

MUNICIPALITY OF TANTRAMAR RECREATION MASTER PLAN

What We Heard Report



Tantramar
NEW BRUNSWICK





Executive Summary

“Recreation as Identity, Health and Community”

Engagement findings re-iterate that recreation supports wellbeing, community connection, and local identity. More than 90% agree that recreation enhances quality of life. Participation is highest in outdoor physical activity (90%), events, and informal social activities. Recreation in Tantramar extends beyond sport facilities and includes parks, trails, arts and culture, festivals, and gathering spaces.

“Great Outdoors, Tight Indoors”

Outdoor amenities such as parks, trails, and beaches are widely used and generally well rated. Trails (54%) and parks/play spaces (45%) are top outdoor investment priorities.

Indoor capacity was more frequently identified as an area requiring attention. Fitness and wellness space (40%), aquatics (38%), and child/youth space (34%) are leading indoor priorities. Limited flexible, multi-use indoor space, rink and ice capacity, indoor courts, and performance-capable venues were identified as gaps.

“We’re Going Elsewhere”

Eighty-five percent (85%) of respondent’s report participating in recreation outside the Municipality. Reasons include programs not available locally, limited aquatic and ice access, greater variety and scheduling flexibility in regional centres, and access to specialized or competitive facilities. This reflects demand for amenities that are limited or unavailable locally.

“Access Matters”

While 80% agree their recreational needs are being met overall, barriers remain.

Common barriers include:

- Inconvenient program times (31%)
- Lack of awareness (27%)
- Perception of better options elsewhere (25%)
- Being too busy (22%)
- Geographic concentration of services
- Transportation and affordability challenges

Trail-related issues include motorized use conflicts, signage gaps, winter maintenance, and connectivity.

“More Than Sport”

Arts, culture, and land-based programming are identified as components of the recreation system. Needs include flexible cultural space, performance-ready venues, and long-term sustainability for programming. Interest was expressed in creative and non-sport recreation options across age groups.

“Something for Every Age”

Recreation priorities vary by life stage but consistently include:

- After-school and youth programming
- Flexible adult programming
- Social and accessible opportunities for older adults
- Inclusive and adaptive programming
- Reduced financial barriers
- Expanded winter recreation options

Seventy-seven percent (77%) support a blended approach to recreation delivery.

“Connect Us Better”

Residents identified the trail network as an important asset and noted opportunities to improve connectivity, safety, winter usability, and wayfinding. Improved coordination, centralized information, and clearer communication about recreation opportunities were also identified.



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INTRODUCTION

In the Municipality of Tantramar, recreation spaces and cultural places contribute to daily life, community identity, and overall wellbeing. From parks and trails to arenas, community halls, arts venues, and informal gathering spaces, recreation supports physical activity, creativity, social connection, and community participation. *As defined in the Framework for Recreation in Canada: Pathways to Wellbeing,*

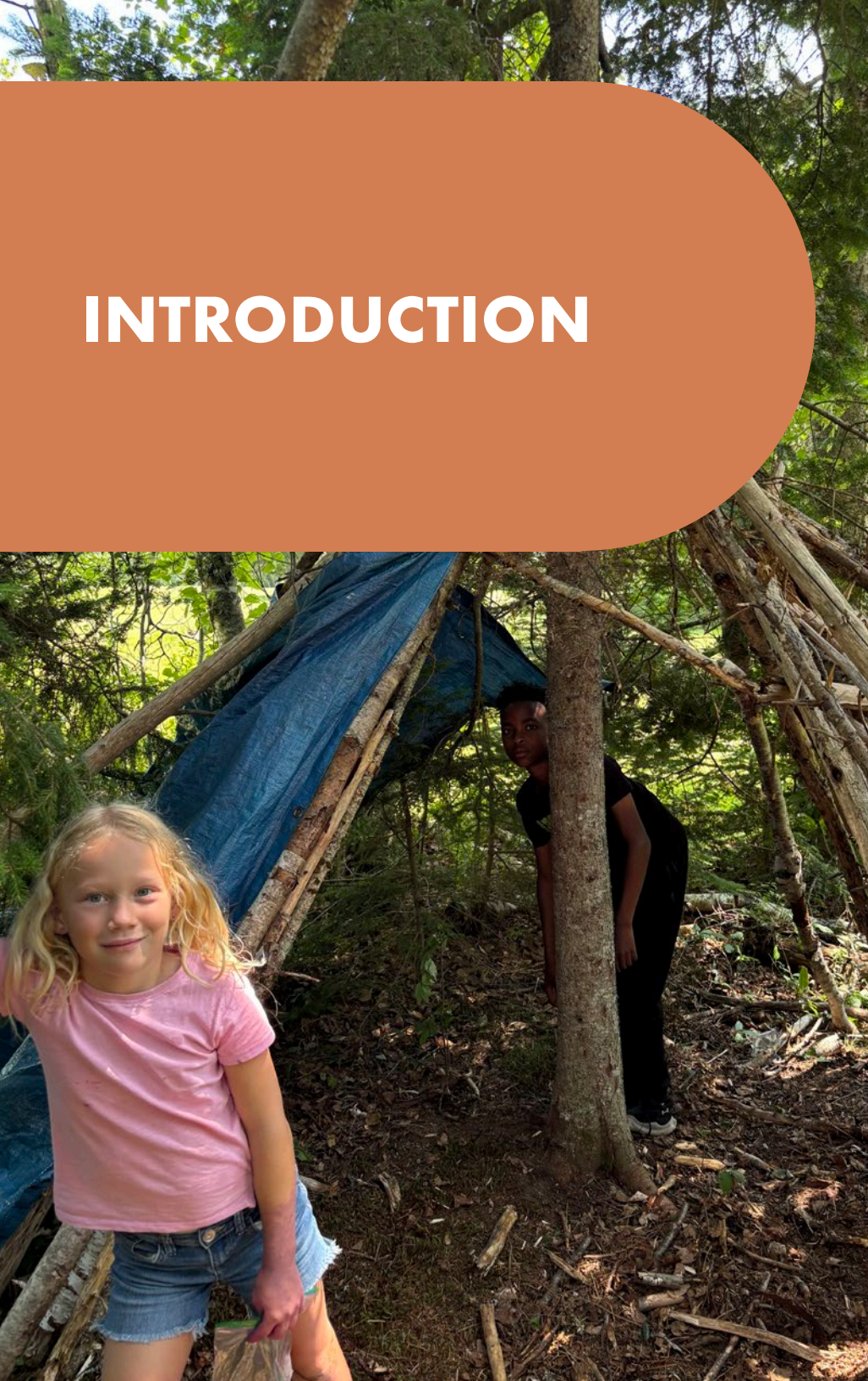
“Recreation is the experience that results from freely chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community wellbeing.”

This broad definition reflects the diverse ways residents of Tantramar experience recreation through sport, arts, heritage and culture, outdoor activity, volunteerism, community events, and everyday informal use of public spaces.

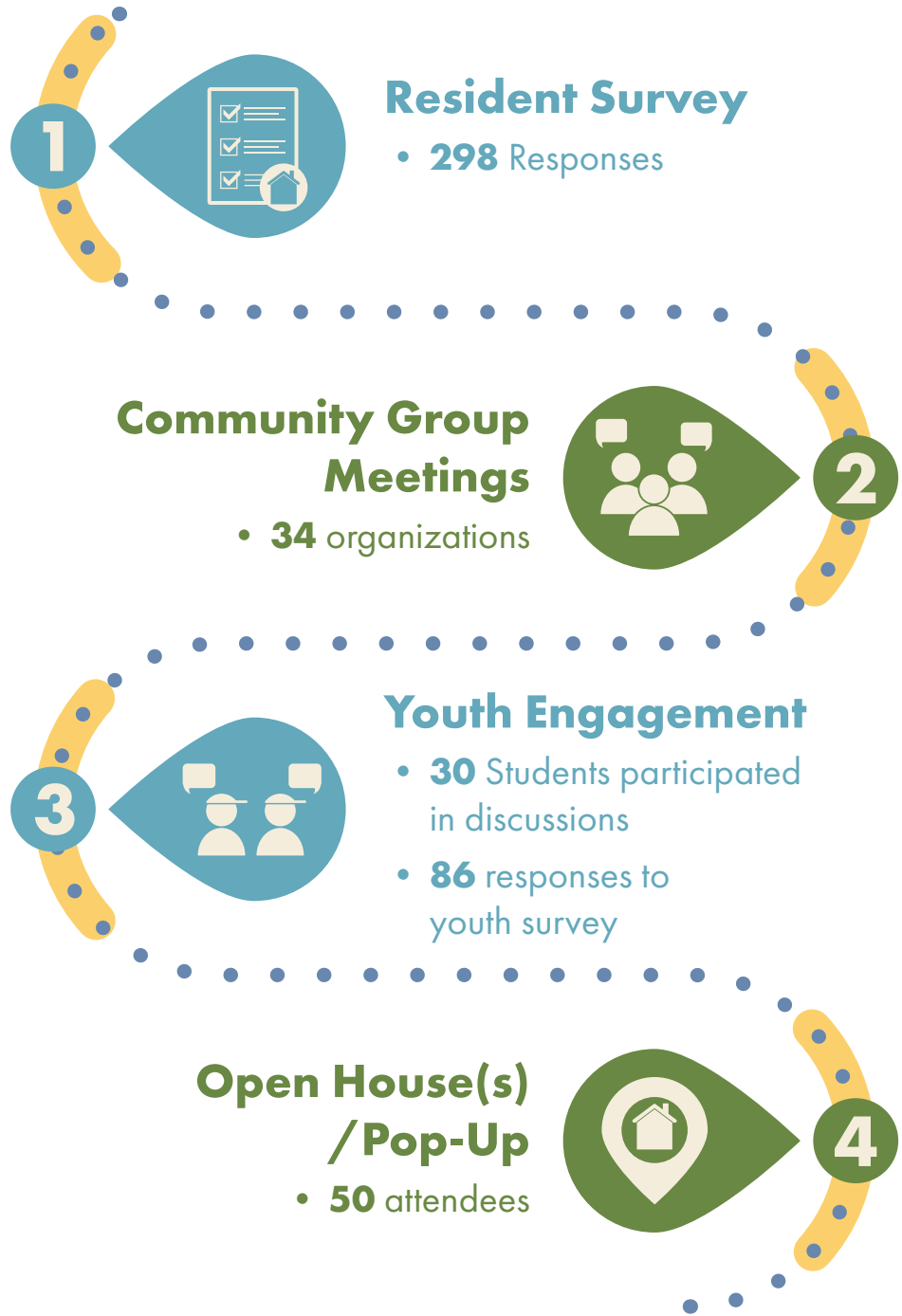
As Tantramar evolves, so do community needs, expectations, and opportunities. The Recreation Master Plan will provide a long-term roadmap to guide decision-making over the next decade. The Plan will assess the current system of facilities, programs, parks, and services; identify strengths and gaps; and establish clear directions to respond to changing demographics, participation patterns, and community priorities.

