



ARBORG BIFROST-RIVERTON RECREATION MASTER PLAN



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1 Introduction

1.1 Project Overview

Leisure and recreation activities are an essential component of any community and are fundamental to quality of life. Such activities play an important role in strengthening a sense of community, promoting active and healthy lifestyles, attracting and integrating new residents, and in the overall quality of life for residents. Arborg and Bifrost-Riverton already have several well-used recreational facilities and amenities including the Arborg Bifrost Community Centre, the Arborg Curling Rink, the Aquatic Centre, the Arborg & District Arena, the Riverton Community Hall, the Riverton Curling Rink, the Riverton Memorial Area, as well as various parks and sports fields. In the Summer of 2020, Landmark Planning & Design was retained to prepare a comprehensive Recreation Master Plan.

Arborg and Bifrost-Riverton have relatively balanced, but ageing, populations with a variety of recreational needs. For example, youth recreation needs (age 0 to 14 years) are very different than the needs of seniors (age 65 and over, which is expected to form a larger percentage of the municipalities' populations over the next two decades).

This Recreation Master Plan will provide Arborg and Bifrost-Riverton with comprehensive strategies for meeting the current and future recreation needs of the community. Over the next decade, the Plan will help prioritize capital expenditures, outline an implementation framework, define future direction in terms of community recreation service delivery, and perhaps most importantly, assist the municipal Councils in decision making as it relates to recreation facilities, spaces, and programming

1.2 Benefits of Recreation

The National Framework for Recreation in Canada (2015) defines recreation as “the experience that results from freely chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community wellbeing.” The National Framework, as well as numerous studies on the topic, elaborate on many of the direct and indirect benefits of recreation for not only individuals and families, but for groups, communities and regions as a whole. A few of the key benefits of recreation can be described as follows:

- Recreation can enhance mental and physical wellbeing, including boosting self-esteem, reducing stress, and promoting positive health outcomes
- Recreation can enhance social wellbeing and help personal development and growth
- Recreation can help build strong families and communities
- Recreation can help people connect with nature
- Recreation can provide economic spin-off benefits and spur investment
- Recreation can boost overall quality of life and sense of community

1.3 Approach / Methodology

The project team proposed a comprehensive approach to the recreation master plan, consisting of several interrelated tasks. The following methodology outlines the Project Team's approach to delivering the fully integrated Recreation Master Plan:

Task 1: Project initiation with the Arborg Bifrost-Riverton Parks and Recreation Commission

Task 2: Background research, trends, and analysis

Task 3: Program and Facility Inventory and Map

Task 4: Stakeholder and community engagement – Recreation vision and philosophy

Task 5: Recreation needs assessment and prioritization

Task 6: Recreation Facility Current Condition Assessment

Task 7: Recreation delivery system and volunteer retention

Task 8: Recommendations, implementation, and funding

Task 9: Draft Recreation Master Plan

Task 10: Final Recreation Master Plan

2 Background

2.1 Geographic Context

2.1.1 Location

The Town of Arborg and the Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton are located in Manitoba's Interlake Region, north of the City of Winnipeg. The Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton is home to the communities of Riverton, Morweena, Okno, and Hnausa. While the Town of Arborg is bounded on all sides by the Municipality of Bifrost Riverton, the Municipality is bordered to the north by Reserve Lands, to the east by Lake Winnipeg, to the south by the RM of Gimli and RM of Armstrong, and to the west by the RM of Fisher. See **Figure 1** for a map of the community.

2.1.2 Transportation Network

The region can be accessed from the south by Provincial Trunk Highways 7 and 8, and from the west via Provincial Trunk Highway 68 and Provincial Road 325. Provincial Road 329 connects the communities of Morweena and Riverton.

2.1.3 Water and Land

Most of the land within the region features soil within classes 1 through 3, meaning the land has fair to high productivity for a range of field crops. The Icelandic River is located

on the west side of the south basin of Lake Winnipeg. The main land use within the region is agriculture.

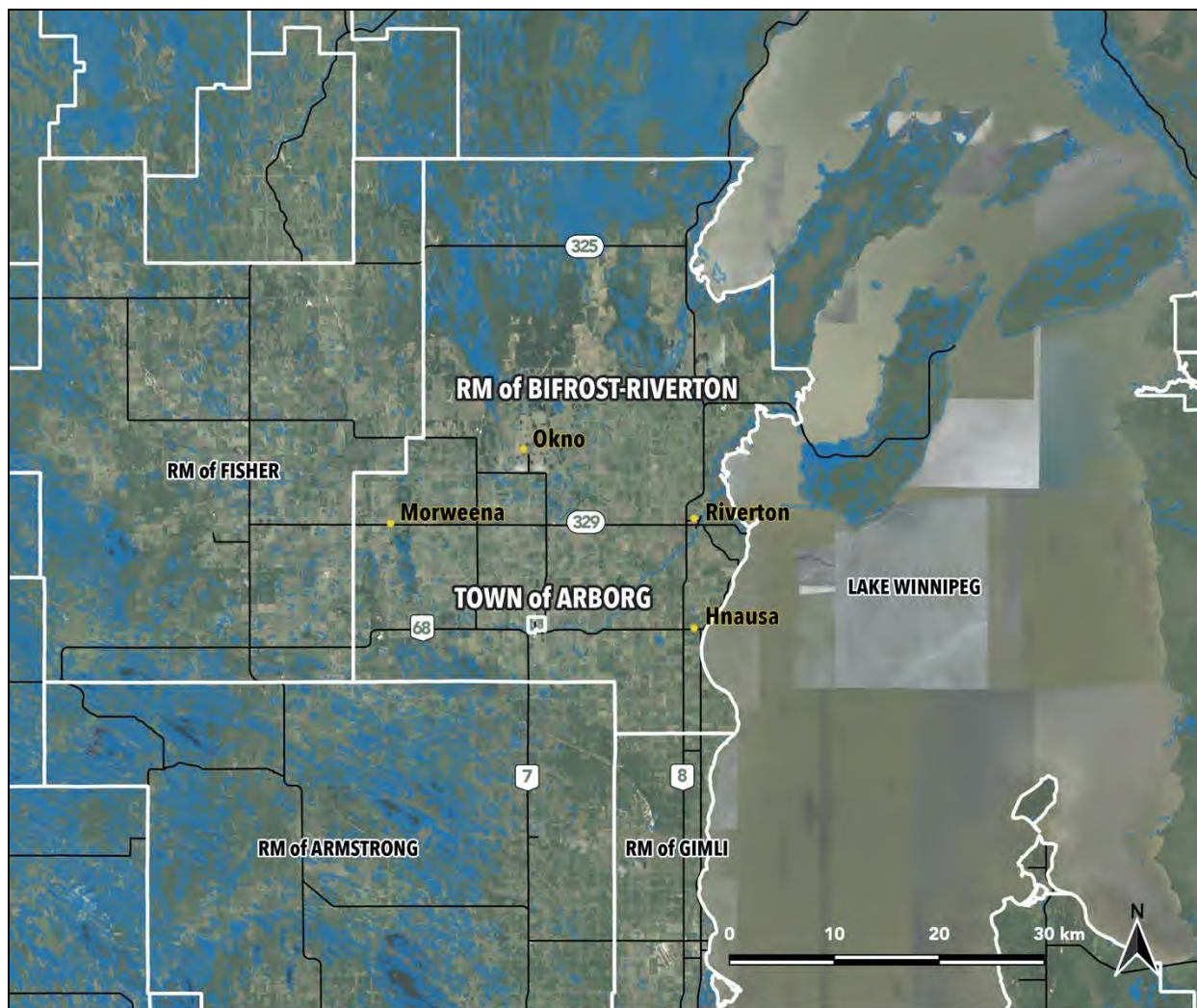


Figure 1. Area of Arborg and Bifrost-Riverton

2.2 Demographics

The demographic characteristics of a community are important in the understanding of current trends and the anticipation of future trends, as they relate to recreation preferences. Significant changes in population may serve to reshape or shift the provision, demand and delivery of recreation services within a community.

2.2.1 Total Population

In 2016, the total population for Arborg and Bifrost-Riverton was 4,610 people; of those, 1,232 people lived in the Town of Arborg and 3,378 people resided within the Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton (which was formed by the amalgamation of the RM of Bifrost and the Village of Riverton in 2015). The Town of Arborg's population grew by 6.5% between 2011 and 2016, while the Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton's population decreased by 4.0% over

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that same period. The Province's population as a whole grew by 5.8% over that period. The median age for the Town of Arborg was 41.0 years in 2016, while the median age for the Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton was 38.6 years; both were in the range of the Province of Manitoba as a whole, which had a median age of 38.3 years in 2016.

