












**Town of Fort Smith**  
**Community Services Committee**  
 Tuesday, February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at 7:00 pm  
 Town Hall Council Chambers

**AGENDA**

1. Call to Order
2. Declaration of Financial Interest
  - a. Statement of Disclosure of Interest
3. Delegations
4. Review
  - a. Agenda
  - b. Minutes
  - c. Visions and Values
  - d. Community Services Master Plan
  - e. Economic Development Plan
5. Directors Report
  - a. Recreation Report – January 2024
  - b. CRC Statistics – January 2024
  - c. Mary Kaeser Library Statistics – January 2024
6. Economic Development
7. Advisory Boards
  - a. Community Services Advisory Board
  - b. Economic Development Advisory Board
    - i. EDAB Minutes January 18, 2024
8. Bylaw/Policy Review and Development
9. Administration
  - a. Briefing Note Big Fun Snowboarding Event Road Closure Request
10. Other Business
11. Excusing of Councilors
12. Date of Next Meeting
13. Adjournment

Attached Documents	
 Statement of Disclosure of Interest	
 Community Services Minutes January 16,	 Vision and Values.pdf
 Community Services Master Plan 2020.pd	 Economic Development Plan.p
 REC Report January 2024.pdf	 CRC Stats - January 2024.pdf
 M KL Stats January 2024.pdf	
 Briefing Note - Big Fun Event Road Clo:	



Town of Fort Smith  
*Code of Conduct for Council Members*

ATTACHMENT A

**STATEMENT OF DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST**

Name of Council Member: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Disclosure: \_\_\_\_\_

Council Meeting or  
Committee Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Agenda Item: \_\_\_\_\_

Agenda Item Description: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of type and nature of Interest (i.e., Interest or Conflict of Interest)

Interest:            Personal       

                         Pecuniary       

Conflict of Interest:       

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Councillor: \_\_\_\_\_

**Office Use Only:**

Recorded by \_\_\_\_\_ at: \_\_\_\_\_

Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



Town of Fort Smith  
Community Services Standing Committee  
Tuesday, January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at 7:00 pm  
Town Hall Council Chambers

Chairperson: Cr. Fergusson  
Members Present: Mayor Daniels, D/M Korol, Cr. Campbell, Cr. Tuckey, Cr. Couvrette, Cr. Pischinger, Cr. Beaulieu  
Regrets: D/M Korol  
Staff Present: Keith Morrison, Senior Administrative Officer  
Emily Colucci, Director of Community Services  
Katie Reid, Executive Secretary  
Guests: Marie Coderre, Director; Northern Arts and Cultural Centre  
Shandi Hunter, NLMCC Manager and NACC Board Member

1. Call to Order

Mayor Daniels called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm and handed the Chair to Cr. Fergusson.

Cr. Fergusson read the acknowledgement of First Nations.

2. Declaration of Financial Interest

a. Statement of Disclosure of Financial Interest – There were no statements of financial interest.

3. Delegation

a. Northern Arts and Cultural Centre (NACC) Marie Coderre/NACC Funding Request Letter – Ms. Coderre provided an introduction and advised that she has been an Arts Director for NACC since 2004 and since, she has been building capacity and presentation programs for NWT Communities. She noted that NACC has a territorial mandate to organize twenty shows annually in the NWT and that they are spread out as four shows in five NWT Communities, including Fort Smith.

Ms. Coderre introduced Ms. Hunter and advised that she is a NACC board member in Fort Smith has been involved for the past few years.

Ms. Coderre noted that it is very costly to go to Edmonton or Vancouver to watch arts and cultural shows and felt it was important to continue to bring arts to the north for increased exposure to youth and northern communities. She advised that arts can be theatre, music, spoken word and that NACC hosts all types of shows while supporting the arts and emerging artists.

Ms. Coderre advised that NACC would be celebrating their 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year with a 300-seat theatre showing in Yellowknife. She advised of her passion to bring arts exposure to northern youth and community members and felt this may encourage them to work in the arts and culture industry. Additionally, she indicated that NACC supports northern and indigenous artists.

Ms. Coderre advised that there would be a Celtic Music Show in February, and that MacBeth theatre was presented in Fort Smith in February 2023 by an appraised Fort Smith indigenous artist. She noted that the MacBeth tour expense was close to \$100k and that NACC has been struggling to find funding sources during the pandemic. She noted that arts, tourism, and restaurants were all negatively impacted by the pandemic. Further, she advised that NACC's emergency funding ceased this year and noted the importance of securing funding to ensure arts and culture shows continue in the north. In addition to this, the GNWT's funding has not increased and Yellowknife's funding contribution has decreased.

She advised that when she started with NACC there was a \$146k budget deficit and noted the importance of not running a deficit.

Ms. Coderre advised that the Town has provided a \$5k contribution annually since 2013, along with other communities. She noted that the Federal Government provides some funding support but only a small percentage of the budget. She continued that she needs to find \$100k to keep up with the same level of funding as previous years and that she is not requesting an increase to the \$5k annual contribution from the Town.

Ms. Coderre stated that Ms. Hunger is NACC's voice for the South Slave Region and that the NLMCC provides local promotion of arts and cultural events.

Ms. Coderre noted that it has been three-years since the pandemic and in consideration of the 2023 wildfire evacuations, that arts can play a healing and inspiring role for the northern communities.

Ms. Coderre advised that NACC's annual programming is online and displays shows scheduled for Fort Smith. She thanked for the opportunity to delegate to Council.

Mayor and Council thanked Ms. Coderre for her delegation.

4. Review

- a. Agenda – The agenda was reviewed. Cr. Couvrette requested adding discussion on Carbon Tax exemption.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Moved by: Cr. Couvrette**

**Seconded by: Cr. Tuckey**

**That the agenda be adopted as amended to include discussion on Carbon Tax exemption.**

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

- b. Minutes – The Community Services Standing Committee Minutes of December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023, were reviewed and adopted at the Regular Meeting of Council on December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

Cr. Campbell requested an update on the response letter to Jeremy Beamish regarding Westgrove lots. Administration advised that a response is drafted that explain the outcomes of the Housing Needs assessment and the Town's funding application to CMHC for possible new subdivision development.

- c. Vision and Values – The Vision and Values were reviewed. Cr. Couvrette advised that he attended the Collaborative Leadership Initiative (CLI) meeting on January 11<sup>th</sup> and the importance of having a dynamic, invigorating vision for the next 10-20 years was discussed. He would like Council to update their vision and values to aspire to be more than a healthy community. He suggested tying vision and values into planning sessions for the Community Plan and Zoning Bylaw review.
- d. Community Services Master Plan – The Community Services Master Plan was reviewed.
- e. Economic Development Plan – The Economic Development Plan was reviewed.

5. Directors Report

- a. CRC Statistics December 2023 – The CRC Statistics were reviewed. The Director of Community Services advised that December was a busy month, and she commended her staff for their time and effort put towards extended programming hours. She noted that programming hours in December were increased to 108 hours of programming per week.

She provided an update on Community Services programming from December 2023. She advised that the CRC hosted the Christmas Parade and Tree lighting partnered with the Seniors Society and that the Seniors Society hosted their annual Senior's Christmas Dinner in the gymnasium. She noted that the department and Economic Development Assistant worked with businesses on Midnight Madness events before Christmas to promote shopping local and business were pleased with the results. She advised that the CRC hosted a NYE family dance party prior to the fireworks show and commended the Boom Squad for an outstanding fireworks show.

The Director advised that the department worked with PWK High School to utilize Pete's Gym for physical education class and noted that archery programming is picking up. She noted that instructors will be coming to the community next month to run a volleyball clinic. Additionally, the department is working with the Aurora Research Institute regarding their boreal berry patch project.

The Director advised that the Town receives MACA funding for youth center initiatives and is used for programming including child and youth resiliency programming. She continued that the curling rink seen good use during summer as an indoor playground when air quality poor outside and that some of the MACA funding would be used to purchase turf for curling rink overlay for future use of the indoor playground.

The Director advised that the Pool has received an aquatic obstacle course and that it was well received. She noted that residents are already inquiring about renting obstacle course for private Pool events. Additionally, the Director advised that she has received her National Lifeguard Certification and that new rounds of lifeguard training would commence in recruitment efforts.

The Director advised that the Skating Club used the Arena space to organize for their cheese fundraiser and that PWK High School has utilized the Arena for physical education class. She noted that the PWK Winter Classic was held on December 21<sup>st</sup> and the Christmas Classic happened December 27-29<sup>th</sup>. Additionally, she noted that additional Public Skate times were implemented during December.

b. Mary Kaeser Library

- i. Library Statistics December 2023 – The Library statistics were reviewed.
- ii. MKL Annual Report 2023 – The 2023 Annual Report was reviewed.

The Director advised that Mary Kaeser Library held regular story times, and with Santa, during December. She indicated that Patti Kay Hamilton launched her book "In the Wild: Stories of a Lifetime on the Trapline" chronicling Pi Kennedy's life in the bush for almost 80 years and noted that the book launch was held in the MKL on December 6<sup>th</sup> with assistance from the Seniors Society. She noted that the book launch was well attended.

The Director provided an update on MKL programming in December and noted that was a letter writing to Santa and local elders, Tech n' Tea, gingerbread house making, and bring your own craft night.

The Director reviewed the MKL Annual Report and noted high usage of the facility. She continued that feedback received is that people feel welcome and safe, and she was pleased with the successful transition of the Library from the old building to the CRC. She noted that through the transition the department has seen a difference in demographics utilizing the space, specifically, increased youth presence.

The Director advised the facility is seeing increased usage but that circulation statistics are consistent with 2022. She advised that she is working with the MKL Program Coordinator to track demographic statistics accessing library services and circulation.

The Director highlighted various programming from 2023 including numerous author visits, school visits from PWK and JBT, cooking classes, WBF activities, SEED programming, will and estate planning, and 3D printing. She noted that statistic collection assists in offering more programming that is well attended and enjoyed by the community. Additionally, statistics show that the MKL is seeing more usage in the afternoons and may consider slightly changing operational hours to accommodate need.

The Director advised that collection development is ongoing annually and is time consuming. She commended the MKL Programming Coordinator for her work.

The Director indicated that 2024 goals include continuing education courses for staff, increasing programming through partnerships, and forming new partnerships in the community. Additionally, she hopes to increase circulation and patron numbers, and they are working to complete a survey of community goals.

6. Economic Development

The Director advised that the Aurora College Community Career Fair is upcoming on February 7<sup>th</sup>. She noted that the department does not currently have Economic Development staff but have submitted applications for SEED funding and the department is still working through economic development projects.

Mayor Daniels suggested considering the feasibility of underground pipe heating for the CRC and Pool. He suggested partnering with GNWT Infrastructure on the initiative as PWK High School is connected to the CRC.

7. Advisory Boards

a. Community Services Advisory Board

- i. CSAB Minutes December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023 – The CSAB minutes were reviewed.

b. Economic Development Advisory Board

- i. EDAB Minutes December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023 – The EDAB minutes were reviewed. Cr. Couvrette advised that EDAB met on December 21<sup>st</sup> discussed the process of submitting recommendations to Council for consideration specifically regarding their review of the Business Licensing Bylaw. He noted that EDAB is scheduled to meet on January 18<sup>th</sup> to further discuss recommendations.

Cr. Fergusson declared a conflict, handed the Chair to Cr. Campbell and left the room.

8. Administration

- a. Briefing Note Wood Buffalo Frolics Contribution Request – The briefing note was reviewed. Administration noted that there wouldn't be conflict as there would be no personal benefit from the contribution but appreciated the caution.

Administration advised that the briefing note provides information on previously budgeted organizational supports and historical requests for support for consideration. He noted that the Town, in 2022 and prior years, had \$5k budgeted as an organizational support for WBF and also \$5k for NACC.

Administration advised that the WBF organizers are requested a \$5k contribution consisting of \$4,600 cash and \$400 in youth swim passes. He noted that the Town would partner with the event to provide the gym and staff support for the event. In addition to this, the Friday afternoon is declared a half-day civic holiday in conjunction of with the WBF as per bylaw.

Administration reviewed currently budgeted organizational supports that remained in the annual budgets. He advised that the NLMCC contribution was increased from \$25k to \$35k in 2020, due to the pandemic, as one time support that has remained in the budget since. Other organizational supports remaining in the budget are JBT Snack Program and the Christmas Food and Toy Drive.

Cr. Couvrette reiterated the need to update the donations policy to ensure transparency, accountability, and community gain from contributions paid by taxpayers' money. He felt that community organizations provide valuable services and thinks its valid to know how funds are used.

Mayor Daniels would like to see organizational supports reinstated in the budget and felt that the current process in reviewing each application is an administrative burden. He felt that organizations receiving contributions provide valuable services and partnerships while providing economic development to the community. Cr. Pischinger agreed with Mayor Daniels comments and reinstating the contributions in the budget. She suggested further discussion on amounts to be contributed to organizations. Cr. Campbell agreed but thinks the donation policy should be updated before proceeding with donations.

Cr. Couvrette understands that organizations serve the community but felt that some organizations support smaller groups and wants to ensure taxpayer dollars benefit as much of the population as possible. He suggested that groups expand their mandate to capture a larger portion of the community.

Administration is hesitant to not make funds available until the donations policy is updated as it would be disruptive to operations. He suggested Council make a motion to develop a contribution agreement for organizational supports and review the donations policy for smaller random requests.

Cr. Couvrette suggested organizations requesting contributions delegate to Council to advise what funds are used for and how they plan to advance community engagements.

Mayor Daniels indicated that the Town needs partners to provide services and would like to invest in the people. He would like to move forward in approving the WBF and NACC requests.

Cr. Beaulieu advised that she was historically involved in WBF and other community organizations and noted that they would fundraise year-round.

Mayor Daniels made a recommendation to contribute \$5k to each NACC and the WBF. Cr. Couvrette seconded and requested an amendment, that approval be contingent on organizations providing additional information and details on what the funding is used for and accountability.

Cr. Pischinger asked why the NACC contribution was removed from the 2023 budget. Administration replied that they were removed due to charging admission fees. He noted that their territorial funding was reduced and that a policy of the City of Yellowknife is that would not support programs no longer funded by the GNWT. He noted that sometimes valuable programs go unfunded, and the result would be no arts and cultural programming offered.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Moved by: Mayor Daniels**

**Seconded by: Cr. Couvrette**

**That Council approve a \$5,000 contribution to the Northern Arts and Cultural Centre; and**

**That Council approve a \$5,000 contribution to the Wood Buffalo Frolics; and**

**That funding be provided contingent on submission of additional information on how funding is used and accountability.**

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

9. Other Business

- a. Carbon Tax Exemption – Cr. Couvrette advised that in October 2023 the Federal Government advised of an exemption of carbon tax for heating fuel. Further, the GNWT in mid-January advised that they realize there is an exemption but that would not be applicable in the NWT until further discussed. He continued that during the election MLA candidates discussed cost of living concerns in the NWT and are now forcing residents to pay \$.17 carbon tax per litre of fuel after being exempt from the Federal Government. Cr. Couvrette made a recommendation.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Moved by: Cr. Couvrette**

**Seconded by: Cr. Pischinger**

**That Mayor Daniels write a letter to the Premier and Minister of Finance for an expedient exemption of Carbon Tax on heating fuel for NWT Residents; and**

**That all Carbon Tax funds collected by the GNWT be rebated to NWT Residents as soon as possible.**

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

10. Excusing of Councillors  
**RECOMMENDATION**  
**Moved by: Cr. Tuckey**  
**Seconded by: Cr. Couvrette**  
**That D/M Korol be excused of the Community Services Standing Committee meeting on January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024.**  
**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**
  
11. Date of Next Meeting  
The next Community Services Standing Committee meeting will be held on February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024.
  
12. Adjournment  
**RECOMMENDATION**  
**Moved by: Cr. Tuckey**  
**Seconded by: Cr. Beaulieu**  
**That the meeting be adjourned at 8:24 pm.**  
**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

# Vision

The vision statement outlines what our community wants to be. Our vision statement provides a basis for future decision-making and activities.

**The Town of Fort Smith will work with our partners to enhance our excellent quality of life by respecting values, traditions, and healthy lifestyles. We will continue to advance as a unified, active and prosperous community.**

# Values

The mission defines how the Town will operate; it represents what is fundamentally important to us in how we work with each other and represent the citizens of Fort Smith.

- **Welcoming** – we are a friendly community which embraces our visitors, students and residents alike.
- **Innovative** – we take on new challenges in the pursuit of excellence.
- **Sustainable** – we are committed to sustainability in our Town’s operations and development.
- **Unified** – we work with Indigenous governments and our partners to implement our plans and achieve our goals.
- **Committed** – we operate professionally and to the highest ethical standards.



Town of Fort Smith | July 2020

# COMMUNITY SERVICES MASTER PLAN





## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Town of Fort Smith is a vibrant, active, and engaged community. It has a remarkable array of facilities and program offerings to engage its citizens in the pursuit of healthy lifestyles. The Community Services Department is responsible for providing, maintaining, and coordinating the spaces, facilities and programs for culture and recreation activities offered by the Town including local parks, the Fort Smith Community and Recreation Centre, the Centennial Arena and the Mary Kaeser Library.

Fort Smith also has a significant number of other facilities and programs, operated by community partners. These are places where residents and visitors can participate in a range of recreation, culture, and other social interactions. They are vital to the community through their promotion of community health and social connections.

The 2020 Community Services Master Plan (the CSMP) considers the programs and services offered by the Town to the community, as they relate to recreation and culture. The general intent of the Plan is to provide the Town with strategic direction to :

- Ensure residents enjoy the highest quality of life
- Maximize appeal of the community to potential new residents
- Draw visitors to the community

This CSMP is an important step toward achieving the Town's strategic goal to be the *healthiest community in the Northwest Territories*<sup>1</sup>. A robust engagement strategy, which included the Indigenous Governments, multiple community partners, and the community, is at the core of this document.

The Vision and Mission statements, which emerged through this process, provide overall direction to the CSMP and its implementation. The Vision describes the preferred future as:

*A place to live, work, play, create and connect - Fort Smith is the healthiest community in the Northwest Territories.*

The Mission describes how the Community Services Department can work toward achieving the Vision:

*The Community Services Department encourages residents to embrace healthy lifestyles by offering leading and relevant recreation and culture programs, services, and facilities.*

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<sup>1</sup> Town of Fort Smith Strategic Plan, 2018



## TOWN OF FORT SMITH COMMUNITY SERVICES MASTER PLAN

In support of the Vision and Mission, the CSMP presents a *Success Framework* including actions, implementation timeframes, and performance measures, organized according to the following 8 interrelated strategies:

### Increase awareness of available programs and services

Communication is key to maintaining and increasing community-wide participation in culture and recreation activities. The intent of this strategy is to ensure there is a range of communication tools that provide appropriate messaging that reach all segments of the community.

### Enhance intergovernmental collaboration

Fort Smith has the unique identity of being a community that is 60% Indigenous. Steps can be taken to work together with the three Indigenous Governments to plan and deliver local recreation and culture programs and services. Further collaboration with Indigenous Governments presents a unique opportunity to identify and pursue efforts toward reconciliation. The intent of this strategy is to ensure that the relationship between the Town and the Indigenous Governments is strengthened as they work together to meet the recreation and culture needs of the whole community.

### Maximize use of existing facilities and outdoor recreation infrastructure

It is generally recognized that Fort Smith is well served when it comes to facilities and infrastructure related to recreation and culture. Co-location of spaces and services that offer opportunities for both programmed and unprogrammed activities can lead to increased participation in recreation and culture activities and programs and, in turn, increased social interaction and community vitality. The intent of this strategy is to ensure that current facilities are used as efficiently and effectively as possible.

### Ensure services and activities are inclusive of all age groups, incomes, and abilities

The Town of Fort Smith is committed to providing recreation and culture services to all members of the community. Many ideas for new programs and services were expressed throughout the community engagement process. The intent of this strategy is to ensure that the Town continues to work with the community and its partners to identify and address those needs and, in turn, ensure equitable access to meaningful culture and recreation opportunities to all segments of the population.

### Encourage greater participation through use of technology

Technology is changing behaviour and the way individuals participate in recreation activities and pursue healthy lifestyles. It is being used more and more to increase engagement in active participation. The intent of this strategy is to ensure the Town utilizes technology to engage community members in their pursuit of wellness.



## TOWN OF FORT SMITH COMMUNITY SERVICES MASTER PLAN

### Develop and maintain partnerships with community partners to meet community needs

Building new partnerships and strengthening existing ones with community partners and like-minded agencies can be a way to provide a range of innovative services in Fort Smith. In many respects, this is already underway, and these partnerships have been formed. The intent of this strategy is for the Town to work collaboratively with partners to avoid duplication of services and identify ways the Town can support their delivery.

### Maintain and expand the active volunteer base

Volunteers are the most important resource community and event organizers have. Having experienced, skilled volunteers who are willing to donate their time will help ensure the success of many future community programs and events. The intent of this strategy is to ensure there are resources available to maintain and enhance the local base of volunteers.

### Enhance data collection and user tracking techniques

It is important to measure the current use of facilities and participation in recreation and culture activities and services. Tracking the uptake of services over time can be used to determine whether activities should be maintained or changed; help to ensure the Town is meeting its targets and can aid in accessing funding.

*The 2020 CSMP was shaped by the community context, extensive engagement, and the current trends and innovations in culture and recreation services. It supports the Vision and Mission and ultimately the pursuit of the Town's strategic priority to be the healthiest community in the NWT.*





**TOWN OF FORT SMITH COMMUNITY SERVICES MASTER PLAN**

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# 1.0 INTRODUCTION



## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Plan Purpose

The Community Services Department is responsible for providing spaces, facilities and programming for culture and recreation activities in Fort Smith including local parks, the Fort Smith Community and Recreation Centre, the Centennial Arena, and the Mary Kaeser Library. Fort Smith also has an array of other facilities and programs, operated by community partners. These are all places where residents and visitors can participate in range of recreation, culture, and other social interactions. They are vital to the community through their promotion of community health and social connection.

The 2020 Community Services Master Plan (the CSMP) considers the programs and services offered by the Town to the community as they relate to recreation, sport, art, and culture. The general intent is to provide the Town with strategic direction to :

- Ensure residents enjoy the highest quality of life
- Maximize appeal of the community to potential new residents
- Draw visitors to the community

### 1.2 Planning Process

This CSMP process was initiated in November 2019 and included the following:

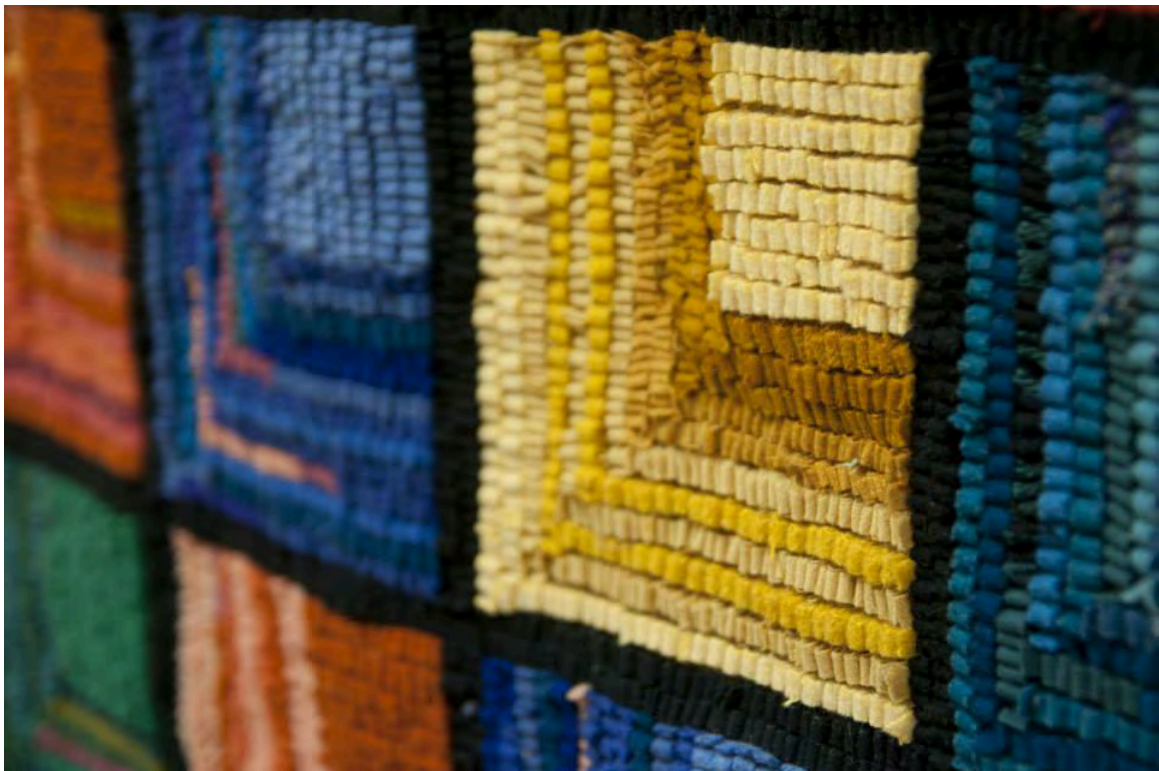
- An inclusive community engagement process to identify community perspectives and needs with:
  - a community-wide survey
  - stakeholder focus groups
  - community pop-up events
- Discussions with Town Council, Staff, and the Recreation Advisory Board (RAB)
- An inventory of facilities and programs
- An overview of community demographics
- A review of relevant trends and innovations in recreation and culture services
- A review of other Town of Fort Smith planning documents
- Development of relevant strategies, actions, and performance measures



### 1.3 Community Services Master Plan Organization

The Community Services Master Plan is organized into the following sections:

- 1.0 **Introduction (this section)** describes the CSMP's purpose, overview of planning process and report organization.
- 2.0 **Plan Framework** presents the Vision for the Community Services Master Plan – the preferred future. It also includes a Mission statement, which describes how to get there.
- 3.0 **Community Services Master Plan Foundations** documents the information that was gathered to support the development of the Community Services Master Plan including community demographics, the planning context, current facilities and programs offered in Fort Smith, and current trends and innovations.
- 4.0 **Success Framework** presents the overall approach in pursuit of the Vision and Mission for recreation and culture services in Fort Smith. It identifies the strategies to enhance these services and the associated actions the Town can take to meet the needs of residents. It also identifies ways to track the implementation of the strategies and ultimately the success of achieving healthier lifestyles among the Town's citizens.



## 2.0 PLAN FRAMEWORK



## 2.0 PLAN FRAMEWORK

### 2.1 Vision and Mission Statement

Fort Smith residents value the recreation and culture services and programs offered in their community. These services and programs contribute to stronger, healthier individuals and community. Maximizing participation in recreation and culture services offered by the Town and by its community partners is also key to achieving the Town's 2018 Strategic Plan goal to be the *healthiest community in the Northwest Territories*<sup>2</sup>.

Based on the themes that emerged through the Master Plan process, the Vision is:

*A place to live, work, play, create and connect - Fort Smith is the healthiest community in the Northwest Territories.*

The Mission Statement describes how the Community Services Department can work toward achieving this Vision:

*The Community Services Department encourages residents to embrace healthy lifestyles by offering leading and relevant recreation and culture programs, services, and facilities.*



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<sup>2</sup> Town of Fort Smith Strategic Plan, 2018



**3.0 COMMUNITY SERVICES MASTER PLAN  
FOUNDATIONS**



### 3.0 COMMUNITY SERVICES MASTER PLAN FOUNDATIONS

The following presents a blend of information that was gathered to develop the Community Services Master Plan. It includes an overview of demographics, an inventory of recreation and culture facilities and programs, facility user statistics, an overview of relevant planning documents, and a summary of the community engagement process.

#### 3.1 Community Demographics

The following demographics are based on the NWT Summary of Community Statistics (2019) and Statistics Canada Census Profile.

##### Population

- The population of Fort Smith is 2,709 people. Overall, the Town has experienced positive population growth of 1% per year from 2009-2019 but has seen a decrease of about half a percent per year since 2016.
- The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) projects that the slight decline will continue. The population of Fort Smith is anticipated to be 2,629 by 2035.