The Master Plan is informed by a comprehensive program of research and community engagement. Input was gathered through group meetings with community organizations and stakeholders, a resident survey, a youth survey, facilitated youth sessions, and pop-up engagement events held throughout the municipality. These engagement activities were designed to ensure broad participation and to reflect the range of recreation experiences within Tantramar.

The findings from these engagement and research inputs are summarized in this *What We Heard* Report.



ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS





OPEN HOUSES / POP-UP EVENTS

Open houses were held at three key community locations: Dorchester Community Centre, the Civic Centre and the Tantramar Farmers Market. The open houses / pop-up events offered residents and opportunity to learn about the Master Plan and share their own ideas. Interactive panels invited participants to reflect on key questions including:

- What additional infrastructure is needed?
- What goals should the Master Plan achieve to better support the community?
- How well are current recreation needs being met?
- What community values should guide recreation planning?
- What other ideas or suggestions do you have?

The input gathered at these events has been summarized and organized into the following:

Facility Improvements or New Facilities Needed

- Upgrade and modernize existing community facilities to improve functionality, accessibility, and year-round use.
- Improve physical accessibility in indoor and outdoor spaces.
- Develop additional multipurpose and flexible spaces to support arts, sports, markets, and community events, specifically in the winter months.
- Enhance and better connect trail and bike path networks, including maintenance and accessible design.
- Establish or formalize gathering spaces and other “third places” specifically in Dorchester.



Goals the Master Plan Should Accomplish

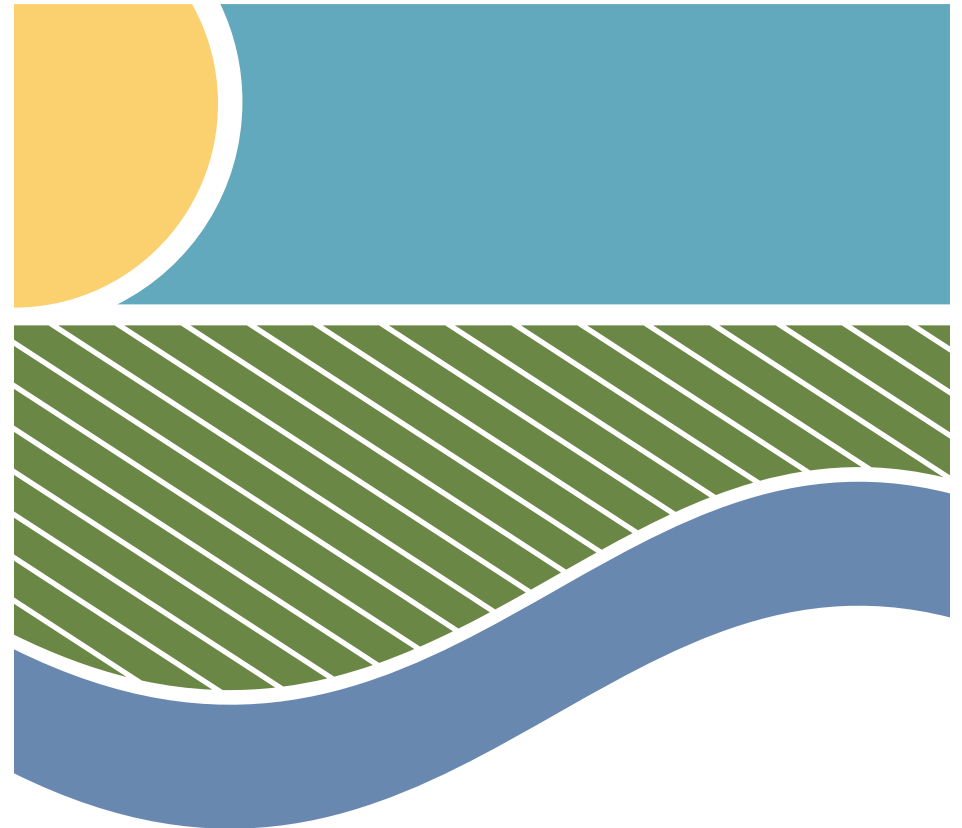
- Advance an age-friendly recreation system that supports residents across all life stages.
- Expand and diversify programming to serve preschool, youth, adults, and seniors.
- Reduce financial and physical barriers to participation through subsidies and scholarships.
- Improve communication, promotion, and centralized program information.
- Strengthen year-round recreation opportunities, particularly during winter months.
- Support community health, active living, and social well-being.

Community Values Important When Planning for Recreation

- Accessibility as a core guiding principle (physical, financial, and technological).
- Recreation for all, with equitable opportunities across age groups.
- Strong volunteerism and community-led programming.
- Intergenerational connection and knowledge sharing.
- Health, well-being, and social connection as foundational outcomes.
- Recognition of recreation and trails as contributors to tourism and community identity.

Suggestion Station

- Expand arts, cultural, sport, and skill-building programs (e.g., dance, music, cooking, science, leagues).
- Increase access to certified instructors and support local groups to that deliver programs.
- Improve coordination of facility use and booking systems.
- Incorporate cultural and natural history interpretation into trail development.
- Provide program information sessions and outreach to increase awareness and participation.



RESIDENT SURVEY

A resident survey was fielded to gather residents' perspectives on recreation services, programs and facilities in the community from from October 14th to November 16th 2025. The survey was primarily administered online, with paper copies available for residents who preferred. The survey was promoted through various methods including:

- Municipality social media channels
- Municipality website
- Posters in facilities and local businesses
- Through groups and community organizations

The findings of the survey are presented in the following sections. They follow the order that the questions were posed in the survey. Not all respondents answered each question; the percentages shown represent those who answered the question.



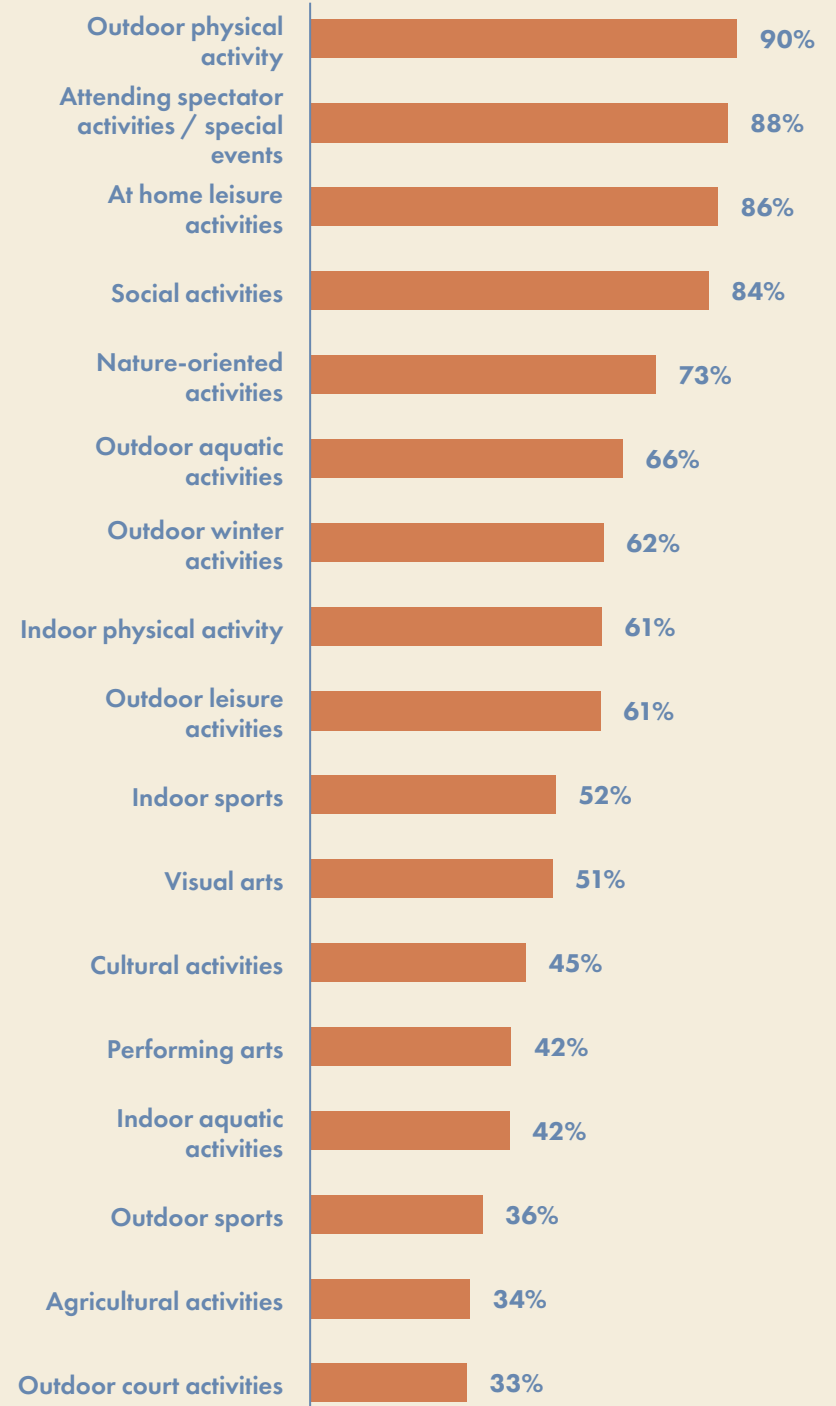
Your Recreation Activities and Spaces

Q: What type of activities or programs have you or a member of your household participated in during the previous year?