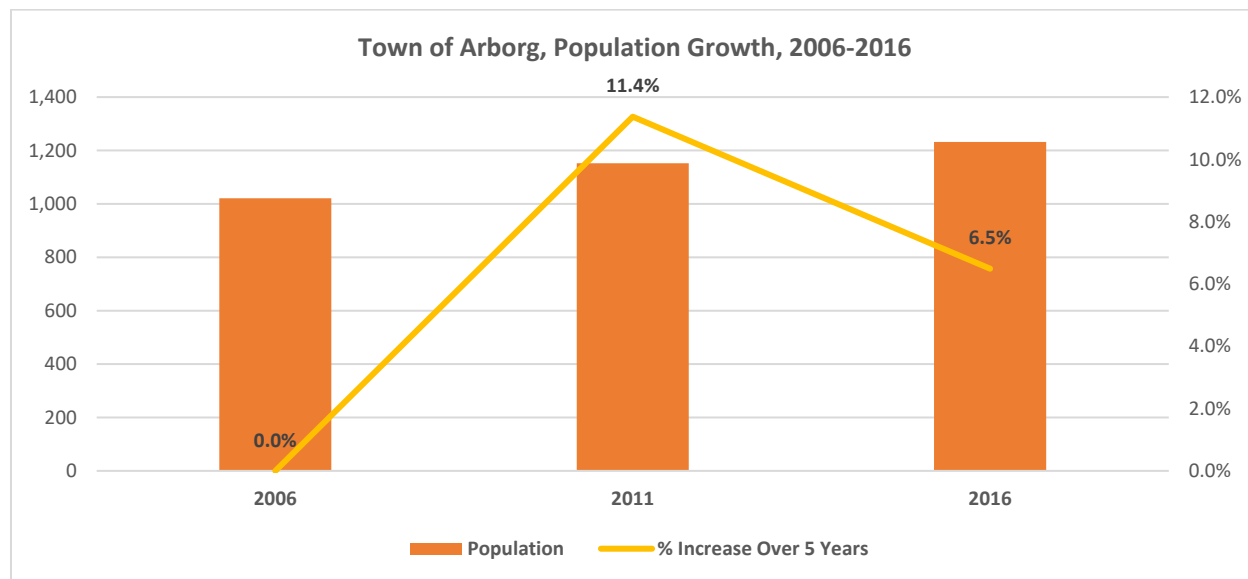


Figure 2. Population Growth, Town of Arborg, 2006-2016

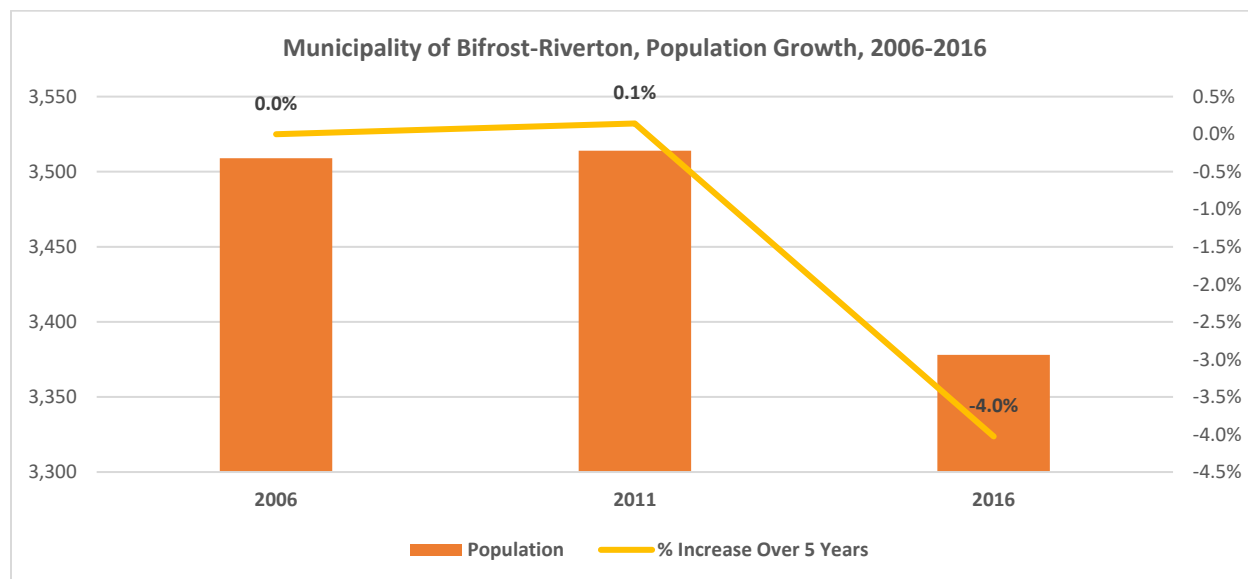


Figure 3. Population Growth, Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton, 2006-2016

2.2.2 Age Distribution

In 2016, the largest age cohort within the Town of Arborg was the group between the ages of 25 and 29 years old (95 people), while the least populated age group was that between 80 and 84 years old (50 people); the largest age cohort for the Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton was between 15 and 19 years old (290 people), and the least populated age group were those over the age of 85 (55 people) (see Figures 4 and 5 below). Compared to many smaller communities in Manitoba, the Town of Arborg has a very balanced population distribution, with broad representation in most age cohorts. The strong representation at the higher ends of the pyramid (those aged 70 years old and older – see Figure 6) is likely due to the robust offering of seniors housing types and amenities within the community, making it a likely community to retire in for those from the surrounding rural communities. The Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton's population pyramid (Figure 7) shows a much more common trend, with a large baby boomer contingent and a relatively large cohort of those under the age of 20; there is a noted gap of those within the 20- to 50-year-old cohort, which is when many community members may head off to larger centres for school and work, before potentially returning in mid-adulthood to raise a family.

Figure 4. Age Distribution, Town of Arborg, 2011 - 2016

Age	2011	2016	% Change
0-4 years	75	90	17%
5 to 9 years	75	80	6%
10 to 14 years	65	75	13%
15 to 19 years	70	55	-27%
20 to 24 years	60	65	8%
25 to 29 years	65	95	32%
30 to 34 years	65	70	7%
35 to 39 years	85	70	-21%
40 to 44 years	55	75	27%
45 to 49 years	55	55	0%
50 to 54 years	60	60	0%
55 to 59 years	65	65	0%
60 to 64 years	55	70	21%
65 to 69 years	60	65	8%

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70 to 74 years	50	60	17%
75 to 79 years	40	50	20%
80 to 84 years	50	50	0%
85 years+	90	85	-6%

Figure 5. Age Distribution, Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton, 2011 - 2016

Age	2011 (includes the former RM of Bifrost and Village of Riverton)	2016	% Change
0-4 years	260	245	-6%
5 to 9 years	260	255	-2%
10 to 14 years	315	260	-21%
15 to 19 years	310	290	-7%
20 to 24 years	215	195	-10%
25 to 29 years	195	160	-22%
30 to 34 years	160	175	9%
35 to 39 years	160	160	0%
40 to 44 years	210	175	-20%
45 to 49 years	245	190	-29%
50 to 54 years	265	255	-4%
55 to 59 years	235	245	4%
60 to 64 years	195	225	13%
65 to 69 years	160	185	14%
70 to 74 years	120	145	17%
75 to 79 years	90	85	-6%
80 to 84 years	55	65	15%
85 years+	40	55	27%

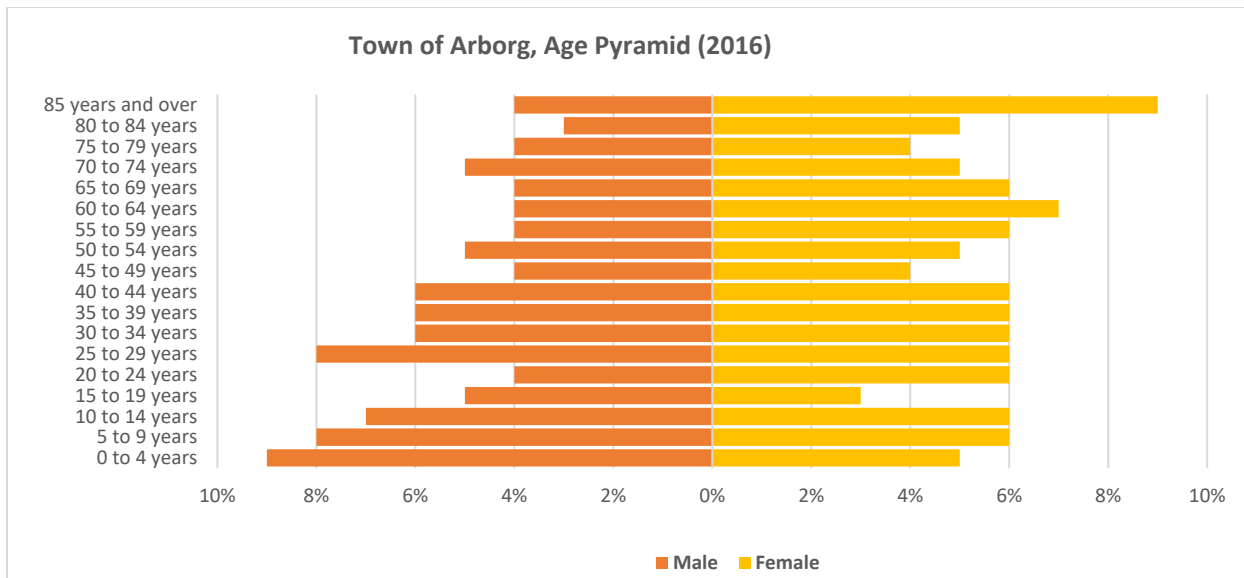


Figure 6. Age Pyramid, Town of Arborg, 2016

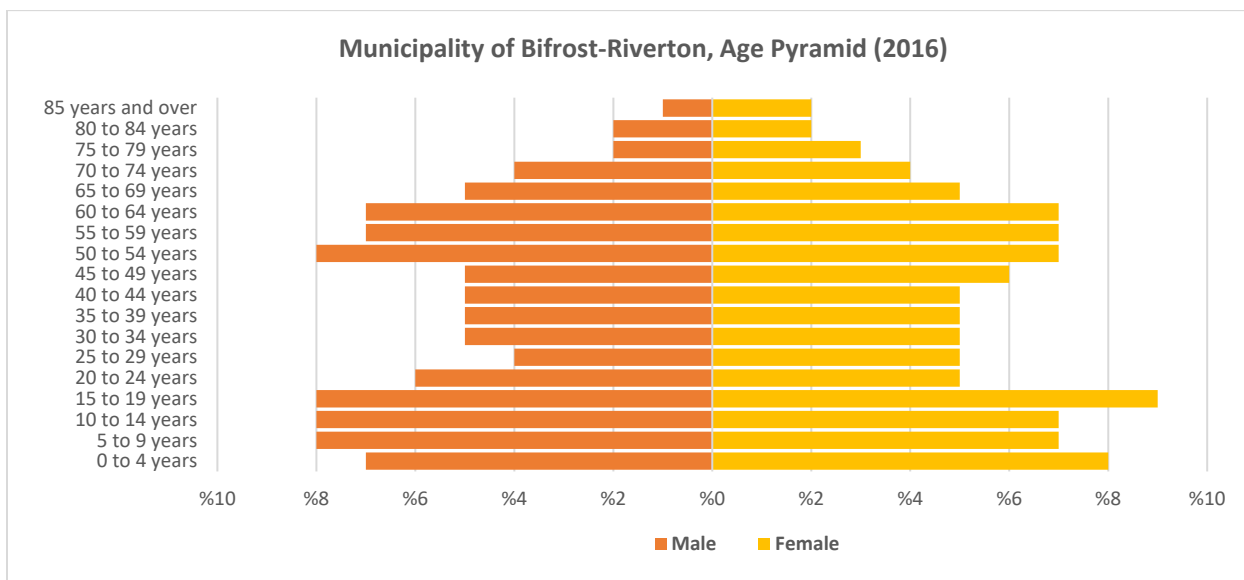


Figure 7. Age Pyramid, Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton, 2016

3 Existing Policy Context:

A review of existing policy, regulatory, planning and other documents was undertaken in order to provide a foundation for understanding the existing recreation framework in Arborg and Bifrost-Riverton. An overview of the existing policy context is outlined below.