*Since the community size is anticipated to remain relatively stable, the Town will need to consider the age structure and changing preferences over time with respect to the provision of recreation and culture services.*



## **Age**

- The age structure of a community helps to define what types of programs and services to provide.
- At an average age of 36.1 (2016), Fort Smith has a relatively youthful population, compared to the rest of Canada with an average age of 41.2 years.

*In a youthful community such as Fort Smith, active pursuits tend to be in high demand and can place pressures on existing facilities, programs, and services. Continued programming to engage community members at all stages of life will continue to be important.*

## **Household Size and Composition**

- On average there are 2.6 people per household.
- Most households (60%) are comprised of 1 or 2 people, with the remaining 40% comprised of 3 or more members.
- There are 135 (24%) lone parent families in private households.

*Households with children, especially lone-parent households, will have implications for the type and amount of recreation and culture activities parents can participate in. In turn, these numbers may affect the possible demand for childcare services for both parents and children to achieve the required daily amount of physical health and wellness.*

## **Indigenous Population**

- About 60% of the population in Fort Smith is Indigenous.
- There are three Indigenous Governments in Fort Smith: Fort Smith Métis Council, Salt River First Nation and Smiths Landing First Nation.

*With such a high proportion of Indigenous residents, represented by three First Nation Governments, the Town of Fort Smith is in a unique position to partner on recreation and culture programs and services that support reconciliation efforts and meet the needs of the whole community.*



### **Education, Employment, and Income**

- 74.1% of the population has a “high school diploma or more”. This number has increased consistently over the past 10 years and is slightly higher than the NWT at 72.6%.
- In recent years, the unemployment rate has experienced an upward trend, from 6.8% in 2011 to 12.4% in 2016.
- The average family income in Fort Smith is \$125,250 (2017) which is about \$9,000 lower than the NWT. About 13% of households earn less than \$30,000 per year.

*The unemployment rate and lower incomes have implications for individuals’ and families’ abilities to afford recreation and culture activities. It is recommended the Town recognize the variable income levels and ensure affordability is not a barrier to participation.*

### **General Health**

- Statistics on health are gathered at the territorial level. In 2014, 35,538 residents of the NWT over the age of 12 were surveyed.
- Almost half of survey respondents said they do not have chronic conditions/did not specify.
- Of those who did, the most common issues were arthritis/rheumatism (16%) and high blood pressure (13%), followed by asthma (9%), diabetes (7%) and mood disorder (8%).
- The 2010 NWT Health Status Report identifies chronic diseases as a major concern. Key findings include:
  - 63% of NWT residents are overweight or obese compared to 51% of other Canadians.
  - Between 2005 and 2007, the leading cause of death in the NWT were cancers and cardiovascular diseases followed by injuries and respiratory diseases.
  - In the NWT 70% of all deaths and more than 50% of the number of days spent in hospital were related to chronic conditions.
  - Approximately 200 new cases of diabetes are diagnosed each year in the NWT.
  - In the NWT 64% of the population rated their mental health as excellent or very good compared to 74% of Canadians.

*The type of health concerns faced in a community will have implications for recreation and culture programs and services.*

### 3.2 Planning Documents

The following documents were reviewed during the development of the CSMP. The following presents an overview of each document and its relevance. It should be noted that all Town decisions are based on the *2018 Town of Fort Smith Strategic Plan*.

DOCUMENT	SUMMARY	RELEVANCE
Tourism/Visitor Services Branding and Marketing Strategy (2011)	Marketing materials and campaigns that target specific audiences that can be implemented by the Town of Fort Smith. Five campaigns were prepared based on general touring, outdoor adventure, visiting friends and relatives (VFR), the sports and recreation field and business travel.	Identifies community tours that highlight local historical and cultural significance. Many of these value-added services are related to culture, recreation, and arts. It identifies both existing products and potential new products that could enhance what the Town offers in terms of recreation and culture
Community Services Master Plan (2012)	Developed to guide decision-making with regard to future community services including parks, recreation and culture facilities and programs.	Recommendations were summarized into two initiatives: to support and enhance service delivery and initiatives dealing directly with indoor and outdoor infrastructure.
Town of Fort Smith General Plan and Zoning Bylaw (2014)	The purpose is to regulate and control the use and development of land and buildings within the Town of Fort Smith in a balanced and responsible manner.	The bylaw provides the relevant zoning that allows for recreation uses in the Town including for Parks, Institutional, Future Urban (which allows for trails), Environmental Reserve which allows for a variety of unstructured recreational uses.
Community Services Department Review (2015)	Provides a review of the programs currently being offered by the Community Services Department. The document identifies programs being offered, identifies community partners, available resources and on-going needs, and the sectors of the community being targeted by programs.	The review identifies recreation facilities and programs in the Town of Fort Smith and, based on the review, presents recommendations for future programs, services, training, and partnerships.
Economic Development Strategy (2017)	Three main elements identified in the Strategy: business development, resident attraction, and tourism.	9 goals were identified in the Strategy. Goal #5: Enhance Livability; Goal # 7: Champion and Assist with Tourism Product Development and; Goal #8: Increase number of Festivals, sporting events and conferences hosted in Fort Smith, are all related to recreation and culture programs and services in Fort Smith.



## TOWN OF FORT SMITH COMMUNITY SERVICES MASTER PLAN

DOCUMENT	SUMMARY	RELEVANCE
Town of Fort Smith Strategic Plan (2018)	The Plan establishes the goals and direction for Mayor and Council. This Plan is the foundation for all decision made by Town Council.	One of the 6 goals identified in the Strategic Plan is: <i>to be the healthiest community in the Northwest Territories.</i>
Fort Smith Open Space Enhancement (2018)	The Plan provides preliminary conceptual design options for selected areas of town.	The report provides an analysis of each of the sites of interest and preliminary future designs and costing. The enhancements will be phased over time. The current priority is to upgrade Conibear Park. The intent is for it to be developed as a small outdoor venue for concert, recitals, plays and theatre.
Fort Smith Citizen Satisfaction Survey (2019)	There were 215 surveys completed. Topics included demographics, quality of life, community issues, communication, satisfaction with services and programs and taxation	Residents provided feedback on their level of satisfaction with recreation and culture services delivered by the Town including library service, parks and playgrounds, recreation and fitness programs, community events and cultural and arts programs.

### 3.3 Fort Smith Recreation and Culture Facilities and Programs

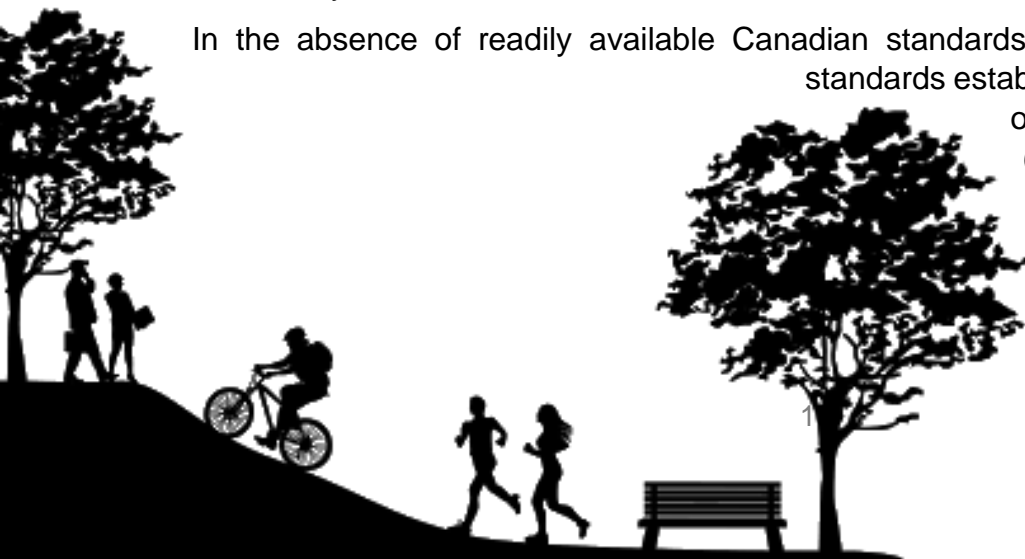
Recreation facilities and amenities are ideally designed to serve the community at every scale, from the smaller neighbourhoods to the community as a whole.

Neighbourhood assets are generally accessible by walking 5 to 10 minutes and serve the local neighbourhood. They include local parks and playgrounds, with ‘tot’ parks (children’s play areas) one of the most common features of neighbourhood parks.

Community-wide assets are accessible by walking, biking, or driving 10 minutes, serve the entire community, include multi-purpose facilities, and are connected to walking and cycling trails.

Although a detailed assessment was not a component of the CSMP process, it was found that the Town of Fort Smith is well served regarding both its neighbourhood and community-wide recreation facilities.

In the absence of readily available Canadian standards for recreation facilities, the standards established by the Ontario Ministry of Culture and Recreation (OMCR) are commonly used. The OMCR standards consider the number of facilities per 10,000 people.



## TOWN OF FORT SMITH COMMUNITY SERVICES MASTER PLAN

This following table underscores how well the Town is served when it comes to its recreation facilities - comparable to communities four times the size of Fort Smith.

Facility type	OMCR Standard # per 10,000 people	Fort Smith Population 2,709
<b>Arena (Hockey Rink)</b>	0.5	1
<b>Baseball Field/Softball</b>	2	2 adults; 1 youth
<b>Basketball Court</b>	2	4 indoor <sup>3</sup> ; 1 outdoor
<b>Beach Volleyball</b>	2	2
<b>Boat Launch</b>	Unknown	1
<b>Bowling</b>	4 lanes	0
<b>Community room</b>	0.5	10 to 15 <sup>4</sup>
<b>Fitness Centre</b>	Unknown	1
<b>Marina</b>	1 per region	0
<b>Outdoor Swimming</b>	2	2+ river/ pine lake
<b>Multi-purpose paved court</b>	2	0 multi-purpose but 2 tennis courts
<b>Playground</b>	12	7 <sup>5</sup>
<b>Skateboard Park (outdoor)</b>	Unknown	1
<b>Soccer Field</b>	2	1 <sup>6</sup> at track/ 2 at JBT
<b>Splash Pad</b>	2	1 moveable splash pad
<b>Tennis Court</b>	2	2
<b>Toboggan slope</b>	1	5+
<b>Walking Trails</b>	Unknown	20+km <sup>7</sup>
<b>Youth Centre</b>	0.5	Youth nights @ Community Recreation Centre; no dedicated space <sup>8</sup>
<b>Badminton Court</b>	2	6 <sup>9</sup>
<b>Curling Rink</b>	6 sheets	3 sheets
<b>Horseshoe Pitch</b>	2	3
<b>Indoor Pool</b>	1	1

<sup>3</sup> One at the Community Recreation Centre that is available all day, one at the Elementary School that is available 5-10pm, one at the High School that is available form 5-10pm, 1 at Uncle Gabe's Friendship Centre.

<sup>4</sup> Located at the Community Recreation Centre and other Town locations such as the Roaring Rapids Hall, Salt River Business and Conference Centre, Uncle Gabe's Friendship Centre

<sup>5</sup> This includes the 2 playgrounds at JBT Elementary. There is shared gym space and playground space at both the JBT Elementary and PWK Highschool

<sup>6</sup> 1 is located at the track; 2 are located at JBT Elementary School

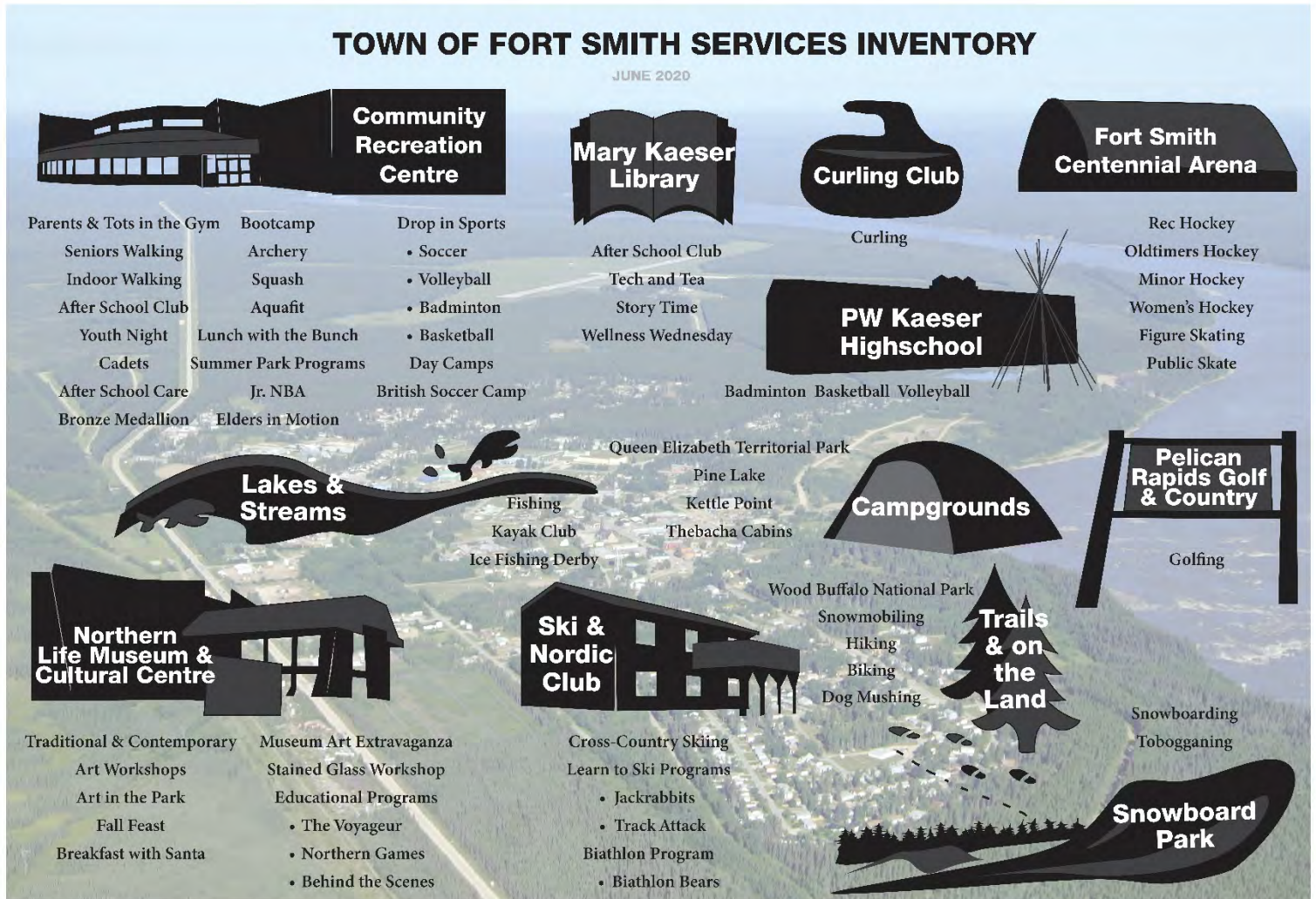
<sup>7</sup> Refers to trails within the municipal boundaries developed and includes those developed by the Town (about 8km) and community members

<sup>8</sup> Uncle Gabe's Friendship Centre has a youth program which is run based on available funding

<sup>9</sup> 2 at Community Recreation Centre; 2 available at JBT Elementary School; 2 available at PWK High School

**TOWN OF FORT SMITH COMMUNITY SERVICES MASTER PLAN**

The diagram below presents the inventory of Town of Fort Smith recreation and culture facilities and programs. The diagram identifies additional facilities such as a running track, cross country skiing trails, a golf course, and a snowboard park. The Town of Fort Smith’s facilities surpass the standards presented in the above table.



background photo courtesy of [www.fortsmith.ca](http://www.fortsmith.ca)

**DNA**  
David Nelson Associates

**TOWN OF FORT SMITH COMMUNITY SERVICES MASTER PLAN**

According to the available information, the Town of Fort Smith offers approximately 37 structured programs and activities. The table below presents the proportion of program offerings by age group. Please note the program offerings includes only those offered by the Town, not by its partners or other organizations in the Town.

Age of Population	% Total Population*	% Programs Available by Age Group**
0-4	7%	38%
5-9	8%	51%
10-14	6%	57%
15-19	6%	57%
20-24	8%	49%
25-29	8%	49%
30-34	7%	49%
35-39	6%	49%
40-44	7%	49%
45-49	7%	49%
50-54	6%	59%
55-59	6%	59%
60+	16%	59%



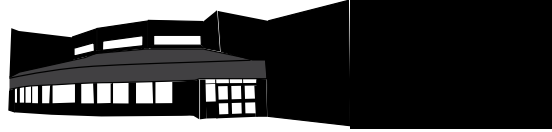
\*total population by age group from Statistics Canada

\*\*%'age of programs is greater than 100% as many programs are available to different age groups

### 3.4 Facility Usage

The Town collects information on the general use of the Community and Recreation Centre, pool, and library. However, statistics were not available for Centennial Arena or for specific programs, activities, or events. The following presents the available user statistics.

#### **Community Recreation Centre**



- Over the past two years, the Fort Smith Community and Recreation Centre has been visited a total of 80,234 times – or about 15 visits per capita per year. *This is higher than the 12 visits per capita, per year, which is a generally accepted indicator of good use of a facility.*
- The busiest month in 2018 was April and the busiest time of 2019 was in October.
- The Recreation Community Centre is least busy over the month of June. Less usage over the warmer, summer months indicates a preference for outdoor activities among residents.

#### **Pool**

- Over the past two years, the pool in Fort Smith has been visited 24,404 times or about 5 visits per capita per year. *By comparison, 4 to 8 swims per capita, per year is a generally accepted benchmark.*
- In 2018, the busiest month was May and in 2019 it was July.
- For both 2018 and 2019, the slowest time of the year was September.<sup>10</sup>



#### **Mary Kaesar Library**

- In 2018, Mary Kaeser Library was visited 15,223 times – an average of about 6 visits per capita. *This is in-line with the benchmark of 6 visits per year. 53% of visits have been by adults and 47% by children.*
- The busiest month of the year was in August and the slowest month was in November.




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<sup>10</sup> These lower numbers are result of the scheduled closure of the pool from mid-August to mid-September

### 3.5 Community Engagement

The planning process for the CSMP included a rigorous community engagement process with a blend of Town Council and stakeholder meetings, a community survey and community pop-up discussions. This multi-faceted process provided the Town with an opportunity to truly engage with a cross-section of residents. Materials and detailed results from the community engagement process are presented in the Appendix.

#### **Mayor, Council and Administration and Recreation Advisory Board (RAB) Meetings**

The meetings with Mayor and Council, Administration and Staff, and RAB generally focused on overall project direction. The discussions also included strengths and challenges related to the delivery of recreation and culture programs and services in Fort Smith.

#### **Community Survey**

The Town administered a community survey over a 7-week period from mid-December 2019 to January 31, 2020. The intent of the survey was to gauge residents' perspectives on and participation in culture and recreation programs and services. The survey was available on-line as well as at various public locations around Town – 182 people responded (See Appendix A for a detailed summary).

#### **Stakeholder Focus Groups**

The stakeholder meetings included 68 participants representative of a variety of community service providers including (See Appendix B for the summary):

- Recreation Staff
- Indigenous Governments
- Parks Canada
- JBT Student Leadership
- Seniors' Society
- Interagency Committee
- Northern Life Museum and Cultural Centre Board



The discussions focused on the types of recreation and/or culture services each group provides; whether there are other services they would like to see; and, how the Town of Fort Smith could support them to deliver those services.

### **Community Pop-Up Displays**

The intent of the community pop-up displays was to meet people where they are. The pop-ups included visually appealing boards (refer to Appendix B) which presented the survey results and provided opportunity for participants to make suggestions related to expanded services and communication methods. In total, 11 pop-up events were hosted at various locations throughout Town. A total of 196 residents were engaged through the pop-ups:

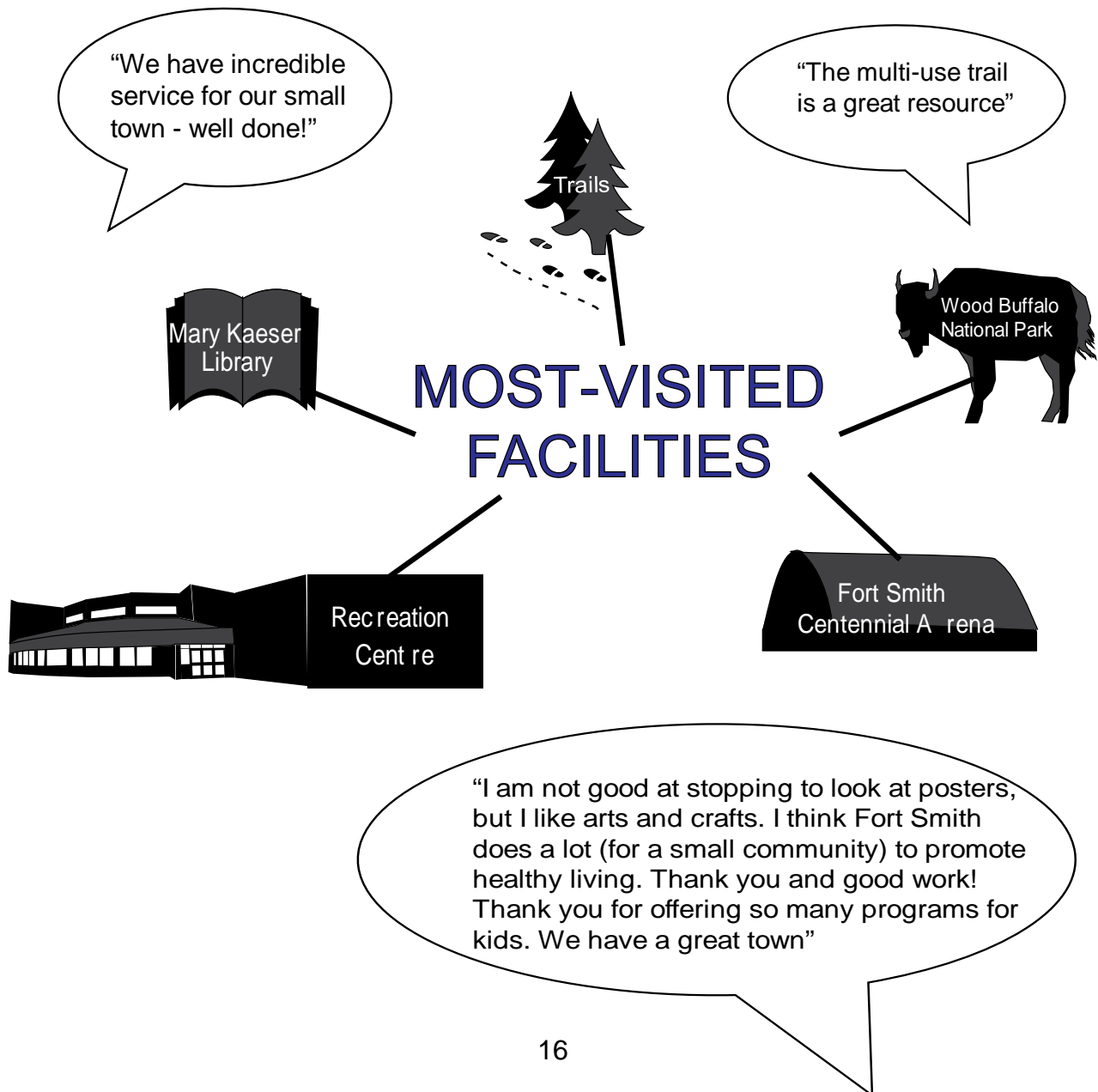
- Kaeser's Grocery Store (x2)
- Northern Store
- Aurora College Foyer
- Post Natal Parents Group (CRC Foyer)
- Youth Night (RCC Foyer)
- Parents and Tots (RCC Foyer)
- PWK Foyer
- Centennial Arena
- Library
- Food Bank



### **Engagement Results**

The detailed engagement results are presented in the Appendix and have been highlighted and integrated throughout this document. Highlights include:

- Residents of Fort Smith are generally satisfied with facilities and the level of culture and recreation services provided in the community. Participants in the engagement process provided a range of additional structured and unstructured activities that they would like to see offered in the community.
- The recreation and culture facilities used most often include the Fort Smith Community Recreation Centre, Fort Smith Centennial Arena, hiking trails around the area, Wood Buffalo National Park and Mary Kaeser Library.





## TOWN OF FORT SMITH COMMUNITY SERVICES MASTER PLAN

- The most popular recreation pursuits in Fort Smith are outdoor activities including walking, running and mountain biking in the summer and cross-country skiing, snowboarding in the winter. The most popular culture activities were festivals such as Frolics, and going out on the land, hunting, fishing, and harvesting.
- Participants said their main barriers to participation in recreation and culture activities were that they are too busy, they are not aware of opportunities, and that the hours are inconvenient.
- Engagement participants had a broad range of ideas to help the Town communicate recreation and culture activities. However, the idea of a calendar that is updated monthly, with all community events and activities (including those offered by partners) seemed to be popular. It was also suggested that this calendar be available on a variety of platforms, both digital and paper.
- Local service organizations generally agreed that the Town could help facilitate additional activities through provision of space and staff for assistance.
- The lack of childcare in the Town was identified as a major issue. It was raised on numerous occasions throughout the process.



“I’ll do anything!  
Fort Smith is  
worth it”

“Use a gamification approach to healthy activities – leaderboards, badges, loyalty points (prizes for high points, like a free book on active living or a free annual pass!)”

### 3.6 Trends and Innovations in Recreation and Culture Services

To support directions for the Town of Fort Smith's recreation and culture planning, it is important to understand the overall landscape for long term planning. The following presents trends in recreation and culture gathered from a variety of resources. Many of these trends have been unfolding over many years, such as the growth of chronic disease due to lifestyle choices, while others have hit the mainstream more recently, such as activities that support reconciliation.

#### Reconciliation

The adoption of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP) by the Federal Government, and the impacts on all levels of community is a major change in the socio-cultural landscape of Canada. The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015) included Calls to Action with direct pertinence to the delivery of recreation and related services including:

- We call upon the federal government, in consultation with Aboriginal peoples, to establish measurable goals to identify and close the gaps in health outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, and to publish annual progress reports and assess long-term trends. Such efforts would focus on indicators such as: infant mortality, maternal health, suicide, mental health, addictions, life expectancy, birth rates, infant and child health issues, chronic diseases, illness and injury incidence, and the availability of appropriate health services. (Call to Action #19)
- We call upon the federal government to amend the Physical Activity and Sport Act to support reconciliation by ensuring that policies to promote physical activity as a fundamental element of health and well-being, reduce barriers to sports participation, increase the pursuit of excellence in sport, and build capacity in the Canadian sport system, are inclusive of Aboriginal peoples. (Call to Action #89)





- We call upon the federal government to ensure that national sports policies, programs, and initiatives are inclusive of Aboriginal peoples, including, but not limited to, establishing:
  - In collaboration with provincial and territorial governments, stable funding for, and access to, community sports programs that reflect the diverse cultures and traditional sporting activities of Aboriginal peoples.
  - An elite athlete development program for Aboriginal athletes.
  - Programs for coaches, trainers, and sports officials that are culturally relevant for Aboriginal peoples.
  - Anti-racism awareness and training programs. (Call to Action #90)
- We call upon the officials and host countries of international sporting events such as the Olympics, Pan Am, and Commonwealth games to ensure that Indigenous peoples' territorial protocols are respected, and local Indigenous communities are engaged in all aspects of planning and participating in such events. (Call to Action #91)

60% of the Fort Smith population is Indigenous and includes members of the Fort Smith Métis Council, Salt River First Nation, and Smith's Landing First Nation. The Town is in a unique position to work with the Indigenous governments to identify community needs and partner in the delivery of programs. Indigenous community members were well represented through the community survey - 50% of survey respondents self-identified as Indigenous

### **Relationship and Partner Building**

Funding expectations, the difficulty in getting people's attention, the splintering of the market, and maximizing the use of community resources have all led to a focus on partnership building for delivery of community services. This may require a shift in understanding in terms of 'ownership' and autonomy for service delivery. There are many community-based organizations currently offering recreation and culture services in Fort Smith.