To begin, respondents were asked to indicate which activities they participated in over the previous year. Participation was highest in outdoor physical activities (90%), attending events (88%), at-home activities such as games and reading (86%), and social activities like getting together with friends (84%).

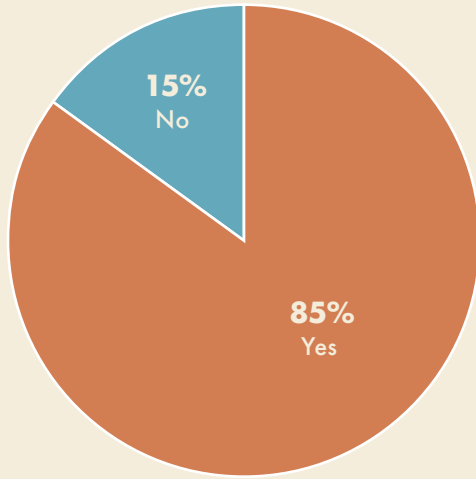
Subsegment Analysis

- Households with children (64%) are more likely to say they participate in indoor sports than household with no children (34%).



Q: Do you participate in activities outside of Tantramar?

Next, respondents were asked if they participated in activities outside of Tantramar. Almost all (85%) indicated they do participate in activities outside of the Municipality, while 15% indicated they do not.



Q: Why do you or a member of your household participate in activities outside of Tantramar?

Places Respondents Go:

- Amherst
- Moncton / Dieppe / Riverview / Memramcook
- Halifax
- Fundy / National & Provincial Parks
- Other Nova Scotia communities
- Other provinces (e.g., Toronto, Calgary)
- Border communities (Fredericton, Saint John)

Reasons for Participating Outside Tantramar

Activities Not Available Locally

- Programs and facilities do not exist in Tantramar (e.g., gymnastics, public gym, yoga studio, therapy pool, indoor play parks, fencing, squash, surfing).
- Limited competitive and high-performance sport opportunities.
- No movie theatre or limited performing arts infrastructure.

Aquatic Facility Limitations

- Limited indoor swimming options.
- Restricted hours and seasonal programming.
- Preference for amenities at YMCA or regional aquatic centres.

Greater Variety and Quality Elsewhere

- Broader range of cultural events, concerts, and festivals.
- More diverse and specialized programming.
- Larger, better-equipped facilities.
- More consistent scheduling and availability.

Scheduling and Accessibility

- Limited evening/weekend options locally.
- Programs clustered at inconvenient times.
- Accessibility and facility access challenges.
- Limited drop-in opportunities.

Recreation and Natural Amenities

- Greater trail diversity and scenic variety.
- Access to waterfalls, beaches, national parks.
- Better winter conditions for skiing and outdoor recreation.

Family and Social Connections

- Visiting family and attending grandchildren's activities.
- Participation in regional leagues and tournaments.
- Seasonal residences or cottages outside Tantramar.

Cost and Convenience

- Lower fees or better value elsewhere.
- Facilities closer to workplaces or shopping destinations.
- Less crowded or more suitable environments.

Q: From the list below, please drag and drop the three **indoor** facilities your household uses most often.

When asked to rank the facilities they use most often, respondents identified the Tantramar Veterans Memorial Civic Centre as the most frequently used facility, followed by the Bill Johnstone Memorial Activity Centre and the Mount Allison Pool. School and community gymnasiums and performing arts centres also ranked relatively high, while smaller community halls and centres were used less frequently overall.



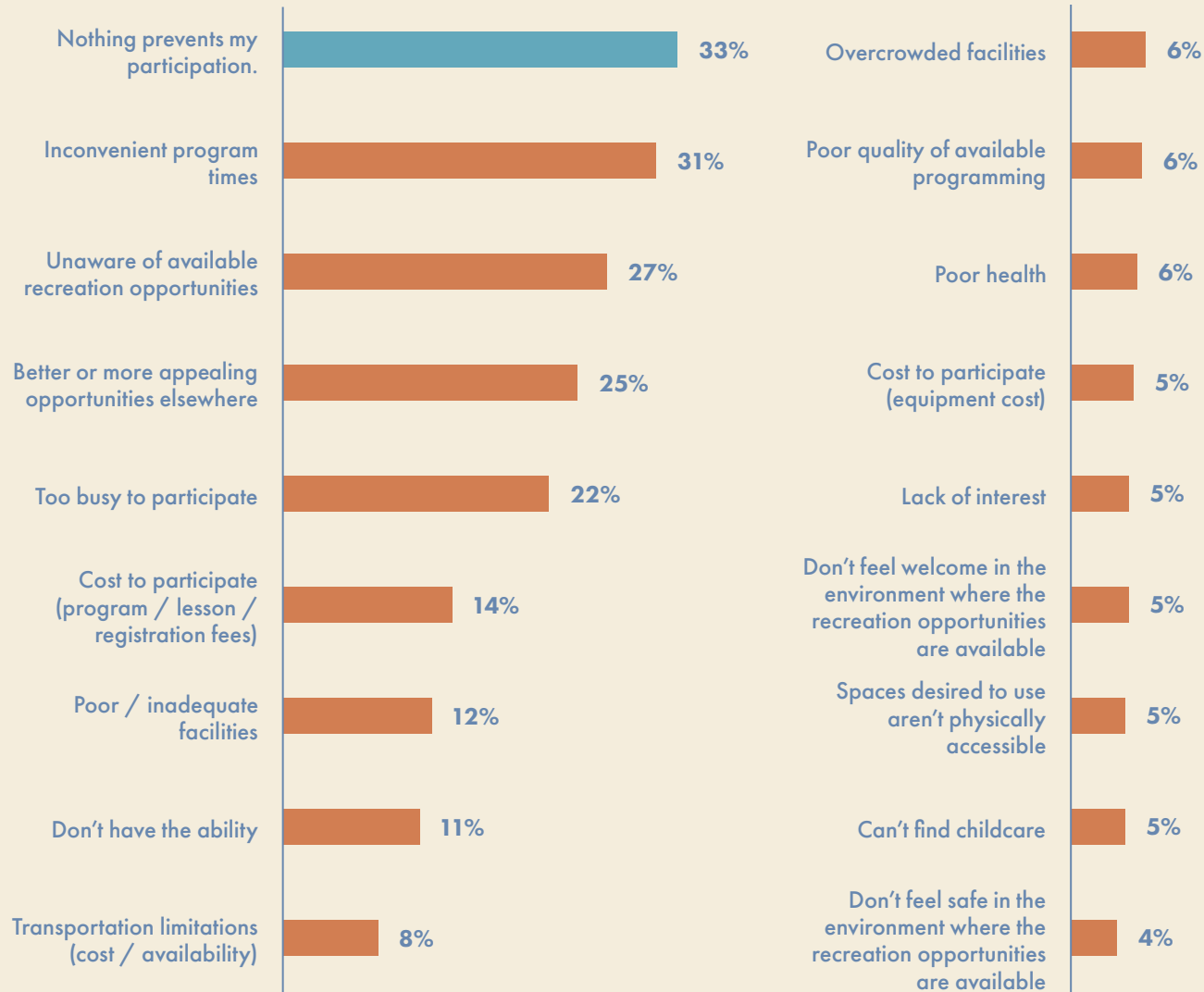
Q: From the list below, please drag and drop the three **outdoor** facilities your household uses most often.

When asked to rank the outdoor facilities their household uses most often, respondents identified Sackville Waterfowl Park as the top facility, followed by Bill Johnstone Memorial Park and Silver Lake Beach (Lillas Fawcett Park). The Walker Road Trail System and local sport fields also ranked highly, while smaller parks and specialty amenities received fewer rankings overall.



Q: What, if anything, **prevents** you and / or members of your household from accessing **recreation opportunities** in Tantramar? Please select all that apply.

When considering barriers to accessing recreation opportunities in Tantramar, the most commonly cited challenges were inconvenient program times (31%), lack of awareness of available opportunities (27%), the availability of more appealing options elsewhere (25%), and being too busy to participate (22%). Notably, one-third (33%) indicated that nothing prevents their ability to participate in recreation opportunities.



Subsegment Analysis

- Those who have been a local resident for more than 10 years (38%) are more likely to say that nothing prevents participation in recreation opportunities than those who have been local residents for 1-5 years (23%) and 6-10 years (17%).
- Those who have been a local resident for 1-5 years (46%) and 6-10 years (40%) are more likely to say that program times being inconvenient is a barrier they face than those who have been a local resident for more than 10 years (26%).

Q: Please use the space below to further explain your answer.

Respondents were able to explain their response or share additional barriers they face when trying to access **recreation opportunities**. The responses are summarized and presented according to themes:

Geographic Distribution of Amenities

- Recreation spaces and programming are concentrated in Sackville, with fewer offerings in Dorchester and other rural areas.
- Existing community halls and rural spaces are underutilized for broader programming and events.

Program Structure

- There is a need for development-focused and non-competitive participation pathways alongside competitive streams.

Social Integration & Entry Barriers

- Some activities are perceived as socially established, making entry difficult for newcomers or beginners.
- There is a need for more introductory, beginner-friendly, and drop-in opportunities.

