaking such projects. In rural Provincial parks where public access is extended beyond normal operational dates, Community Partnership Agreements have been established. Specific criteria must be met by groups, one of which is the ability to provide liability insurance. Park development partnerships in the Commuter West Region are currently being explored by HRM staff, and further collaboration with provincial organizations, as outlined in Action 5.1, may result in the advancement of this action item.

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RRS Action Reference	Recommendation	Status
Theme 3: Volunteer Support		
3.1	Consider prioritizing the support of volunteer-operated organizations in the high and medium priority areas which are identified in the Rural Lens for Recreation Service Delivery in order to build capacity that leads to sustainable organizations that rely less on municipal resources.	Practice has been adopted as the standard A key performance indicator report system has been created by staff to track the work that is being done to support community groups and organizations in high and medium priority areas of rural HRM. Approximately one third of the sixty projects and initiatives reported in the 2024/2025 fiscal year were to support rural groups and organizations.
3.2	Create a rural communication strategy to better market services provided by HRM.	In Progress Corporate Communications completed a Rural Communication strategy which is being implemented throughout all business units. A mailing list of community groups and organizations who would like to receive information directly from the Volunteer Support Services team has been created. The creation of a marketing plan for Volunteer Support Services has been addressed in Action 6.1
3.3	Consider prioritizing requests for training and support from community groups starting with the high-priority areas identified in the Rural Lens for Recreation Service Delivery.	In Progress The offering of standalone volunteer training workshops was piloted in the Spring of 2024 in conjunction with regular recreation programming. These workshops were marginally successful, and will require additional marketing when offered in the future. Sport Nova Scotia has initiated sport specific coaching training in the Musquodoboit Valley and Sheet Harbour areas, with Halifax Parks & Recreation assisting in promotion, venue provision, and participant recruitment.
3.4	Create an annual catalog of available training opportunities for community-operated facilities and registered not-for-profit recreation organizations.	Completed Successfully A catalog of all training offered by Volunteer Support Services (Community Developers) to community groups and organizations has been developed, an online format to request training

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		from Volunteer Services has been established on Halifax.ca. with hard copies also available.
3.5	Review the municipality's processes and procedures to identify opportunities to streamline or simplify permitting processes for volunteer groups proposing low-risk activities or events on municipal property.	Action has been deferred to year two
3.6	Pilot lending community event kits to volunteer groups that lack funding and resources.	Practice has been adopted as the standard Various kits and equipment have been loaned to support rural volunteer groups and organizations by Recreation Programming. An inventory of all available equipment for residents to borrow has been compiled and circulated within the business unit. This list has been reviewed and approved by Risk and Insurance. A best practice has been established to formalize the terms for the loans, to ensure the equipment is returned in good condition and to mitigate cost for damaged equipment. The availability of kits and equipment to lend to residents and groups will be expanded as funding and grant opportunities become available.
3.8	Continue to support volunteer groups in rural areas throughout the year with logistical and permitting guidance, community events funding, and the scheduling of the municipal float program through the Special Events Task Force.	Practice has been adopted as the standard Rural events have continued to be supported by the Special Events Task Force. Halifax Regional Fire and RCMP support has been arranged in order to support many rural community events on both a small and larger scale.
3.9	Explore opportunities to increase the involvement of youth in volunteer opportunities in rural communities	In Progress The Youth Leadership Program, offered during the summer months, continues to be recognized as Parks and Recreation's primary driver in encouraging youth volunteerism in rural HRM. A total of 54 youth from rural communities were registered in the program in the summer of 2024. Volunteer opportunities were provided, including weeding community gardens and assisting in Summer Day Camps. The program is offered at no cost and has been designed to provide youth with volunteer experience, job readiness training, and social engagement opportunities.