### **Social Value of Recreation and Culture**

The growing recognition of mental health and social isolation has also led to a recognition of the role of recreation and culture to combat these issues. For communities, libraries are more and more becoming places not for silent contemplation but for gathering and meeting, as well as providing warmth and shelter. Recreation is being developed for more marginalized populations to re-engage them with community. These services need to be accessible to all segments of the population by providing equitable access to meaningful culture and recreation opportunities to vulnerable community members. And newcomers can connect with their new homes through cultural events and recreation activities.

Festivals, such as Frolics was identified as the most popular cultural activity by survey participants (66%), this was followed by going out on the land (55%) and art shows, such as art in the park and museum art extravaganza (40%).

### **The Rise of Technology**

Probably the greatest impact to physical and social health is occurring due to the prolific use of technology, especially among young people. Screen time is now a common phrase, and a common issue facing parents who want their children to make healthier choices. However, parents too are spending a lot of time dedicated to their electronic devices and losing connection with others. This can result in more sedentary lifestyles and is creating concerns for long-term health impacts. However, technology can be used to encourage recreation activities. For example, through the engagement process, suggestions for gamification, where challenges could be set up using available technology, were made.

### **Unstructured Activities**

Values have shifted, resulting in increased segmented demands for recreation and culture activities. People are choosing activities that can be done at personally convenient times and places. The number of children in organized sport has decreased. People are looking for services that meet their individual needs, that can be accessed any time of the day or week, that are unstructured, and involve less time and commitment. Facilities are increasingly being designed to balance programmable and non-programmable spaces to allow for both structured and unstructured activities.

Survey respondents' top recreation activities in the past year included unstructured activities such as summer outdoor activities at 71% (i.e. walking, running, mountain biking), recreational swimming at 56% and winter outdoor activities (i.e. cross country skiing, snowboarding, snowmobiling, tobogganing) at 51%.

### **Experience-Based Activities**

People are looking for experiences. Younger people will look for extreme activities and older people will seek safer versions of adventure activities. Participation in experience-based activities will continue to grow, although there will be a switch to less strenuous





activities by aging Baby Boomers. Physical activity can be coupled with a cultural activity to maximize the public’s interest – i.e. hiking trips along scenic, historical routes; outdoor activities and environmental learning; cultural learning and ecotourism; and physical activity as rehabilitation.

**The Value of Placemaking**

As part of the trend toward ‘experience’ based activity, ‘placemaking’ has become a notable trend that involves both culture and recreation. The idea behind placemaking is to make a site or venue an overall experience. Placemaking for a town such as Fort Smith focuses on what makes the community unique, and how it can highlight and celebrate that uniqueness. For example, consistent trail signage in a design that is specific to Fort Smith can be part of an overall placemaking strategy and could contribute significantly to the experience of unstructured recreation along the trails.

**Volunteerism**

In the NWT, Culture and Recreation are where the greatest number of volunteer hours are dedicated.<sup>11</sup> While the greatest number of volunteers are youth (15-24), seniors (65+) provide the greatest number of volunteer hours. Sport, recreation, and culture have historically depended on the role of volunteers to make them succeed – from kids’ sports team coaches to festival ticket takers. The Town of Fort Smith has a strong base of volunteers. Among survey respondents, 45% have actively volunteered in the past year and 53% said they were interested in volunteering.



<sup>11</sup><https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3610061801&pickMembers%5B0%5D=1.13>



### **Lack of Free Time**

A lack of free time, largely due to busy lifestyles has traditionally been the number one barrier to participation in recreation and culture activities for youth and adults. Surveys conducted across the country suggest that a 'lack of free time' is the primary barrier to participation, including in Fort Smith where 49% of survey respondents reported "too busy" as a barrier to participation. A lack of time for physical activity has contributed to increases in rates of obesity and chronic disease, a desire for more flexible and convenient program options, and decreasing levels of volunteerism.

### **Wellness and Chronic Disease**

There is a growing awareness of the health benefits of physical activity and healthy eating. The proportion of Canadian adults who are active has increased significantly over time, although activity levels continue to drop with age. Physical activity has been clearly recognized as a major factor in chronic disease prevention and management.

### **Multi-Use Facilities**

There is a continuing and growing demand for facilities that contain something for everybody, rather than those designed for singular uses. Co-location of complementary facility components (i.e. youth spaces with gymnasiums, cultural spaces with libraries, etc.) can create convenient centralized activity centres for residents and generate operating efficiencies for the Town.

### **Communication**

Communication is a key to ensuring that all residents have an opportunity to participate in the programs and services offered by the Community Services Department so that those programs and services remain relevant. In the survey, 36% of respondents said a barrier to participation is "not aware of opportunities". Due to the inter-generational nature of recreation and culture services there is a need for multiple platforms. During the stakeholder workshops and community pop-up engagement, participants had many ideas as to how the Town can improve communications related to recreation and culture services.

"Prioritize Indigenous cultural and educational activities. Schedule reading and storytelling and visiting activities for all ages (evenings and weekends)"

"I work at Aurora College and it would help to have more events that students and their families can attend"

## 4.0 SUCCESS FRAMEWORK



## 4.0 SUCCESS FRAMEWORK

The Town of Fort Smith has a remarkable array of facilities and program offerings to engage its citizens in the pursuit of healthy lifestyles. Current participation rates in programs and services and the positive feedback received through community engagement process are solid indicators of the Community Services Department's success in delivering programs and services.

This Success Framework identifies strategies and actions to maximize engagement in recreation and culture programs in the Town of Fort Smith. It has been shaped by the community context, extensive engagement, and the current trends and innovations in culture and recreation services. The Framework supports the Community Service's Department's Vision and Mission and ultimately the pursuit of the Town's strategic priority *to be the healthiest community in the NWT.*

The Framework is organized around 8 interrelated strategies. These strategies include associated actions and ways to measure their successful implementation. Timeframes have been included for each of the actions a general reference as follows: short (1 to 3 years); medium (3 to 5 years); long (5+ years).

*It is recommended that the Plan is reviewed at year 5 of its implementation to determine if new actions should be considered, based on new and emerging trends, potential new recreation and culture funding sources and, to determine overall relevance of actions.*



**4.1 Increase awareness of available programs and services**

Communication is key to maintaining and increasing community-wide participation in culture and recreation activities. The intent of this strategy is to ensure there is a range of communication tools that provide appropriate messaging that reach all segments of the community.

ACTION	SHORT	MED	LONG
Continue to hold social media competitions to promote participation within the community. For example, to participate, citizens are asked to post a photo while at an activity held by the Community Services Department using the hashtag such as <b>#LifeinFortSmith</b> . Participants can be entered into draws for free passes to the Community Recreation Centre or other prizes.	✓		
Facilitate free activity days at indoor and outdoor facilities in Fort Smith such as free art classes, an open house at the Community Recreation Centre or outdoor activities such as snowboarding or Nordic skiing with available equipment and instruction.	✓		
Develop a social media campaign utilizing platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to increase awareness of classes and services offered by the Community Services Department. For example, stream live video of popular events and activities on Instagram and Facebook.	✓	✓	
Continue to utilize existing communication techniques including consistent updates to the Community Recreation Centre calendar, the Recreation Guide and posters/flyers and signage at the Community Recreation Centre and other locations throughout Fort Smith.	✓	✓	✓
Meet residents “where they are” by facilitating pop-up fitness and culture opportunities at various locations and events in Fort Smith such as the College, schools, parks, and other places where people gather.		✓	✓

**METRICS**

- Number of ‘Followers’ on IG and FB (quarterly social media audit)
- Number of likes, posts, reposts on IG and FB (quarterly social media audit)
- Participants in Live Streams
- Participants at pop up events
- Overall registration at Community Recreation Centre programs

### 4.2 Enhance intergovernmental collaboration

Fort Smith has the unique identity of being a community that is 60% Indigenous. Steps can be taken to work together with the three Indigenous Governments to plan and deliver local recreation and culture programs and services. Further collaboration with Indigenous Governments presents a unique opportunity to identify and pursue efforts toward reconciliation. The intent of this strategy is to ensure that the relationship between the Town and the Indigenous Governments is strengthened as they work together to meet the recreation and culture needs of the whole community.

ACTION	SHORT	MED	LONG
Work with Indigenous Governments to include local Indigenous languages on signage in the Community and Recreation Centre and other sites in Fort Smith.		✓	
Facilitate quarterly recreation and culture services planning meetings with Fort Smith Métis Council, Smith Landing First Nation and Salt River First Nation to identify and coordinate activities, determine potential space needs and to identify other ways to support each other's activities.	✓	✓	✓
Collaborate with Indigenous Governments in planning and communicating events and activities through social media platforms, websites, print media, and other forms of communication.	✓	✓	✓
Partner with Indigenous Governments to support Indigenous culture activities. The Town can work with Indigenous Governments to identify appropriate ways to support cultural activities and events.	✓	✓	✓

**METRICS**

- Meetings held
- Signage installation
- Events developed and promoted in partnership



### 4.3 Maximize use of existing facilities and outdoor recreation infrastructure

It is generally recognized that Fort Smith is well served when it comes to facilities and infrastructure related to recreation and culture. Co-location of spaces and services that offer opportunities for both programmed and unprogrammed activities can lead to increased participation in recreation and culture activities and programs and, in turn, increased social interaction and community vitality. The intent of this strategy is to ensure that current facilities are used as efficiently and effectively as possible.

ACTION	SHORT	MED	LONG
Ensure that 50% of Community Recreation Centre spaces are adaptable and flexible to accommodate the diversity of recreation and culture program and service needs within the Town of Fort Smith. Ensure facilities are barrier free, environmentally sound and meet current and future technology needs of users, such as Wi-Fi access and projection screens.	✓		
Maximize the use of existing community facility space in town. Work with residents, partners, and community stakeholders to reconfigure the Community and Recreation Centre to ensure efficient and inclusive use of space within the facility. Explore options to include, for example, the library and childcare space in the Community Recreation Centre.	✓		
Improve access to the local trail system by providing infrastructure (such as garbage cans, benches, and signage) along local trails. Promote active transportation through the utilization of existing trail and transportation systems.		✓	
Take activities and programs outside by making use of parks and trail systems for organized culture activities, such as painting in the park and recreation programming, such as bootcamps and trail running.		✓	
Explore including data collected by the library in annual reports of the Community Services Department	✓	✓	✓

**METRICS**

- % of Community Recreation Centre spaces that are flexible for programmed and unprogrammed use
- % of programs offered and outdoors
- % of time Community Recreation Centre rooms and facilities are booked for programs or for rentals to establish the efficient use of facilities
- % of time outdoor recreation facilities are booked (i.e. soccer and baseball/softball fields)

**4.4 Ensure services and activities are inclusive of all age groups, incomes, and abilities**

The Town of Fort Smith is committed to providing recreation and culture services to all members of the community. Many ideas for new programs and services were expressed throughout the community engagement process. The intent of this strategy is to ensure that the Town continues to work with the community and its partners to identify and address those needs and, in turn, ensure equitable access to meaningful culture and recreation opportunities to all segments of the population.

ACTION	SHORT	MED	LONG
Facilitate opportunities for vulnerable, low-income community members to participate in no-cost and low-cost programs, to ensure the recreation system remains open and accessible to all residents such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Free access pack (i.e. 12 visit punch card to Community Recreation Centre)</li> <li>▪ Free access to sports equipment (e.g. skate rentals)</li> <li>▪ Free lessons through an annual budget allocation for lower income residents<sup>12</sup> (i.e. swimming, skating, snowboarding, art)</li> <li>▪ Free transportation options (such as a vanpool, shared carpool)</li> </ul>	✓		
Consider a policy that requires recreation, sports and culture groups that are subsidized by the Town to offer community outreach and subsidized/no cost registration for residents of low-income backgrounds.	✓		
Develop a regular and on-going presence in the schools for relationship building and support for children and youth. Profile recreation and culture activities at the schools through, for example, demonstrations both in-class and as part of school assemblies.	✓		
Provide opportunities for feedback and new ideas for recreation and culture services in Fort Smith through an annual community satisfaction survey, comment boxes and tracking of user feedback.		✓	
Develop and maintain partnerships with health, social service agencies and other service providers in the community. Reach out directly to their clientele and work together on culture, sport, and recreation needs.		✓	

<sup>12</sup> Some communities offer lower income residents a certain amount of money toward courses (i.e. \$200/year toward recreation courses for a family).



TOWN OF FORT SMITH COMMUNITY SERVICES MASTER PLAN

ACTION	SHORT	MED	LONG
Provide on-site, drop-in childcare options for parents to give them the opportunity to pursue their health and wellness goals.		✓	
Facilitate free activity days at indoor and outdoor facilities in Fort Smith such as free art classes, an open house at the Community Recreation Centre or outdoor activities such as snowboarding or Nordic skiing with available equipment and instruction.		✓	
Engage students through leadership groups to identify gaps in programs and activities for children and youth in Fort Smith. Establish an annual youth forum to identify gaps in programming, discuss opportunities to improve culture and recreation opportunities and other relevant areas related to youth.		✓	

METRICS

- Number of low-income residents participating in town and partner recreation and culture activities
- Number of families using drop-in childcare
- Number of residents participating in “free activity” days
- Number of youths engaged in the forum



#### 4.5 Encourage greater participation through use of technology

Technology is changing behaviour and the way individuals participate in recreation activities and pursue healthy lifestyles. It is being used more and more to increase engagement in active participation. The intent of this strategy is to ensure the Town utilizes technology to engage community members in their pursuit of wellness.

ACTION	SHORT	MED	LONG
Consider using existing software and apps (i.e. Strava, Run Keeper) to facilitate fitness challenges. Provide incentives for participation such as draw prizes, free recreation passes, etc.	✓		
Provide access to equipment and on-line classes and space at the Community Recreation Centre and partner organizations, including the library, to allow for flexibility in type of culture and recreation programs and activities offered to Fort Smith residents. These could include, for example, fitness classes such as spin, cooking classes, art classes, etc.		✓	
Provide a forum for staff to review on-line fitness and other classes and make these reviews available to residents on social media platforms and/or the Town’s website.		✓	

**METRICS**

- Number of participants in challenges
- Number of participants in classes streamed
- Number of classes streamed at Community Recreation Centre
- Number of reviews by Community Recreation Centre staff





**4.6 Develop and maintain partnerships with community partners to meet community needs**

Building new partnerships and strengthening existing ones with community partners and like-minded agencies can be a way to provide a range of innovative services in Fort Smith. In many respects, this is already underway, and these partnerships have been formed. The intent of this strategy is for the Town to work collaboratively with partners to avoid duplication of services and identify ways the Town can support their delivery.

ACTION	SHORT	MED	LONG
Convene a forum of service agencies within Fort Smith to determine priorities and common needs, and to identify efficiencies and resource sharing opportunities.	✓		
Utilize existing communication techniques to promote the programs and services offered by partner organizations		✓	

**METRICS**

- Number of meetings with partner organizations

#### 4.7 Maintain and expand the active volunteer base

Volunteers are the most important resource community and event organizers have. Having experienced, skilled volunteers who are willing to donate their time will help ensure the success of many future community programs and events. The intent of this strategy is to ensure there are resources available to maintain and enhance the local base of volunteers.

ACTION	SHORT	MED	LONG
Allocate a staff member to coordinate volunteer activities to ensure that volunteerism is tracked and managed in a coordinated effort.	✓		
Recruit volunteers to assist in areas specific to their interests and skills. Define roles with clear expectations, timelines, and deliverables. Host an annual or bi-annual volunteer “job fair” to provide information on available opportunities.		✓	
Recognize volunteers and coordinate an annual volunteer appreciation event and through incentives such as passes to the Community Recreation Centre and draw prizes.	✓		
Partner with the schools to develop leadership and volunteer programming as part of the curriculum.		✓	

**METRICS**

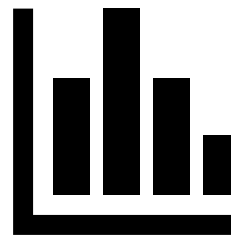
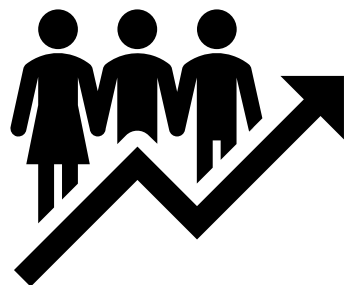
- Number of volunteers



### 4.8 Enhance data collection and user tracking techniques

It is important to measure the current use of facilities and participation in recreation and culture activities and services. Tracking the uptake of services over time can be used to determine whether activities should be maintained or changed; help to ensure the Town is meeting its targets; and, can aid in accessing funding.

ACTION	SHORT	MED	LONG
Investigate and acquire a software package to assist staff in tracking the use of Town’s culture and recreation programs and activities.	✓		
Develop a consistent method for community organizations that receive Town funding to report on user numbers, volunteer numbers and participant demographics, such as festivals and sporting events	✓		
Utilize data for reporting on success, identifying gaps and future planning.	✓		
Include data related to % of time facilities (indoor and outdoor) are booked for use.	✓		
Incorporate library data that meaningfully reflects this aspect the cultural programming of the Town (e.g. programs offered at the library)	✓		
Collect data for structured and spontaneous use of recreation and culture services. For example, install trail counters at key locations around Fort Smith.		✓	
Explore opportunities and formats for collecting volunteer numbers and volunteer hours for community-based programs, events, and activities.		✓	



## **PHOTOGRAPHY CREDITS**

Cover Photo (left to right): Town of Fort Smith Facebook Page (SSDEC/Sarah Pruys, Pierre-Emmanuel Photography), Northern Life Museum & Cultural Centre Facebook Page, Town of Fort Smith website ([www.fortsmith.ca](http://www.fortsmith.ca)), Louis Brockner

Introduction – Karl Johnston

p.2 - Northern Life Museum & Cultural Centre Facebook Page

Plan Framework – Town of Fort Smith Facebook Page (Wood Buffalo Frolics Group)

Community Services Master Plan Foundations – Outpost Magazine

p.6 – Town of Fort Smith Instagram Account (@fortsmithnwt); participants in the Mad Bison Mud Run, August 2018

p. 7 - Town of Fort Smith Instagram Account (@fortsmithnwt); November 2017

p 20 - Town of Fort Smith Instagram Account (@fortsmithnwt); 2019 Pine Lake Picnic, July 2019

Success Framework – Town of Fort Smith Website ([www.fortsmith.ca](http://www.fortsmith.ca))

p. 24 - Town of Fort Smith Website ([www.fortsmith.ca](http://www.fortsmith.ca))

p.26 - Town of Fort Smith Website ([www.fortsmith.ca](http://www.fortsmith.ca))

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**DNA**  
David Nairne + Associates Ltd

**CS** Planning  
Group

## **APPENDIX A – Survey Results**



Town of Fort Smith  
Community Services Master Plan  
**SURVEY SUMMARY**

February 2020

David Nairne + Associates Ltd.



**INTRODUCTION ..... 3**

1. Do you and/or members of your household participate in recreation activities (such as swimming, skating, or fitness classes) and/or cultural activities (such as art classes and education programs at the museum)? ..... 3
2. Which recreational and/or cultural facilities do you and your family use most often? ..... 3
3. In the past 12 months, what types of recreational activities have you or anyone in your household participated in, in Fort smith? Please check all that apply..... 4
4. Are you and members of your household able to participate in recreational activities as often as you would like? ..... 5
5. In the past 12 months, what types of cultural events and activities have you or anyone in your household participated in?..... 5
6. Are you and members of your household able to participate in cultural activities as often as you would like? ..... 5
7. What limits your ability to participate in recreational and/or cultural activities as often as you would like? (check all that apply) ..... 5
8. What recreational and/or cultural activities would you like to see offered in Fort Smith? (open ended questions)..... 6
9. How would you rate your level of satisfaction with the recreational activities in Fort smith for the following age groups? AND..... 7
10. How would you rate your level of satisfaction with the cultural activities in Fort smith for the following age groups? ..... 7
11. In the past 12 months did you volunteer in a recreational and/or cultural activity in Fort Smith in some way? If yes, what did you do?..... 7
12. Are you interested in volunteering? What are you interested in doing? ..... 8
13. Fort Smith wants to be the healthiest community in the NWT. What could we do to make that happen?..... 9

**DEMOGRAPHICS ..... 10**

14. How many people in your household are in the following age categories? ..... 10
15. Where did you get this survey? ..... 10

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ..... 10**

## INTRODUCTION

The Town of Fort Smith (the Town) is developing a Community Services Master Plan to guide recreation and culture programs and services. As part of the project, the Town administered a community survey over a 7-week period from mid December 2019 to January 31, 2020. The intent of the survey was to gauge residents’ perspectives on and participation in cultural and recreation programs and services. The survey was available on-line as well as at various public locations around Town - 182 people responded. This document presents a summary of the results.

**1. Do you and/or members of your household participate in recreation activities (such as swimming, skating, or fitness classes) and/or cultural activities (such as art classes and education programs at the museum)?**

- Overall, 88% of respondents said they or their household members participate in various ways, such as art classes, education programs at the museum, swimming, skating or fitness classes and many more (Figure 1, right).

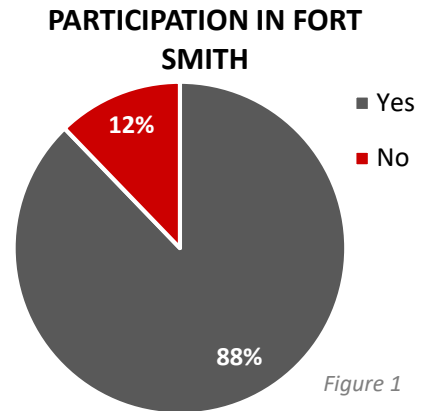


Figure 1

**2. Which recreational and/or cultural facilities do you and your family use most often?**

- The recreational and cultural facilities used most often include the Fort Smith Recreation Centre, Fort Smith Centennial Arena, hiking trails around the area, Wood Buffalo National Park and Mary Kaeser Library (Figure 2, below).

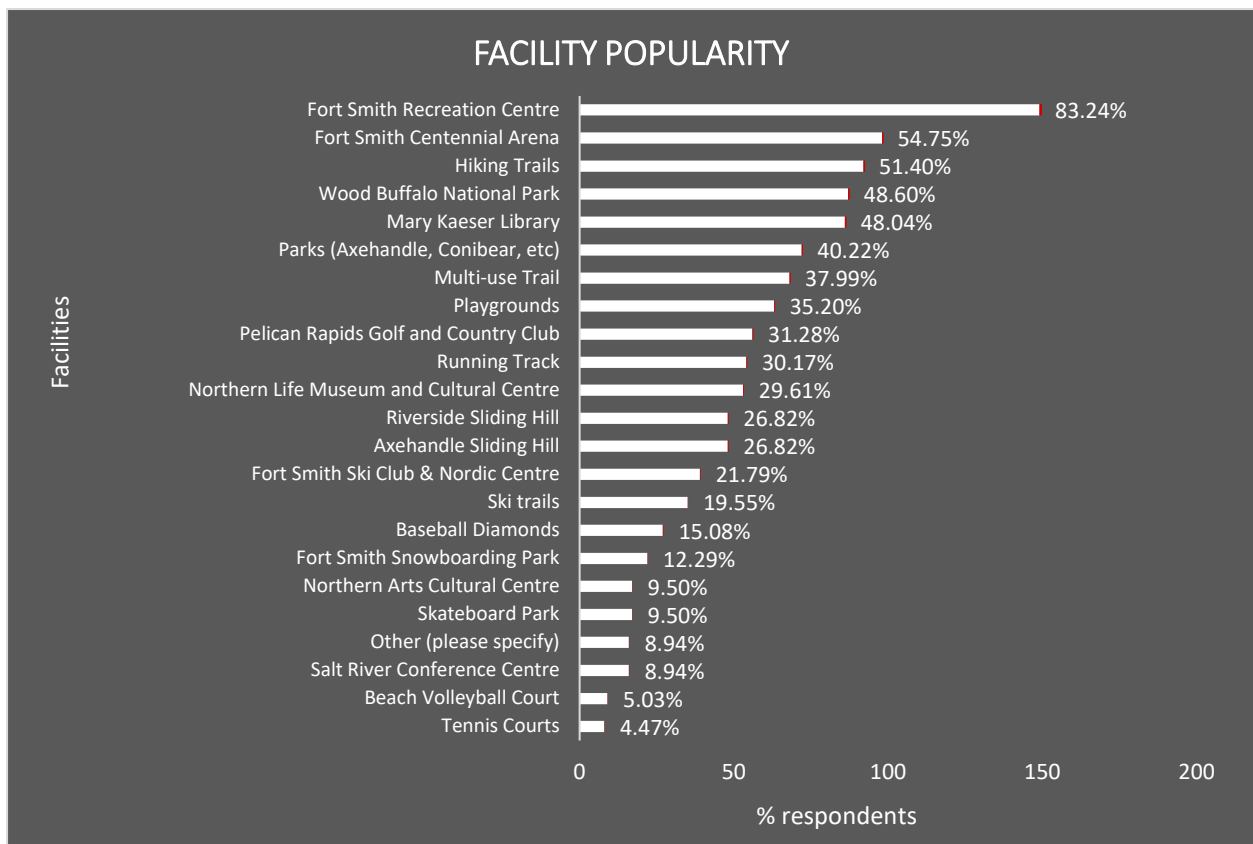
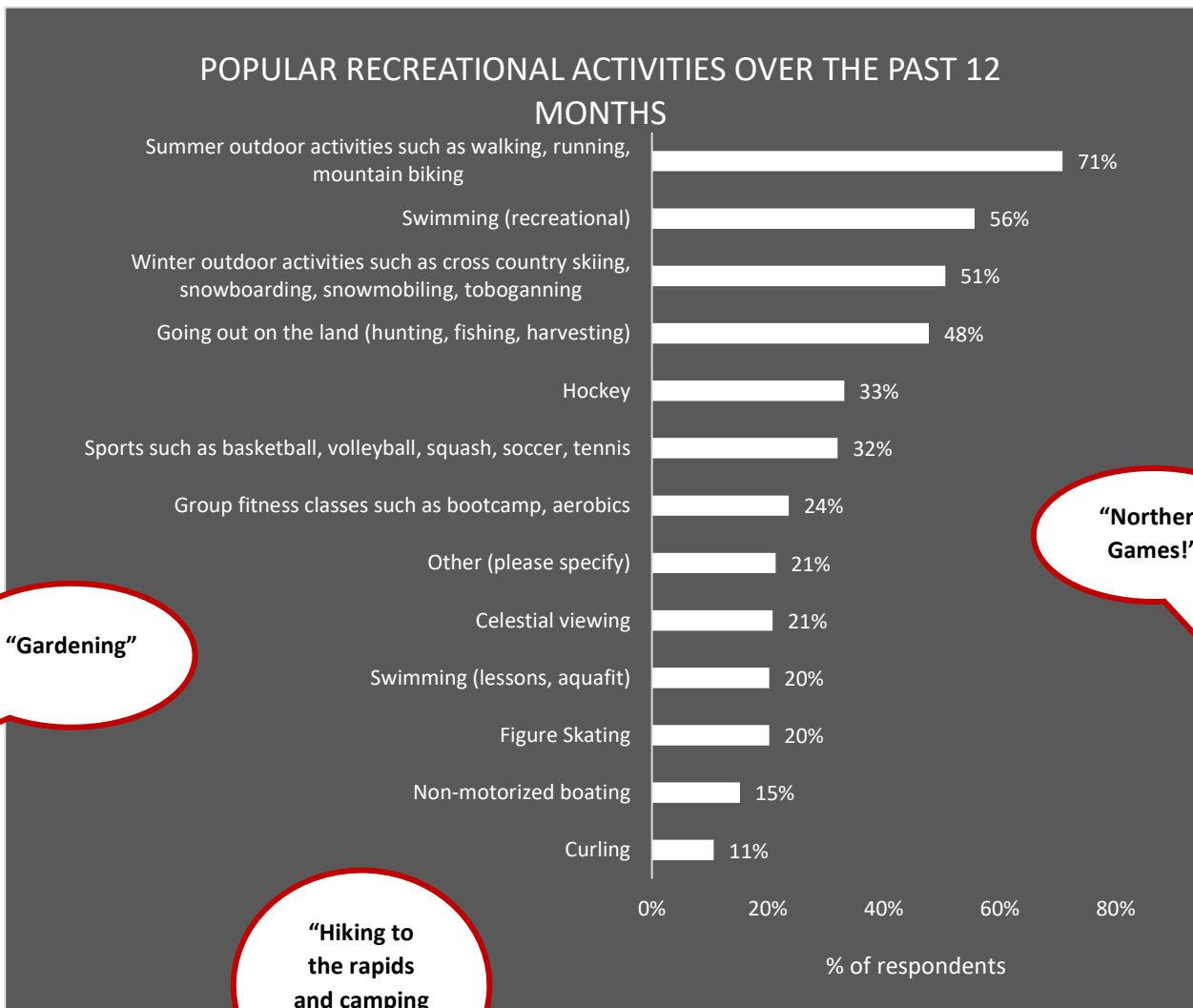


Figure 2

**3. In the past 12 months, what types of recreational activities have you or anyone in your household participated in, in Fort Smith? Please check all that apply.**

- Over the past year, survey respondents mostly participated in summer outdoor activities such as walking, running and mountain biking.
- In the winter, they participated in cross country skiing, snowboarding, snowmobiling and other winter sports.
- Swimming is popular all year round.
- Going out on the land for hunting, fishing, and harvesting is also a common activity.
- The least-common activities over the past year include curling and non-motorized boating.
- Just over one-fifth (21%) of respondents mentioned other activities that were not listed in the survey, such as Pete’s Gym, ATVing, camping, archery, golf, shooting, pickleball and kayaking/canoeing.