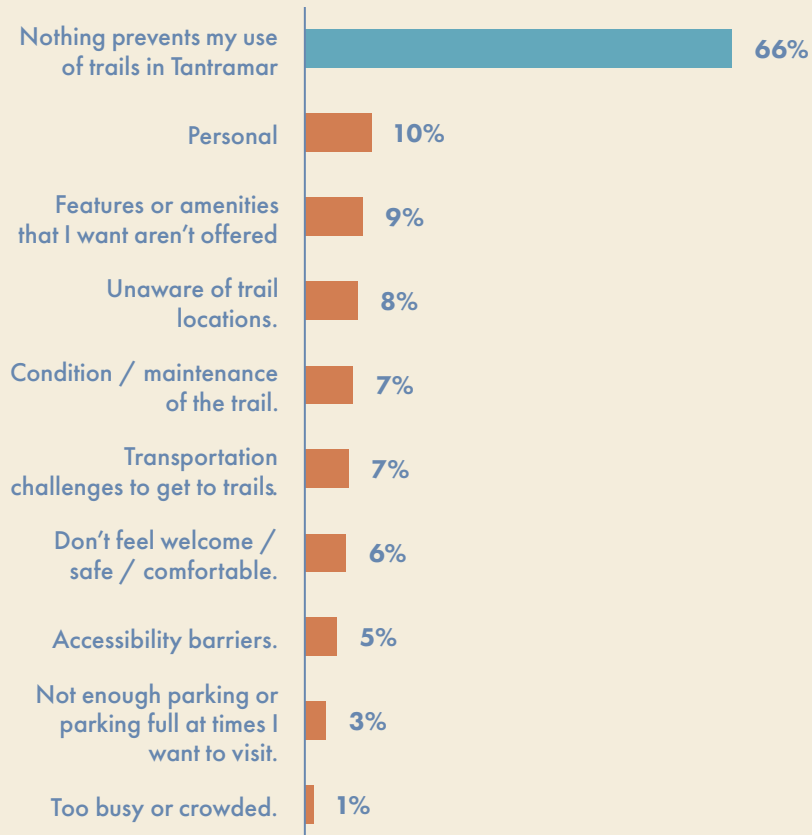
Space Design & Multi-Use Flexibility

- Current facilities do not consistently support multi-use or adaptable programming.



Q: Does anything limit or prevent you using **parks and trails** in Tantramar?

When asked about barriers to accessing parks and trails, the majority (66%) indicated that nothing prevents their use of these spaces in the Municipality.



Q: Please use the space below to further explain your answer.

Respondents were able to explain their response or share additional barriers they face when trying to access **trail opportunities**. The responses are summarized and presented according to themes:

Motorized Use Conflicts & Enforcement

- Unauthorized motorized vehicle use on designated non-motorized trails reduces trail quality and user experience.
- Removal or damage to gates and signage has occurred in some locations.
- Limited enforcement of trail-use regulations.

Shared-Use Conflicts

- Conflicts between disc golf and walking activities at Beech Hill.
- Concerns regarding unclear shared-use expectations on multi-use trails.
- Tension between on-leash and off-leash dog use in certain areas.

Wayfinding & Information Gaps

- Lack of a centralized, clearly accessible trail map.
- Uncertainty regarding permitted uses (e.g., ATV access, club membership requirements).
- Limited clarity around private land access and liability.

Connectivity & Network Gaps

- Lack of safe highway crossing between sections of the trail network.
- Limited integration of cycling infrastructure within the broader transportation network.
- Some trail systems do not adequately accommodate recreational cycling.

Winter-Specific Infrastructure

- Limited plowed walking routes for winter use.
- Desire for expanded winter trail grooming or designated winter walking sections.

Support Amenities

- Limited year-round washroom availability.
- Lack of diaper-changing facilities near parks and trailheads.
- Interest in public canoe/kayak storage near Silver Lake.

Policy & Access Restrictions

- Changes to vehicle access at Beech Hill have reduced accessibility for gatherings.
- Interest in expanded or clearly designated ATV connections to Nova Scotia.

Infrastructure Maintenance & Enforcement

- Trail degradation related to ATV use and limited bylaw enforcement affects usability.
- Improved maintenance of outdoor infrastructure is required to support walking, cycling, and recreation use.

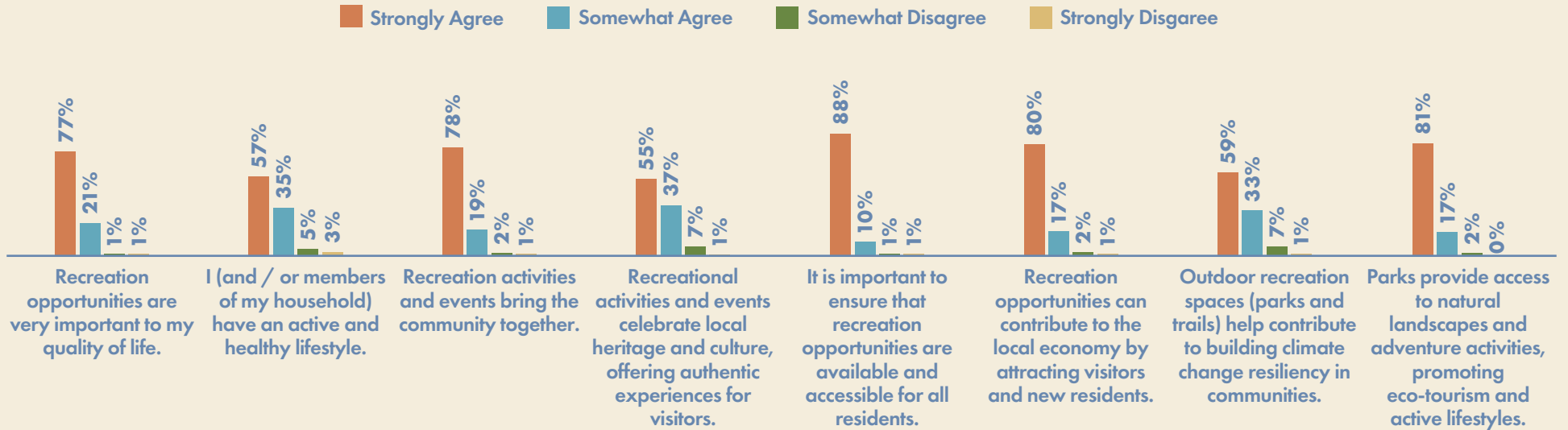
Environmental Constraints

- Wildlife concerns and seasonal conditions affect the use of certain outdoor spaces.

The Value and Benefit of Recreation

Q: Please consider the provision of recreation in Tantramar and indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

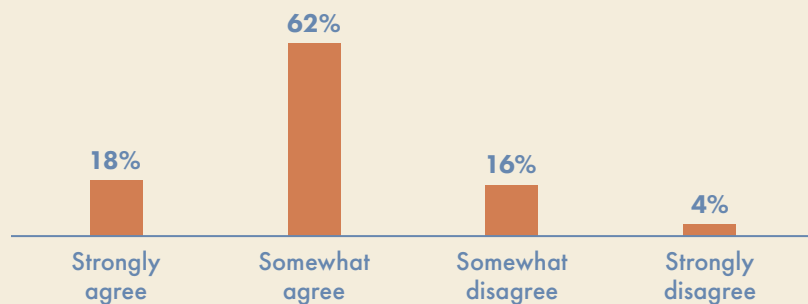
There is overall support for recreation and parks in Tantramar, with over 90% of respondents agreeing that recreation enhances quality of life, strengthens community, and should be accessible to all. Respondents also widely recognize the role of parks in promoting active lifestyles, supporting the local economy, and contributing to environmental resiliency.



Satisfaction

Q: What is your level of agreement that the Municipality of Tantramar meets the current recreational needs of its residents?

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement that the Municipality meets their recreational needs. As shown in the graph, 80% agree (strongly or somewhat) that their recreational needs are being met. While approximately one-quarter (20%) disagree (somewhat disagree and strongly disagree).



Q: Please explain your answer.

Respondents were able to explain their answer. The responses are summarized and presented according to themes:

Higher Agreement: Needs Are Being Met

- Strong range of outdoor recreation opportunities.
- Recent trail and park improvements are positively viewed.
- Recreation delivery is supported by active community groups and volunteers.
- Overall satisfaction is expressed for a small municipality.