3.1 Development Plan

The Eastern Interlake Planning District Development Plan (2010) guides growth and development within the RM of Gimli, Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton, Town of Arborg, and Town of Winnipeg Beach. The Development Plan establishes objectives and policies for land use planning and development activities within the district, including those relating specifically to recreation.

The Development Plan designates the Town of Arborg and the community of Riverton as Urban Centres. The objectives for Urban Centres address issues such as aging infrastructure and its associated costs, plus the recognition that open space and parks contribute to the quality of life for residents. Recreation focussed objectives within the Plan include: “To ensure the availability of an adequate supply of land to meet the present and future requirements of the various urban land uses” (Section 4.3 (4)) and “to ensure that open spaces are developed to meet recreational needs and to enhance the environmental livability and attractiveness of the communities” (Section 4.3 (5)).

General policies for Urban Centres within the Plan note the following in terms of development relevant to recreation in Parks, Institutions, and Open Space Areas: Planning and development of open space and parks shall respect the needs of all (Section 4.4.5(a)); use and protection of shore lands and riverbanks shall be encouraged (Section 4.4.5(b)); and “areas in concept plans shall be designated to accommodate present and future land requirements for schools, health care facilities, and community recreation facilities” (Section 4.4.5(c)).

Specific Parks, Institutions, and Open Space Areas policies applicable to the areas of Arborg and Bifrost-Riverton include (Sections 4.5.1 and 4.5.2):

- New areas in the south-east quadrant have been established to acknowledge the site of the Heritage Village Museum and the nearby development of new church facilities.
- The shore land adjacent to the Icelandic River shall be protected in accordance with the policies of this Plan and shore lands may be acquired and designated as open space where deemed desirable and economically feasible.

3.2 Zoning By-laws

Within the three independent Zoning By-laws within the study area, recreational uses fall under the following categories:

- Open Space/Recreational Zones (OR) for the Town of Arborg Zoning By-law No. 6-2011;
- Open Space/Recreational Zones (OR) within the RM of Bifrost Zoning By-law No. 4-2011; and,
- Parks and Recreation District (PR) within the Village of Riverton Zoning By-law No. 76/80.

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For the Town of Arborg Zoning By-law and the RM of Bifrost Zoning By-law, the OR Zone is intended to provide sufficient land to accommodate recreational and open space uses. Examples of permitted uses include: Athletic, sports and recreation areas; golf courses; parks and playgrounds; recreational facilities; and religious facilities. Examples of conditional uses include: Campgrounds; marinas; and restaurants.

Within the Riverton Zoning By-law, permitted uses may include: Golf courses; schools; publicly owned or approved parks; playgrounds and recreation areas; skating, curling and hockey rinks; and public reserves. Conditional uses may include but not limited to: Exhibition and fair grounds; stadiums; and community centres and clubs. Site area and width requirements within the Parks and Recreation District are specific to uses and the maximum building height is 3 storeys or 45ft., whichever is the lesser (Section 3.6.3.1).

3.3 Provincial Policy and Regulation

3.3.1 Provincial Planning Regulation

The Provincial Planning Regulation (PPR) outlines the Province of Manitoba's interest in the sustainable development of land, resources and infrastructure via direction in land use policy.

With respect to recreational development in Arborg and Bifrost-Riverton, Policy Area 4: Renewable Resources, Heritage & Recreation describes capturing the economic, environmental and social benefits and values linked to sound land use planning. Section 4.3 lists the policies in relation to compatible recreational use with goals of "managing the recreational use of resources and ensuring existing and future recreational use is appropriately planned and accessible to the public". These include the following considerations concerning the planning of outdoor recreational uses (Section 4.3.1): the suitability of the natural resources for outdoor recreational use, which is to be determined with reference to the Canada Land Inventory recreational capability classification of the natural resource, and the carrying capacity of the natural resource on which the outdoor recreational use will rely; the amount of land needed to accommodate the particular outdoor recreational use; and measures that are required to be taken in order to minimize and mitigate any negative impacts on the natural environment, which may include restricting the location of buildings and limiting the density of development, the proximity of the development to shorelines and the clearing of land.

In Section 2.2 Strong Urban Centres under Policy Area 2: Settlement Areas, the PPR outlines policies "to maximize existing public investments, the downtown or central business district of an Urban Centre must be protected and enhanced by" encouraging large-scale indoor recreational facilities serving the whole area, planning active transportation linkages, encouraging the preservation of heritage resources, and promoting the rehabilitation and re-use of existing buildings as well as the multiple use of buildings.

3.3.2 Community Use of Schools Legislation

In 2012, the Public Schools Amendment Act (Community Use of Schools) amended the Public Schools Act to provide a more formalized framework for communities' use of school facilities. The amendment requires each school board to develop a policy of the public's use of school facilities (indoor and outdoor) when the facilities are not being used by students. Overall, the legislation aims to maximize the use of school and community facilities to support the educational, recreational, social and cultural programming that can be offered during and outside school hours to help youth and community members to gain access to local facilities in their pursuit of physically active and healthy lifestyles. "The province strongly encourages and values partnerships between schools/school divisions, municipalities and recreation commissions with members of the community to promote wide and optimal use of facilities". Both the Arborg Bifrost Parks and Recreation Commission and the Riverton-Bifrost Parks and Recreation Commission have joint use agreements with the Evergreen School Division, which will be outlined further in Section 3.5.

3.3.3 Manitoba's Policy for Recreation Opportunities

Manitoba's Policy for Recreation Opportunities defines recreation as "all activities chosen by a person or group to make leisure time more interesting, more enjoyable and more satisfying". It notes the many benefits of recreation, not only for participants (like happiness, physical health, and mental health), but for society as a whole (like the social/economic benefits). The policy sets out four key principles to guide the Province as they work with Manitobans to provide recreation opportunities:

- Planning for community choices: Acknowledges the need to encourage local and volunteer leadership in the provision of broad recreational opportunities for residents, and encourages local partnerships of various groups.
- Developing the role of local governments: Notes that local governments will play the primary role in supporting recreation opportunities.
- Reducing barriers to recreation opportunities: Acknowledges that barriers to participation need to be identified and addressed.
- Learning and sharing knowledge about recreation: Promotes knowledge sharing, communication, and mutual learning for those involved in recreation.

A companion document outlines a series of guiding principles for recreation in Manitoba:

- Benefits of Recreation
- Inclusion and Accessibility
- Individual and Community Choice
- The Volunteer
- Working Together
- Maximizing Investment
- Recreation Leadership

Based on the results of the stakeholder engagement program led by the Province, feedback in terms of policy direction was organized into four key priority areas:

- **Leadership and Workforce Development:** promotion of recreation as an important service to public/communities; supporting professionals and volunteers with training, resources, consultation.
- **Maximizing Resources:** coordinating provincial programs/services, safe and efficient operation of facilities, developing best practice guidelines for program delivery and facility operation
- **Access and Affordability:** leisure education for individuals, physical literacy for individuals, targeted/specialized programming
- **Funding:** facilities (funding for planning, construction, maintenance), programs, fee subsidies, leadership

3.4 Local Recreation Commission By-laws

3.4.1 Town of Arborg By-Law No. 6-2003

By-law 6-2003 replaces By-law 14-91, which itself established the Arborg Bifrost Parks and Recreation Commission (ABPRC); the by-law takes its authority from provisions in *The Municipal Act*. The by-law outlines at a high-level the make-up of the Commission's membership, the length of their terms, and the Commission's responsibilities (electing of a chairperson, adopting rules and regulations, meeting monthly, and engaging a recreation director, among others). The by-law also notes that the commission may equip, supervise, program and maintain various recreation facilities and amenities owned (or controlled) by the Town of Arborg and the former RM of Bifrost. The Commission may prescribe fees for use of these facilities, and shall encourage and initiate various forms of recreation within the community (including social, cultural and artistic endeavours).

The Policy Manual for the Arborg Bifrost Parks and Recreation Commission is described in detail in Section 6.

3.4.2 By-law 2-2003 (former RM of Bifrost and former Village of Riverton)

Two identical by-laws (2-2003) were adopted in 2003 by the former RM of Bifrost and former Village of Riverton. The by-laws themselves amend the establishing by-laws of the Riverton-Bifrost Parks and Recreation Commission, which were originally adopted in 1991 (By-law 7-91 in Bifrost; By-law 2-91 in Riverton). The by-law amends the make-up of the board membership. The Policy Manual for the Riverton Bifrost Parks and Recreation Commission is described in detail in Section 6.

3.5 Joint Use Agreements

Over the past 15 years or so, the Province of Manitoba has actively encouraged Municipalities and School Divisions to enter into joint use agreements for recreation facilities and programs. Joint use agreements are excellent tools to maximize utilization of existing facilities to support educational, recreational, social, cultural and other programming through partnership. These are particularly important in smaller communities, where there may only be one gym (school gymnasium), one set of baseball diamonds (school or municipal) and one rink (municipal). By setting out terms, conditions,

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and expectations through an agreement, user groups and residents can enjoy the facilities in their communities regardless of who the actual owner of said facility is.

Both municipalities have adopted Joint Use Agreements with the Evergreen School Division. The Joint Use Agreements lay out the terms and conditions of use for Evergreen School Division Schools' use of municipal facilities, and vice versa.

The Evergreen School Division follows Administrative Procedure 4.20 regarding the Use of School Facilities. The document takes direction from the Community Use of Schools legislation, as well as its accompanying guides. The Administrative Procedure includes conditions of use, as well as permit templates to be completed by those seeking to use school facilities. The procedure notes that the Principal of each school is to ensure that a calendar of school use by permit holders, and share with information with the school custodian, manager of operations, and any teaching staff that might be impacted (e.g. physical education teachers). The procedure also outlines the priority in which use of schools will be granted, including 1) School / School Division users, 2) Community non-profit programs of an educational nature, 3) Community Groups (e.g. sports clubs, church services, 4H clubs, etc.), and 4) Groups with a Commercial / Political purpose. First and Second priority groups are not charged user fees for facility use, and can potentially bump third and fourth priority groups with appropriate notice (one month); other groups are charged \$20 / hour (or any additional costs that might be tied to the permit). The Procedure also outlines who may access the school, as well as supervision and security protocols. A list of conditions for use is appended to the document, and outlines liability insurance requirements and includes an indemnity clause. The Procedure is generally consistent with those seen around the Province.

Unfortunately, the joint use agreements are not without their challenges. For example, the Arborg High School has a weight room attached to its gymnasium. However, the access is limited to community members for various reasons, including the need for a certified individual to supervise, limited hours, and the need for a custodian to be on site (school cleaning staff are generally only in until 9 PM and not on weekends).