**4. Are you and members of your household able to participate in recreational activities as often as you would like?**

- The ability to participate in recreational activities was almost equally divided among respondents – 55% of respondents said they can participate as often as they would like, while 45% said they are unable to.

**5. In the past 12 months, what types of cultural events and activities have you or anyone in your household participated in?**

- The most popular cultural activity was festivals (such as Frolics), with two-thirds of respondents picking this activity.
- Many respondents also mentioned going out on the land (hunting, fishing, harvesting) and Art shows (such as Art in the Park and Art Extravaganza).
- Respondents noted other activities that were not listed on the survey, such as Spring Stock, movie nights, school-related activities, education programs at the college, beading and author readings.

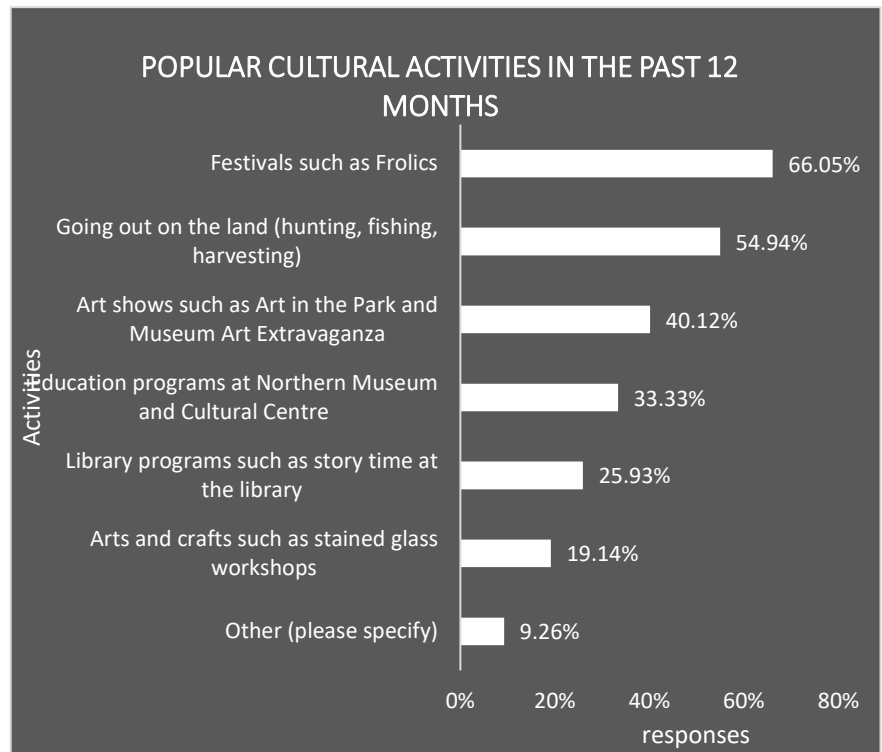


Figure 4

**6. Are you and members of your household able to participate in cultural activities as often as you would like?**

- The responses to this question, were divided almost equally with 52% yes and 48% no.

**7. What limits your ability to participate in recreational and/or cultural activities as often as you would like? (check all that apply)**

- Nearly half (49%) of people said they are too busy.
- Just over one-third (36%) said they are not aware of opportunities.
- Another third (32%) said the hours are inconvenient.
- One-quarter (25%) believe there is a lack of desired facilities or programs.

- Open-ended responses mentioned cold weather, conflict with schedules, lack of equipment and workshop spots filling up quickly as other factors that act as barriers in accessing programming (Figure 5).

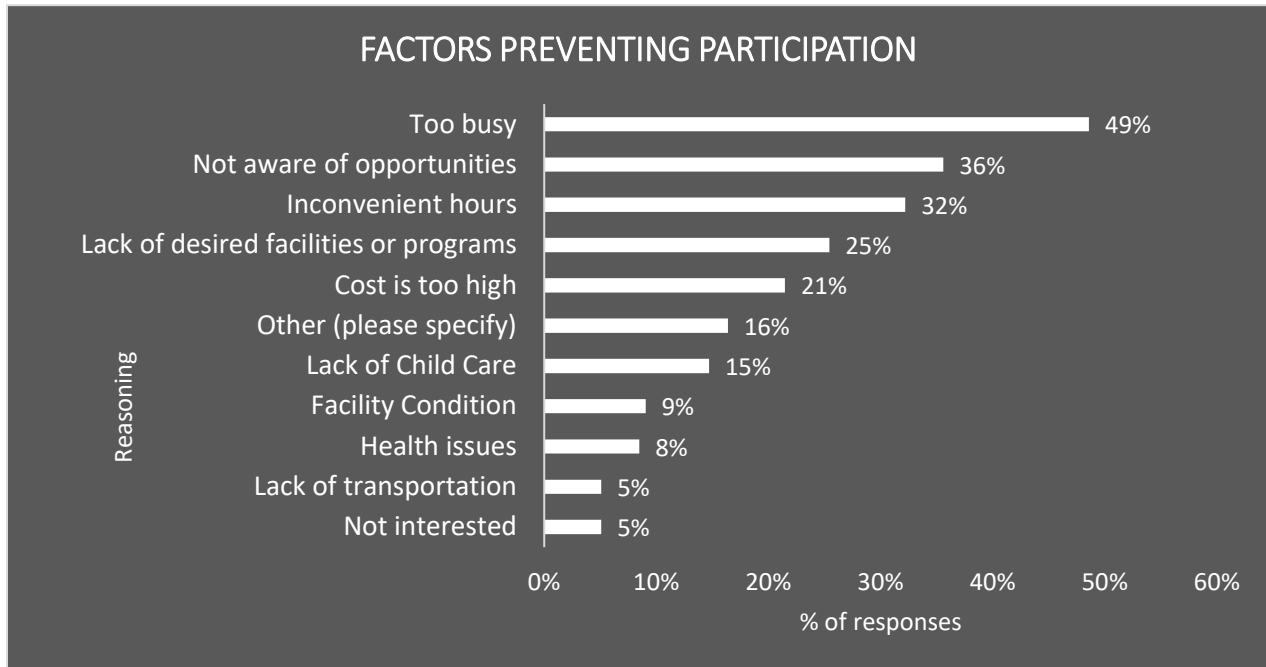


Figure 5

**8. What recreational and/or cultural activities would you like to see offered in Fort Smith? (open ended questions)**

- The responses to the is question have been compiled in figure 6 below, with the most common answers appearing in larger letters.
- Respondents said they would like to see new opportunities such as martial arts, gymnastics, dance classes and traditional teachings.
- Respondents also said they would like an extension to program hours to include evenings and statutory holidays.
- Specific classes for young kids and seniors were also mentioned.



Figure 6

**9. How would you rate your level of satisfaction with the recreational activities in Fort Smith for the following age groups? AND**

**10. How would you rate your level of satisfaction with the cultural activities in Fort Smith for the following age groups?**

Figure 7 below presents the average level of satisfaction with recreation and cultural activities in Fort Smith on a scale of 1 to 5:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Very Dissatisfied</li> <li>2. Dissatisfied</li> <li>3. Neutral</li> <li>4. Satisfied</li> <li>5. Very Satisfied</li> </ol> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For recreational activities, people are most satisfied with programming for school age children (6 to 12 years), and least satisfied with programming for teens (13 to 18 years).</li> <li>• For cultural activities, people are most satisfied with programming for school age children, and least satisfied with programming for young children (0 to 5 years).</li> <li>• Overall, people are more satisfied with recreational activities - the weighted average for recreational programming was higher in every age group compared to cultural programming.</li> </ul> |
|--|--|

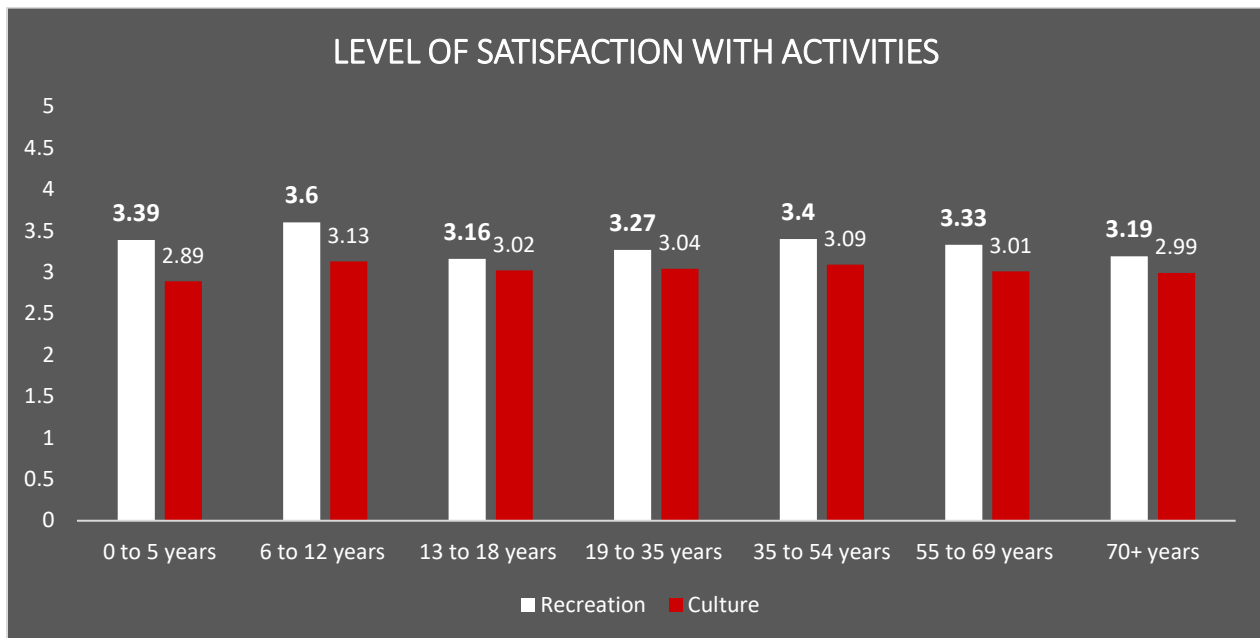


Figure 7

**11. In the past 12 months did you volunteer in a recreational and/or cultural activity in Fort Smith in some way? If yes, what did you do?**

- Just under half (45%) of respondents have actively volunteered in the community over the past year in various volunteer positions.
- The most popular volunteer activities included seasonal events such as Santa Sleigh, Arctic Winter Games and Paddlefest, while others gave their time at recreational tournaments and events.



**13. Fort Smith wants to be the healthiest community in the NWT. What could we do to make that happen?**

As shown in Figure 10 below, the responses to this question fell into ten different categories: affordability, incentives, mental health, facility upgrades, food, program suggestions, climate, all ages, accessibility, and movement.

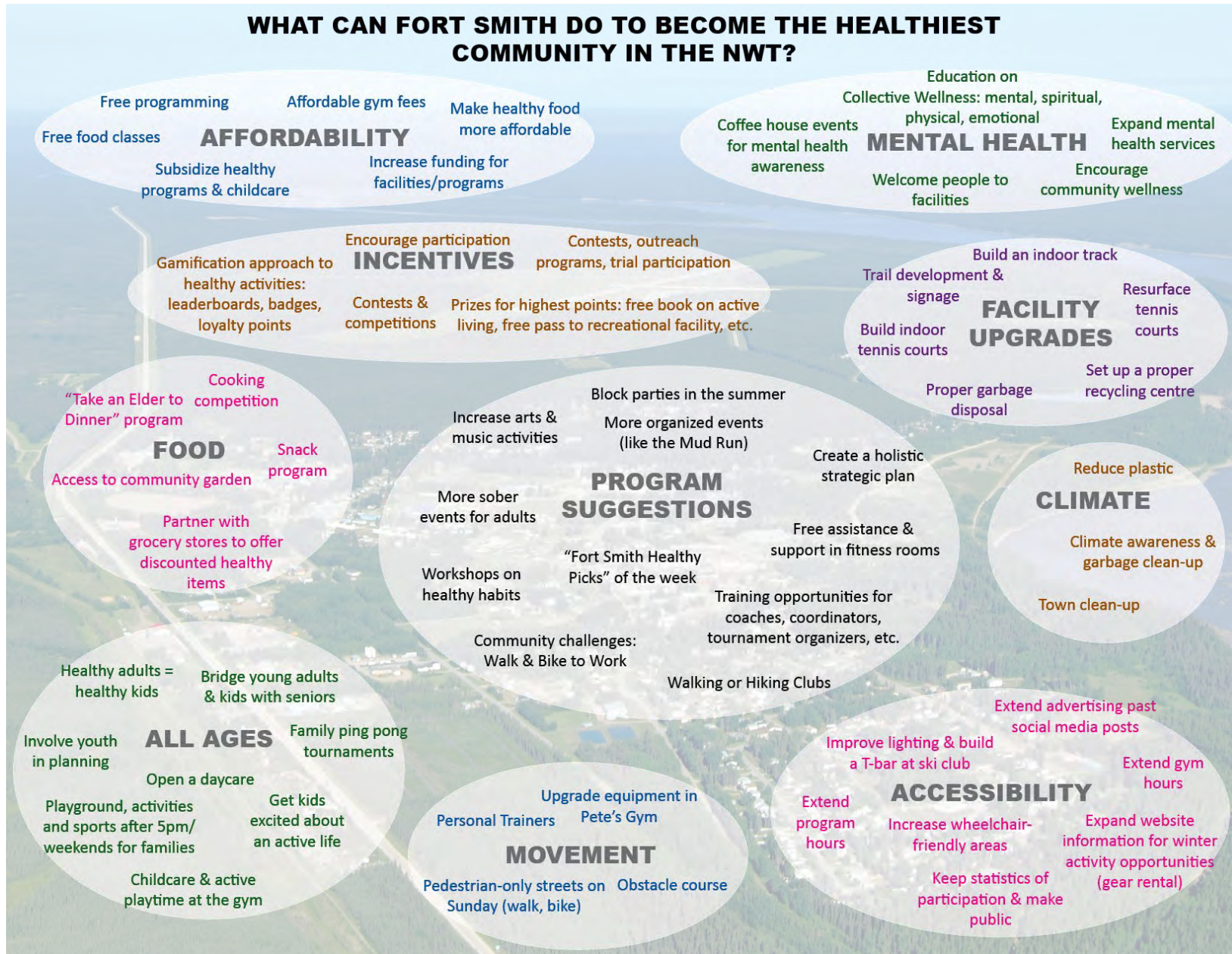


Figure 10

## DEMOGRAPHICS

### 14. How many people in your household are in the following age categories?

- The survey population is mostly middle-aged, with one-quarter (25%) between the ages of 36 to 54 years old, and just over one-fifth (21%) is between 18 to 35. Seniors over the age of 70 are the smallest age group at 5% (Figure 11).

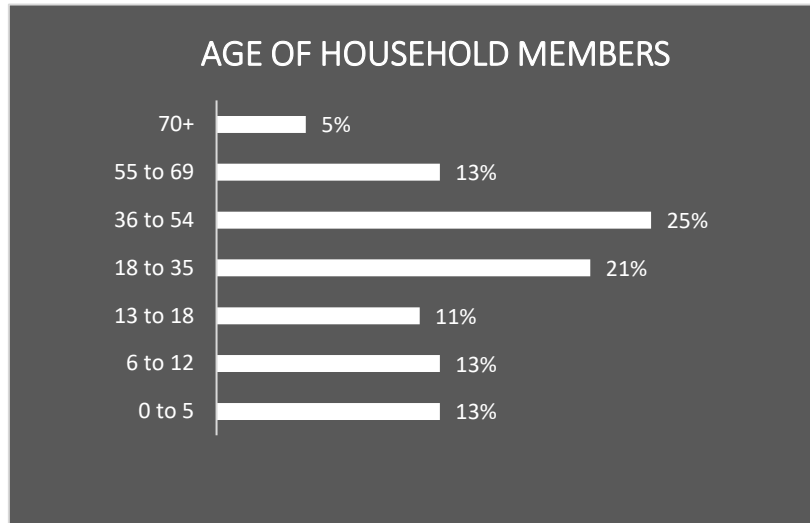


Figure 11

97% of people who took this survey indicated they are from Fort Smith, and 3% are not. A large majority (72%) who are from Fort Smith have lived there for over 10 years (Figure 12).

Nearly half (49%) are Indigenous (either First Nations, Metis, Inuit or multiple identities) (Figure 13).

### 15. Where did you get this survey?

40% of people said they filled it out online, while an additional 31% picked up a copy at the Recreation Centre. Others found copies at the Mary Kaeser Library, Aurora College, the Arena or at the Museum and Cultural Centre. Nobody filled out a survey from the grocery store, PWK Highschool or JBT Elementary.

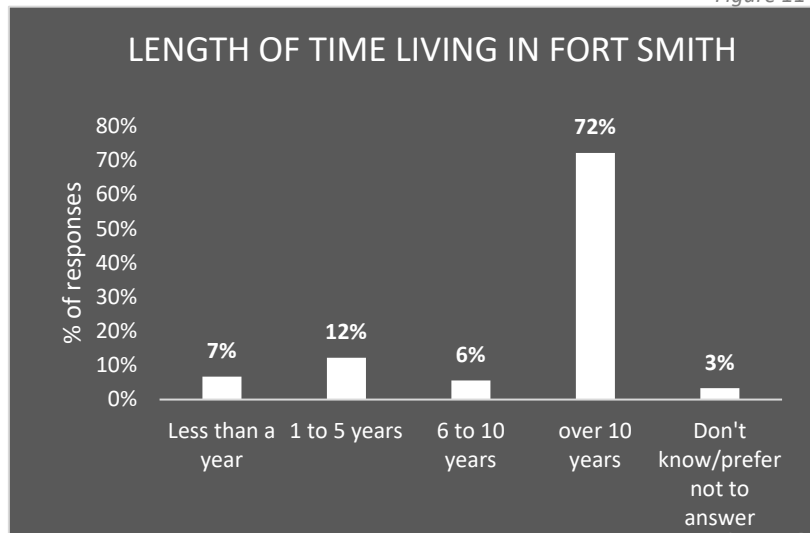


Figure 12

## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Most responses throughout this survey were very engaging, offering ideas and additional comments to any open-ended questions while filling out the bubbled answers accordingly. Very few people skipped questions. Some final comments that people offered at the end of the survey include the following:

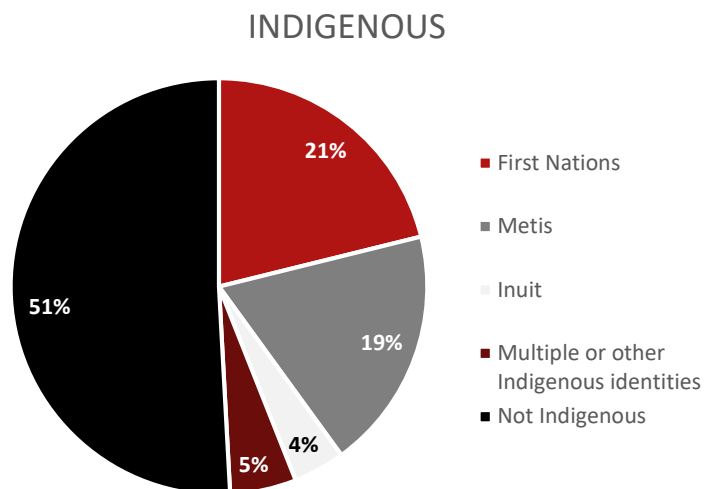


Figure 13

**"I work at Aurora College and it would help to have more events that students and their families can attend without any costs."**

**"Great job! Keep it up :)"**

**"I am not good at stopping to look at posters, but I like arts and crafts. I think Fort Smith does a lot (for a small community) to promote healthy living. Thank you and good work! Thank you for offering so many programs for kids. We have a great town."**

**"The multi-use trail is a great resource, but needs continued maintenance, especially the graveled section."**

**"I feel that there are a lot of activities for youth (which is important) but I wish there was more for adults. I am doing my best within my expertise, but I am not sure how much of an impact I am doing."**

**"Lower the drop-in fees & increase the pool hours."**

**"If Pete's gym is going to the basement, please make the floor concrete. It would be unsafe not to do so."**

**"As youth I think that we should be able to come to the Rec centre to play sports and improve K sports. I think that there should be like sport coaches for some or all sports. Maybe not for drop in but like if there were certain like practices with coaches."**

**“Don't forget Ft. Smith has a shooting range. For some reason, Ft. Smith residents are less likely to walk or bike instead of driving than many other communities in the NWT or in the south, whether to and from work, school or around town. Try to get people to spend more time outdoors instead of going from heated building to idling vehicle to heated building.”**

**“Prioritize Indigenous cultural and educational activities. Schedule reading and storytelling and visiting activities for all ages evenings and weekends.”**

**“Thank you for the free swim day! Pete's gym machines need to be kept in good repair and replaced as needed to keep this at the level it should be for the price of a membership.”**

**“work on beautification with residents like gardens, flowers, community gardens, full recycling program, full composting program including worm composting in winter, dog parks, playgrounds, x country track set the oval at the school and close to town for those without transportation out to the ski club.”**

**“PLEASE do some work in Pete's Gym. The gym is not maintained equipment breaks and is not replaced even when front desk staff our asked. over the past few years kettle bells have been removed multiple pieces of cardio equipment have been removed (at least 5 pieces that I can recall) Attachments for the machines have broken and not replaced. Also, look at the bench in the gym. If people hang out their coats the bench is useless, May as well just take it out. you can't sit on it and put on your shoes.”**

**“One other thing that would be great to see would be a dog park so owners can take pets there to run around and play.”**

**APPENDIX B – Stakeholder and Pop-Up Engagement Summary**



Town of Fort Smith  
Community Services Master Plan  
**COMMUNITY  
ENGAGEMENT WEEK**  
February 17-23, 2020  
David Nairne + Associates Ltd.



## INTRODUCTION

The Town of Fort Smith (the Town) is developing a Community Services Master Plan to guide recreation and culture programs and services. As part of the project, the Town facilitated an engagement process with residents during the week of February 17 to 23, 2020. This included meetings with community partners and community “pop-ups”.

The stakeholder meetings included 68 participants representative of a variety of community service providers including:

- Recreation Staff
- Recreation Advisory Board
- Town Council
- Indigenous Governments
- Parks Canada
- JBT Student Leadership
- Seniors’ Society
- Interagency Committee
- Northern Life Museum and Cultural Centre Board

The discussions focused on the types of recreation/cultural services each group provides; whether there are other services they would like to see; and, how the Town of Fort Smith could support them to deliver those services.

The intent of the community pop-ups was to meet people where they are. The pop-ups included visually appealing boards (refer to Appendix A) which presented the survey results and provided opportunity for participants to make suggestions related to expanded services and communication methods. In total, 11 pop-up events were hosted at various locations throughout Town including. A total of 196 residents were engaged through the pop-ups:

- Kaesar’s Grocery Store (x2)
- Northern Store
- Aurora College Foyer
- Post Natal Parents Group (CRC Foyer)
- Youth Night (CRC Foyer)
- Parents and Tots (RCC Foyer)
- PWK Foyer
- Centennial Arena
- Mary Kaesar Library
- Food Bank

The outcomes are presented below. Please refer to Appendix A for the engagement materials.

## FOCUS GROUP MEETING NOTES

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### **Town Council – 6 participants**

Members of Fort Smith Town Council met to review the results of the community survey (available in appendix A). and the review the schedule and engagement materials. They suggested additional focus groups and pop-ups including the Food Bank and meeting with the Seniors at Kaesars.

### **Community Partners Meetings**

As part of the engagement process, the Town facilitated workshops with 7 community partners. Each meeting included an overview of the purpose of the Community Services Master Plan project and a presentation of the survey results. The discussions tended to be organic in nature, but the following questions generally framed the meetings.

- What cultural/recreation programs/services does your organization offer
- Is there anything else you would like to see offered?
- Who / what organization should take the lead?
- How can the Town of Fort Smith help? (ie. facilities, funding proposals, assisting with events)
- How can the Town better communication cultural/recreation programs/services/activities?

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### **Parks Canada – 15 participants**

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The following are the outcomes/ideas discussed and recorded during the discussions with Parks Canada staff.

#### **Communications**

- Newspaper
- Bulletin Board
- Email out a monthly schedule
- Info board: central location info
- Town needs to take lead on communication and centralize
- Able to call town/rec centre - find out what's going on/ Staff around know what's going on
- time overlaps: different times
- provide outreach to people to do different programs
- Signage is important
- Monthly bulletin

#### **Volunteerism**

- volunteer – dedicated – hard to recruit others to help – make the community better – community pride – individual interests
- better organization by the Town – database for volunteers
- Volunteer fair
- Could have a volunteer trade show
- Multigenerational volunteers
- How to encourage youth to be involved
- Some of the volunteer opportunities perhaps aren't aware of

#### **Tourism**

- Tourism Strategy: help cross-market (need to know what's going on)
- What makes the Town unique in the territory: help promote the Town
- Have lots of services and need them packaged up
- If Town is an attractive place to live makes it easier for people to move here for work
- Link up with the Town – partnering agreement
- Guide hikes, etc

#### How can the Town of Fort Smith help?

- Town needs to work more closely to help the infrastructure
- Rapids make us a unique community
- better connection, infrastructure.
- Garbage cans need to be emptied
- Complications due to slide area
- There needs to be a greater community core
- Concern with moving everything into the Rec Centre
- How to develop a walking tour? What do we need to do, how does it fit, connect the modes of activity

- Integration of lands
- Signage through the town; what is the history of the town; celebrate history and culture in the community itself.
- Move as a facilitator a partner in the process
- Better if hiking club in community and parks can support it
- Organize volunteers; data collection, birds, surveys
- Provide info to guide
- volunteer contact person: PR person; coordinator that knows what's happening in Town
- Spread the word/schedule a bit better
- Website can be difficult to navigate
- Create a destination
- Insurance and space available
- \*\*\*Childcare is very important
- Needed for retaining and attracting staff
- 65 to 70 kids per year; only 1 licensed dayhome
- Trail signage: wayfinding
- Climbing wall

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#### Health Centre – 5 participants

---

##### General

- Used to have Nordic Walking, Biggest Loser (needs to be offered after 5)
- Used to offer babysitting courses
- Overtime limitations

##### Barriers

- Volunteers
- Childcare
- Housing

##### Favourites

- Museum performances
- Hockey
- Beading

- Yoga/Bootcamp
- Limitation: overtime

##### Additional Activities

- Biggest Loser
- Nordic Walking
- Babysitting courses
- Need for childcare during adult activities
- Evening classes offered through college
- Indoor walking park
- Waterpark/splash park
- Classes geared toward youth
- More structured, pool tables
- More supervision
- Family dance; partner with town

- Youth dance
- Gymnastics, dance, drama
- Art camps/theatre
- Music lessons
- Cooking circle; culinary arts (partner with college to teach)

#### **Communications**

- Town Facebook Group rather than page

- Info sign on Town Hall
- Central location for info
- Post and update monthly schedule on Town website
- One-off events on Calendar
- Other groups post on Calendar
- Town of Fort Smith app
- Mechanism to add events to the calendar and remove

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### **Recreation Advisory Board – 5 participants**

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#### **General**

- Activities taking place; town insurance
- Provide facilities
- Challenge – who's in town
- Haven't had swim team for a couple of years
- Kids not in the pool so much (insurance, space)
- Town may need to stop trying to be the everything to everybody
- What about events ie/ walking to TUK
- Bike to work; active transport
- Close a road down for events
- Are there barriers to active transport?
- Bike to work/school
- Bike repairs/team kids
- Team activities missing; evenings and weekends
- There is programming here for kids
- Youth night Friday/Saturday

#### **Insurance for the Ski Club**

- Can't get insurance through Town because is in Alberta
- Facility insurance is crippling

#### **Multi-use trail**

- confusion around tenure of lands
- Signage – need to foster a relationship with department of lands so work in best interest
- Lobby GNWT to print signage on the lands
- Unstable lands
- Needs to be better maintained
- Better base and is there a way around that
- Need to pave it to make it safe
- Is there a way around that
- Need to pave it to make it safe and easier to walk on Calder Avenue

#### **Other**

- Obstacle course
- Mud run; 5km + 6.5 km
- Need for better coordination
- Cultural Events – weaving classes at the college
- Carpentry
- College changed rules around opening hours and overtime staff
- Museum; weekend workshops
- \*\*Partnerships with Town for one-off events

## Seniors Society – 7 Participants

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- 2 areas are underutilized – Conibear Park, Track
- Building programs into Conibear
- Used to have music festival
- Canada Day
- Access is good
- Parking can be an issue
- Track is better for seniors; town has no programs; walking program @ the track
- Track could be promoted better in the Town
- Relay for life was held there one year
- 
- Lots of Rec activities
- Good at responding to the ‘ask’; good at coming through with suggestions
- Seniors; accessibility is very important.
- Culture services for seniors
- Friendship Centre; crafts
- Cree lessons, crafts, etc.