Moderate Agreement: Needs Partially Met

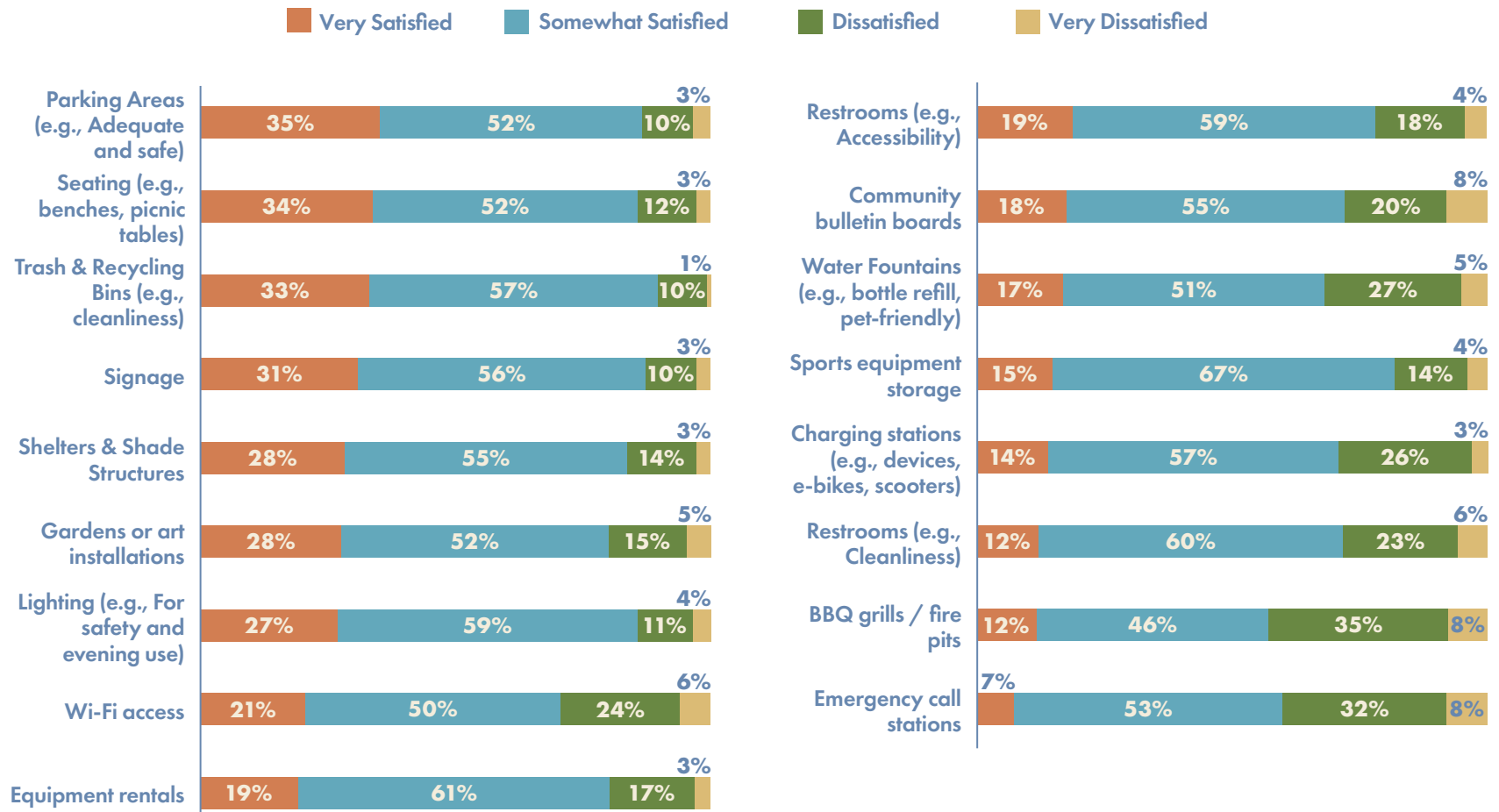
- Indoor recreation capacity is limited and not keeping pace with growth.
- Heavy reliance on university facilities limits flexibility and access.
- Adult, mid-life, and teen programming is less developed than youth offerings.
- Rural communities feel less served than Sackville.
- Information about programs and registration is not centralized or easy to navigate.

Lower Agreement: Key Gaps Identified

- Lack of a multi-use community recreation centre.
- Insufficient ice time and indoor sport court capacity.
- Limited accessible and inclusive facilities.
- Transportation barriers affect equitable access.
- Arts and cultural infrastructure and funding are viewed as under-supported.
- No permanent, year-round event facility.

Q: How satisfied are you with the following aspects of recreation in Tantramar? Consider how well each are meeting the needs you and/or your household for both indoor and outdoor facilities and amenities.

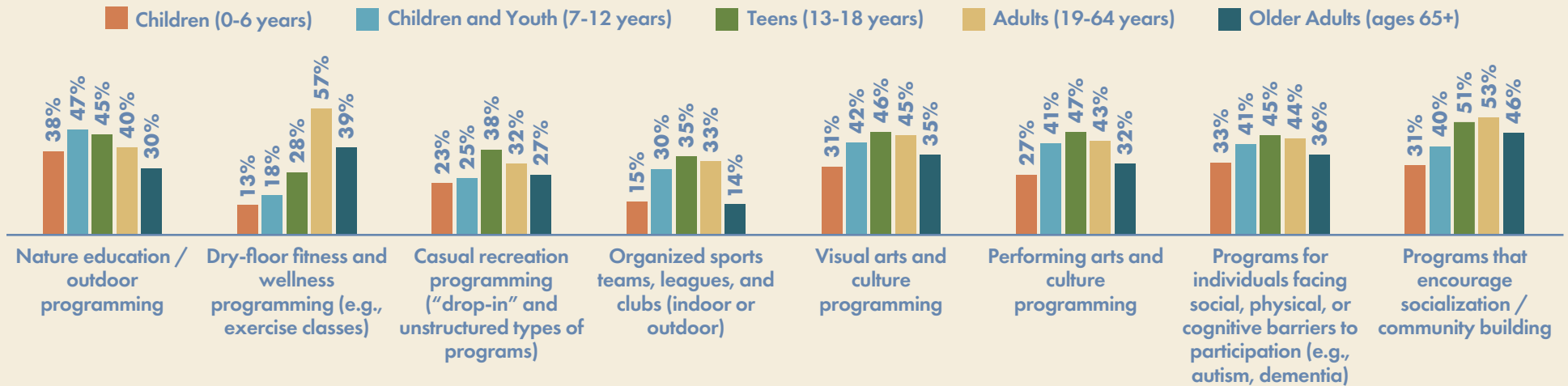
Respondents were presented with a list of support amenities and asked to rate their level of satisfaction with each. Overall, satisfaction was high across most amenities, particularly parking, seating, cleanliness of trash and recycling bins, signage, and lighting. Lower satisfaction levels were noted for amenities such as BBQ grills and fire pits, emergency call stations, water fountains, charging stations, and Wi-Fi access.



Future Priorities and Focus Areas

Q: Identified in the following matrix are several different programming types. Please **select all** that you think should be a future priority to **enhance delivery** of recreation in Tantramar for each of the age groups identified.

Shifting to programming needs, interest varies by age group, with the strongest overall demand for programs that encourage socialization and community building, particularly among teens (51%), adults (53%), and older adults (46%). Visual and performing arts programming also ranked highly across age groups, as did inclusive programs supporting individuals facing participation barriers. Nature-based programming was especially important for children and youth, while adults showed the greatest interest in dry-floor fitness and wellness opportunities.



Q: Please explain your answer.

Respondents were asked to explain their answer for future priorities and focus areas:

Youth & Teen Programming

- Dedicated teen-focused social and drop-in programs.
- Safe, screen-free gathering opportunities.
- More structured activities for youth beyond sport.

Adult Programming

- Expanded adult-only recreation and social options.
- More evening and weekend offerings.
- Flexible, drop-in formats for busy adults.

Early Years & Family

- More 0–6 programming, especially in winter.
- Affordable after-school and PD day programs.
- Family-based and nature-focused activities.

Arts & Cultural Programming

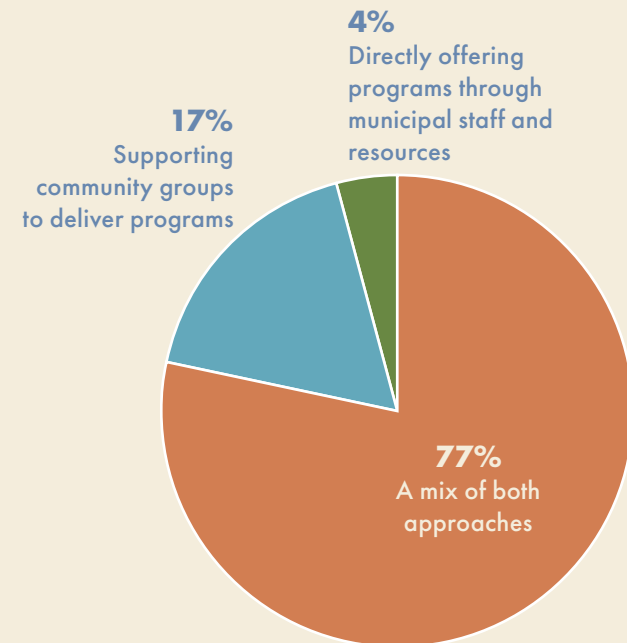
- Increased arts, music, and creative workshops.
- Greater support for local arts organizations and festivals.
- More non-sport recreation options.

Inclusive & Adaptive Programming

- Expanded programming for persons with disabilities and neurodiverse residents.
- Affordable options to reduce financial barriers.
- Outreach or social programming for seniors and isolated residents.

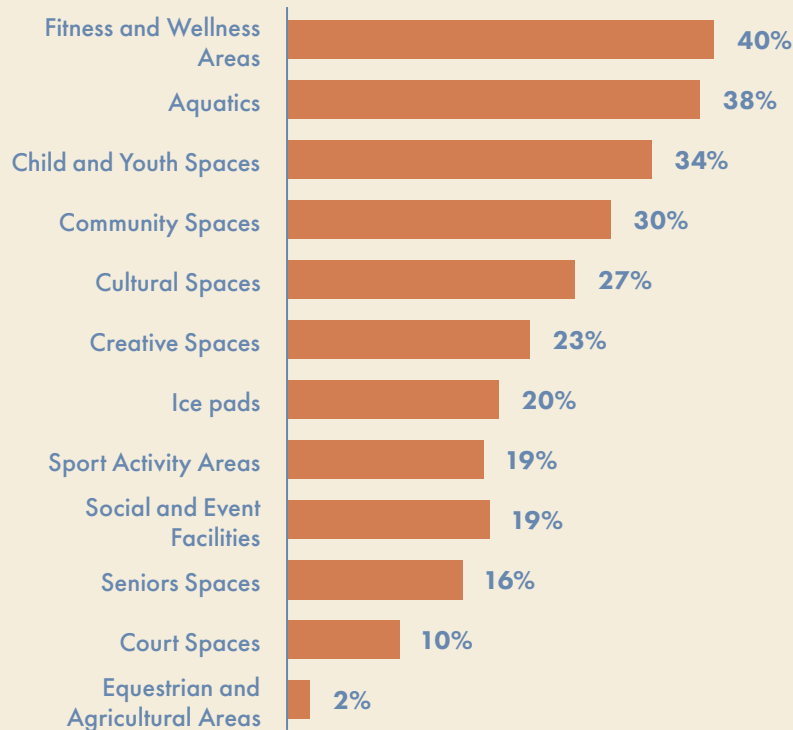
Q: Which approach do you think the municipality should prioritize when it comes to recreation programming?