3.6 Other Studies

3.6.1 Age-Friendly Riverton Community Consultation Summary

In 2010, community consultations were held in Riverton as part of the Age-Friendly Manitoba initiative, which was aimed at assisting communities prioritizing issues that would help make them more age friendly. Several of the key points relate directly to recreation. Many participants noted the benefits of having an attractive river running through town, being in proximity to Lake Winnipeg, and the wide variety of outdoor activities in the vicinity (including fishing, boating, soccer, and baseball). In terms of areas for improvement, many mentioned the need to connect and repair sidewalks through town, make attractive seating areas around town (e.g. adding more benches or meeting places along paths/sidewalks), and the need for pedestrian crosswalks along the Main Street. Some also called for including more activities connecting seniors with youth (e.g.

shared activities that offer opportunities for mentorship and learning) and exercise programs from seniors. Some mentioned the need to increase volunteer recognition.

3.6.2 Age-Friendly Arborg and RM of Bifrost Community Consultation Summary

In 2010, community consultations were also held in Arborg as part of the Age-Friendly Manitoba initiative, which was aimed at assisting communities prioritizing issues that would help make them more age friendly. In terms of outdoor spaces and accessibility, many noted the need to improve outdoor spaces (particularly pathways) by increasing lighting, including more benches, and adding more sidewalks. Some wanted to see more parks and greenspace. In terms of social opportunities, many noted they would like to see increased opportunities for seniors and youth to interact, while encouraging the community to provide more opportunities for exercise and social events. It was also noted that there's a need to better advertise events to ensure that seniors are aware of all opportunities for involvement.

3.6.3 Arborg Bifrost-Riverton Sustainable Community Action Plan

In 2017, the Arborg-Bifrost Community Development Corporation, the Town of Arborg, and the Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton retained WSP to prepare a Sustainable Community Action Plan. The Plan established a shared vision for the municipal partners, with a goal of strengthening the region in terms of economics and sustainability. Although the Plan's focus is not specific to recreation, the topic is touched on many times as a tool to attract tourism, retain residents, and enhance the social well-being of the communities. Through the Plan's community engagement process, recreation was often noted as a key strength and opportunity in the region. Moreover, the Plan's accompanying "Community Assets Inventory" provides an overview of the region's key facilities, amenities, and services as it relates to recreation.

4 Trends in Rural Recreation

To help inform the types of facilities, programs, activities, and recreational opportunities might be most appropriate for Arborg and Bifrost-Riverton, it is important to understand the major trends in rural recreation in the Interlake, southern Manitoba, and across the prairies. This section provides an overview of some of the latest literature and documentation on the state of rural recreation today.

4.1 Trends across the Prairies

4.1.1 Major Themes

There are several overarching themes in terms of rural recreation today. First, and perhaps most importantly, **partnerships** are key. That includes partnerships between volunteers, community organizations, school boards, local businesses, governments and recreation departments. Partnerships are crucial to maximizing resources, expertise, and knowledge. Examples of partnerships could range from a business sponsoring a tournament, a school lending their gym to a community dance program, and a tri-partite

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funding agreement (matching fundraising dollars) to build a new sport facility. Effective partnerships can:

- Increase access to resources, both financial and human.
- Reduce duplication of services offered.
- Serve more people.
- Achieve better financial results.
- Allow for valuable facilities in rural areas.

Second, there is a trend towards rural recreation providing **opportunities for tourism and economic development**. A prime local example is the Noventis Aquatic Centre, which attracts visitors from outside of Arborg during the summer months, who then might also spend money at local businesses and restaurants. It's been estimated that over 75% of the 10,000 annual visitors to the centre are from outside of Arborg and the surrounding area.

Third, there is a major push towards **developing facilities that meet recreational needs**, rather than building a facility and hoping to fill it with activities. This requires extensive consultation with local residents to gain a clear understanding of the types of activities and programs they frequent (or would like to see). If the majority of residents prefer cycling and walking to basketball, it is much more effective to develop a network of trails, rather than a gym that may sit empty for most of the day.

4.1.2 Recreation Directors and Recreation Commissions

Recreation Directors (or Coordinators) develop, coordinate, organize, and promote recreational opportunities within a Municipality (or several municipalities). They are responsible for seeking out partnerships and sponsorships, while lobbying other levels of government for funding/grants. They also serve as the key contact for program, activity and facility information. Finally, they are responsible for keeping information accessible and up to date.

Recreation directors have become much more important figures lately, especially in rural municipalities where recreation opportunities known at the local level may not be coordinated (or known) in a town or village nearby. Moreover, the Province Manitoba has been encouraging municipalities to hire recreation directors (or partner with nearby municipalities to hire one) to address the issues identified above.

Both Arborg and Bifrost-Riverton have recreation directors, which immediately puts the communities at an advantage from a recreation perspective.

Through the Recreation Opportunities - Partners in Leisure program, the Province actively encouraged smaller municipalities to develop recreation commissions. The intent of the program was to encourage partnerships between municipalities and school divisions, in order to share resources and facilities for more efficiency, and make it feasible to hire a full-time recreation director.

4.1.3 Facilities

Over the past decade or so, five major trends in regards to facilities (some of which are interrelated): Aging facilities, multi-purpose facilities, an emphasis on minimizing operating/maintenance costs, a phased approach to building, and evolving functionality.

The majority of rural recreational facilities were constructed in the 1960s and 1970s, with many approaching the end of their useful life. Many require expensive upgrades (while maintenance costs are soaring) or outright replacement. This trend is especially apparent in many of Manitoba's rural communities, where arenas, community halls, and curling clubs are the most common facilities. Many municipalities are thus faced with a dilemma: Invest in existing facilities to extend their lives for the short term, or make the major decision to replace/consolidate facilities with something brand new. This is a theme that will be explored throughout this study.

For municipalities that do decide on replacement, the major trend is towards multi-use or multi-purpose facilities (rather than stand-alone, single purpose facilities that were common in the 20th Century). These expensive facilities tend to be located on the outskirts of towns (where cheaper land and more space are available). They feature several recreational uses in one, including rinks, pools, gyms, courts, multi-purpose rooms, office space, and concessions (or any combination of these). The centralization and avoidance of duplication tend to make them more efficient to operate in terms of both staff and energy costs. They also create synergies and economies of scale (due to increased use). Finally, they generally tend to be more flexible in their programming (e.g. the multi-purpose room could be used for yoga, dance class, or musical theatre). Many jurisdictions in Manitoba have followed this formula recently, including Steinbach's Multiplex and Altona's Millennium Exhibition Centre. It should be noted that there is a need to balance these centralized, multiplex facilities with local (and perhaps smaller scale) recreation opportunities as well. Costs, both capital and ongoing operation/maintenance, have been a major impediment to the wide-spread implementation of these types of facilities. However, it is also important to provide some local recreation opportunities (play areas, outdoor basketball courts, etc.). Local facilities provide valuable recreation opportunities for those who do not have access to transportation. Coming to terms with a balance between those two approaches is a challenge in a rural region with several smaller settlement areas.

As mentioned, a major driver towards these multi-plex facilities is to lower the ongoing maintenance and operating costs. Stand-alone facilities inevitably use more energy (for heating, cooling, and lighting) and water. They also require more staff, due to their separate locations. There is also a major push to increase the energy efficiency (and thus lower the operating costs) of recreation facilities, as outlined in Manitoba Hydro's "Energy Efficiency Guide for Municipal Recreation Facilities". An example of a recreation trend driven primarily by lowering operating costs is the proliferation of splash pads over wading pools. Whereas wading pools require lifeguards, purchases of chemicals, and daily maintenance (replacing the water each day), splash pads require no supervision, very

little maintenance, and are cheaper to install. Upgrading existing facilities to utilize LED lighting and energy efficient heating/cooling systems are another example of this trend in action.

The fourth major trend in facilities is the phased approach to building. Rather than building an expensive facility upfront, a municipality may start small (usually with the most important aspect of the complex, e.g. a rink or a gym). As each subsequent phase becomes successful (or self-sustaining) and the need for expansion is proven, planning for the next phase begins. Many major recreation facilities in the surrounding area have taken that approach, including Steinbach's Multi-plex, Niverville's Hespeler Park and Altona's Millennium Exhibition Centre.

The final major trend in facilities has been the evolving functions and flexibility in use of existing facilities, as preferences and trends change. One widespread example is the evolving use of libraries – whereas thirty years ago, a library was a space to borrow books, read and study, today they have become technology hubs, meetings spaces, and training centres in many communities. A local example would include the use of Arborg's Curling Club as a pickle ball court during the summer months.

4.1.4 Age Related Trends

There are also trends in participation, in terms of activities and programs for youth, adults and seniors. The overall trend is that participation in organized sports has declined, giving way to **more individual and self-directed activities**. This tends to be more pronounced in rural areas, where individual outdoor activities are readily accessible, whereas access to team sports or programs may not be.

For youth, participation in organized sports has declined over the past two to three decades. Instead, they are participating in more informal and sedentary activities, including video games, social networking, skateboarding and “hanging out”. In rural areas, activities like ATVing, snowmobiling, fishing and hunting are particularly popular.

For adults, the results are more mixed. Some are participating in sports (e.g. beer leagues, old-timers hockey, etc.). However, most are participating in more individual types of activities (walking, hiking, working out, cycling, etc.) that meet the needs of those with busy schedules. In rural areas, cross country skiing, hunting and fishing, snowmobiling and ATVing are popular as well. Seniors (a large and growing demographic) are participating in activities like golf, curling, and walking in greater numbers as well. Pickleball has become extremely popular with seniors in the past decade, as evidenced in both Arborg and Bifrost-Riverton.

4.1.4.1 Youth Participation

Canadian youth are steadily decreasing their physical activity and increasing their participation in sedentary recreational activities. The decreased physical activity raises concerns for child obesity. National initiatives such as ParticipAction attempt to increase activity and make it a regular part of children's daily routine. As of early 2021, there is a growing concern that children may not be receiving the level of activity they need to maintain good health, particularly as gym classes are restructured and many

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recreational activities have been cancelled due to efforts to combat the spread of COVID-19.

Youth under the age of 17 tend to participate in traditional sport activities such as soccer, hockey, volleyball and basketball, whereas youth aged 18 to 24 are involved in a larger variety of activities. Although youth are still participating in a variety of physical activities, the rate of participation has decreased. Social media and video games have become a mainstay in youth culture – and while these activities may be sedentary, they are very social activities as well. Whereas in the past, youth would need to get together or meet up in order to enjoy the company of friends, many now do this from the comfort of their own homes via messaging apps, interactive video games, and video-conferencing software like Zoom, Teams, or FaceTime.