### Communications

- Facebook is not good
- Posters
- Monthly mail-out available around town; insert into water bill
- Therapeutic session in pool; physiotherapy in the pool
- Lots of seniors would go who would normally go to lane swim.
- Dedicated person doing the calendar
- Community channel
- People miss the community newspaper

### Museum Hours

- 8 to 5; the hours are too restrictive
- Offer crafts and art projects
- Can be costly

### Library

- After school structured reading for older kids?
- Book clubs for kids at the after school
- Drama club; plays at Conibear Park
- Choir
- Space for children could go to have a choir
- Readers theatre
- Plays in Conibear Park
- Unstructured activities for kids
- How to get kids involved in play?
- Last few years – soccer coaching – well-received among the kids
- Library can be challenging; downstairs

### Other

- Sewing groups in town
- Fashion show for local fashions
- Room at the college for crafting but just for the students
- don’t bring storytellers from elsewhere, use locals
- People need to be aware
- Food security: gardening workshops
- Chemical free!

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## Integrated Health – 5 participants

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### Communication

- Facebook Page
- Town crier
- Radio
- Sandwich board at 4-way stop

### Childcare

- Big need in community
- Lots of ideas about collaboration

### **Restorative Justice Program Offerings**

- Restorative Justice – connection and relationships
- Program to bring people to land
- Community justice; transfer community services hours to new hours
- Duke of Edinburgh Award; service hours
- Fiddle and ukulele lessons
- DJ equipment through Duke of Edinburgh award
- Online lessons

### **Parking, Trails, Other**

- Parking lot Timber; leads to Queen E; empty lot – new lot
  - Markings on some of the trails; better signage
  - Figuring out where to park
  - Random patrol; to make sure that rules are being adhered to; random pop-in to make sure everything is okay
  - Town is good about clearing trails
  - Town should have Remote Control club
- 

### **Indigenous Governments – 11 Participants**

---

- Volunteerism; have a central location
  - Central repository for volunteers
  - Calendar with all the activities
  - Culture camps; have a main calendar of activities
  - Phone around and find out what is happening
  - Come to board map and talk to them
  - COMMUNICATION
  - Ask for input
  - Work better together; get involved
  - Provide some financial backing to the events offered by other?????
  - Perception that only certain groups get the backing
  - Representative on Rec Advisory Board
  - Community Calendar
  - Put a newspaper out twice a month
  - Identify boards and who is in them
  - Snow sculpture contest
- 

### **Museum Board – 4 Participants**

---

#### **Collaboration**

- Town celebration – programming with day camp
- Santa parade - museum was the location previously for the hot chocolate
- Big push for Arts programming; need to ensure there is no duplication
- Collaboration for scheduling; communication
- Formalize talking to staff; to the programmers
- Share summer maintenance workers
- Town could advocate for cultural funding
- Advisory Boards both Rec, Art and Culture; write policy so there is a balance between the Rec, Arts and Culture representative
- Collaboration with programming

#### **Barriers**

- Have limits to staff; can't run weekend workshops every weekend
- Programmers need to engage more
- More regular meetings
- Flexible funding would be helpful

#### **Community Spaces**

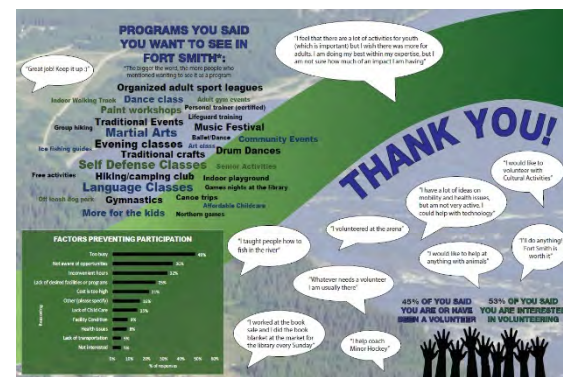
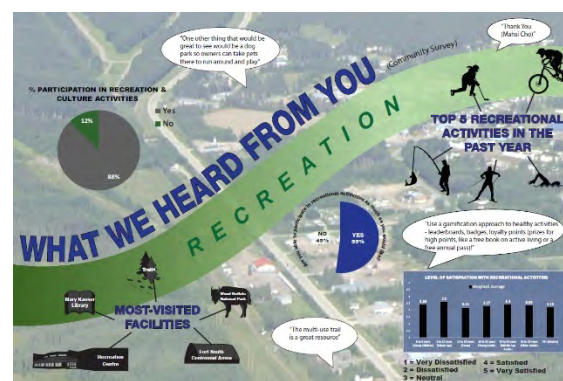
- Need to provide more than one place for people to physically gather
- Need more than facility for people to feel safe.
- Need for quiet place that encourages quiet contemplation.
- More than one accessible place for people to go
- Keep bringing the Town together

## POP-UP WORKSHOPS NOTES

As discussed previously, the pop-workshops were held at various locations around the Town of Fort Smith. Information about the Community Services Master Plan process along with survey results were presented on poster boards. A total of 196 people participated in the pop-up workshops. Participants were asked to respond to the following questions:

1. How should we get the message out about recreation and culture activities in Fort Smith?
2. In terms of recreation and culture programs and services, what should the town:
  - a. Do more off
  - b. Do less of
  - c. Stop doing

For the most part, participants responded to questions 1 and 2a. The following reports on the responses, organized by theme.



Posters from the pop-up workshops describing the CSMP process and community survey results

### 1. How should we get the message out about recreation and culture activities in Fort Smith?

- Need a schedule
- Town guides to show visitors
- Use screen at rec centre for more than just rec activities

- Facebook, Instagram
- Fall/summer/winter rec printed guides
- Ensure all staff Pool/RCC/Arena know what happening at each/other venues
- Website/Facebook
- TV Bingo announcement
- Rec Guide updated monthly
- Update website more often
- Social Media (Websites)
- News/New paper/ flyers
- Bulletin Boards (everywhere)
- Announcements through intercoms/phones/people
- Community bulletin board
- Town website
- Monthly calendar of activities
- Maybe a community notice board in front of the town hall where posters and announcements can be displayed – this could be duplicated at the Rec Centre
- Library Arena
- Facebook community page!
- Flyers and electronic sign advertising/promoting activities
- Specialized website/Facebook pages tailored to each rec service ie/ rec, town, library
- MORE OF THIS!! (Engagement posters)
- Go to schools
- Facebook
- Instagram
- Social Media
- Flyers in mailboxes
- Face to face conversations (classrooms)
- Community Board
- Buy-Sell Trade?
- Youth Night
- Meetings
- Community meetings
- Presentations!!!
- More posters

## 2. In terms of recreation and culture programs and services, what should the town **do more of?**

---

### **Recreation Activities**

---

- Basketball
- Bingo
- Boxing/martial arts club
- Childcare (infant)
- Children and family activities
- Continue play groups
- Dance play
- Gymnastics
- Highschool to use rec centre more (gym)
- HIIT classes, Pilates; greater variety of classes at a different time
- Lower prices at rec centre
- More recreation
- More recreational activities
- More squash support (courts, coaches)
- More to do for 1 to 3 ages
- Ball hockey
- Music group
- Personal trainer
- Pete's gym – more equipment, programming
- Play group on Sunday (small kids in gym) in winter
- Programs, group play for special needs children (need for trained staff)
- Running group
- Sensory bins in the gym for children
- Spin class and bikes
- Sports should be free!
- Tae Kwan Do or Martial Arts classes
- Timing of classes challenging; 7 to 8 would be better
- Tournaments
- Women-specific programs (weight-lifting)

## **Outdoor Recreation**

---

- Trails
- Trail maps (brochure for community)
- Trail signs
- Bike park/trails axe handle
- Trails to 4 worldly rapids to see
- Turn “dead spaces” into high level extreme sports ie/ Whistler style bike trails
- More walking/biking trails (by river, etc)
- New park and water park
- Improve maintenance of the parks (summer students?)
- Trails are great! Continue winter access to trails
- Biathlon programs (skiing)
- More walking/biking trails (by river, etc)
- Canoeing
- Support dog mushing
- More outdoor activities
- Canoeing
- Biathlon programs (skiing)
- Bike park
- Mountain bike park
- Support dog mushing
- More outdoor activities
- More community-wide events

## **Cultural**

---

- Storytelling by Elders
- Dene games
- Hide Camp
- Traditional games in the evenings/weekends (not just handgames)
- Workshops (different ages, skills, art, carving)
- Workshops (interpersonal skills, On the Land)
- Elder available to listen
- Round Dance for each season
- Wednesday night healing circle
- Dance lessons
- Rabbit snaring
- Dene games
- Storytelling by Elders

- Hand games
- Art program

## **Youth**

---

- More activities for teens
- Youth activities
- Recreation activities for Teenagers (weekdays and weekends)
- Elders and Kids coming together. Interacting
- Arts and crafts at youth night
- More things at youth night (art, beading)
- There should be free swimming at youth night
- Mental health courses for youth
- More youth nights
- Food at youth night
- Workshops (acting, art, science, robotics)
- Movies bro
- More video games

## **Food**

---

- More gluten free food (access, cheaper....)
- Community kitchen (Healthy Families); need space to do program. Challenge: staffing
- More food options

## **Volunteerism**

---

- For all the sports, burnout is a big factor!
- Support the clubs and volunteer organizations that are there now. The same people volunteer
- Mentoring programs throughout all facilities

## **Mental Health**

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- We need more programs on Drugs and Alcohol
- Need programs on Grieving, Suicide, Addictions

## **Museum**

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- Weekend or evening hours for museum
- Museum Winter program for kids in the Museum

- Children’s science and play area in Museum

---

### **Facility**

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- Outdoor rink with lights
- UPGRADE GYM: AC in summer, new mirrors, upgraded equipment
- Smoothie/drink shop by gym
- Need a space where people can get together to play games, have a coffee, TALK
- Need more benches around town
- Fix the telescope at the look out
- Benches
- Splash Park
- Playroom for toddlers
- Mountain bike park
- Water fountain at Arena
- More/new water fountains ear squash courts and in arena

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### **Snowboard Park**

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- Snowboard rope system
- Tow rope at snowboard park

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### **Library**

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- Longer library hours
- More computers at Library
- Library needs upgrades to meet needs of technology
- Library – program room

---

### **Swimming**

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- More pool programming; extended hours
- Basketball
- Pool open later (adult swim)
- Swim programming for families on weekends
- Swim themed programming; more from pool

- Renewed swimming program (seems to have fallen to the wayside)
- Swim lessons for adults
- More swim lessons
- Adult lane swim time in the evenings
- Swim team! Get your lifeguards running swim team
- Junior lifeguard programming more often
- Swim team
- Pool open later (adult swim)
- More pool programming; extended hours

---

### **Childcare**

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- Childcare while parents work out
- Day care
- Childcare
- Childcare for college students
- Support daycare/childcare
- Childcare while parents work out
- Drop in childcare so parents can work out

---

### **Music / Arts**

---

- Music and Art for children
- Dance lessons for adults
- Local music, culture society be given funding for Music events in Fort Smith
- Dance
- Paint night

---

### **Reconciliation**

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- More education re: colonialism
- More info on indigenous history and culture

---

### **Astronomy**

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- Astronomy class or workshop (explore the Night Sky)

---

### **Internet**

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- Better and cheaper internet
- Better internet access in Town

## APPENDIX A



**Town of Fort Smith  
Community Services Master Plan  
ENGAGEMENT MATERIALS**

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Week of February 17, 2020  
David Nairne + Associates Ltd.



## **Contents**

- Community Engagement Schedule (as of Feb 12, 2020)
- Focus Group Questions
- Presentation Boards
- Community Survey Summary

Day/Time	Stakeholders	Location
<b>Monday February 17</b>		
12pm – 1pm	Mayor and Council	Council Chambers
4pm – 6pm	Community Pop Up	Kaesers Store
7pm – 8pm		
<b>Tuesday February 18</b>		
10am – 12:30pm	Aurora College Staff and Students	Foyer of Aurora College
1:30pm – 2:30pm	Parks Canada	Parks building
3pm – 4pm	PWK students and staff	PWK Foyer
<b>Wednesday February 19</b>		
10:30am – 12pm	Parents and Tots/Post Natal parent group	Rec centre foyer
12pm – 12:30pm	JBT Student Leadership	JBT School
1:30pm - 2:30pm	NTHSSA – Fort Smith Region	Council Chambers
5:30 to 6:30	Community Pop Up	Arena
7:00 pm – 8:00pm	Recreation Advisory Board	Council Chambers
<b>Thursday February 20</b>		
10:30am -11:30am	Seniors' Society	
12pm – 1pm	Interagency Committee	Council Chambers
<del>1:30pm – 2:30pm</del>	<del>Uncle Gabe's Staff and Board</del>	<del>Uncle Gabe's</del>
3:30pm – 6pm	Library Users – Children and Adults	Library
<b>Friday February 21</b>		
10am – 11:30am	Community Pop Up	Kaesers
12pm – 1:15pm	Indigenous Governments	Council Chambers
4pm – 6pm	Community Pop up	Northern Store
7pm – 8pm	Museum	Museum
8pm – 10pm	Youth Night	Recreation Centre Foyer
<b>Saturday February 22</b>		
10am – 12pm	Rec Centre Pop up (parents and tots and swim lessons)	Rec centre foyer
1pm – 3 pm	Food Bank	Church
Total		

**FOCUS GROUPS**

<b>Audience</b>	<b>Agenda</b>
<b>Mayor and Council</b>	<p>Overview Survey results</p> <p>Review draft Vision/ Mission</p> <p>Review schedule, materials, focus group questions, general logistics for the week</p> <p>Questions: (matrix up on screen to fill in)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What other cultural/recreation programs/services do you think should be offered?</li> <li>• Who / what organization should take the lead?</li> <li>• How can the Town help? (ie. facilities, funding proposals, assisting with events)</li> </ul>
<b>Interagency</b>	<p>Overview Survey results</p> <p>Questions: (<i>Group work or matrix depending on size of group</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you offer any cultural/recreation programs/services?</li> <li>• Are there other programs/services that your clients have talked about?</li> <li>• Is there anything else you'd like to see offered?</li> <li>• Who / what organization should take the lead?</li> <li>• How can the Town of Fort Smith help? (ie. facilities, funding proposals, assisting with events)</li> </ul>
<b>Indigenous Governments</b>	<p>Overview survey results</p> <p>Questions: (flip charts)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What cultural/recreation programs/services do you currently offer?</li> <li>• What are your members asking for?</li> <li>• Is there anything else you would like to offer?</li> <li>• How can the Town of Fort Smith help (ie. facilities, funding proposals, assisting with events)?</li> </ul>

<b>Museum Board and Staff</b>	<p>Overview survey results</p> <p>Questions: (flip charts)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What cultural/recreation programs/services do you currently offer?</li> <li>• What are your members asking for?</li> <li>• Is there anything else you would like to offer?</li> <li>• How can the Town of Fort Smith help? (ie. facilities, funding proposals, assisting with events)?</li> </ul>
<b>Senior's society</b>	<p>Overview Survey results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questions: (matrix up on screen to fill in)</li> <li>• What other cultural/recreation programs/services do you think should be offered?</li> <li>• Who / which organization should be the lead?</li> <li>• How can the Town of Fort Smith help? (ie. facilities, funding proposals, assisting with events)</li> </ul>
<b>NTHSSA – Fort Smith Region</b>	<p>Overview Survey results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What cultural/recreation programs/services do you currently offer?</li> <li>• Is there anything else you would like to offer?</li> <li>• How can the Town of Fort Smith help? ie. facilities, funding proposals, assisting with events)</li> </ul>
<b>Recreation Advisory Board</b>	<p>Overview Survey results</p> <p>Questions: (matrix up on screen to fill in)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What other cultural/recreation programs/services do you think should be offered?</li> <li>• Who / which organization should be the lead?</li> <li>• How can the Town of Fort Smith help? (ie. facilities, funding proposals, assisting with events)</li> </ul>
<b>Uncle Gabe's Staff and Board</b>	<p>Overview Survey results</p> <p>Questions: (flip chart)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What cultural/recreation programs/services do you currently offer?</li> <li>• Is there anything else you would like to offer?</li> <li>• How can the Town of Fort Smith help? ie. facilities, funding proposals, assisting with events)</li> </ul>
<b>Parks</b>	<p>Overview Survey results</p> <p>Questions: (flip chart)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What cultural/recreation programs/services do you currently offer?</li> <li>• Is there anything else you would like to offer?</li> <li>• How can the Town of Fort Smith help? ie. facilities, funding proposals, assisting with events)</li> </ul>

<b>Youth</b>	Poll everywhere Question options:  <i>Why do you come to the recreation centre/what do you do here?</i>  <i>Are there any other activities that you think would be fun but aren't available in town?</i>  post it notes – see the pop-up board below... what should the town do more of, do less of, stop doing – for rec and culture
<b>Children</b>	Student leadership – grade 4 to 6 students – half an hour at lunch one day What should the town do more of... do less of... stop doing... - for rec and culture  After school at library - Mapping their community



# THE TOWN OF FORT SMITH COMMUNITY SERVICES MASTER PLAN

The Community Services Master Plan will identify community needs and priorities related to recreation, arts and culture services and recommend how these services should be addressed and delivered in the next 10 years.

The goal of the Plan is to provide Mayor and Council, Administration and the Advisory Boards with strategic direction for service provision to:

- Ensure residents enjoy the highest quality of life
- Maximize the appeal of the town to potential new residents
- Draw visitors to the town



## PROJECT SCHEDULE



- Introductory Meetings
- Current Inventory of Opportunities
- Draft Community Survey

- 1st Community Engagement
- Preliminary Report

- Administer Survey
- Survey Analysis
- ★ Stakeholder Workshops
- Trends & Innovations Analysis
- 50% Completion Meeting

- Develop a Success Framework
- 2nd Community Engagement
- Draft Final Report
- 90% Completion Meeting

- Finalize Report
- 100% Completion Council Presentation

The Community Services Master Plan is on track to be completed by April 2020!

★ We are here!

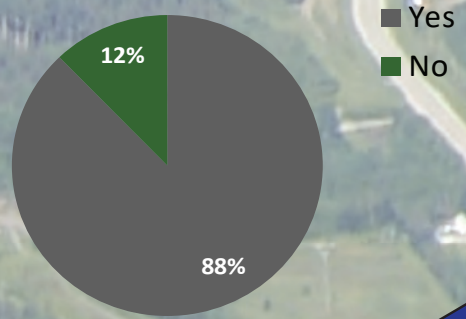
# WHAT WE HEARD FROM YOU RECREATION

(Community Survey)

"One other thing that would be great to see would be a dog park so owners can take pets there to run around and play"

"Thank You (Mahsi Cho)"

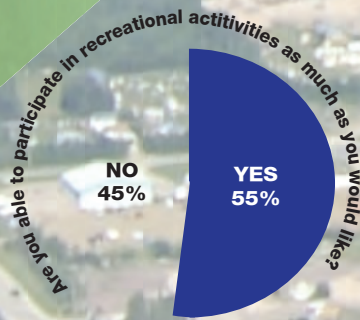
% PARTICIPATION IN RECREATION & CULTURE ACTIVITIES



## TOP 5 RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES IN THE PAST YEAR



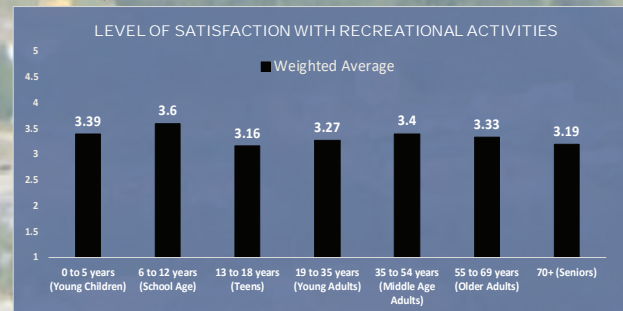
"Use a gamification approach to healthy activities - leaderboards, badges, loyalty points (prizes for high points, like a free book on active living or a free annual pass)!"



## MOST-VISITED FACILITIES

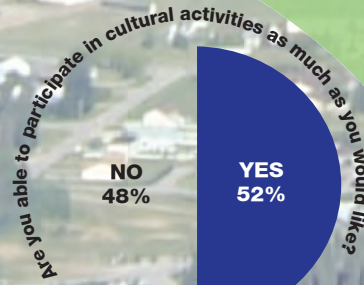


"The multi-use trail is a great resource"



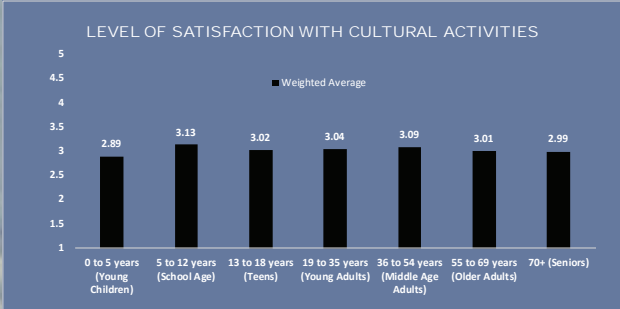
1 = Very Dissatisfied    4 = Satisfied  
 2 = Dissatisfied        5 = Very Satisfied  
 3 = Neutral

# CULTURE



"We have incredible service for our small town - well done!"

"I am not good at stopping to look at posters, but I like arts and crafts. I think Fort Smith does a lot (for a small community) to promote healthy living. Thank you and good work! Thank you for offering so many programs for kids. We have a great town"



1 = Very Dissatisfied    4 = Satisfied  
 2 = Dissatisfied        5 = Very Satisfied  
 3 = Neutral



On the Land (hunting, fishing, harvesting, etc.)

"I work at Aurora College and it would help to have more events that students and their families can attend"

## TOP 5 CULTURAL ACTIVITIES IN THE PAST YEAR



"As youth I think that we should be able to come to the Rec centre to play sports and improve sports. I think that there should be like sport coaches for some or all sports. Maybe not for drop in but like if their were certain like practices with coaches"

"Prioritize Indigenous cultural and educational activities. Schedule reading and storytelling and visiting activities for all ages (evenings and weekends)"

# PROGRAMS YOU SAID YOU WANT TO SEE IN FORT SMITH\*:

\*The bigger the word, the more people who mentioned wanting to see it as a program

Organized adult sport leagues

Indoor Walking Track Dance class Adult gym events  
 Paint workshops Personal trainer (certified)  
 Traditional Events Lifeguard training  
 Group hiking Music Festival  
 Martial Arts Ballet/Dance Community Events  
 Evening classes Art class Drum Dances  
 Ice fishing guides Traditional crafts Senior Activities  
 Self Defense Classes  
 Free activities Hiking/camping club Indoor playground  
 Language Classes Games nights at the library  
 Off leash dog park Gymnastics Canoe trips  
 More for the kids Affordable Childcare  
 Northern games

"Great job! Keep it up :)"

"I feel that there are a lot of activities for youth (which is important) but I wish there was more for adults. I am doing my best within my expertise, but I am not sure how much of an impact I am having"

# THANK YOU!

"I would like to volunteer with Cultural Activities"

"I have a lot of ideas on mobility and health issues, but am not very active. I could help with technology"

"I volunteered at the arena"

"I'll do anything! Fort Smith is worth it"

"I would like to help at anything with animals"

"Whatever needs a volunteer I am usually there"

"I taught people how to fish in the river"

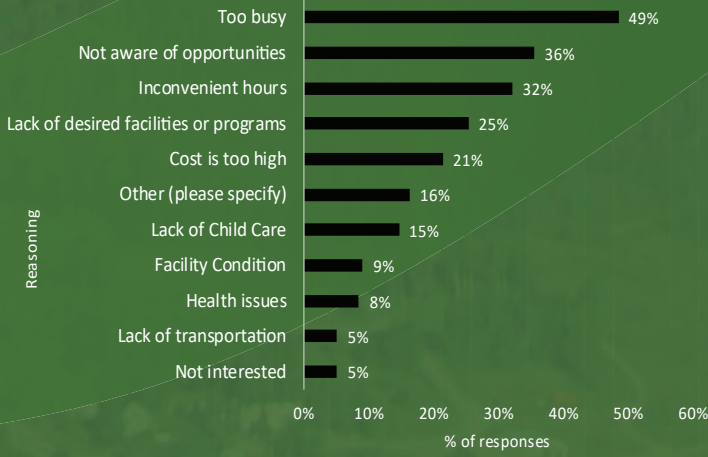
"I worked at the book sale and I did the book blanket at the market for the library every Sunday"

"I help coach Minor Hockey"

**45% OF YOU SAID YOU ARE OR HAVE BEEN A VOLUNTEER** **53% OF YOU SAID YOU ARE INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING**



## FACTORS PREVENTING PARTICIPATION



# WHAT CAN FORT SMITH DO TO BECOME THE HEALTHIEST COMMUNITY IN THE NWT? (Community Survey)

**AFFORDABILITY**

- Free programming
- Affordable gym fees
- Free food classes
- Subsidize healthy programs & childcare
- Increase funding for facilities/programs
- Make healthy food more affordable

**MENTAL HEALTH**

- Education on Collective Wellness: mental, spiritual, physical, emotional
- Coffee house events for mental health awareness
- Welcome people to facilities
- Expand mental health services
- Encourage community wellness

**INCENTIVES**

- Encourage participation
- Gamification approach to healthy activities: leaderboards, badges, loyalty points
- Contests & competitions
- Contests, outreach programs, trial participation
- Prizes for highest points: free book on active living, free pass to recreational facility, etc.