When considering approaches to recreation programming, 77% of respondents prefer a mix of direct municipal delivery and support for community groups. Seventeen percent prefer primarily supporting community groups, while 4% prefer direct municipal delivery alone.



Q: Please select up to **three (3) INDOOR** recreation amenities that should be considered a priority for future investment in Tantramar.

When asked about priorities for indoor investment, respondents most frequently identified fitness and wellness areas (40%), aquatics (38%), and child and youth spaces (34%). Community and cultural spaces also ranked relatively high. Lower priorities included court spaces (10%) and equestrian and agricultural areas (2%).

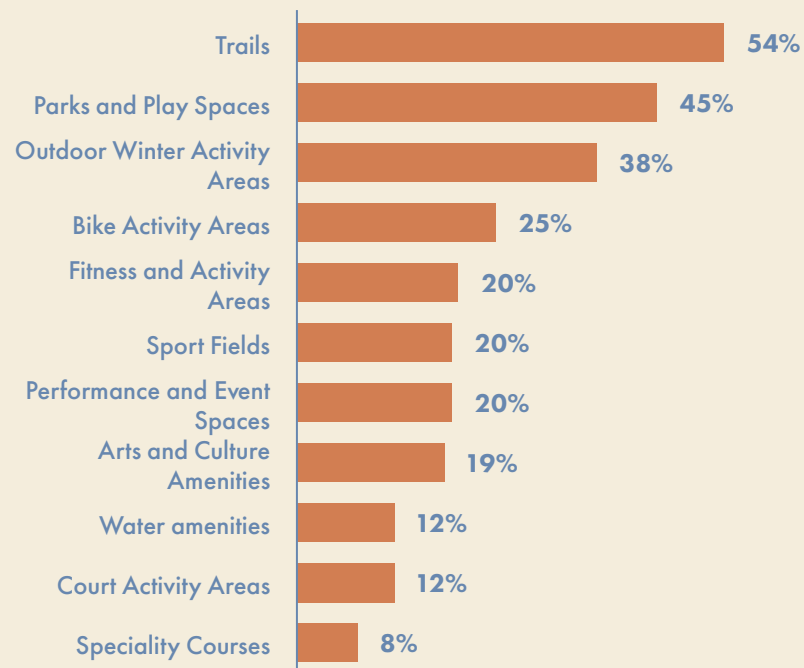


Subsegment Analysis

- Those who have been a local resident for 1-5 years (53%) and over 10 years (42%) are more likely to say that fitness and wellness areas should be a priority for investment than those who have been local residents for between 6-10 years (17%).
- Those who have been a local resident for 6-10 years (49%) are more likely to say that cultural spaces should be a priority for investment than those who have been a local resident for 1-5 years (24%) and over 10 years (22%).
- Those who have been a local resident for 6-10 years (44%) and over 10 years (35%) are more likely to say that child and youth spaces should be a priority for investment than those who have been a local resident for 1-5 years (18%).
- Households with children (29%) are more likely to say that sport activity areas should be a priority for investment than households with no children (8%).

Q: Please select up to **three (3) OUTDOOR** recreation amenities that should be considered a priority for future investment in Tantramar.

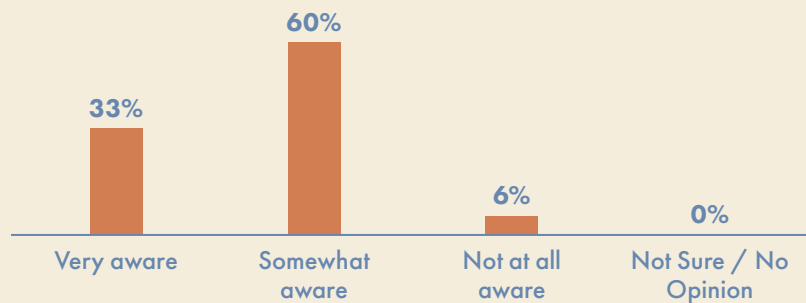
For outdoor investment, trails (54%) and parks and play spaces (45%) were the top priorities, followed by winter activity areas (38%). All other amenities were identified by roughly one in four respondents or fewer.



Awareness

Q: In general, which best describes your level of awareness of recreation opportunities (facilities / spaces, programs, services and events) in Tantramar?

Almost all (93%) respondents report being aware (very aware and somewhat aware) of recreation opportunities in Tantramar. The minority indicated they are unaware.

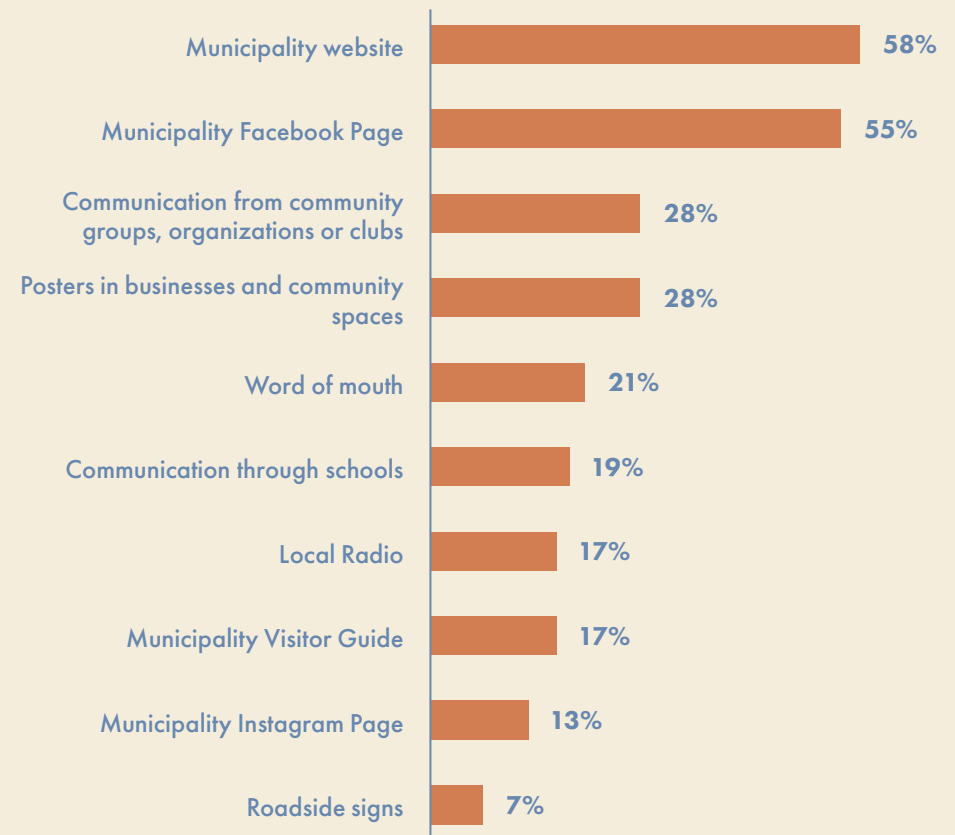


Subsegment Analysis

- Those who have been a local resident for over 10 years (38%) are more likely to say they are very aware of recreation opportunities than those who have been a local resident for 1-5 years (21%).

Q: How do you prefer to learn about parks and recreation opportunities in Tantramar? **Please select your top three (3) preferences.**

Respondents prefer receiving information through the municipal website (58%) and Facebook page (55%). Other commonly identified methods include communication from community groups and posters in local businesses (28% each).



Big Idea

Q: Share your BIG IDEA for Recreation in Tantramar! If you have an idea about how you might increase participation in recreation, bring a new activity to the Municipality, get more youth active or make participating in recreation more inclusive – share your ideas with us.

Lastly, respondents were asked to share any final thoughts or big ideas they have related to recreation in the Municipality. The responses are summarized into themes.

Support for Community Organizations

Increased financial, logistical, and promotional support was mentioned as needed for existing community organizations and program providers. Simplified access to funding, affordable space, and stronger municipal coordination could help sustain and expand community-led programming.

Multi-Use Recreation Space

Flexible, year-round multi-use space is was mentioned as needed to support sport, fitness, arts, markets, and community events. Respondents indicated that spaces should be adaptable, affordable, and designed to accommodate diverse activities without over-reliance on a single user group.

Arts & Culture Infrastructure

Dedicated arts, culture, performance, and cinema infrastructure was mentioned as critical to sustain and grow the municipality's creative sector. Stable funding and appropriate venues were mentioned necessary to support festivals, live music, theatre, film, and community arts programming.

Youth & Teen Engagement

Expanded youth and teen programming was mentioned as needed, including drop-in spaces, non-competitive recreation, mentorship, and leadership development opportunities. Safe, accessible gathering spaces beyond organized sport were mentioned as top priorities the municipality should consider.

Adult Programming

More adult and working-age programming was mentioned as needed, particularly evening and flexible options that accommodate work and family schedules. Expanded non-competitive sport, fitness, learning, and social programming could improve participation.

Inclusive & Accessible Recreation

Respondents indicated that recreation opportunities must be more inclusive and accessible, including adaptive sport, accessible facilities, and affordable programming. Equity across rural areas and support for persons with disabilities should be key considerations.

Trails & Active Transportation

Respondents mentioned that the trail network and active transportation system should be expanded and connected to improve safe, year-round access between communities. Improvements should support walking, cycling, winter use, and reduced reliance on vehicles.

Aquatics & Ice Capacity

Respondents indicated that the Municipality should address the limited availability of ice and aquatic opportunities. Increased access to public and non-competitive was mentioned as a priority.