4.1.4.2 Adult Participation

Like the younger generations, many adults are also not participating in regular physical activity. Adults aged 25 to 44 are participating in a greater number of sports, with hockey being the most popular, followed by baseball/softball and soccer. These sports are traditionally accommodated through existing facilities and established leagues. Baby boomers are maintaining participation in the traditional activities of hockey and baseball but are also beginning to participate in other more individual sports such as golf. Many adults have indicated that busy lifestyles, particularly connected to their work, are the primary reason for inactivity. The results of the community survey will explore this theme further.

Desire for more unstructured or spontaneous recreation opportunities (e.g. ones with open time slots, and no need to register) has grown as well, and this is no exception in the communities of Arborg and Bifrost-Riverton. Many adults have expressed a desire for opportunities for informal pick-up games and activities with minimal commitment. Fitness classes and yoga have increased in popularity, while the proliferation of fitness centres / gyms has expanded over the past two decades – the ability to work-out (whether using free-weights, machines, or cardio equipment) further reinforces the notion that adults prefer to exercise on their own schedules.

4.1.4.3 Senior Participation

Older Canadians identify having more time to participate in leisure activities. They also have higher active participation rates than they did in the past. An increasing senior population within Canada increases the demands for adequate recreation programs in all communities. In Manitoba, the proportion of the population over the age of 65 was 15.6% of Manitobans in 2016; that percentage is expected to rise significantly over the next decade as the Baby Boomers age. As evidenced in the Age Friendly Manitoba studies in both Arborg and Bifrost-Riverton, seniors are looking for opportunities to connect with youth, walk around safely within their communities (through the addition of sidewalks, crosswalks, better lighting, and seating), and access the river.

The number of activities participated in by seniors has decreased significantly from those of the younger age groups. Although statistics suggest that seniors tend to lead more

active lifestyles, the types of activities are changing. There is an increase in individual activities such as golf, walking, or other related activities. As seniors begin to reach their mid-70's, physical activity declines significantly. This is often a result of the onset of some disability or limitation, including in some bases, the loss of a driver's license.

4.1.5 Arts and Cultural Trends

Arts and cultural participation have increased over the past few decades and awareness of the benefits of non-athletic recreational activities for health and well-being is being promoted by recreational service providers. Recent research identified the following trends for arts and cultural participation:

- More Canadians read a book than go to a movie.
- Art galleries are increasingly popular with Canadians.
- Classical music audiences increased slightly.
- Most other cultural and heritage activities, including the performing arts, attract roughly the same percentage of Canadians in 2005 as in 1992.

4.1.6 Funding Trends

In terms of funding trends, municipalities across the country are facing budget crunches. While municipalities are the closest level of government to residents, they have fewer revenue generation tools available to them (namely property taxes, levies, user fees, and grants) than higher orders of government. Maintenance and operating costs increase as facilities and infrastructure ages, while capital replacement costs continue to rise year-over-year. Municipalities are facing increased pressure to focus on core services (water, wastewater, roads, solid waste, etc.), which means that recreation funding has remained stagnant (or in some cases, cut). To exacerbate the issue, life-cycle management has not been a top priority – capital repairs have not been budgeted for, reserve funds have been depleted, and asset management programs have not been prioritized.

As a result of this trend, creative funding and financing models have become more prevalent, as communities look for innovative ways to fund recreational programs and maintain ageing facilities. While local property taxes and recreation levies are still important sources of funding for recreation infrastructure and programming (depending on the deliver model), many other methods are used to varying degrees. Recent trends include recreation authorities/districts/commissions partnering with various non-profit organizations (e.g. Kinsmen, Elks, Winnipeg Foundation, etc.) to fund opportunities, while others seek out partnerships and sponsorships from businesses. Public Private Partnerships (P3s) have also become a more common method of financing infrastructure and facilities, although this is generally reserved for larger facilities like arenas in major centres). Many recreation districts will also hire part-time grant writers, to help them apply for the various provincial, federal, and non-profit organization funding pots available for recreation, arts, cultural, and social programming. Fundraising has always been a key component to recreation funding, often initiated at the grassroots level – leveraging local fundraising dollars is often an important early step in receiving matching corporate or government funding for a project. Finally, user fees have become an increasingly important method of funding programming, particularly in municipalities that look to

provide recreation on a cost-recovery basis. While user fees can help cash-strapped municipalities provide a broader range of activities, it's important to consider equity and attainability and balance cost-recovery with participation.

4.1.7 Declining Volunteerism

According to Statistics Canada, almost 12.7 million Canadians (or 41% of Canadians aged 15 and older) volunteered for charities, non-profits, and community organizations in 2018 (while many more volunteered informally). These volunteers devoted approximately 1.7 billion hours to volunteering, an equivalent of roughly 860,000 full-time year-round jobs. The number of hours volunteered increased steadily with age, with the cohort born before 1945 volunteering the most (followed by the Baby Boomers).

Research shows that only a small minority of the total volunteers account for the bulk of volunteer hours. This is a cause for concern for community recreation programs that rely on volunteers. Studies suggest that the reason Canadians volunteer less is due to lack of time. Busier schedules and fast-paced careers reduce the long-term commitment of volunteers. This has a significant impact on opportunities available to communities like Arborg and Bifrost-Riverton, where almost all of the recreation programs and services are provided by volunteers. The difficulty with volunteer recruitment and retention has been well-documented as well, and will be addressed later in this Plan.

4.1.8 Environmental Considerations

While some environmental considerations were noted in the facilities section, it is important to highlight the recent emphasis on combatting climate change and promoting sustainability (while recognizing that many green design features can also have long term economic benefits through decreased operating maintenance and operating costs). One key component of green design includes retrofitting municipal recreation facilities to be more energy efficient. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) helps fund feasibility studies for retrofitting municipal facilities in order to help manage ongoing operating costs through increased sustainability. Some of the retrofits seen in other municipalities' facilities include upgrading insulation/windows, upgrading HVAC systems, and on-site renewable energy generation (e.g. solar panels or geothermal). All of these strategies have environmental benefits. Adaptive re-use of existing spaces is another way to promote sustainability, rather than demolishing a facility and starting from scratch.

4.1.9 Health and Wellness Focus

While not necessarily a recent trend, there has been a growing consensus on the importance of recreation as part of a wholistic approach to health, mental-health, and well-being. Particularly in youth, research has shown that recreation of many forms can lead to better educational outcomes and the development of key skills that are important in becoming a well-rounded member of the community (including empathy, patience, confidence, leadership, creativity, resilience and problem-solving). Similar to aforementioned trend towards more individual activities, many note the benefits to health and wellness related to activities such as yoga, cycling, walking, and other forms

of fitness. Active communities see better health outcomes, particularly in terms of helping to reduce diseases such as diabetes and heart disease.

4.1.10 Technology

Over the past two decades, technology is playing an increasing role in the provision of recreation. This has taken many forms, including the following:

- The use of technology in advertising and communications, including sharing events through social media, distributing leisure guides via email lists, and coordinating scheduling/bookings through online calendars
- The use of smart phones/smart watches to track steps, heart rate, and daily activities, as well as options to share this information with friends (which can help act as a motivation for activity)
- The use of online registration and payment of fees for various activities, including team sports and fitness classes
- The use of key fobs to allow for access to certain facilities by residents without the need for a supervisor or on-site staff person (although this depends on liability and insurance requirements, which differ by community and facility)

4.1.11 Municipal Service Standards

Canadian municipalities are primarily responsible for providing front line recreation services to the citizens within their communities. As municipal governments are closest to their constituents, they have the ability to respond more quickly and effectively to community needs as it relates to recreation. However, municipal government can also be the most constrained, in terms of funding and budget flexibility.

As noted, most recreation facilities in rural Manitoba were constructed in the 1960s and 1970s and are in need of significant upgrade or replacement. Municipalities must assess community need and rationale for replacement when considering replacement of facilities. Recreational facilities can be assessed based on population thresholds, with presumably larger municipalities needing more recreational facilities.

The western provinces (including Manitoba) have not established a standard for facility development. Many local recreation professionals have not found such a tool useful due to the diversity of communities. The drawback of the service standard approach is that although it can help gauge the needs of the community in the context of similar-sized communities, it is based solely on total population and does not account for cohort distinctions, costs, usage, or, community-specific issues, cultural preferences, size, and character.

Many Canadians report that infrastructure requirements for physical activity and sport are absent or sparse within their community, but municipalities report the cost of maintaining facilities are too high and due to the age of existing facilities, most require significant repair and maintenance. As a result of the varying sizes and dispersal of communities within Canada, it is difficult to establish standards that will satisfy all. There is a push within all levels of government for policies that encourage cooperation among

municipalities, community leaders and organizations within the community in order to bridge the gap between needs of the community and existing infrastructure.

The use of standards for facility provision based solely on the size of population is no longer as common as it once was in municipalities across Canada. Instead, municipalities are relying on recreation master planning processes such as this one, taking into account population, future growth, existing facilities, traditional patterns of use in the community, public consultation and funding opportunities from higher levels of government. It is important to consider more than just population, particularly in the case of sports facilities (such as arenas, soccer fields, gymnasiums etc.) because the use of these facilities is often driven by sport interest rather than general community need or total population.

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) is working to develop policies that encourage long term national funding for recreation infrastructure in distressed and rural areas, where municipalities do not have the means for developing and maintaining their own adequate infrastructure. This would ensure that all communities have access to adequate recreation opportunities, regardless of population size or location.

5 Recreation Inventory

A comprehensive inventory of existing recreation facilities, parks, trails, and open spaces was developed to help the Project Team understand the current recreation assets in the Arborg and Bifrost-Riverton area. The information served as a baseline from which the Project Team could build recommendations about future needs and priorities. The inventory is also mapped, for ease of reference.

5.1 Facilities Inventory and Map

Arborg and Bifrost-Riverton are both blessed with a strong inventory of recreation facilities, amenities, assets, and infrastructure despite their relatively small populations. Some of the key facilities include the Arborg & District Arena, the Arborg Curling Club, The Riverton Curling Rink, Riverton Memorial Arena, the Noventis Aquatic Centre, as well as several places of worship. In addition, many residents enjoy leisure and recreational activities at the two Community Halls (in Riverton and Arborg), school facilities (including gyms, outdoor fields, and playgrounds), Campgrounds, multi-seasonal recreational trails, libraries, and nearby provincial parks and beaches. The following section includes a high-level inventory of key facilities, as well as accompanying maps. A detailed inventory spreadsheet (and corresponding high resolution maps) are included in **Appendix A**.