**FACILITY UPGRADES**

- Build an indoor track
- Trail development & signage
- Build indoor tennis courts
- Proper garbage disposal
- Resurface tennis courts
- Set up a proper recycling centre

**FOOD**

- "Take an Elder to Dinner" program
- Cooking competition
- Snack program
- Access to community garden
- Partner with grocery stores to offer discounted healthy items

**PROGRAM SUGGESTIONS**

- Block parties in the summer
- Increase arts & music activities
- More organized events (like the Mud Run)
- More sober events for adults
- Workshops on healthy habits
- Community challenges: Walk & Bike to Work
- Walking or Hiking Clubs
- Free assistance & support in fitness rooms
- Training opportunities for coaches, coordinators, tournament organizers, etc.
- "Fort Smith Healthy Picks" of the week
- Create a holistic strategic plan

**CLIMATE**

- Reduce plastic
- Climate awareness & garbage clean-up
- Town clean-up

**ALL AGES**

- Healthy adults = healthy kids
- Bridge young adults & kids with seniors
- Involve youth in planning
- Open a daycare
- Playground, activities and sports after 5pm/
- Childcare & active play-time at the gym
- Family ping pong tournaments
- Get kids excited about an active life

**MOVEMENT**

- Upgrade equipment in Pete's Gym
- Personal Trainers
- Obstacle course
- Pedestrian-only streets on Sunday (walk, bike)

**ACCESSIBILITY**

- Extend advertising past social media posts
- Extend gym hours
- Extend program hours
- Increase wheelchair-friendly areas
- Keep statistics of participation & make public
- Improve lighting & build a T-bar at ski club
- Expand website information for winter activity opportunities (gear rental)

HOW SHOULD WE GET THE MESSAGE OUT ABOUT  
RECREATION & CULTURE ACTIVITIES  
IN FORT SMITH?

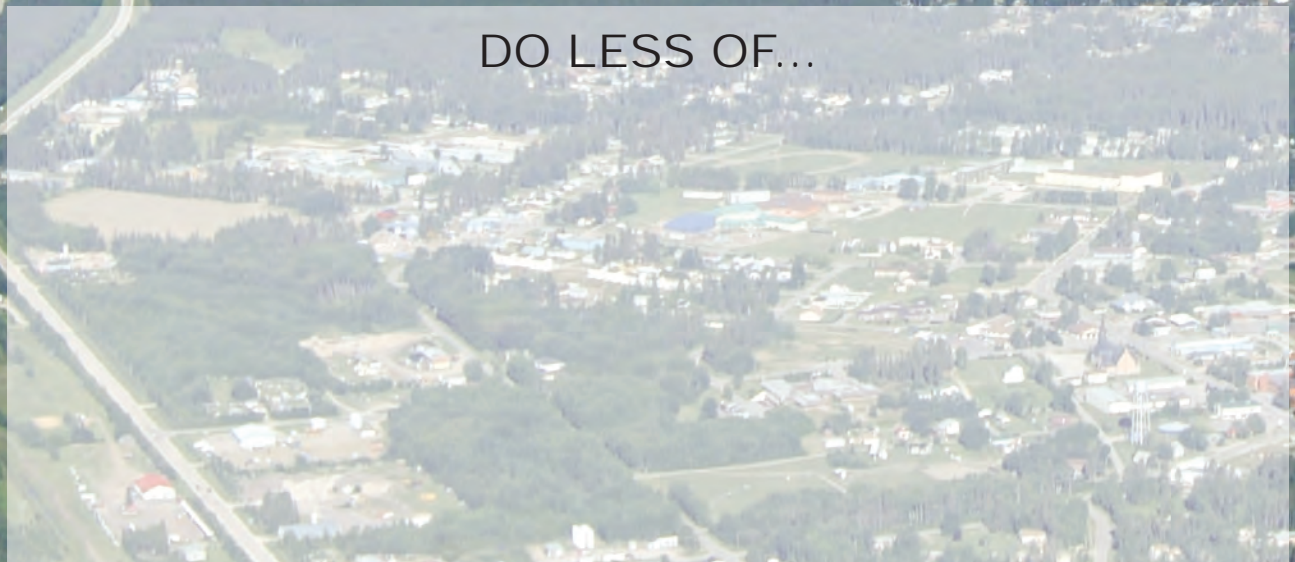


IN TERMS OF RECREATION & CULTURE  
PROGRAMS & SERVICES, WHAT SHOULD  
THE TOWN...

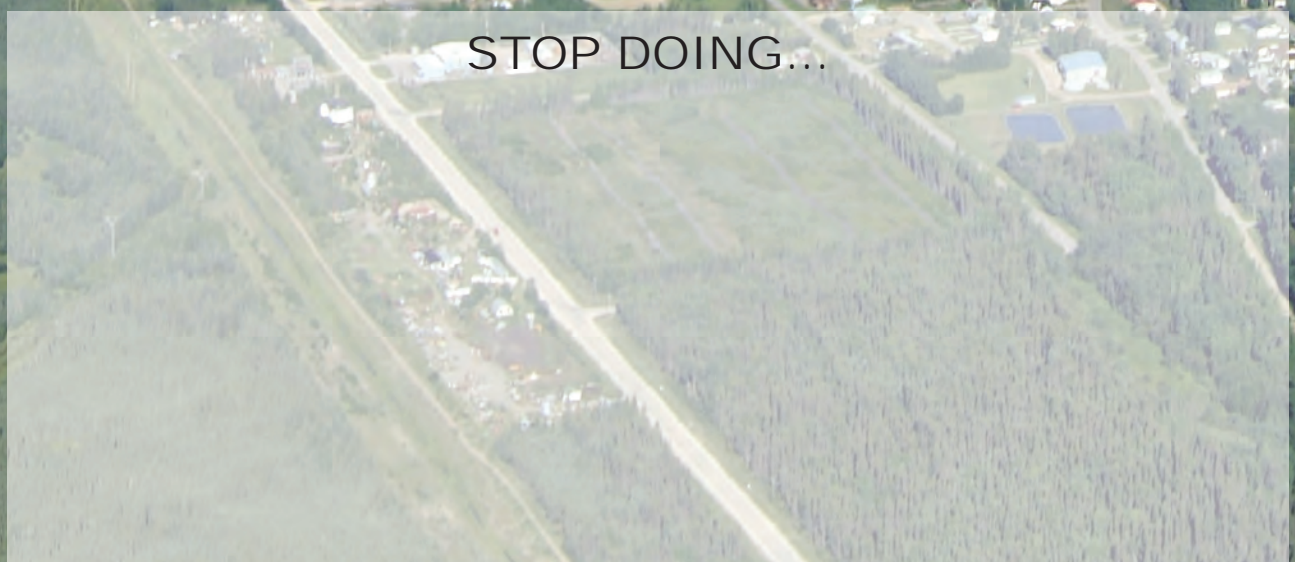
DO MORE OF...



DO LESS OF...



STOP DOING...



# TOWN OF FORT SMITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2018 – 2022



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## Executive Summary

The Economic Development Strategy for the Town of Fort Smith is set in the context of the community's vision, values and goals. We will seek to work with all possible partners to ensure success and development for everyone in our community and region. The Town of Fort Smith Vision, Values and Goals are as follows:

### Vision

“The Town of Fort Smith will work with its partners to enhance our excellent quality of life by respecting values, traditions, and healthy lifestyles. We will continue to advance as a unified, active and prosperous community.”

### Values

- We value an open, transparent, effective government.
- We value our natural environment.
- We value a safe and hospitable community for our residents and visitors.
- We value education.
- We value the use of sustainable energy sources.
- We value active living, health and wellness.
- We value effective communication.
- We value community unity through partnerships.
- We value the passion and commitment of our volunteers

### Goals

- Operate an open, transparent and effective government
- Operate the Town of Fort Smith in a fiscally responsible manner.
- Provide excellent municipal programs and services to the citizens.
- Continue as a responsible employer
- Preserve, advocate and enhance the natural environment in the Town.
- Maintain a safe community.
- Support all educational opportunities within the community.
- Be a leader in sustainable environmental practices in our community.
- Foster a strong cohesive community spirit.
- Maintain a healthy, active community
- Grow our residential and business community
- Promote Fort Smith as a desirable destination

## Economic Development Strategy Planning Process

The three main elements of economic development in Fort Smith:



The draft strategy required community feedback and input. It was handed out at the Thebacha Trade Show, emailed to all business license holders, and displayed on the main page of the Town of Fort Smith website and Facebook pages with links to the actual document. Requests for feedback were also made directly via emails and phone calls to key individuals or organizations who have been actively involved in the business community of Fort Smith.

The feedback form was provided in a way for submissions to be anonymous. Individuals providing feedback did not grant permission for the names to be used in any public document.

Feedback was provided by local business owners from a variety of business areas, former politicians, employees from government agencies and members of the municipal advisory boards. See Appendix A, for a copy of the Feedback Summary.

In creating this strategy, a literature review was completed of the following documents:

- Town of Fort Smith Community Plan, Bylaw 935
- Town of Fort Smith Community Services Master Plan
- Town of Fort Smith's Sustainability Plan
- Town of Fort Smith's Tourism Branding & Marketing Strategy
- Smith Landing First Nation Environmental Scan Report
- Smith Landing First Nation Economic Survey Results
- The Town of Hay River's Integrated Sustainability Plan
- GNWT Tourism 2020 Plan
- GNWT Economic Opportunities Strategy
- Yellowknife 2014-2019 Economic Strategy
- Community Economic Development Strategy – City of Whitehorse

## Economic Development Strategic Plan – Introduction

The role of Municipal Government in Economic Development is to influence the atmosphere of the community to make it conducive for growth. The Town of Fort Smith will focus on areas of greatest possible growth and opportunities which may include areas of manufacturing, agriculture, biomass, and harvesting. Factors such as land availability, cost of living, territorial and federal legislation as well as local and global economies will also play an important role in the Fort Smith economy.

The items and actions outlined in this document will serve as the foundation on which the Town of Fort Smith will base our Economic Development activity. The lead partners and scheduling of tasks are dependant upon the availability and approval of partners and outside organizations.

The funding for many of the projects described in this document will be solicited from the department of Industry, Tourism and Investment with the Government of the Northwest Territories. The Town of Fort Smith contribution will be funded through the Operations and Maintenance budget and funds outside of these contributions will be by request from the Town of Fort Smith reserves.

It is important to be aware that the nature of Economic Development and Community Development is ever-evolving. This document will be a living document and referenced often but remain a dynamic piece which can be updated as needs and opportunities require.

# Town of Fort Smith - Economic Development Strategic Goals

## Goal # 1

Foster and Encourage business and job creation and retention

## Goal # 2

Increase Communication with and within the Business Community

Goal #3 - Diversify the Local Economy

Goal #4 - Attract residents to live in Fort Smith

Goal #5 - Enhance Liveability

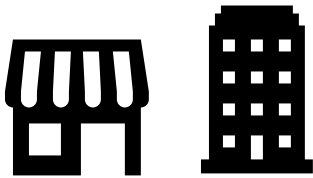
Goal #6 - Attract shoppers & visitors from the region into our community

Goal #7 - Champion and Assist with Tourism product development and packaging

Goal #8 - Increase number of Festivals, sporting events and conferences hosted in Fort Smith

Goal #9 - Work with regional partners to market Fort Smith: (Hay River, Fort McMurray, Yellowknife and Edmonton)

# Goal # 1: Foster and Encourage Business and Job Creation and Retention



## Strategies

- A. Opportunities Assessment
- B. Develop Land & Business Inventory
- C. Gather input from Business Community
- D. Identify Investment Objectives & Strategies
- E. Implement Investment Strategy
- F. Strengthen Government Positions in Fort Smith

## A. Opportunities Assessment

**Purpose:** Taking stock of our current situation allows for better planning. This step helps us gather information and list the assets available to us.

**Possible Lead/Partners:** Economic Development Officer, GNWT - Industry, Tourism, and Investment.

**Activities:**

- Do an opportunities assessment of all current business license holders in Fort Smith.
- Identify gaps where services or goods are not available in Fort Smith but potentially could be.
- Compare 3-5 other regional communities of similar size.
- Business interviews: What new services/ stores would increase their spending? Are they seeking partners? Does their business need a complimentary business or service? Are they looking to retire soon? What are the plans to grow or maintain business?
- Complete a SWOT Analysis – Identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats including areas of business, manufacturing, industry and tourism.

**Inputs/Budget:**

- 20-40 hours staff time

**Outputs:** Develop a shortlist of 10-15 investment attraction opportunities

**Desired Outcomes:** Establish a clear vision of current business conditions.

**Metric:**

- List of potential opportunities/investments

**Description:** This list will identify what has worked well in Fort Smith and areas that can be targeted as opportunities to investigate. What new stores, industries, or manufacturing would benefit the Fort Smith economy? Ensure input from local business owners and government agencies to work collaboratively with the community.

**Priority:** High

2018				2019				2020				2021				2022			
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4

## B. Develop Land and Business Inventory

Purpose: Taking stock of our current situation allows for better planning. This step helps us gather information and list the assets available to us.

Possible Lead/Partners: Economic Development Officer

Activities:

- Identify and list land and businesses that are available for purchase as commercial/ retail space.
- Interview current land owners regarding their interest in subdividing land to use/create office/retail space. Do they have current plans for vacant land (especially those located in Town Centre zone)? What would be an incentive for them to build on that land?
- Explore options for land availability or residential development.

Inputs/Budget:

- 20 – 60 hours staff time

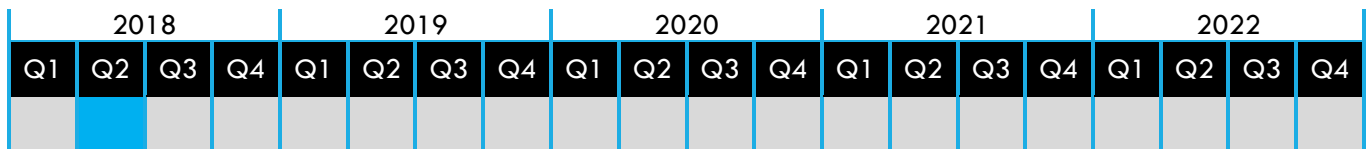
Outputs: Clearly defined investment locations in Fort Smith. Up to date list of zoned and serviced commercial and industrial lands and buildings, readily accessible on the Town of Fort Smith website.

Desired Outcomes: Establish a clear vision of current business conditions.

Metric: Inventory list of available commercial/retail space, with updated information on price, size, buildings, etc.

Description: If investors or potential business owners are looking for an ideal space for their organization where do they go to seek that information? The Town of Fort Smith wants to be ready to help people find an area quickly and easily with all the information at our finger tips.

Priority: Medium - High



## C. Gather input from Business Community

**Purpose:** Taking stock of our current situation allows for better planning. This step helps us gather information and list the assets available to us.

**Possible Lead/Partners:** Economic Development Officer, Chamber of Commerce, GNWT - Industry, Tourism and Investment

**Activities:**

- Survey all business license holders to assess what are the impediments and opportunities to doing business in Fort Smith (including home occupation businesses).
- What incentives would help them to consider new investment opportunities, for example: reduced power costs.

**Inputs/Budget:**

- 40 – 80 hours staff time.

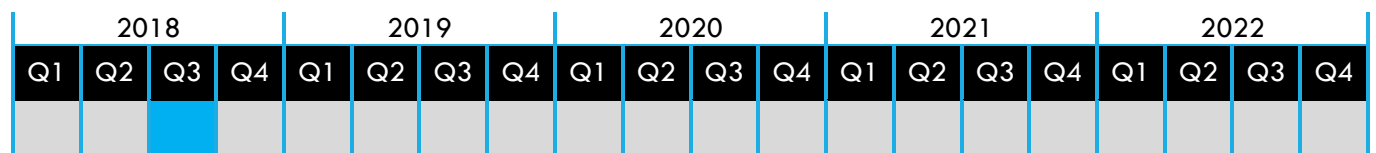
**Outputs:** List of barriers and opportunities identified by the business community.

**Desired Outcomes:** To have excellent communication with the business community. Gain practical ideas to assist with growth in the business community to ensure Fort Smith is a business-friendly community.

**Metric:** Survey report.

**Description:** By forming an integrated approach to community economic development and engaging stakeholders, we will hope to build relationships and maximize value of economic development information that can be utilized by the business community.

**Priority:** High



## D. Identify Investment Objectives and Strategies

Purpose: Identify investment objectives.

Possible Lead/Partners: Economic Development Officer, GNWT - Industry, Tourism and Investment, Chamber of Commerce.

Activities:

- Identify target sector (from Opportunities Assessment).
- Define number of new businesses and/or number of employees Fort Smith would like to attract within a set time frame.
- Define opportunities for development or expansion in the community.
- Use above information to create an investment strategy.

Inputs/Budget:

- 40 – 100 hours staff time
- \$5000 professional services for studies (potential opportunities to leverage funds)

Outputs:

- Report and Studies that evaluate potential opportunities.
- Investment Strategy created.

Desired Outcomes: To understand better the opportunities for business and potential industry development in Fort Smith, and to use that data to promote investment in Fort Smith.

Metric: Various reports, studies, report to SAO/council, investment strategy.

Description: The reports, feasibility studies and investment strategy will evaluate the opportunities for potential business and industry development in Fort Smith such as agriculture, biomass, wild game and plant harvesting, and ideas for manufacturing. The information will be available not only locally, but at various networking events. The reports and studies will be a valuable tool to economic development in Fort Smith.

Priority: High

2018				2019				2020				2021				2022			
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4

## E. Implement Investment Strategy

Purpose: To assist with the development of business and growth in Fort Smith.

Possible Lead/Partners: Economic Development Officer, Tourism and Trade Advisory Board, Chamber of Commerce, GNWT – Industry, Tourism and Investment, Aurora College.

Activities:

- Speak to potential partners.
- Regular meetings to create and implement investment strategy.

Inputs/Budget:

- 100 - 200 hours staff time

Outputs: Investment Strategy

Desired Outcomes:

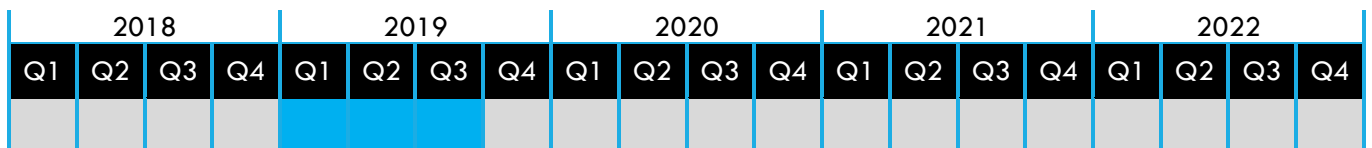
- Identify number of new businesses and/or number of new employees Fort Smith would like to attract over a set time.
- Strategy implementation.

Metric:

- Number of businesses licenses.
- Number of new employees/jobs.

Description: The strategy will clearly identify what are the areas for growth in the community and steps that can be taken to encourage that development. The Town will investigate the appetite for a committee to form and implement this strategy. The investment strategy will be a valuable tool for economic development in Fort Smith.

Priority: High



## F. Strengthen Government Positions in Fort Smith

**Purpose:** Identify current staffing for all government employees in Fort Smith including Federal, Territorial and Municipal. Establish strategies to strengthen positions and departments in Fort Smith.

**Possible Lead/Partners:** Senior Administration Officer, Mayor, Council, Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Officer, Aurora College, GNWT - Industry, Tourism and Investment.

**Activities:**

- Inventory current government positions.
- Advocate to maintain positions in Fort Smith.
- Research past levels and where positions went.

**Inputs/Budget:**  
TBD

**Outputs:** List of government positions and strategies to maintain them.

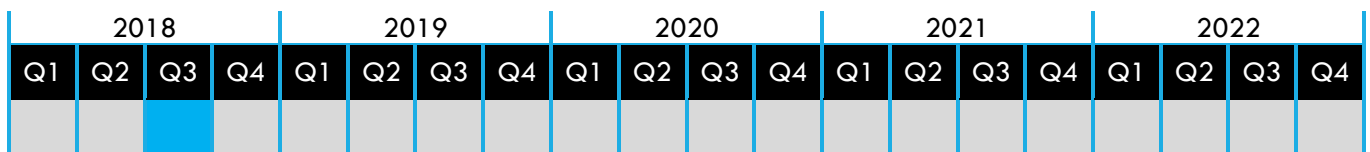
**Desired Outcomes:** Work with government organizations to encourage and strengthen government positions and labour force in Fort Smith.

**Metric:**

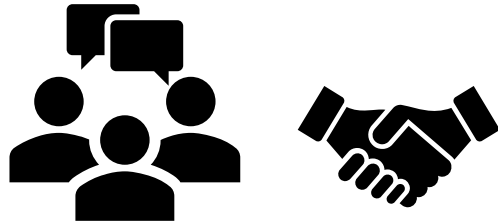
- Inventory of Government positions
- Report on past and current positions
- Number of actions taken to advocate for government jobs in Fort Smith

**Description:** The Government of Canada and the Government of the Northwest Territories play an important role in the economy of Fort Smith. The Town would like to investigate ways to support, maintain and/or grow the government labour force in Fort Smith. This goal attempts to ensure that the Town is actively participating in, and advocating for the continued role these employers play in the Fort Smith economy.

**Priority:** High



## Goal # 2: Increase Communication with and within the Business Community



# Strategies

- A. Assess Local Business Climate
- B. Provide Educational & Networking Opportunities
- C. Regular Communication with Business Community
- D. Support Chamber of Commerce with Shop Local Campaign

## A. Assess Local Business Climate

Purpose: To ensure that communication is open, transparent and responsive.

Possible Lead/Partners: Economic Development Officer, Chamber of Commerce, GNWT - Industry, Tourism and Investment.

Activities:

- Host "Business Walks" - Quarterly meetings to businesses asking 3-5 questions.

Inputs/Budget:

- 10-20 hours staff time, annually

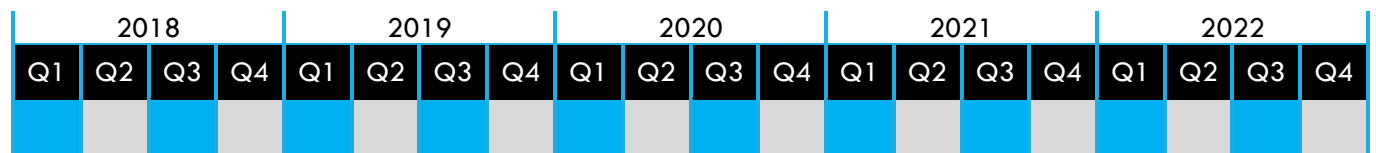
Outputs: Survey Report.

Desired Outcomes: To be informed of emerging opportunities and be responsive to business needs.

Metric: Quarterly reports based on surveys.

Description: To improve communication between the local business community and local leadership, we will reach out to local businesses. As the local business environment is varied, this initiative will assist in the collection and distribution of information to all types of businesses. It will also allow the Town of Fort Smith and local government agencies to better understand the needs of the business community.

Priority: Medium



## B. Provide Educational & Networking Opportunities

Purpose: Increased collaboration to address business opportunities and threats.

Possible Lead/Partners: Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Officer, Trade & Tourism Advisory Board, Aurora College

Activities:

- Host business education series (i.e.: Business After Hours, Business Breakfast, or Lunch & Learn, on relevant topics such as marketing, Lunch with the Mayor, social media, financing, etc.).

Inputs/Budget:

- 10-20 hours staff time

Outputs: TBD

Desired Outcomes: To have a strong, creative and growing business community.

Metric:

- Events attended/created.
- Number of interactions with Business Community.
- Business Satisfaction Survey.

Description: Supporting each other starts here, with businesses and organizations getting to know each other and making sure all organizations and businesses are supporting each other.

Priority: Medium



## C. Regular Communication with Business Community

Purpose: To ensure consistent avenues of communication that are open, transparent, and responsive.

Possible Lead/Partners: Economic Development Officer, Chamber of Commerce

### Activities:

- Town of Fort Smith representative to regularly attend Chamber of Commerce meetings.
- Designate a lead person or system to communicate the Town's capital plans and local investments with the business community, ex.: business newsletter.

### Inputs/Budget:

- 20 – 40 hours staff time

### Outputs:

- Improved communication of capital plans to business community.
- Focus on communicating Town expenditures as investments in the local economy.

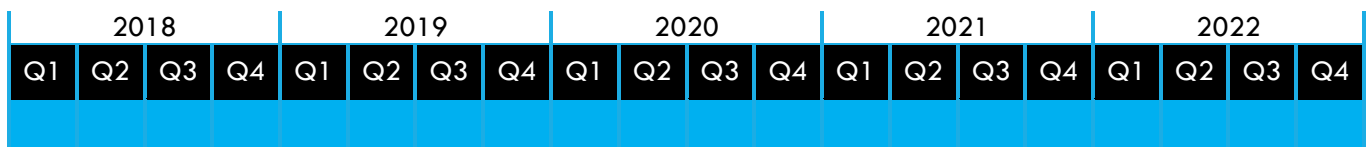
Desired Outcomes: To have excellent communication and a productive relationship with the business community.

### Metric:

- Increase in joint projects between Town of Fort Smith and Chamber of Commerce
- Quarterly e-newsletter to the business community.

Description: Regular communication is key to developing a long-term business relationship, in line with the Town of Fort Smith communication plan.

Priority: High



## D. Support Chamber of Commerce with Shop Local Campaign

Purpose: To ensure residents, businesses and government agencies understand the significance of buying locally and its impact on the community's economy.

Possible Lead/Partners: Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Officer.

Activities:

- Offer coordinated events, promotions and activities for local shopping by consumers and local purchasing by organizations.
- Create coordinated marketing and educational content.

Inputs/Budget:

- \$500 - \$1000/ year

Outputs: Annual Campaign and Review of internal spending of Government agencies in October/November

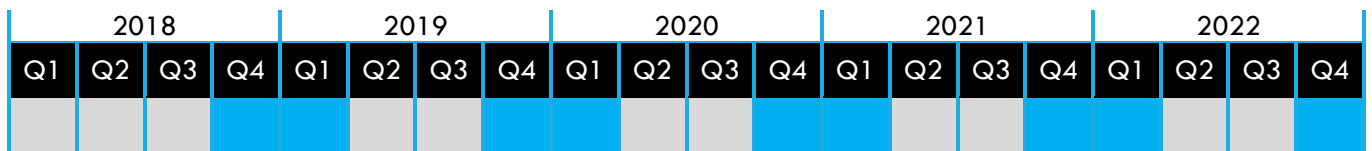
Desired Outcomes: To have a strong local economy based on supporting local businesses. To have residents and organizations understand the value of potentially paying a little more to have their dollars go farther in our community.

Metric:

- Survey businesses on effects of campaign.

Description: A "buy local" campaign that engages the local businesses, government agencies and citizens can be a powerful tool to help sustain small businesses. Working with the Chamber of Commerce to send out a strong message that we support and strongly encourage local spending can help to ensure the message reaches all citizens, businesses and all levels of government.

Priority: Medium



## Goal # 3: Diversify the Local Economy



# Strategies

- A. Create a Cooperative Planning Strategy with Community and Regional Partners
- B. Identify Areas of Economic "Leakage".
- C. Encourage Youth Entrepreneurs

## A. Create a Cooperative Planning Strategy with Community and Regional Partners

Purpose: Create local action to address common regional goals and issues, working together with local First Nations, and other regional governments.

Possible Lead/Partners: Leadership representatives of First Nations and Municipalities

Activities:

- Investigate the possibility of a "Stronger Together" initiative through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. What are our common goals? How can we work together?
- Meet with regional governments (including other municipalities) to investigate ways to determine and work towards common goals.
- Host regular leadership meetings: Ministers, Town of Fort Smith, Fort Smith Metis Council, Smith Landing First Nation, Salt River First Nation, Thebacha Chamber of Commerce, and all major leadership, to find common ground and have a united front when voicing issues for the community and the region.

Inputs/Budget:

TBD

Outputs:

TBD

Desired Outcomes:

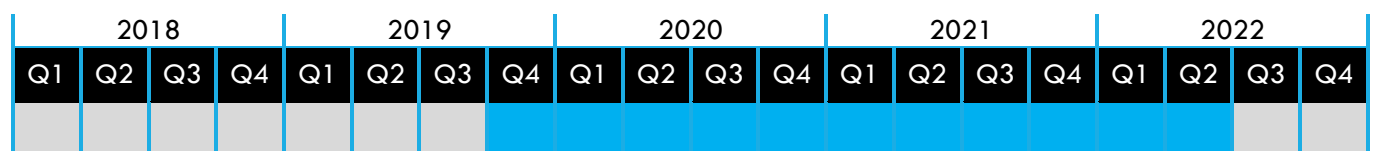
To begin discussion on how a stronger united voice can:

- Engage businesses and other governments.
- Increase access to funding.
- Save on joint programs.
- Increase opportunities for local business development and job creation.
- Develop opportunities for coordinated planning efforts.