Community Building

Recreation programming should prioritize intergenerational connection, newcomer integration, wellness, and social cohesion as respondents reiterated the important role these facilities play in the community.

Communication & Coordination

Respondents mentioned that communication and scheduling coordination should be improved through centralized calendars, updated digital platforms, and clearer information on availability, accessibility, and registration.

Demographics

Q: Please provide the following optional demographic information. We are asking for this information solely to assist with analysis of the survey data and the responses you provide will not be attributed to you or shared with any other third parties. By answering these questions we can better review the data to determine the needs for different subsets of the population.

Where do you live?	
Sackville	85%
Dorchester	6%
Other - Write In	10%
How long have you been a local resident?	
1 - 5 years	16%
6 – 10 years	17%
More than 10 years	67%
Which of the following categories best describes your age?	
Under 19 yrs.	2%
20-29 yrs.	4%
30-39 yrs.	16%
40-49 yrs.	29%
50-59 yrs.	23%
60-69 yrs.	15%
70-79 yrs.	8%
80 yrs. and older	2%
Prefer not to answer.	2%

Which of the following categories best describes your age?	
One-person household	10%
Couple with children	45%
Couple without children	28%
Lone parent family	4%
Multigenerational household (at least 3 generations)	5%
Two or more adults not a couple (e.g., roommates, siblings living together)	3%
Prefer not to answer.	4%
Which of the following categories best describes your total household annual income, before taxes, in 2024?	
Less than \$30,000	5%
\$30,000 to just under \$60,000	12%
\$60,000 to just under \$90,000	16%
\$90,000 to just under \$120,000	23%
\$120,000 and over	25%
Prefer not to answer.	19%
Please select all that apply:	
I or someone in my household identify as Indigenous, First Nations, Metis, or Inuk (Inuit)	16%
I or someone in my household identify as a racialized person.	6%
I or someone in my household identify as LGBTQ2S+	36%
I or someone in my household has a disability.	64%
I or someone in my household has moved to Canada in the last 5 years.	4%



YOUTH ENGAGEMENT



Youth Survey

A youth survey was conducted to gather input from youth in Tantramar about recreation programs, activities, and spaces in the community from January 4th to February 15th. The survey was administered online through the local high school and was designed to be youth-friendly, accessible, and easy to complete.

In total 86 responses were received. The findings of the survey are presented below.

About You

Q: How do you usually get to school?

To begin the survey, respondents were asked how they usually get to school. As illustrated in the accompanying graphics, approximately two-thirds take the bus, while approximately one-quarter get to school by car.



Bus – 65%



Walk/ride/wheel – 11%



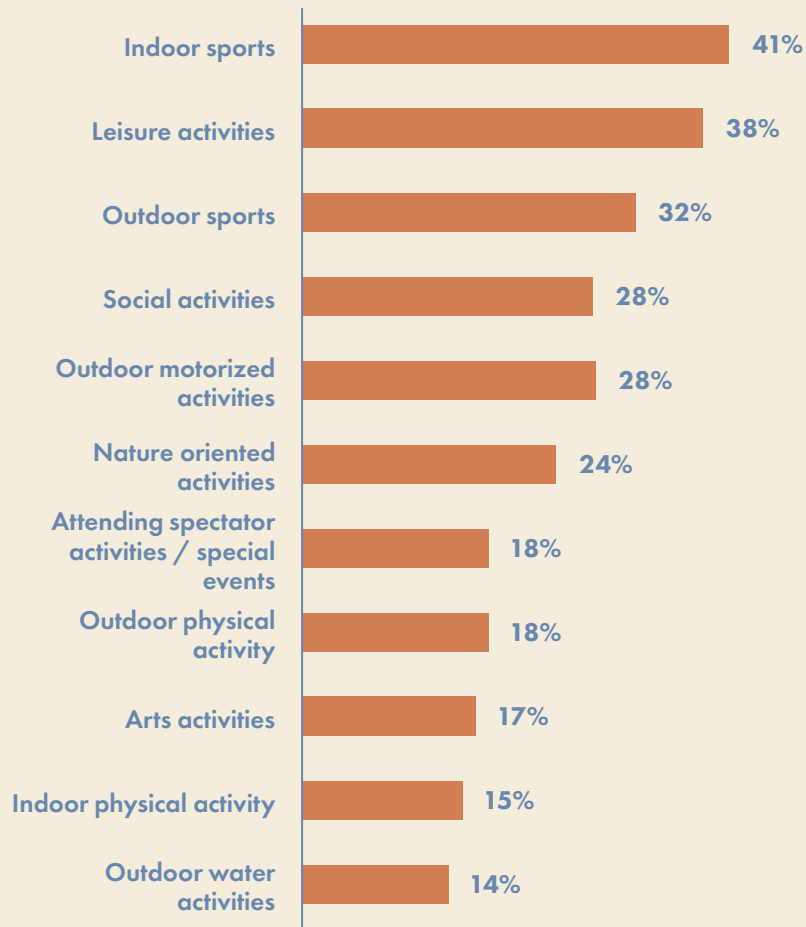
Car – 23%



Activities

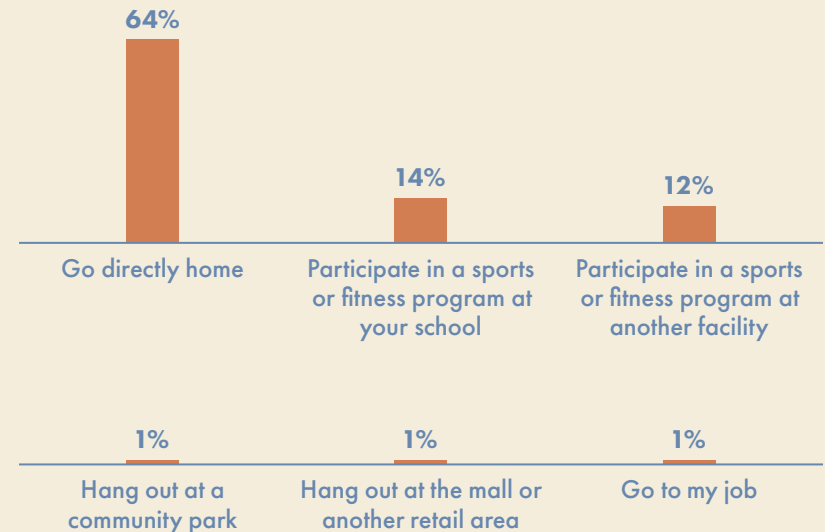
Q:What are your favourite types of activities? You can select up to 3 answers.

When asked to identify their favourite activities, over one-third of youth indicated a preference for indoor sports such as basketball (41%), while a similar proportion identified a preference for leisure-based activities such as gaming and reading (38%).



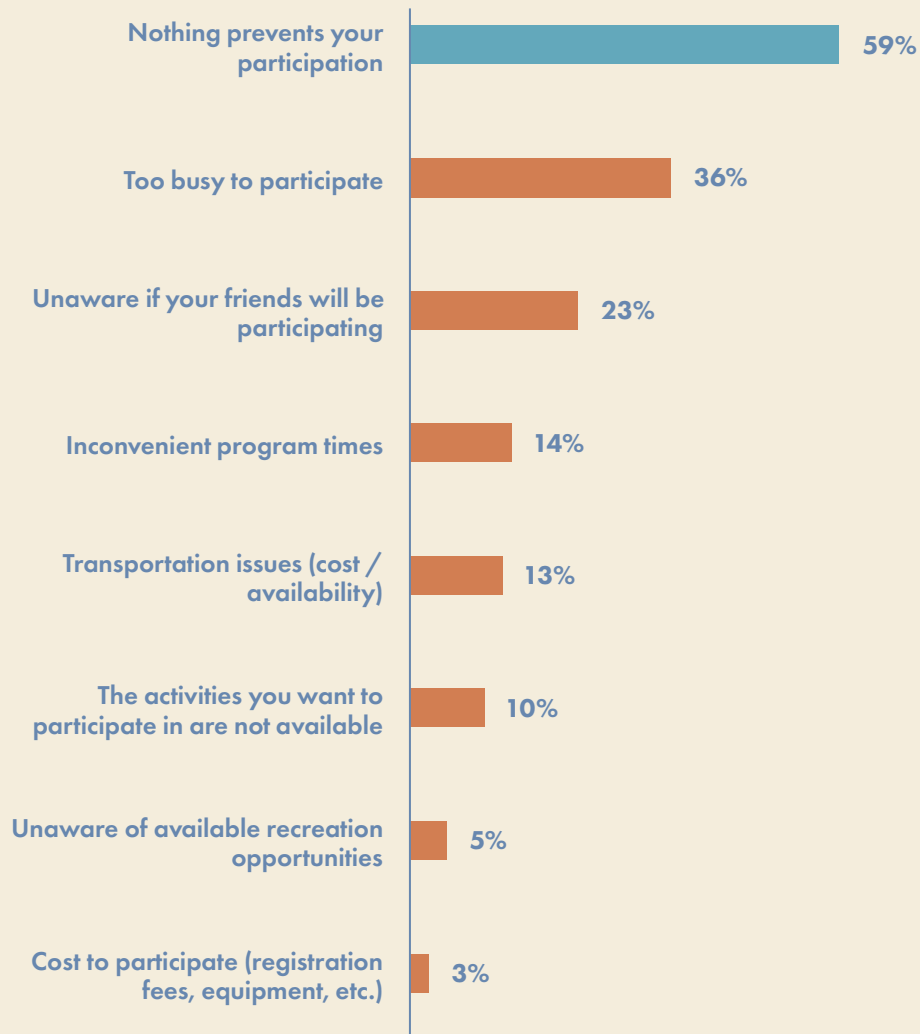
Q:What do you normally do after school? Please choose one answer.