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Figure 8. Facilities Overview (Arborg and Bifrost-Riverton)

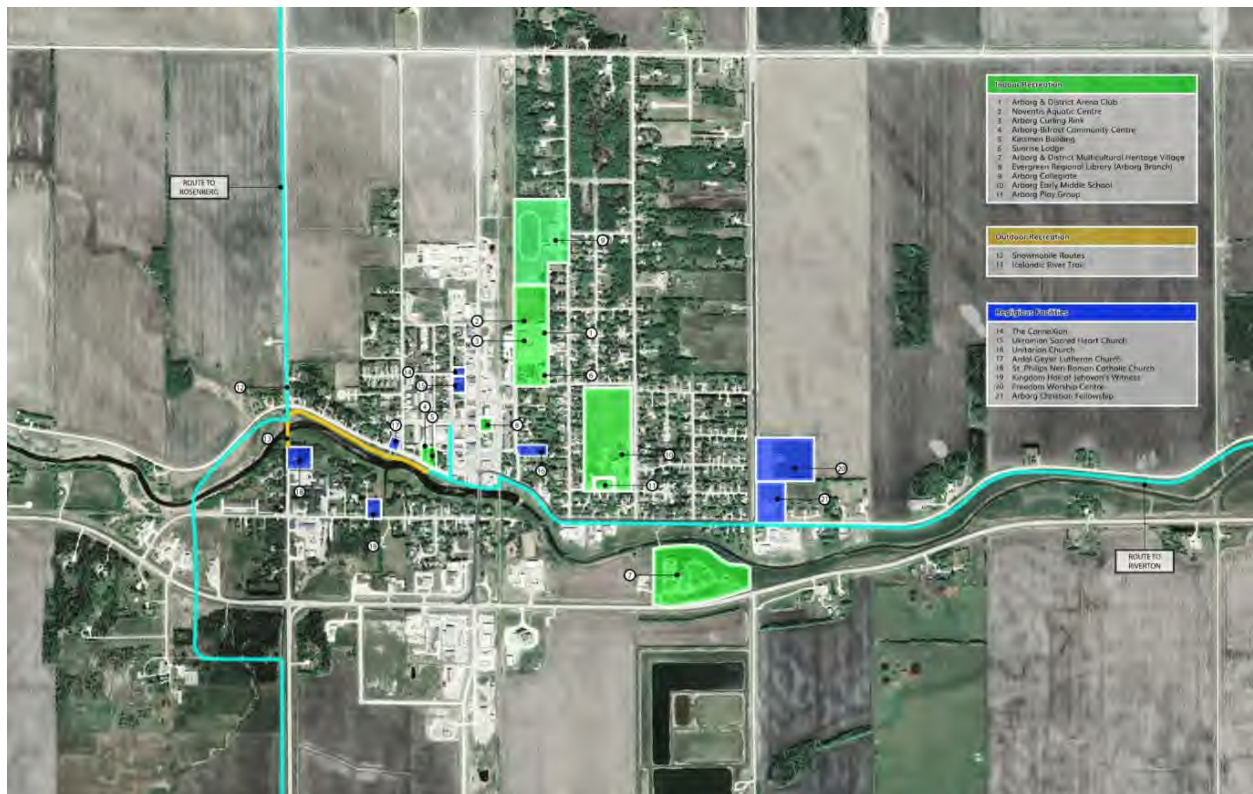


Figure 9. Facility Map -Town of Arborg (Detailed Map included in Appendix A)



Figure 10. Facilities Map – Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton (Detailed Map included in Appendix A)

5.2 Major Facility Highlights

5.2.1 The Arborg & District Arena

Amenities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHL standard size artificial ice surface • Large, heated indoor viewing area • Rink side seating (for 800 spectators) • Full commercial kitchen • Six Large dressing rooms with showers • Meeting room • Satellite TV • Activity Room

5.2.2 The Noventis Aquatic Centre

Amenities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spray arches & umbrellas• Unique vortex area• 140-foot twisting slide• Heated water• Pre-school area with slide (plus an additional slide)• 40-foot twin racing slide• 4-lane pool• Floor geysers• Large, shallow play area

5.2.3 The Arborg Community Hall

Amenities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Commercial kitchen• Internet access• Two ceiling mounted projectors and screens for presentations• Stage• 1500 sq. ft. dance floor• Sound system• Second convenience kitchen• 600-person capacity• Can be divided into smaller rooms for smaller events• Outdoor amenities: 3 baseball diamonds / 2 soccer fields / discus cage

5.2.4 The Arborg Curling Club

Amenities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Four curling rinks (used for pickle ball in the Summer months)• Capacity of between 250 and 300 people• Club room• Changing rooms• Canteen facilities• Satellite TV

5.2.5 The Riverton Curling Rink

Amenities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Indoor Arena• Four sheets of ice (winter)• Capacity: 175 downstairs / 190 upstairs• No Air Conditioning• Home of the Riverton Elks Lodge #530 clubroom

5.2.6 The Riverton Arena

Amenities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One rink • Four dressing rooms • New LED lights • Not insulated (not heated during winter) • New condenser installed recently • Home of Reggie Leach

5.2.7 The Riverton Community Hall

Amenities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kitchen (upgrades to commercial kitchen ongoing) • Internet access • Audio/visual system • Stage and dance floor • 500-person capacity

5.2.8 All Recreational Facilities

A detailed spreadsheet including facility name, type, amenities, location, and other relevant information is included in **Appendix A**.

Figure 11. Recreation Facilities Inventory (Abridged Version)

Facility Name	Type
Arborg & District Arena	Arena
Riverton Memorial Arena	Arena
Hnausa Beach Provincial Campground	Campground
Bifrost-Riverton Campground	Campground
Old Town Campground, Arborg & District Multicultural Heritage Village	Campground
Riverton Campground	Campground
Freedom Worship centre	Church
Ardal-Geysir Lutheran Church	Church
Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witness	Church
St. Philips Neri Roman Catholic Church	Church
Unitarian Church	Church
Ukrainian Sacred Heart Church	Church
The ConneXion	Church
Morweena EMC	Church
Riverton Hnausa Lutheran Church	Church
Riverton Gospel Chapel	Church
Interlake Mennonite Fellowship	Church
Mennville Evangelical Mennonite Church	Church

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Facility Name	Type
Anchor of Hope Church	Church
Arborg Christian Fellowship	Church Church of Nazarene
Lake Center Mennonite Church & School	Church/School
Arborg-Bifrost Community Centre	Community Centre
Riverton-Bifrost Community Hall	Community Hall
Icelandic River Walking Trail (Arborg)	Community walking path
Icelandic River Walking Trail (Riverton)	Community walking path
Riverton Curling Club	Curling Rink (Connected to Riverton Community Hall)
Arborg Curling Club	Curling Club
Evergreen Regional Library (Arborg Branch)	Library
Evergreen Regional Library (Riverton Branch)	Library
Noventis Aquatic Centre	Outdoor Aquatic Centre Open June to September long weekend
Icelandic River Outdoor Trail (ice clearing)	Outdoor Skating Rink Outdoor Skating Path Outdoor Tobogganing
Hnaua Provincial Park	Provincial Park
Riverton Collegiate	School
Riverton Early Middle Years	School
Arborg Collegiate	School
Arborg Early Middle School	School
Arborg Play Group Inc.	Day Care
Mennonite Interlake Fellowship School	School
Morweena Christian School	School
Riverton and District Friendship Centre	Friendship Centre
Riverton Elks Lodge	Lodge
Riverton Skate Park	Skate Park
Riverton Day Care Cooperative Inc.	Day Care

5.3 Program Inventory

Both Arborg and Bifrost-Riverton have a broad range of recreational opportunities, whether for summer or winter, team sports or individual programs, and catering to various age cohorts. These programs are organized and managed by a variety of different groups and organizations, including local soccer and hockey associations, the Creative Cocoon, the Recreation Commissions, local friendship centres, non-profit groups, and individual coaches / trainers / instructors. Below is a list of many of the key programs and recreational opportunities offered within the two communities, as well as the program type, category, user age range, venue, location, and season.

Figure 12. Recreation Programs Inventory

Program Name	Program Type	Category	Users	Venue	Location	Season
	4H	Social				
Aqua Zumba	Fitness	Sports		Noventis Aquatic Centre	Arborg	Summer
Zumba - Sole Sisters (Tanya / Desarae)	Fitness	Sports			Riverton/Arborg	Year-Round
Minor League Baseball - Arborg	Baseball	Sports	U7, U9, U11, U13, U15, U18		Arborg/Riverton	Summer
Canada Day Celebrations	Celebration	Cultural		Centennial Park	Riverton	Summer
Carving with Thor	Carving	Cultural			Riverton	Winter
Cooking with Kids	Cooking Classes	Cultural				
Cooking with Youths	Cooking Classes	Cultural				
Perogy-bee's	Cooking Classes	Cultural				
Crafters Corner	Crafting	Cultural			Riverton	Winter
Arborg Nordic Ski Club	Cross-country skiing	Sports			Arborg	Winter
Floor Curling	Curling	Sports		Arborg & District Arena Riverton Hall	Arborg/Riverton	
Little Rocks Curling	Curling	Sports	Grades 3 to 5	Arborg Curling Club	Arborg	Winter
Junior Curling - Development	Curling	Sports	Grades 7 +	Arborg Curling Club Riverton Curling Rink	Arborg/Riverton	Winter
Junior Curling - League	Curling	Sports	Grades 6 to 10	Arborg Curling Club	Arborg	Winter
Men's League Curling	Curling	Sports		Arborg Curling Club Riverton Curling Club	Arborg/Riverton	Winter
Women's League Curling	Curling	Sports		Arborg Curling Club Riverton Curling Club	Arborg/Riverton	Winter
Mixed-Doubles Curling	Curling	Sports		Arborg Curling Club	Arborg	Winter
Old-Time Dance	Dancing	Sports	All ages	Arborg Hall	Arborg	Year-Round
Partners In Time Dance Company	Dance Classes	Sports	Jazz / Tap / Ballet		Riverton/Arborg	Year-Round
RiverTap Dance	Dance Classes	Sports			Riverton/Arborg	
Culturama	Entertainment	Event		Arborg Community Hall	Arborg	Fall
Arborg Horse Show	Equestrian	Event		Silver	Silver	Summer
Arborg Fair and Rodeo	Fair, Rodeo	Event		Fair Grounds (Silver)	Silver	Summer
Arborg Street Festival	Festival	Event		Arborg Main Street	Arborg	Summer
Coralee Barkman's Fitness Club	Fitness Club	Sports			Riverton	Year-Round
Open Gym	Fitness	Sports			Riverton	Year-Round
Arborg Gymnastics	Gymnastics	Sports		Arborg Early Middle Years School	Arborg	Fall/Winter
Arborg Jr B Ice Dawgs Hockey Club	Hockey	Sports	Ages 16 to 22	Arborg & District Arena	Arborg	Winter
Arborg Minor Hockey Association	Hockey	Sports	Ages 5 to 17	Arborg & District Arena	Arborg	Winter
Hockey with Reims	Hockey	Sports	Ages 4-7	Arborg & District Arena	Arborg	Winter
Interlake Lightning	Hockey	Sports	U18, AAA	Arborg & District Arena Interlake	Arborg	Winter
Recreation Hockey League	Hockey	Sports	All ages	Arborg & District Arena	Arborg	Winter
Recreation Hockey	Hockey	Sports	All ages	Riverton Memorial Arena	Riverton	Winter
40+ Recreation Hockey	Hockey	Sports	Ages 40 +	Arborg & District Arena	Arborg	Winter
Riverton Minor Hockey Association	Hockey	Sports	Various Ages Groups	Riverton Memorial Arena	Riverton	Winter
Icelandic National League (Esjan)	Language Classes	Cultural			Arborg	Summer
	Language Classes	Cultural		Riverton & District Friendship Centre	Riverton	Year-Round
Painting Classes	Painting	Cultural			Riverton	Year-Round
Arborg Pickleball	Pickleball	Sports		Arborg Curling Club Arborg & Riverton High Schools	Arborg/Riverton	Year-Round