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RRS Action Reference	Recommendation	Status
Theme 4: Programming and Meets Rural Needs		
4.1	Create and regularly update community profiles for each community recreation service area every four years, using resident engagement, asset mapping, recreation trends and Statistics Canada population data.	Completed Successfully Profiles have been developed of each of the four districts outlined in the RRS. These profiles have been used to inform programming decisions, and support requests for low or no cost programming in rural areas. They have been shared with Community Groups as requested. A template has been created which will allow staff to recreate profiles when Statistics Canada Population Data is updated.
4.2	Hold free or low-cost community-based programs in the high- priority communities, as noted in the Rural Lens for Recreation Service Delivery.	In Progress A streamlined process for the approval of free programs or programs that were not included in the Regional Council approved fee by-law has been developed for rural recreation programming. The Community Profiles that were developed as a result of Action 4.1, show that the average income of those living in the high priority rural areas is on average 30% lower than the whole of HRM. As a result programs are offered for shorter durations to keep programs at a lower cost to residents. (i.e day camps that are registered by the day and not by the week, 8 week programs as opposed to 10 week programs), running multiple programs at the same time for various age groups so that only one trip to a venue has to be made for families. The awareness of the Recreation Funding Access Program (Affordable Access Program) and the reluctance to use the Recreation Funding Access Program has been identified as a barrier to rural program participation. Going forward promotion of the Recreation Funding Access program will take place prior to seasonal registrations in rural communities.
4.3	Create a rural instructor recruitment strategic plan including: - Building the capacity of rural residents to lead programs that meet the recreation demands of specific communities.	In Progress A program proposal submission process has been developed and is scheduled to launch in the fall of 2025. Through this process new ideas and potential leaders who are willing to travel to and within rural HRM, will be identified. The process will be widely

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	- Building an incentive program which would take into consideration the cost of mileage and travel time. - Using contract instructors where necessary	promoted in rural communities to encourage both new and long-time residents to share their skills and expertise. Internal capacity has also been built through targeted training, support for the continuation of current staff certifications, summer staff training, and the provision of High 5 certification.
4.6	Assist staff in leading the implementation of the Rural Recreation Strategy action items.	In Progress In May of 2024, Community Recreation Coordinator, Mickie McDow, was reassigned to lead the implementation of the Rural Recreation Strategy within Parks and Recreation, within other HRM business units and through external organizations and levels of government. The role has been assigned to ensure departmental actions are supported, progress is tracked, and issues and concerns are reported to the appropriate parties.
4.8	Explore expanding structured recreation programming and events in public parks and wilderness areas.	In Progress The Explore Our Trails program was extended to rural trails during Fall 2024 and Spring 2025. Guided hikes were offered at Phantom Falls, Gibraltar Rock, Taylors Head, Pennant Point, and the Bluff Wilderness Area. A winter camping program was scheduled to be offered in February 2025 at the Chaswood Educational Woodlot; however, it was cancelled due to low registration. Most of the outdoor program participants and registrants were not residents of the rural areas where the programs were offered.
4.12	Establish a Regional Round Table Committee of rural based HRM staff, as well as representatives from community operated facilities and other community recreation groups and organizations. The group would meet quarterly to discuss and collaborate on forthcoming plans and programs recreation opportunities in the rural areas of the region to enhance recreation program delivery and to avoid duplication or competition.	Completed Successfully Consideration was given to the unique characteristics, the distance between, and the needs among the four regions outlined in the RRS. Therefore, it was decided that a Regional Recreation Round Table would be established in each area. Regular meetings have been held by the groups, and collective efforts have been made toward the achievement of regional goals.

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RRS Action Reference	Recommendation	Status
Theme 5: Intergovernmental and Interdepartmental Partnership		
5.1	Complete a more detailed review of Parks & Recreation's historical level of service delivery cost to provide service across all regions of the municipality back to 2015. Examine if the four rural regions are being provided with equitable service delivery compared to each other and the urban and suburban regions through an analysis of the proportions of population to amenities as well as the existing level of service to the high-priority communities as outlined in the Rural Lens for Recreation Service Delivery. This analysis should include a review of all relevant service delivery indicators such as previous budgets, work orders, participation numbers, and programming.	In Progress Due to recreation software system changes, differences in data collection methods, limited availability of historical data, covid effects on programming operations and budgets, it was decided to begin collecting data in 2022. There were challenges to completing this action, as expenditure had to be tracked and categorized across multiple software systems. All data has been collected, and a working group will now be formed by the Internal Rural Recreation Advisory Committee to analyze the information. This analysis will be used as a benchmark to monitor the equitability of investment in rural areas of HRM and, where applicable, to assess the effectiveness of processes implemented as a result of the RRS. The completed analysis will be included as an appendix in future updates of the Rural Recreation Strategy.
5.2	Work with staff from Active Transportation Planning, Corporate Facility Design & Construction, Regional Recreation, Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage, Nova Scotia Health, Halifax Public Libraries, Department of Lands and Forestry, the Natural Resources Education Centre, and the Community Health boards to create a biannual planning meeting to discuss and collaborate on forthcoming plans and programs affecting recreation opportunities in the rural areas of the region. Recommend attendance from advisors from Diversity & Inclusion, Planning & Development, Finance, Public Works, Corporate Communications, Discover Halifax and the Municipal Physical Activity Leadership Program when relevant topics arise.	In Progress To determine interest in this action, an online meet-and-greet was held in June 2025 with attendees from departments from various levels of government, Discover Halifax, HRM business units, Halifax Public Library and affiliated recreation service providers. It was agreed by those in attendance that community-level staff are doing a great job of partnering and collaborating on projects; however, it was noted that decision-makers across government levels and other agencies are less aware of other projects and initiatives in rural communities. A clear interest in working together was expressed, along with a desire to explore how and when collaboration could take place. Additional individuals who should be included in future discussions were also identified. A workshop has been scheduled for October 29, 2025, and will be held in the rural community of Carroll's Corner, as participants are expected to attend in person from both the Halifax and Truro areas.
5.3	Establish a Rural Recreation Advisory Committee of internal relevant staff, to ensure regular alignment with the RRS.	Completed Successfully The Terms of Reference were developed and approved for the Rural Recreation Advisory