Next, respondents were asked what they normally do after school. The majority (64%) indicated they go directly home. Refer to the graph.



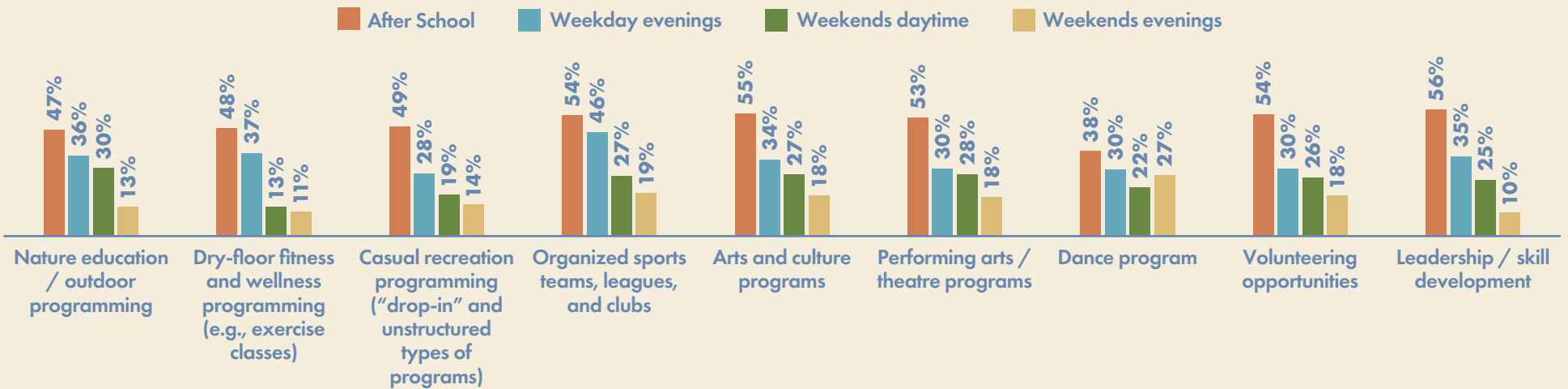
Q: What (if anything) prevents you from being active and participating in recreation opportunities in Tantramar? You can select up to 3 answers.

Considering barriers youth face when trying to participate in recreation opportunities, approximately one-third indicated that they are too busy to participate (36%), while lower but similar proportions indicated that they are unaware if their friends are participating in the same activity (23%).



Q: What activities would you like to participate in more? For each activity, please tell us when you would like to participate.

Next, youth were presented with a list of programming types and were asked to indicate which activities they would like to participate in more and when. Youth interest in participating more is strongest after school across nearly all activity types, particularly leadership/skill development (56%), arts and culture programs (55%), organized sports (54%), and volunteering (54%). Interest declines in evenings and on weekends, with weekend evenings consistently the lowest across most categories.



Facilities

Q: What indoor or outdoor facility do you think the municipality is missing or should improve?

Youth were asked to indicate improvements or additional facilities that the Municipality should consider. Their responses are presented below:

Top Facilities Needed

- More rink/ice facilities (outdoor rinks, pond, additional rink)
- Indoor sport space (soccer field, courts, volleyball, badminton)
- Pool
- Bowling alley
- Rock climbing facility
- Paintball
- More drop-in activity spaces

Upgrades to Existing Facilities

- Civic Centre seating & locker rooms
- Basketball courts & equipment
- Football goal posts
- Baseball scoreboard
- Arena seating
- Weight room

Big Idea

Q: Share your BIG idea for recreation in Tantramar! Have an idea about how you might increase participation in recreation, bring a new activity to the Municipality, get more people active or make participating in recreation more inclusive – share your ideas with us.

Lastly, youth were asked to share their BIG IDEA for recreation in Tantramar. The responses are presented below:

Ice & Rink Facilities

- Outdoor skating rink
- Additional / on-campus hockey rink
- Winter or outdoor hockey tournaments

Sport Facilities

- New football field
- Volleyball court (indoor or outdoor)
- Soccer
- Rock climbing
- Motor-related activities

Programs & Social Activities

- Board games group
- Movie nights / movie theatre
- More sports teams & recreational groups
- “Anything to do” / more activities

Inclusion & Accessibility

- Programs promoting awareness and acceptance of minority groups (including LGBTQ+)
- Activities for people with disabilities
- Asking youth what they want

Outdoor & Nature Ideas

- Large natural pond for recreation and environmental learning
- Walking trail

Youth Conversations

In addition to the youth survey, a session was held at the Dorchester School with students in grades 5 and 6. A summary of key themes is presented:

Current Recreation Participation: Participants identified activities including soccer, football, biking, hockey, scouts, horseback riding, sledding, parks, playgrounds, forest use, and seasonal winter activities.

Recreation Infrastructure Needs: Participants identified interest in additional infrastructure such as community-wide trails, a skate park, climbing spaces, larger hills, football fields, bike parks, recreation buildings for clubs, horse stables, and a new school.

Program and Organized Sport Opportunities: Participants expressed interest in expanded organized programming, including competitive soccer opportunities, football, volleyball, horse shows, music groups, and local art clubs.

Barriers to Participation: Identified barriers included limited mountain biking space, concerns about injury, heat, accessibility for people with disabilities, uncertainty about team selection, and the cost of horseback riding.

Access and Community Amenities: Additional suggestions included free recreation opportunities, improved modes of transportation, snack amenities, and investment in reconciliation funding.





GROUP MEETINGS

A series of discussion sessions was facilitated with an array of organizations, each offering unique perspectives on the provision of recreation in the Municipality. A collaborative in-person meeting was held in October 2025. Virtual meetings were held in early November, with total 34 groups participating. These organizations included recreation and sport organizations, arts, culture and heritage organizations, social services, service clubs, governing bodies and more.

To begin the in-person session, participants were asked to describe Tantramar in three words. The words mentioned are presented in the following graphic:

CREATIVE CALM QUAIN
CHALLENGING INVOLVED DIVERSE
INVITING PEACEFUL
FRIENDLY LOCAL COMMUNITY
FOREIGN LOCAL
CONNECTION TRAILS
ENGAGING CHALLENGES WATER WILDLIFE
SUPPORTIVE MARSHES
PROGRESSIVE RESPONSIVE
COLLABORATION

The discussions covered a broad spectrum of topics, but several key themes emerged across multiple sessions. The following themes provide a summary of the key insights shared during the meetings.

Arts, Culture, and Community Identity

Participants identified arts, culture, and heritage as central components of community identity and regional positioning. Cultural activity occurs at local, regional, and national scales, including festivals, land-based programming, and heritage initiatives. There is interest in strengthening the integration of heritage and contemporary arts and cultural programming to support participation, tourism, and community connection in the Municipality.

Facility Gaps and Multi-Purpose Space Needs

Participants identified gaps in suitable, affordable, accessible, and appropriately equipped spaces for recreation, arts, and community use. Needs include performance-capable venues, flexible multi-purpose space, classroom and meeting areas, indoor winter field space, permanent outdoor event space. Aging infrastructure and accessibility limitations (e.g., elevators, sidewalks, crossings) were noted as constraints on participation.

Outdoor Recreation, Trails, and Active Transportation

Participants identified outdoor spaces and trails as important community assets. Opportunities include improved trail maintenance, mapping, signage, interpretive elements, and year-round usability. Safety improvements such as expanded sidewalks, safe highway crossings, and active transportation connections were identified. Interest was also expressed in permanent powwow grounds and enhanced outdoor gathering areas.

Land-Based Programming and Cultural Continuity

Participants identified the importance of land-based activities, cultural teachings, food security initiatives, and youth engagement programs. Programming such as powwow, archery, hunting and fishing education, community gardens, and healing forest initiatives were identified as contributing to cultural continuity and health outcomes. Transportation and accessibility barriers for elders and youth were noted.

Funding, Sustainability, and Resource Allocation

Participants identified operational funding constraints, limited staff capacity, and reliance on volunteers as ongoing challenges. There is interest in more predictable, equitable, and transparent funding processes, including clearer communication regarding grants and municipal resource allocation. Participants noted the need for long-term planning approaches to support sustainability.

Volunteer Development and Organizational Capacity

Participants identified challenges related to volunteer recruitment, leadership development, and succession planning. There is interest in governance training, coach and referee clinics, CPR training, and broader organizational capacity-building supports. Groups noted the need for municipal coordination to support training opportunities.

Communication, Awareness, and Municipal Coordination

Participants identified gaps in communication between community groups and the municipality. Challenges include identifying appropriate staff contacts, limited awareness of available facilities and programs, and insufficient municipal promotion. There is interest in clearer communication channels, coordinated advertising, and stronger municipal visibility of recreation and cultural initiatives.

Inclusion, Accessibility, and Equity

Participants identified barriers related to affordability, transportation, physical accessibility, and social inclusion. Concerns include accessibility for elders and mobility devices, youth transportation limitations, affordability for teenagers, and experiences of bullying and racial discrimination. Smaller communities expressed concern about equitable distribution of municipal attention and funding.

Event Readiness and Tourism Capacity

Participants identified limitations related to venue capacity, parking, and hotel accommodations as constraints for hosting larger events and festivals. These factors were noted as affecting tourism potential, performer attraction, and funding eligibility tied to visitor metrics.

Collaboration and Regional Coordination

Participants identified opportunities to strengthen collaboration across community organizations, Indigenous communities, and regional partners. There is interest in shared facility use, coordinated service delivery, joint programming, and consolidated data sharing to support advocacy, planning, and funding applications. A regional approach to recreation and cultural development was identified as a potential direction.

Collaboration with Mount Allison University

Participants identified opportunities to strengthen collaboration with Mount Allison University, including shared facility use, partnership in cultural and community programming, increased student volunteer engagement, and coordination of services that support community capacity. There is potential to align university resources with community initiatives related to recreation, cultural programming, and health and wellness planning.







Tantramar
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