Metric: Cooperative Strategy Created.

Description: Many municipalities and First Nations, and even neighbouring municipalities want to collaborate but do not know where to start. There may be big differences in the communities' demographics, cultures, and how they govern themselves. The *Stronger Together* Toolkit offers step-by-step suggestions on how to bridge differences, so partners can find new ways to work together for mutual prosperity.

Priority: Medium



## B. Identify Areas of Economic Leakage and Areas to Recapture Spending

Purpose: Strengthen the local economy by capturing more local spending.

Possible Lead/Partners: EDO, Chamber of Commerce

Activities: Conduct an Economic Leakage Study: outlining areas where money is leaving the community.

Inputs/Budget:

- \$5000 hire outside contractor (Potential opportunity to leverage funds).
- Request assistance from Statistics NWT.
- Develop action plan to recapture spending.

Outputs:

- Community Economic Spending report.
- Strategy to recapture spending.

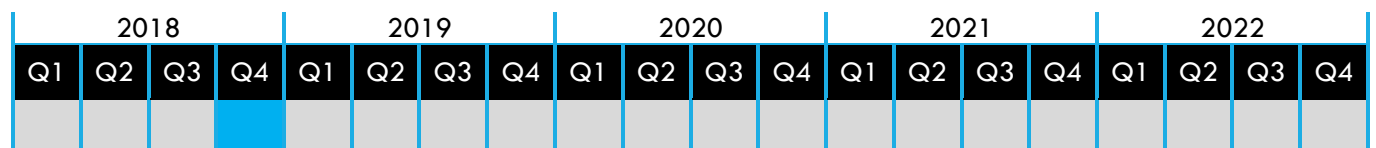
Desired Outcomes: To maximize local spending.

Metric:

- Report outlining specific spending habits of local households, businesses & government agencies.
- Percentage or amount of money spent outside of Fort Smith.
- Value of economic spending by households, businesses and government agencies.

Description: With easy access to online shopping, and large super stores available to people when they travel south, the opportunity for residents to spend money outside of Fort Smith is high. Identifying the main areas of spending outside the community will assist with creating a campaign to capture more of that spending locally.

Priority: High



## C. Encourage Youth Entrepreneurs

**Purpose:** To support initiatives that give young people a chance to explore entrepreneurship in a fun and exciting way.

**Possible Lead/Partners:** Economic Development Officer, GNWT ITI, Chamber of Commerce, Aurora College, PWK High School, JBT Elementary School, Thebacha Business Development Services.

**Activities:** Create, organize, promote and host event.

**Inputs/Budget:**

- 10-20 hours of staff time.
- \$2,500 project fund (potential opportunities to leverage funds).

**Outputs:** Assist with creating, organizing, promoting and hosting an event.

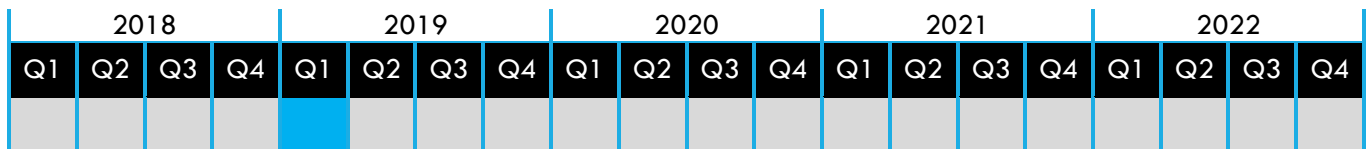
**Desired Outcomes:** To get youth thinking about business.

**Metric:**

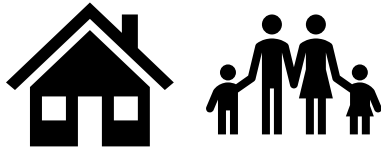
- Participation rate.
- Feedback via survey.

**Description:** Hosting an event of well recognized programs such as “Junior Achievement” and “Lemonade Day” or participating in a youth business challenge, introduces the concept of entrepreneurship at a young age. The goal is to get youth thinking about business.

**Priority:** High



## Goal # 4: Attract and Retain Residents to live in Fort Smith



# Strategies

- A. Identify the Current Situation
- B. Define Key Target Markets, Messaging & Strategy
- C. Develop a Marketing Strategy
- D. Increase Housing Options
- E. Create a Resident Ambassador Program

## A. Identify the Current Situation

Purpose: Taking stock of our current housing situation allows for better planning. This step helps us gather information and list the assets available to us.

Possible Lead/Partners: Economic Development Officer.

Activities: Assess and inventory available housing, rental properties, land and future housing possibilities.

Inputs/Budget:

- 40 - 60 hours staff time.

Outputs:

- Up to date list of available houses for sale and rent, with prices.
- Up to date list of available lots for sale, with prices.

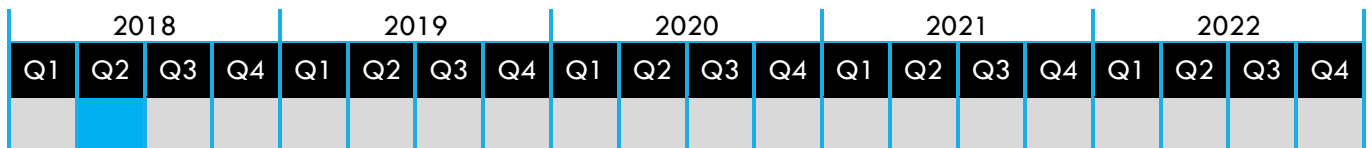
Desired Outcomes: Establish clear outlook of housing market.

Metric:

- List and descriptions of available lots, houses, rental properties and costs, readily accessible on the Town of Fort Smith website

Description: Attracting new employees and businesses to our community means having available and affordable housing for them. Without a strong real estate presence, it is important to have a good understanding of the housing market to asses where and how we can grow.

Priority: High



## B. Define Target Markets

**Purpose:** To attract and retain residents who will contribute to the economic growth and diversification of Fort Smith.

**Possible Lead/Partners:** Economic Development Officer, GNWT – Industry, Tourism and Investment, Chamber of Commerce, Aurora College.

**Activities:**

- Identify current and targeted demographics – Age, gender, income, education, occupation.
- Identify employers hiring in Fort Smith and the NWT.
- Compare cost of living to other NWT communities.
- Identify Fort Smith’s “story” or “brand” and how it fits with the type of people who are currently living in Fort Smith and how it can help identify a target market for Fort Smith.

**Inputs/Budget:**

- 40 -60 hrs of staff time

**Outputs:**

- Report defining target markets

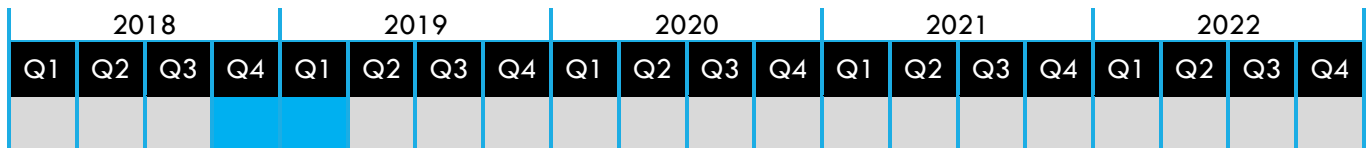
**Desired Outcomes:** To define Fort Smith’s story or brand and ideal target markets.

**Metric:**

- Report identifying key markets

**Description:** The Town of Fort Smith has an important role to play in the promotion of Fort Smith as a community in which to live, work and play. Fort Smith offers a variety of recreational, educational, cultural and economic opportunities and we will seek to promote these attributes to grow our population. Fort Smith also looks to retain the current population such as university aged students returning from school, and retiring long-term workers.

**Priority:** Medium



## C. Develop Marketing Strategy

Purpose: To attract residents who will contribute to the economic growth and diversification of Fort Smith

Possible Lead/Partners: Economic Development Officer, Tourism and Trade Advisory Board, Aurora College, Thebacha Chamber of Commerce.

Activities:

- Create marketing strategy.

Inputs/Budget:

- 40 – 100 hours staff time.
- \$2500 for professional photos (Possibility to leverage funds).
- \$2500 for printed material (Possibility to leverage funds).

Outputs:

- Community Marketing Strategy.

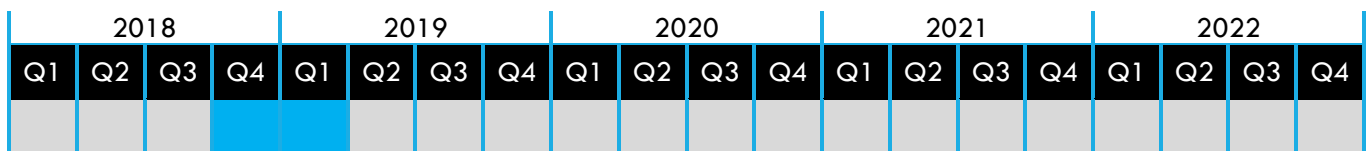
Desired Outcomes: To create a marketing strategy with a strong focus on the digital component that targets key markets (mine workers, young families, seniors, etc.) to come and visit, live, work and play in Fort Smith!

Metric:

- Market Strategy
- Number of residents
- Number of houses
- Digital Metrics report

Description: A marketing strategy is important to provide focus and step-by-step actions on the how and why of attracting new people into our community. An important aspect to the Marketing Plan will be marketing the community digitally. With so many people on computers, phones and tablets as well as social media sites, digital marketing is key to Fort Smith's success in attracting people to live, work and play.

Priority: Medium



## D. Increase Housing Options

Purpose: Ensure growth through available and affordable housing.

Possible Lead/Partners: Sustainable Development Advisory Board, Director of Municipal Services, Economic Development Officer, Salt River First Nation, Smith Landing First Nation, Fort Smith Metis Council, Aurora College, Local developers.

Activities:

- Work with landowners to develop affordable housing through programs and policies.
- Location and design guidelines for different housing types and densities
- An affordable housing strategy
- A public information campaign about building requirements for secondary suites, and the benefits of infill housing and residential intensification

Inputs/Budget:

- 20 – 40 hours staff time.

Outputs:

- TBD

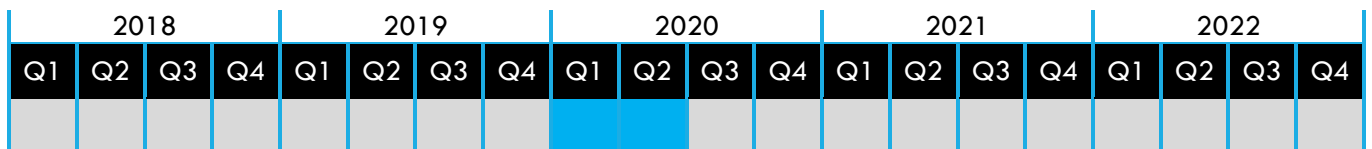
Desired Outcomes: Strong and affordable housing market in Fort Smith.

Metric:

- Number of homes available for rent or sale.

Description: A key factor in a good quality of life, is living in good neighbourhoods with affordable housing. Attracting new employees and businesses to our community means having housing that suits their needs whether they are seniors, young professionals, or families.

Priority: High



## E. Create a Resident Ambassador Program

Purpose: Improve visitor experience with exceptional service and knowledge of community.

Possible Lead/Partners: Chamber of Commerce, GNWT- Industry, Tourism and Investment, Thebacha Chamber of Commerce, Aurora College, Economic Development Officer.

### Activities:

- Train community members as Community Ambassadors with the Northern Most Host program especially:
  - All front-line Town of Fort Smith staff.
  - Front line retail staff as hosts of the community.
  - All employees / service providers involved in the Tourism sector.

### Inputs/Budget:

- 40-80 hours staff time.

### Outputs:

- Organize training events.

Desired Outcomes: Fort Smith business and tourism sectors recognized for their outstanding service and attention to their clients. Fort Smith recognized as a great place to live and do business.

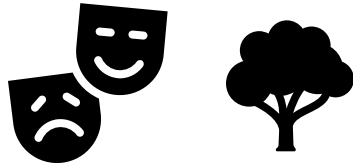
Metric: Number of employees that have completed the program.

Description: Fort Smith is already viewed as a welcoming community. The Northern Most Host program provides them with a few more tools and broader understanding of the types of visitors that come to Fort Smith and why it is important to exceed their expectations.

Priority: Medium - High

2018				2019				2020				2021				2022			
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

## Goal # 5: Enhance Liveability



# Strategies

- A. Identify Areas Needing Improvement
- B. Strengthen Public Engagement
- C. Community Improvement Plan/Guidelines
- D. Create Municipal Funding Program
- E. Identify Transportation Concerns
- F. Grow Culture and Arts Sector

## A. Identify Areas Needing Improvement

Purpose: To attract residents who will contribute to economic growth and diversification.

Possible Lead/Partners: Economic Development Officer, Trade & Tourism Advisory Board, Thebacha Chamber of Commerce, GNWT ITI, Wood Buffalo National Park, Fort Smith Seniors Society, Smith Landing First Nation, Salt River First Nation, Fort Smith Metis Council, Aurora College, Northwestern Air Lease

Activities:

- Community Survey: Identify community infrastructure (buildings, commercial, residential) that need improvement or are lacking in some capacity.

Inputs/Budget:

- 60 – 100 hours staff time.

Outputs:

- Community Survey.
- Survey Report.

Desired Outcomes: To ensure that current residents and visitors' first and/or current impressions of Fort Smith are extremely positive.

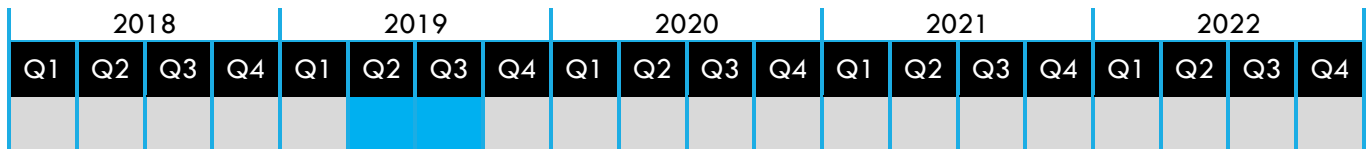
Metric:

- Survey report.

Description:

The economic infrastructure of Fort Smith can be defined as the facilities and infrastructure of the community that make business activity possible. This goal attempts to ensure that the Town is actively participating in, and advocating for the continued development of this infrastructure.

Priority: High



## B. Strengthen Public Engagement

**Purpose:** To attract residents who will contribute to economic growth and diversification.

**Possible Lead/Partners:** Economic Development Officer, Trade & Tourism Advisory Board, Thebacha Chamber of Commerce, GNWT ITI, Wood Buffalo National Park, Fort Smith Seniors Society, Smith Landing First Nation, Salt River First Nation, Fort Smith Metis Council, Aurora College, Northwestern Air Lease.

**Activities:**

- Develop an internal communications plan (Town of Fort Smith – How to communicate internally and to the public).
- Identify external communication options – How local news is reported directly to the citizens of Fort Smith focusing on the people, places and things that make Fort Smith unique and special.

**Inputs/Budget:**

- TBD

**Outputs:**

- Communications Strategy.

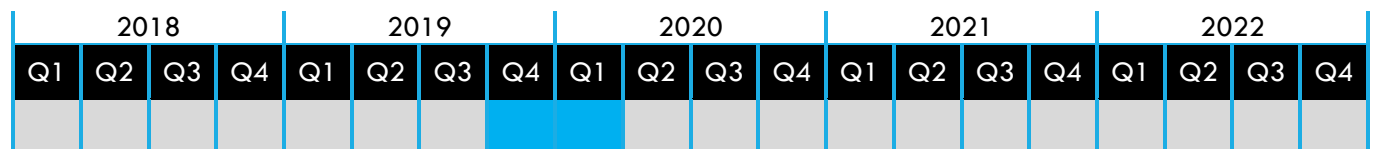
**Desired Outcomes:** To ensure all citizens feel informed about policies, bylaws and decisions being made and have the opportunity and a forum to voice their opinions.

**Metric:**

- Communications Strategy.
- Communication Report.

**Description:** When residents become involved and informed with community decision making, they begin to see themselves as having an influence to create the kind of community they want to live in, and to shape and change the future. The residents of Fort Smith are key to informing policy makers on what is important to them and through engagement people often are more supportive and help strengthen decisions and policies that have been made.

**Priority:** Medium



## C. Create a Community Improvement Plan/Program

**Purpose:** To stimulate investment in the downtown core.

**Possible Lead/Partners:** Economic Development Officer, Senior Administrative Officer, Director of Municipal Services, Sustainable Advisory Board, Trade and Tourism Advisory Board, Chamber of Commerce, GNWT Industry, Tourism and Investment.

**Activities:**

- Create overall plan for downtown development.

**Inputs/Budget:**

- 100 – 150 hours staff time

**Outputs:**

- Set framework for areas identified in need of revitalization, redevelopment or renewal in Fort Smith’s downtown core. Specify areas that would be most beneficial for economic development.

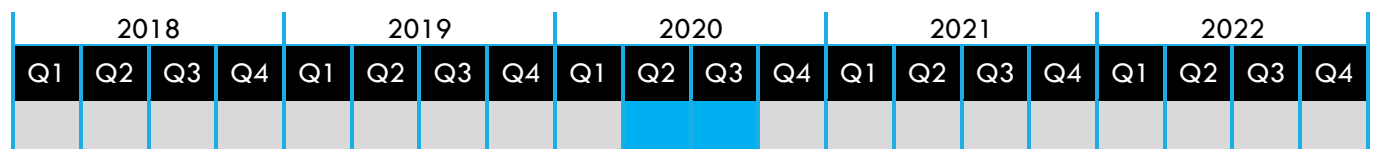
**Desired Outcomes:**

- To have a visually pleasing and compact Town Centre that reflects Fort Smith’s scenic small-town character.
- To reduce the number of vacant lots and buildings in the Town Centre zone.

**Metric:** Community Improvement Program (CIP).

- **Description:** The character and quality of the community is partially reflected in the aesthetic appeal of the main street and downtown area. The buildings and landscape which front onto McDougal Road and the river side trails are key components to the character of Fort Smith. A Community Improvement Program is intended to improve the appearance of commercial and residential buildings to improve the overall aesthetics and character of the community. Development in the Town Centre contributes to its role as the Town’s central hub of activity.

**Priority:** High



## D. Create Municipal Funding Program

Purpose: To stimulate investment in the downtown core.

Possible Lead/Partners: Economic Development Officer, SAO, Director of Municipal Services, Sustainable Advisory Board, Trade and Tourism Advisory Board, Chamber of Commerce.

Activities:

- Create a funding program for businesses to improve the look of their business, based on Community Improvement Plan, for example: landscaping, building façade, building signage, etc.

Inputs/Budget:

- \$10,000 – \$30,000 (potential opportunity to leverage funds).

Outputs:

- Municipal Funding Programs.

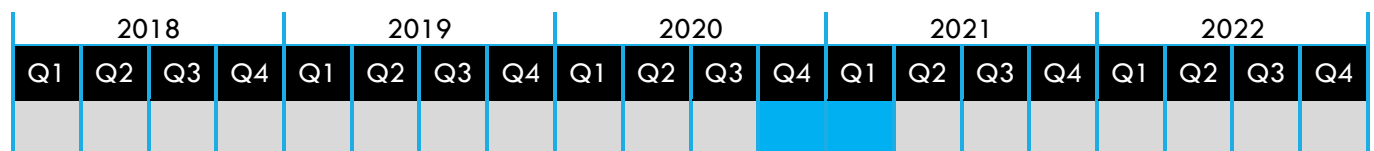
Desired Outcomes: Increase attention to areas in the downtown core in need of repair or redevelopment. Private sector and government investment in the downtown core.

Metric: Stimulate private sector investments through municipal incentives.

Description:

The format of a municipal funding program could consist of either a grant or loan for a portion of the defined eligible costs. Eligible improvements could include restoration of architectural details, window and door repair, building façade, entryway modifications, lighting, sign improvements, landscaping etc.

Priority: High



## E. Identify Transportation Concerns

**Purpose:** To facilitate easy access for travel to northern and southern destinations and present Fort Smith as a desirable and affordable place to live.

**Possible Lead/Partners:** Economic Development Officer, GNWT ITI, Chamber of Commerce, Northwestern Air Lease, transportation companies.

**Activities:**

- Identify opportunities for reduced rate travel.

**Inputs/Budget:**

- 20 – 40 hours staff time.

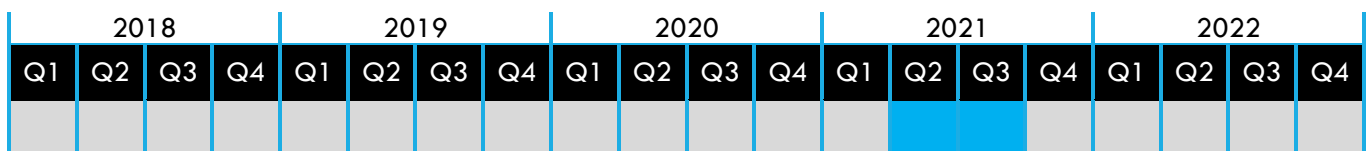
**Outputs:** Report on travel and transportation options.

**Desired Outcomes:** Begin the discussion of reduced rate travel that supports local businesses while benefitting residents.

**Metric:** Reduced Rate Travel options identified.

**Description:** Fort Smith's location as a remote northern community means that transportation in and out of the community involves long drives to reach southern destinations or flights, which are more expensive because of the smaller market. Are there creative ways to reduce costs of travel while still supporting important transport businesses?

**Priority:** High





## Goal # 6: Attract Shoppers and Visitors from the Region into our Community



# Strategies

- A. Direct Marketing Campaign
- B. Improve Visitor Experience

## A. Direct Marketing Campaign

Purpose: Capture a larger segment of the regional tourist market

Possible Lead/Partners: Economic Development Officer, Chamber of Commerce, Trade and Tourism Advisory Board, Wood Buffalo National Park, Northwestern Air Lease.

Activities:

- Identify key marketing strategies (activities, events, festivals, etc.) for each region/community.
- Employ marketing strategy for Yellowknife, Fort McMurray, Fort Chipewyan, Fort Resolution, Hay River, High Level and Peace River regarding events, festivals, and seasonal shopping.
- Test use of shopping passport, discount coupons and coupon booklets.

Inputs/Budget:

- 50 – 80 hours staff time.

Outputs:

- Visitor Surveys.
- Direct Marketing Strategy.

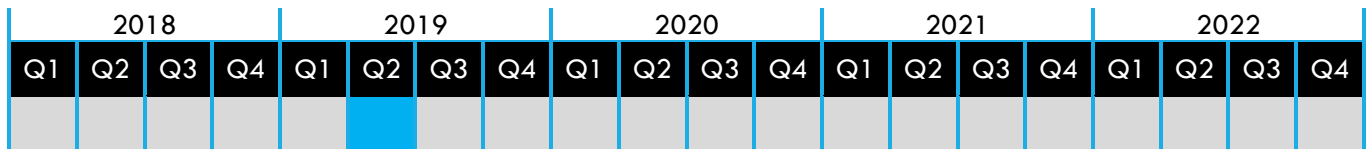
Desired Outcomes: Develop a clearly defined market strategy with a heavy emphasis on digital marketing

Metric:

- Number of regional visitors – measured by Visitor Information Centre, hotels, coupons.

Description: The largest number of visitors to Fort Smith are from Alberta and the NWT. How can Fort Smith attract a larger segment of this market? What activities or experiences do they look for? What can Fort Smith offer that others in our region can't get or do in their own community? Why should they make the trip?

Priority: High



## B. Improve Visitor Experience

**Purpose:** To attract visitors and residents by providing an excellent customer experience in all aspects of business and tourism.

**Possible Lead/Partners:** Economic Development Officer, GNWT ITI, Wood Buffalo National Park, Northwestern Air Lease, Thebacha Chamber of Commerce

**Activities:**

- Identify points of contact for visitors.
- Identify if improvements are needed through visitor surveys at key areas i.e.: airport, restaurants, VIC, hotels, museum, rec. centre, trails, etc.
- Ensure strong customer service skills through the Northern Most Host program.
- Provide support for front-line staff to become familiar with local tourism products.
- Review existing models of service delivery at tourism related organizations and support service improvements.

**Inputs/Budget:**

- 60 – 80 hours staff time.
- Printed materials - \$1500.

**Outputs:** Visitor satisfaction survey.

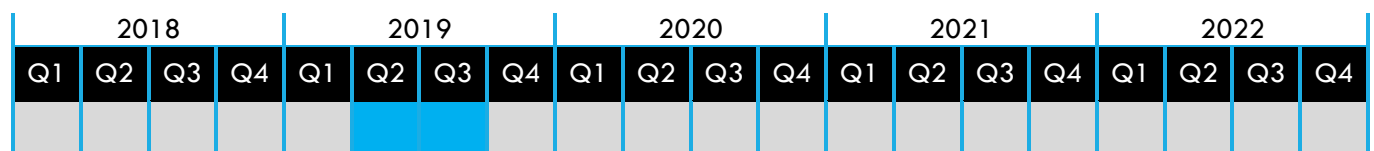
**Desired Outcomes:** Fort Smith tourism and service sector exceed visitor expectations.

**Metric:**

- Visitor satisfaction survey.
- Number of participants in Northern Most Host.

**Description:** Word of mouth advertising is still the most valuable type of advertising, especially in the digital age. People are considerably more likely to listen to the advice of a friend than that of an advertisement. Great attention to customer experience and customer service will create a large group of people championing our community. How do we want people to feel when they think of our community?

**Priority:** High



## Goal # 7: Champion and Assist with Tourism Product Development



# Strategies

- A. Champion New Development
- B. Identify the Barriers to Tourism Development
- C. Encourage Cultural Aspects to Tourism Development

## A. Champion New Development

Purpose: Grow tourism opportunities in Fort Smith.

Possible Lead/Partners: GNWT ITI, Wood Buffalo National Park, Fort Smith Metis Council, Smith's Landing First Nation, Salt River First Nation, Economic Development Officer, Aurora College, Chamber of Commerce, Northwestern Air Lease.

Activities:

- Research protentional areas of growth in tourism.
- Identify opportunities for tourism operators and First Nations organizations to partner with museums, NWT Territorial Parks and Parks Canada to deliver guided tours and programs.
- Encourage the development of tours that showcase the culture, land, people and services in the region.

Inputs/Budget:

60 – 100 hours staff time.

Outputs:

- TBD

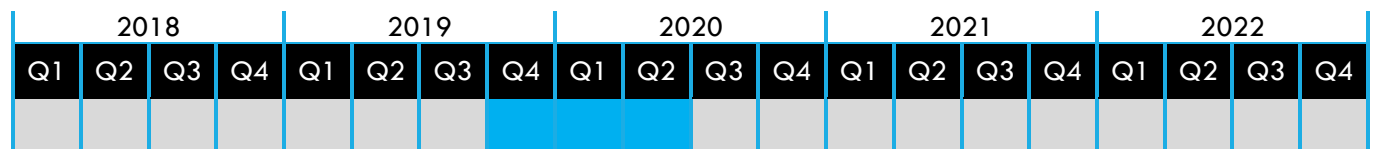
Desired Outcomes: New tourism products identified.

Metric:

- New Tourism Product opportunities outlined.
- Strategies to develop new tourism products.

Description: The Fort Smith tourism sector has great potential and opportunities to grow over the next five years with Baby Boomers moving into retirement and more youth travelling globally. Both tourism sectors have an interest in active adventure and cultural experiences, ideal for Fort Smith's setting.

Priority: Medium



## B. Identify the Barriers to Tourism Development

**Purpose:** Grow tourism opportunities in Fort Smith, especially for guides and outfitters

**Possible Lead/Partners:** GNWT ITI, Economic Development Officer, Tourism and Trade Advisory Board, Thebacha Chamber of Commerce, Wood Buffalo National Park, Northwestern Air Lease.