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Program Name	Program Type	Category	Users	Venue	Location	Season	User Fee?
Riverton & District Seniors Resource	Seniors Resources	Social			Riverton	Year-Round	
Arborg & District Seniors Resource	Seniors Resources	Social			Arborg	Year-Round	
Seniors Games	Seniors Resources	Sports		Riverton Hall	Riverton	Year-Round	
Arborg Rod and Gun Club	Shooting and Fishing	Sports			Arborg		
Church Choir	Singing	Social				Year-Round	
Public Skating	Skating	Sports	All ages	Arborg & District Arena	Arborg	Winter	
Public Skating	Skating	Sports	All ages	Icelandic River	Arborg	Winter	
Arborg Skating Club	Skating	Sports	Ages 3 to 17	Arborg & District Arena	Arborg	Winter	
Riverton Ice Club	Skating / Figure Skating	Sports			Riverton	Winter	
Arborg Slo-Pitch	Slo-pitch League	Sports			Arborg	Summer	
Interlake Snow Trackers	Snowmobiling	Sports				Winter	
Minor League Soccer	Soccer	Sports	U6, U8, U10, U12, U15, U18		Arborg/Riverton	Summer	
Interlake Impact Soccer	Soccer	Sports	Manitoba Major Soccer League		Arborg	Summer	
Riverton Day Camp	Summer Day Camp	Social			Riverton	Summer	
Kids Days	Summer Day Camp	Social		Arborg Heritage Village	Arborg	Summer	
Public Swim	Swimming	Sports		Noventis Aquatic Centre	Arborg	Summer	
Swimming Lessons	Swimming	Sports		Noventis Aquatic Centre	Arborg	Summer	
Adult Swim	Swimming	Sports		Noventis Aquatic Centre	Arborg	Summer	
Arborg Reechka Ukrainian Dance Club	Ukrainian Dance	Sports	Dance Class Ages 4 - 18 Dance Class Ages 19+ Organize Ukrainian Socials		Arborg	Year-Round	
	Veterans Club	Social		Arborg Legion #161	Arborg	Winter	
Adult Volleyball	Volleyball	Sports	Adults (Recreational)	Riverton Collegiate Institute	Riverton	Winter	
Walking Club	Walking	Social			Arborg/Riverton	Winter	
Mel's Yoga	Yoga	Sports			Riverton	Year-Round	
Mel's Yoga	Yoga	Sports			Arborg	Year-Round	
Yoga with Steph	Yoga	Sports			Arborg	Year-Round	
Voice lessons [The Creative Cocoon]	Singing Lessons	Cultural		The ConneXion	Arborg		
Children's mask making [The Creative Cocoon]	Crafting	Cultural	Children	The ConneXion	Arborg		
Babysitters certificate class [The Creative Cocoon]	Babysitting	Cultural	Youth	The ConneXion	Arborg		
Farmhouse clock class [The Creative Cocoon]		Cultural		The ConneXion	Arborg		
Felt wreath class [The Creative Cocoon]		Cultural		The ConneXion	Arborg		
Kids floral class [The Creative Cocoon]		Cultural	Children	The ConneXion	Arborg		
Adult floral class [The Creative Cocoon]		Cultural	Adults	The ConneXion	Arborg		
Crafting class [The Creative Cocoon]	Crafting	Cultural		The ConneXion	Arborg		
Card making class [The Creative Cocoon]	Crafting	Cultural		The ConneXion	Arborg		
Restorative yoga [The Creative Cocoon]	Yoga	Sports		The ConneXion	Arborg		
Pottery [The Creative Cocoon]	Pottery	Cultural		The ConneXion	Arborg		
Archery [The Creative Cocoon]	Archery	Sports		The ConneXion	Arborg		

A detailed version of this spreadsheet is included in **Appendix B**.

6 Service Delivery Model

6.1 Jurisdictional Roles

6.1.1 Federal Government

The Federal Government's role in local recreation is varied. The Government of Canada has jurisdictional authority over areas such as national sport, high-level cultural policy direction, and areas such as National Parks and National Historic Sites. They can also be involved in funding for major recreational infrastructure, generally through dedicated infrastructure funding pots or tri-partite agreements with Provincial and Local Governments.

The National Framework for Recreation in Canada was adopted in 2015 as a joint initiative between the Interprovincial Sport and Recreation Council and the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association. While not an initiative of the Federal Government, it does look at recreation from a national lens, and looks at ways to renew recreation in Canada despite the many challenges and barriers.

6.1.2 Provincial Government

The Provincial Government has a major role in recreation, in terms of enabling legislation, funding partnerships. Provincial Legislation enables municipalities to create recreation commissions such as those governing recreation in both Arborg and Bifrost-Riverton. The province also allows municipalities to collect levies in order to support recreation facilities and programming, as well as allowing municipalities to take public reserve land through the subdivision process. The Province also manages Provincial Parks, two of which are in the immediate vicinity of the community – Hnaua Beach and Hecla-Grindstone.

Manitoba's Policy for Recreation Opportunities (2015) provides an overview of the various ways the Provincial Government will support and encourage recreation in the Province, including through partnerships, grants/funding, policy direction, and collaboration with schools.

6.1.2.1 Recreation Opportunities - Partners in Leisure

The program offers:

- Criteria to encourage partnerships
- Support to strengthen partnerships and enhance co-operation (between Province, Municipalities, School Divisions)
- Recognition of the importance of professional recreation leadership (e.g. recreation director or coordinator)

RMs and Towns with a population of less than 10,000 qualify for funding under the program.

6.2 Arborg-Bifrost Parks and Recreation Commission Board (ABPRC)

The Arborg Parks and Recreation Commission has a policy manual that lays out its vision and goals, and is intended to guide decision-making, budgeting, and operations.

6.2.1 Mission Statement and Goals:

Mission Statement: To provide quality recreational activities and facilities that promote and contribute to healthy lifestyles in a coordinated and efficient fashion.

Goals:

- Fully utilize existing facilities
- Promote and foster healthy lifestyles
- Develop and promote new programs and activities
- Enhance the quality of life for residents
- Maintain and/or improve existing facilities
- Review short and long-term goals annually at budget time

6.2.2 Board Structure and Responsibilities

The volunteer board is comprised of nine members, including a councillor from each municipality (appointed by each council) and a representative from the Evergreen

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School Division (although they have not regularly been attending meetings for some time). The Board members have several responsibilities, including:

1. Familiarizing themselves with the policies and programs of the Commission
2. Establishing short and long-term recreation goals
3. Reporting on activities to the municipal councils
4. Have knowledge of and promote recreational activities in the community
5. Administer public funds allocated for recreation
6. Establish and review policies
7. Appoint sub-committees to operate efficiently and effectively
8. Assist in recreation commission programs, fundraisers and events

The Manager of Recreation Services reports to the Board, while the Board reports to the two municipalities. The Board holds monthly meetings (with the exception of summer), majority is needed for quorum, and minutes are to be kept at each meeting (and reviewed). Board members are expected to attend meetings.

6.2.3 Manager of Recreation Services

The Manager of Recreation Services is similar to the role of a recreation director, depending on the municipality. The Manager of Recreation Services oversees and manages the staff members, including facility managers, recreation assistant, facility attendants, coordinators, and any seasonal roles (e.g. aquatic centre, day camp) that may be in place.

6.2.4 The ABPRC's Role in Programs and Facilities

The Policy Manual outlines the ABPRC's role in programming and facilities. In terms of programming, the ABPRC exists to promote activities/programs to residents and to offer new and different types of enjoyment to all age groups.

The ABPRC operates public facilities, which are intended to provide recreation programs to residents. The policy manual outlines priority of use, general rules, and the key tenets to guide rental agreements. It also outlines a canteen policy.

6.2.5 The ABPRC's Role in Finances

The Policy Manual provides details regarding the ABPRC's role in financial matters. The ABPRC's fiscal year is from January 1st to December 31st, while operating budget preparations begin in January and are submitted to the Councils for approval by the end of February. A capital budget is also to be prepared annually, to ensure funds are set aside for repairs, renovations, replacements, or new construction/purchases. Financial statements are submitted for an audit review every year (no later than March 31st).

It is noted that fees will be set by the Manager of Recreation Services, and take into account cost, fairness, and equality to all users. It is specifically noted that the ABPRC will not operate as a financial granting agency to local programs/activities, but that it will partner with community organizations to deliver workshops/seminars.

6.2.6 The ABPRC's Role in Staffing

The ABPRC is responsible for posting jobs, recruiting, and hiring permanent employees (the latter is fulfilled by a hiring committee made up of the manager and two board members). The Policy Manual provides an overview of employee hiring, performance review, professional development opportunities, training, hours of work, pay, and other matters – in that sense, the latter half of the policy manual acts more like an employee guide, with terms typically found in an employment agreement. Employees are subject to at least two performance reviews per year. The document also outlines procedures regarding overtime, sick leave, vacation, and disciplinary action / dismissal. Finally, the policy speaks to the need for volunteer recognition by the Manager and/or Board.