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		Committee, and the Committee has been established. Representatives from Parks, Recreation Programming, Regional, Recreation, Community Developers, Strategic Planning and Design make up the Rural Recreation Internal Advisory Committee. Three meetings were held in year one of RRS implementation phase.
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RRS Action Reference	Recommendation	Status
Theme 6: Advertising and Communications that Reflects Rural Needs		
6.1	Develop a Rural Communications Strategy that reflects the municipality's unique rural communities, local culture, and communication preferences and needs including: Current evidence and best practice on rural-based communications • Strategic communications approaches tailored to rural communities • Guidelines on imagery, language, tactics, and tools for rural audiences • Action plan to operationalize the strategy, including new processes, protocols, budget and resources. An evaluation plan to measure the success of the strategy	In Progress Input was requested from Parks & Recreation for the Rural Communications Strategy, which was developed by Corporate Communications. The strategy is heavily informed by the results of community engagement conducted during the creation of the Rural Recreation Strategy (RRS). The document is intended to serve as a guideline for Corporate Communications. The complete strategy was shared with Parks & Recreation in May 2025. Action plans to more effectively market programs and services in rural HRM will now be developed with the support of Corporate Communications
6.2	Partner with Discover Halifax to add all municipal recreation facilities, community-operated halls and Centre's, and municipal parks to their Things to Do page with a prominent link on halifax.ca.	In Progress All municipal recreation centres have been added to the Discover Halifax database. Community-operated halls and centres have been informed of the opportunity and were provided with a template to assist in organizing the information to be presented. The entry of municipal parks into the database is currently underway, with completion projected for November 2025.
6.3	Create and maintain an up-to-date listing of community and board-operated facilities' contact and location information on the halifax.ca website.	Completed – Desired outcome not achieved The realization of this action is precluded by the current policies regarding non-municipal content on the Halifax.ca website. Up-to-date lists of contacts, websites, and social media links for community- and board-operated facilities are collaboratively maintained by Recreation Programming staff. An online searchable presence is maintained by most community facilities, and up-to-date contact

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		information is made available by Community Recreation Centres when requested.
6.4	Continue the use of print and other non-web-based communication methods when advertising Parks & Recreation programming, services, community engagements and events, especially in communities lacking internet access.	In Progress Branded paper-based templates for program and event promotions requiring a short turnaround time have been supplied by Corporate Communications. These templates are intended to be produced in colour; however, access to colour printers is not currently available in most rural Community Centres. The need for colour printers to be supplied to rural Community Centres and offices has been communicated to the Information Technology Department for their consideration. Programs continue to be advertised in community publications and budget support has been made available.
6.5	Work Collaboratively with HRCE and principals to facilitate the communications of recreation opportunities within rural schools	In Progress The distribution of program promotions through email channels, the sending of flyers home with students, and the placement of posters in schools have been supported by many rural principals. No obligation has been placed on principals to participate, nor can it be expected. Staff will continue to discuss program and services promotion in rural schools with HRCE through the Service Exchange Agreement negotiations.