**Activities:** Work with local tourism organizations, individuals and tourism agencies to review tourism product/operator process.

**Inputs/Budget:**

- 40 – 60 hours staff time.

**Outputs:**

- Report for Town of Fort Smith administration.

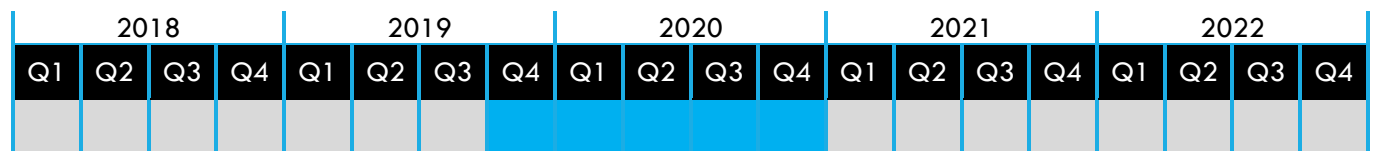
**Desired Outcomes:** Fort Smith is a popular tourism destination with a choice of guides and outfitters who provide high quality experiences

**Metric:**

- Report of barriers and possible solutions identified.

**Description:** Licensed tourism operators and local guides are extremely limited in Fort Smith. Identifying some of the barriers associated will help encourage operators to develop new tourism opportunities. What are the associated costs and licencing requirements to operate a tourism business in Fort Smith? Are the steps challenging to navigate? Can the Town of Fort Smith or other local organizations help to facilitate the process?

**Priority:** High (as it relates to guides and outfitters)



## C. Encourage Cultural Aspects of Tourism Products

Purpose: Grow tourism opportunities in Fort Smith

Possible Lead/Partners: Smith Landing First Nation, Salt River First Nation, Fort Smith Metis Council, Cree Language Program, Chamber of Commerce, Northern Life Museum & Cultural Centre, Wood Buffalo National Park, GNWT ITI, Trade and Tourism Advisory Board, Economic Development Officer, Northwestern Air Lease.

Activities: Work with local First Nations and tourism/business operators to respectfully incorporate traditional languages into their operations. Investigate other opportunities to respectfully incorporate local culture into business/tourist experiences.

Inputs/Budget: TBD

Outputs: Report to Town of Fort Smith administration.

Desired Outcomes: Increase in the development, expansion, celebration and support of authentic Indigenous tourism experiences.

Metric: Report outlining unique cultural components that can be a part of Fort Smith business and Tourism products or experiences.

Description: Tourists are seeking authentic cultural experiences. Cultural events such as hand games, drumming, jigging, and hide tanning workshops are often held during large events and celebrations that bring people together. When visitors are invited to take part in these cultural events they experience and appreciate the rich history, traditions and people of the area. Whether it is exposure to some of the traditional languages or a fully immersed experience, visitors value first hand interaction with local culture.

Priority: High

2018				2019				2020				2021				2022			
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4

## Goal # 8: Increase number of Festivals, Sporting Events and Conferences held in Fort Smith

# Strategies



A. Create and Maintain Active Volunteer Base

B. Collaborate with Local Organizations to Host and Market Events

## A. Create/Maintain Active Volunteer Base

**Purpose:** To ensure events in Fort Smith are successful based on experienced and knowledgeable volunteers.

**Possible Lead/Partners:** Arctic Winter Games Society, Town of Fort Smith Recreation Coordinator, Economic Development Officer, Aurora College, Visitor Information Centre Staff, local sports clubs, Northern Life Museum & Cultural Centre, Northwestern Air Lease.

**Activities:**

- Attain volunteer list.
- Work with Arctic Winter Games Society in development of volunteer base in key sectors and volunteer programs.
- Provide volunteers with skills training opportunities.

**Inputs/Budget:**

- 10 – 20 hours

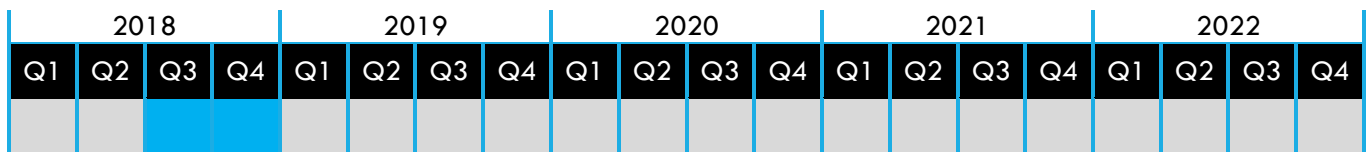
**Outputs:** Volunteer list

**Desired Outcomes:** Detailed database of experienced volunteers that can be called upon to ensure the organization of successful events in sports, tourism programs, conferences and festivals.

**Metric:** Detailed volunteer list outlining areas of experience and expertise.

**Description:** Volunteers are the most important resource community and event organizers have. The ability to have a list of experienced, skilled volunteers who are willing to donate their time will help ensure the success of many future community events.

**Priority:** Low



## B. Collaborate with Local Organizations to Host and Market Events

Purpose: Grow tourism opportunities in Fort Smith.

Possible Lead/Partners: Tourism and Trade Advisory Board, Chamber of Commerce, GNWT ITI, Smith Landing First Nation, Salt River First Nation, Fort Smith Metis Council, Wood Buffalo National Park, Northwestern Air Lease, Aurora College, Local Festival Organizations, Local Sports Organizations, Regional sport and cultural organizations.

Activities:

- Identify events with most potential.
- Create a one-page list of sports facilities in Fort Smith and relevant information for marketing.
- Modify and implement the Good Sports Campaign, in the Fort Smith Tourism & Marketing Plan.
- Assist in hosting sporting events, training camps, tournaments, conferences and festivals.

Inputs/Budget:

- 60-150 hours staff time.
- \$10,000 (potential to leverage funds).

Outputs:

- One-page facility outline brochure
- Good Sports Campaign overview

Desired Outcomes: Fort Smith recognized as a desirable location to host and attend sporting events and training, smaller conferences, and regional meetings.

Metric:

- Number of events hosted.
- Number of participants.

Description:

The draw for sports can be for both competition and coaching/training seminars. Having attracted enthusiasts of sports that can be played in many places, we will structure programs to expose them to the facilities in Fort Smith, as well as other unique offerings of the region.

Priority: High



## Goal # 9: Work with Regional Partners to Market Fort Smith (Hay River, Fort McMurray, Yellowknife, Edmonton)

# Strategies



A. Market Fort Smith regionally, nationally and internationally

## A. Market Fort Smith Regionally, Nationally and Internationally

Purpose: Grow tourism in Fort Smith.

Possible Lead/Partners: Economic Development Officer, Trade & Tourism Advisory Board, Chamber of Commerce, Wood Buffalo National Park, GNWT ITI.

Activities: Update Tourism Marketing Strategy. Prioritize and implement marketing campaigns.

Inputs/Budget:

- 40 – 60 hours staff time.

Outputs: Updated tourism marketing strategy.

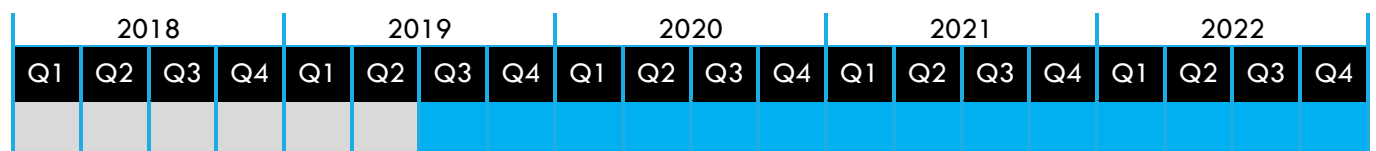
Desired Outcomes: To create a marketing strategy that targets regional areas, as well as national and international visitors.

Metric: Based on Visitor Survey, VIC stats, retail survey

- Number of visitors.
- Type of travel.
- Length of stay.
- Average amount of money spent.

Description: Most visitors to Fort Smith come from Alberta and the Northwest Territories, for this reason there will be a stronger emphasis on attracting regional visitors, while still leveraging marketing opportunities to international markets. International visitors to the Northwest Territories tend to stay longer and spend more money than regional visitors, so looking at opportunities to invite international audiences is crucial.

Priority: Medium



# Appendix A: Feedback Summary Results

## DRAFT Economic Development Strategy Feedback Summary



## Overview

The DRAFT copy of the Fort Smith Economic Development Strategy was completed in April 2017, and presented to numerous groups, organizations and to the public at community events. The draft format requested community feedback and input. It was also handed out at the Thebacha Trade Show, emailed to all business license holders, and displayed on the main page of the Town of Fort Smith website and Facebook pages with links to the actual document. Requests for feedback were also made directly via emails and phone calls to key individuals or organizations who have been actively involved in the business community of Fort Smith.

The feedback form was provided in a way for submissions to be anonymous. Individuals providing feedback did not grant permission for the names to be used in any a public document.

Feedback was provided by local business owners from a variety of business areas, former politicians, employees from government agencies and members of the municipal advisory boards.

The feedback overview is outlined based on the sectors that have the highest amount of comments. The sectors include:

- General Feedback
- Events, Conferences, Festivals
- Local Buying
- Chamber of Commerce
- Tourism
- Business Development and Job Creation
- Attract Residents

## General Comments

- The plan lacks focus on where it is we are and where we can best position ourselves. Be specific, what are the actions that need to be taken.
- Each sector needs to have more specific goals: are we a town of young professionals, families, or seniors? Ask this for each sector (Business, Tourism, Residents). We need diversity but with a core majority to focus on.
- What is Fort Smith's uniqueness? What can we offer that is different from other small Northern communities? Why should someone move here?
- Add to Mayor & Council Goals – "Supporting the development of indigenous land owners – to encourage and build good relationships with First Nation Governments"
- Don't make items too broad – be specific, define the action that needs to be taken. People can get behind focused action items
- Look to work with partners who have the expertise in areas we are seeking. The Town cannot do it all nor should it. A community works best when it works together.
- Add regular leadership meetings: ministers, ToFS, Metis, SLFN, SRFN, Chamber of Commerce, and all major leadership to find common ground, have a united front when voicing issues for the

community/region, “stop the bleeding” out of the community with loss of jobs. Decipher the GNWT plan, is it for Hay River to become the regional centre for all departments?

## Events / Conferences / Festivals

- Bring teams in with funding programs such as Mackenzie Recreation Association.
- Provide a package for athletes that can be given to the host organizations to send out when sending out invitations: Where to stay, what to do, where to eat, get gas, etc.
- Town needs to allocate staff to assist with the development and advertising of hosting sporting events, and hosting participants while they are here. How much do we spend on Rec Staff payroll? Are the Town Rec staff being used to their best capacity?
- How do we attract teams from YK, HR, High Level to come to an event in Fort Smith when the more efficient use of their dollars (more competition, bigger centre for shopping opportunities, etc.) are down south? Competing with return flights YK to Calgary for \$400.
- Form a multi-sports society representing: soccer, track, cross-country running and baseball. To leverage greater volunteer power for events and training.
- Make bids to host Territorial AGM's and conferences – e.g. NWT Associations of Communities, NWT Tourism, etc.
- Conference retreats – no cell phones, just focus on meeting on a specific topic, intense focus, away from distractions, immersed in nature but still have every day luxuries. Identify facilities available and capacity.
- The Track is an unused resource: Olympic quality. How can we work with Hay River for Track & Field competitions? What kind of training programs and courses can we provide.
- Host NWT Associations of Communities, NWT Tourism, ask if we can use Aurora College for extra accommodations.
- Create a meeting/conference package outlining what Fort Smith has to offer.

## Local Buying

- Ensure all government agencies have and enforce a local purchasing policy.
- Assist local businesses to make it easy for government to shop with them.
- Review policies to ensure local businesses are at the forefront (e.g. for new development needing supplies and equipment, ask local suppliers first).
- Government departments need to review their spending budgets and see if more items can be purchased locally.

- How can local businesses and government agencies all support the local businesses? How can we support each other? (Business to business).

## Chamber of Commerce

- Chamber needs support from the Town and the Chamber needs to support all businesses and prioritize what is best for Fort Smith
- Facilitate a stronger Chamber, ask NWT Chamber to come and help develop policies and direction, and set goals with the Chamber. Define common goals for the business community?
- Chamber (or Town) should create a commercial website and/or FB page where local businesses can post flyers, sales, ads, etc. Also include a site or page that keeps business owners up to date on community initiatives, training, youth business, etc. (as opposed to quarterly meetings).
- Work with Chamber to host a Town of Fort Smith AGM, State of Address from the Mayor. Open to the public and allows all citizens to have their say with an open mic.

## Tourism

- Fund a position like a Tourist Broker, who will create and sell packages and tourism products, take bookings and make necessary arrangements for clients amongst inter-agencies.
- Signage: Raise profile of Fort Smith along the highway, especially at Buffalo Junction. Have one or two large signs somewhere between Edmonton and 60<sup>th</sup> parallel.
- Work with Hay River to promote a trip/itinerary from Hay River to Fort Smith, which would benefit both communities.
- Promote highway upgrades. Could tie this in with a homecoming event. "Drive to Fort Smith on the beautiful new highway!"
- Work with Alberta Tourism to promote Fort Smith
- Aurora / Northern Lights Tours – Fort Smith is in the centre of the Auroral Arc. We have the clearest nights in the world of aurora destinations.
- Whooping Crane Visitation – WBNP was willing to do it, how can we begin to proceed with that possibility and with proper consultation.
- Use of coupons is a way to measure visitors and sales
- Analyze current tourism events/festivals for SWOT – how can we nurture current products before we develop new ones.
- Artist workshops – create a list of artists willing and able to provide half-day or full day workshops to visitors – can be an addition to a current festival

- Work with Parks Canada and ITI to develop itinerary packages for travellers
- What are some strategies to encourage more knowledgeable tourism champions in the community? Can we do more during Tourism Week?
- Develop a strategy for destination awareness
- Develop some trip planning tools that make it easier for people to get here, take some of the work out of arranging your trip if itineraries are already planned.
- Tourism needs regional representation
- Northern Most Host – Currently run by ITI, need to ensure it is offered at convenient times for businesses. ToFS could ensure its staff have completed the course.
- Truck Rodeo with Aurora College Heavy Equipment Operators
- Road Rally
- Spa using Slave River Clay

## Business Development and Job Creation

- Need a newspaper source providing information for Fort Smith or something equally or more efficient at communicating issues that face the community.
- GNWT MACA School of Community Government – Should be attached to Aurora College. Currently the program is very limited
- Biomass – combine fire prevention with biomass harvesting. Create a Forest Management Strategy that could be run by a local business versus GNWT, to encourage long term efforts for the program
- Have a portable saw mill for a micro business to process wood on site as it is cut
- Morel mushroom picking
- Climate Change should be on everyone's mind. Install electric charging spots so residents could run electric cars - ToFS should buy an electric car
- Aurora College programming – programs for tourism guiding, interpretation and outfitting – working with WBNP and ITI – could add these as courses to the ENRTP course. It opens up job options.
- Lobby government and NTPC to supply reasonable cost power to the businesses and residences in Fort Smith
- Include partner champions with areas of responsibility, implementation strategies and deadlines.
- Aurora College could be the Centre for Excellence for Water. Territory wide program for water quality, water governance, water use and water resources/ecology. (May need to choose between an NWT Arts Centre or NWT Water Centre to invest in).
- Aurora College only outsource of income, increase number of college students from 300 to 600
- College needs to remain the regional centre. Who is the community voice for advising the College?
- Bring in foreign workers who are already trained (outside money coming in)
- Sell Leather from hides taken by local hunters
- Water from across the river that is pure and can be sent south?
- Drift wood furniture, or drift wood processed and sent south

- Barge items to Fort Chip?
- Diamond Willow – collect and sell, or make furniture to sell
- Bulk food supply of hard to get items – partner with trucking company
- More funding for Adult Education opportunities – look at demographics in a realistic way to decipher needs of the community

## Attract Residents

- Focus on attracting professionals who have clients that live in all parts of the country or professionals who can do their job and live anywhere: Mining, engineering, technology based. They will be attracted by low cost of living, good lifestyle, and good services.
- GNWT staffing: Ensure employees designated to live in Fort Smith are living in Fort Smith.
- Need permanent doctors
- Need a bus for transporting seniors
- Need good low-cost housing
- Need more rental accommodations – condo style with good security, bottom level commercial – close to downtown
- People would use electricity for heat, a sustainable fuel, if affordable. We need to do our share to market it positively.
- Need 500 – 1000 more people to build a new business that is sustainable
- New residents welcome package: This should include new babies, find out how they heard about Fort Smith.

# RECREATION REPORT – JAN 2023

## Recreation Centre:

### Programming:

- Walk to Tuk challenge has begun.
- Board Game Night program was introduced taking place every Monday from 7-10pm. Accessible for individual 13 and over.
- Royal Army Cadet Events took place in CRC Gymnasium to promote interest in the program.
- Jan 29, Youth volley ball night organized by Metis
- Booking of National coaches for volleyball development clinic Feb 5-6.

### Other:

- A promotional campaign continues via Facebook and physical poster to encourage participation to programming and events.
- Work on the design of signage inside the CRC continues.
- Renovation by Maintenance staff of janitorial closet (next to squash court) was completed.

## Pool:

- Full schedule pool operations were offered from Jan 1 – 6, 2024.
- New Aquatic Obstacle was set-up for public use during this period.
- Regular In-Services are taking place.
- Bronze Medallion Course as been set for Feb 2-4, 2024.
- Posters for Bronze Medallion as been place at High School, Town business, Town facility and Facebook posting on Town, Rec and Community Bulletin Pages.
- Additional Training props have been created for In-Service Training including 2 clone training first aid kit, 4 Training Radios and 4 Training Lifeguard Packs/Pouch.
- Sensor as been installed by Pool staff to alert of any individual entering pool area.

## Arena:

- Additional Free Public Skate was offered During Jan 1 – 6, 2024.
- Women's Hockey Tournament Took place Jan 12-14, 2024.
- FS Skate Club Event took place Jan 26-28, 2024.
- Research into purchase of a new hot plate to replace current stove has begun.

## Town of Fort Smith Community and Recreation Centre Stats

Jan-2024

Fort Smith Community and Recreation Centre	Dec Sessions	Dec Participants	Jan Sessions	Jan Participants	
Squash	Operational for days 29		97	Operational for days 30	111
Pete's Gym	Operational for days 29		924	Operational for days 30	1373
Senior Lane Swim	10 of 14		54	14	75
Public Swim	12 of 17		232	23	398
Family Swim	-		-	-	-
Public Lane Swim	15 of 20		49	23	80
Parents & Tots Swim	2 of 7	17 Parents; 13 Tots		14	19 Parents; 20 Tots
Daycare Swim	2 of 7	6 Adults; 26 Tots		8	99
Summer Camp Swim	-		-	-	-
Lifeguard Training	-		-	-	-
ASCP	2		46	7	181
FREE UNW Swim	6		148	-	-
FREE Community Swim	1		24	-	-
Pool Rentals	-		-	-	-
Womens Squash	3		34	5	43
Mixed Squash League	3		10	4	19
AWG Volleyball	-		-	-	-
Club Soccer	4		98	8	210
Drop-in Soccer	4		20	4	21
Drop-in Volleyball	7		60	13	126
Drop-in Badminton	2		14	4	22
Drop-in Sports	4		14	5	72
Drop-in Basketball	3		12	4	22
Family Drop-in Sports	4		20	4	27
Curling	3		6	17	59
Parents & Tots Gym	24 of 25	183 Parents; 699 Tots		26	206 Parents; 478 Tots
Gym Rentals	16 of 28		417	22	375
Pickleball	10		70	9	66
Youth Night	19		197	8	224
Youth Drop-In	10		240	23	250
Zumba (fitness room)	-		-	-	-
PWK Fire Drill	1		122	0	0
Archery	3		14	3	15
<b>CRC Daily Total (started Dec 19)</b>	<b>10</b>		<b>1160</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>4483</b>

Comments: .

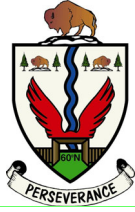
Fort Smith Centennial Arena	Dec Sessions	Dec Participants	Jan Sessions	Jan Participants
Rec Hockey	3	82 on-ice, 34 off-ice	5	86 on-ice, 61 off-ice
Womens Hockey	10	176 on-ice, 23 off-ice	9	145 on-ice, 70 off-ice
Old Timers Hockey	6	136 on-ice, 37 off-ice	8	177 on-ice, 19 off-ice
Public Skate	8	43 on-ice, 54 off-ice	12	105 on-ice, 23 off-ice
Family Skate	7	40 on-ice, 11 off-ice	7	57 on-ice, 77 off-ice
Rentals	15	73 on-ice, 123 off-ice	10	103 on-ice, 27 off-ice
Minor Hockey	40	487 on-ice, 589 off-ice	52	620 on-ice, 482 off-ice
Figure Skating	34	358 on-ice, 596 off-ice	44	551 on-ice, 441 off-ice
Youth Shiny	4	22 on-ice, 39 off-ice	2	18 on-ice, 11 off-ice
Parents N Tots	0	0 on-ice, 0 off-ice	0	0 on-ice, 0 off-ice
PWK Hockey	4	69 on-ice, 196 off-ice	-	-
Classic Hockey Tournament	20	417 on-ice, 987 off-ice	-	-
Women's Hockey Tournament	-	-	14	450 on-ice, 1330 off-ice

Comments: .

Fort Smith Child Care	Dec Sessions	Nov Participants	Nov Sessions	Nov Participants	
ASCP/Summer Camp		14	342/420; 1 Drop-ins(HD)	18	368/540
Daycare		14	17FT, 0HT, 6FTI; 1 Drop-ins(HD)	22	15FT; 2HT; 6FTI; 0 Drop-ins (HD)
Comments: .		FTI is for Full Time Infant		FTI is for Full Time Infant	

Mary Kaeser Library  
Activity Report December 2024

	Jan-23	Last Month	Jan-24	YTD
Adults	620	424	487	487
Children	984	761	1056	1056
<b>Total attendance</b>	<b>1604</b>	<b>1185</b>	<b>1543</b>	<b>1543</b>
CAP Computer Users	361	183	212	212
CAP Computer Hours	<b>384.25</b>	188	289.65	289.65
Wifi users	<b>138</b>	176	318	318
<b>Programming:</b>				
Family literacy	<b>37</b>	0	59	59
Adult programs	39	0	6	6
Seniors programs	n/a	0	0	0
Curious Creators (Friday activities. holiday/spring break/summer reading	36	0	27	27
Teen programs	n/a	0	23	23
Class/daycare visits	2	n/a	n/a	0
Class/daycare visits	n/a	92	112	112
<b>Total program Attendance</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>227</b>
<b>Other</b>				
Circulation stats	809	433	580	580
Inter-library loan requests (MKL patrons)	13	4	12	12
Inter-library loan requests (NWT patrons)	12	10	34	34
Reference	63	62	95	95
Operational Hrs	217	188.5	212	212



# Town of Fort Smith Economic Development Advisory Board Minutes January 18, 2024

Regular Meeting – Town Hall Council Chambers

**Attendees:**

Helena Katz

Alyssa Etsell

Mike Keizer

Cr. Mike Couvrette

**Regrets:**

Pierre Emmanuel-Chaillon

Kevin Antoniak

**Administration:**

Keith Morrison, SAO

Katie Reid, Executive Secretary

**A. Call to Order**

Helena Katz called the meeting to order at 12:05 pm.

**B. Approval of Agenda**

***MOTION***

**Moved by: Mike Keizer**

**Seconded by: Kevin Antoniak**

**That the agenda be adopted as presented.**

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**C. Approval of Minutes**

***MOTION***

**Moved by: Mike Keizer**

**Seconded by: Kevin Antoniak**

**That the EDAB minutes of May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023, be adopted as presented.**

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**D. Business Arising from the Minutes**

Cr. Couvrette noted that advisory boards are feeling disconnected from Council and noted discussion on how to revitalize boards and the having the advisory boards meet together.

## **E. New Business**

Administration advised that SDAB has reviewed and updated their terms of reference for the other advisory board's review. He noted that their policies are uniform under municipal legislation have guidelines have functioned effectively in the past. He stated that changing the rules is an effort to address the problem or that current rules could be applied through an engaged Administration and Council to keep advisory boards operating. Administration noted that advisory boards are the manifestation of public will to assist in fleshing out questions that can't be answered administratively. He provided the example of home occupation businesses and noted many viewpoints to consider which requires a road map to move forward. He continued that advisory boards are consulted on issues and recommendations are brought back to Council for consideration. He noted that delegations to Council are not necessary as the Council representative should speak to recommendations brought in advisory board minutes to Standing Committee meetings. Further, he noted that advisory board recommendations can be approved by Council recommendation in Standing Committee meetings and motioned at Regular Council meetings. He noted the need to better engage with advisory boards on issues and find path where advisory board work turns into actions of Council. He clarified that there was work done by SDAB on an idling policy and the energy plan that never transpired further.

Administration advised that he is back in the SAO for the interim until the new SAO arrives and that the new SAO would set the tone for the advisory boards. He noted that in the past the Town hosted an annual Joint Advisory Board meeting/event and included the advisory boards in staff appreciation events.

He suggested the board request to be engaged with economic development issues that impact residents to be the voice of the community and put forward recommendations to Council for consideration and that Council can decide to support recommendations put forward for actioning.

Administration suggested EDAB put forward recommendations on business licensing to bring to Council to forward to the Bylaw Review Committee in consideration of the work done. Further, he advised that EDAB would be engaged in the Community Plan and Zoning Bylaw review work. He continued that SDAB has been engaged in housing initiatives and to support housing development with economic development. Administration advised that commercial and home occupation businesses could be considered in the review process. Cr. Couvrette noted that there are increased enforcement requirements with home occupation businesses and suggested capacity for enforcement should be considered.

- a. Business Licensing Recommendations – Mike K. advised that he had compiled discussion from the past EDAB meetings where they discussed business licensing and that he did research on business licensing in various jurisdictions that were all are very different. He noted that many aspects to consider including revenue, community benefits, and administration of the bylaw, including enforcement capacity. Additionally, would businesses be required to show qualifications and certificates, and what is offered in return of the license, such as website advertising.

He noted different types of businesses including commercial and home occupation businesses. He thinks it would be hard to enforce home occupation business size and the number of employees. He continued and asked what types of businesses are allowed as commercial and what are not allowed.

He felt that community consultation would be important in reviewing the bylaw and suggested a consultant/professional should be engaged when rewriting the bylaw in consideration of the complexity. Helena agreed and in consideration of zoning and allowable home occupation businesses.

Administration suggested in consideration of EDAB's work and the different viewpoints, that they put forward a recommendation that the document be written with public consultation.

Helena requested further reviewing the document prepared by Mike before putting forward a recommendation.

#### **F. Excusing of Members**

EDAB excused Pierre and Kevin from the meeting.

#### **G. Date of Next Meeting**

The next EDAB meeting will be on Thursday, January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at 12:00pm in Council Chambers.

#### **H. Adjournment**

***MOTION***

**Moved by: Alyssa Etsell**

**Seconded by: Mike Keizer**

**The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m.**

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**



## BRIEFING NOTE

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**To:** Community Services Standing Committee

**Date:** February 13, 2024

**Subject:** Big Fun Snowboarding Event – Road Closure Request

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### **Purpose:**

To close the section of road of Marine Drive between Mills Street and Wapiti Street to all traffic from 7:00am to 7:00pm on Saturday March 9 and Sunday March 10 for the Big Fun snowboarding event.

### **Background:**

To support the safety of participants and spectators of the Big Fun snowboarding event on Saturday March 9 and Sunday March 10, a road closure is requested for Marine Drive, between Mills Street and Wapiti Street. This will ensure safe movement of participants and spectators from the parking lot, food tables, registration tables, washrooms and change rooms. This event usually has about 75 participants. In consideration of the large number of people moving through the area during the day, closing the road is requested to would allow for safe passage.

### **Recommendation:**

That Marine Drive, between Mills Street and Wapiti Street, be closed to vehicle traffic from 7:00am to 7:00pm on Saturday, March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024 and Sunday, March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024, for the Big Fun Snowboarding Event.