6.2.7 Other

There are some draft notes within the Policy Manual, and some sections that don't appear to be complete or require finalization. Based on the research of similar communities, it is rare that volunteer boards have such a level of responsibility in terms of administering public funds allocated for recreation.

6.3 The Riverton-Bifrost Parks and Recreation Commission Board

The Riverton-Bifrost Parks and Recreation Commission has a policy manual that lays out its vision and goals, and is intended to guide decision-making, budgeting, and recreation policy.

6.3.1 Mission Statement and Vision Statement

Mission Statement: The Riverton – Bifrost Parks and Recreation Commission (RBPRC) is committed to service the Riverton-Bifrost area by providing leisure programs, encouraging cooperation between community organizations and maximizing usage of public recreation facilities and opportunities to meet the needs of individuals, various interest groups and community organizations.

Vision Statement: The Riverton-Bifrost Parks and Recreation Commission (RBPRC) will work cooperatively within the community to create recreation and leisure opportunities for persons of all ages.

6.3.2 Board Structure, Roles and Responsibilities

The volunteer board is comprised of up to nine members, including two councillors, a representative from the Evergreen School Division (although they have not regularly been attending meetings for some time), and up to six volunteer members from the community.

The Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton is responsible to appoint two elected officials to the commission each year, to encourage youth participation in recreation, to receive/approve/support the budget proposed by the commission, and to carry liability insurance on the recreation facilities. The Commission's responsibilities include recreation planning, administration, community development, and staff management.

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The Recreation Director reports to the board and their core responsibilities generally fall under two categories: Planning and administration.

Planning: The Recreation Director's responsibility is to maximize the utilization of public recreation facilities, develop/deliver programs to the community, and promote youth involvement in recreation programs.

Administration: The Recreation Director is responsible for the annual operating budget, to track financial documents/receipts, and to provide a written evaluation of recreation services/programs annually.

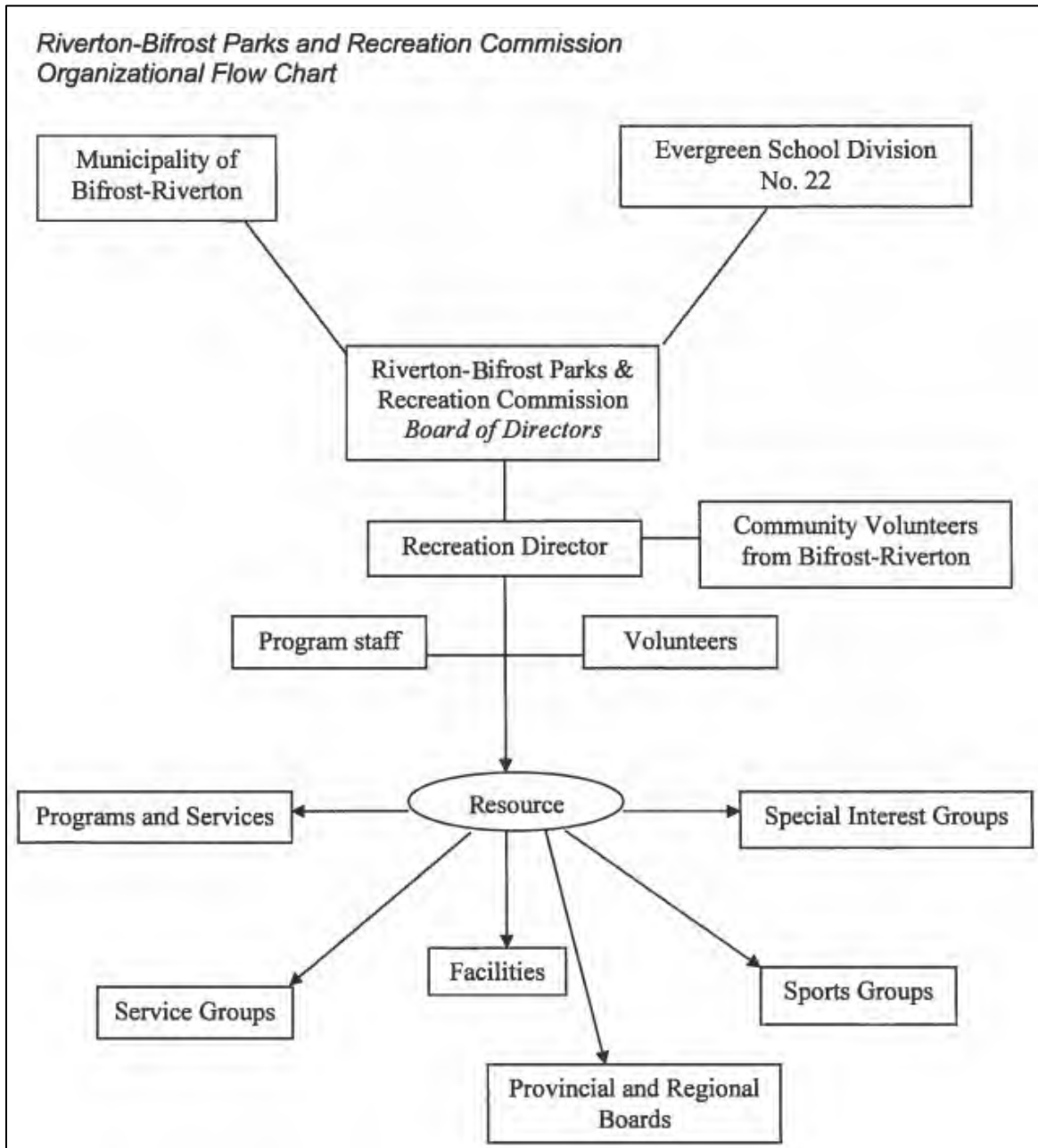


Figure 13. Riverton-Bifrost Parks and Recreation Commission Organizational Flow Chart

6.3.3 The RBPRC's Role in Programs and Facilities

In terms of programming, there are several key policies in the manual, including:

- The need for clear program objectives for each program
- The need for Commission approval before new programs are implemented
- The need to avoid offering duplicate programs and services
- The need for programs to operate on a cost-recovery basis (expenditures are not to exceed revenues)
- The Commission does not operate as a financial granting agency
- The Commission is to provide assistance to groups in organizing, leadership, and publicity (rather than through financial contributions)

6.3.4 The RBPRC's Role in Finances

In the administrative policies section, the Policy Manual outlines the RBPRC's role in financial management, expenditures, and municipal funding.

6.3.5 Role of the Recreation Director

The Recreation Director is responsible for “the development of recreational programs and supporting existing community recreation, sports, fitness, cultural, senior and school groups within the district”. They are also responsible to ensure the daily and monthly operation of the recreation district which includes administration, recordkeeping, and program management. The Policy Manual provides an in-depth job description of what the position entails, including roles relating to programming, community development, promotion and administration.

6.3.6 The RBPRC's Role in Staffing

The Policy Manual provides an overview of the different types of staff that may be hired by the Commission (full time or seasonal), the setting of wages, overtime considerations, and other employment-related topics (recruitment, selection, termination, sick leave, and vacation). There are policies that encourage staff to pursue training in their areas of expertise, whether through conferences or courses – there are opportunities to be reimbursed for such activities.

The Manual also requires that all employees are evaluated on an annual basis, and lays out a framework in terms of who is responsible for evaluating each employee (e.g. the Director is evaluated by the Commission). The manual provides a template for conducting these evaluations, in terms of goal-setting, expectations, and self-evaluation.

6.3.7 Other

There are several policies relating to registration. Registration is to be taken on a first come first serve basis, payments need to be received in full prior to program commencement, and standard forms are to be completed by participants.

The Manual also speaks to refunds, the Commission's role in the provision of special events and meeting procedures.

6.4 Examples from Across Manitoba

Recreation in Manitoba is varied across the province, both in its implementation and structure. Various structures exist including:

- Recreation Districts or Commissions (including volunteer-led boards)
- Recreation Departments of the Municipality
- Recreation Advisory Committees (usually made up of Council members or representatives from Local Urban Districts)

This section provides a summary of information on the various governance, financial and service delivery models from a selection of recreation districts and commissions across Manitoba. Preference was placed on jurisdictions with similar makeups to Arborg and Bifrost-Riverton: where an urban municipality and a rural municipality work together on recreation initiatives. Recreation entities reviewed for this section include:

- Rockwood Stonewall Recreation Committee / Teulon Rockwood Recreation District
- Souris Valley District Recreation Commission
- Macdonald Headingley Recreation District
- Minnedosa & District Recreation Commission
- Altona & Area Recreation District

Due to local contexts, geographies, facilities (and their ownership), existing relationships and municipal governance structures, challenges exist in conducting simple apples-to-apples comparisons. Instead, this review provides a summary of governance models, funding models and service delivery models from selected entities in various jurisdictions in Manitoba.

Despite their differences, several commonalities exist and will be described at the end of this section. As a preliminary note, many districts and municipalities have experienced significant difficulties with recreation programming, funding and governance during 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. As a result, the majority of information provided in this review applies to 2019 and earlier (although budget information tends to be from 2021).

6.4.1 Rockwood / Stonewall / Teulon

The area covered in this section includes the Rural Municipality of Rockwood and the urban municipalities of Stonewall and Teulon.

Governance: The Rockwood, Stonewall, and Teulon recreation model is significantly different amongst other recreation districts. Following a recent Recreation Master Plan, the municipalities are split down the middle forming two “hubs”: A north hub, centred around the Town of Teulon, and a south hub, centred around the Town of Stonewall.

Both Teulon/Rockwood and Stonewall/Rockwood have recreation boards made up of representatives including local councillors and volunteers. While there are differences in geography and facilities, there is a general sense of partnership and collaboration, not competition. Additionally, there is a Recreation Facilitator who provides coordination

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and a single-window approach for residents within the municipalities. The Facilitator also works with both boards on grant applications and communication efforts.

Funding: Both boards within the Rockwood / Stonewall / Teulon recreation area rely on grants for operation.

Facilities in Stonewall are owned by the Town and funded through general tax revenues. Both Teulon and Rockwood utilize a levy which contributes to recreation facilities in both of those municipalities.

As previously noted, grants are a large part of the funding for programming and predominantly handled by the Recreation Facilitator. However, the Facilitator position is cost-shared between Stonewall and Rockwood only.

All programs and services are provided on a cost-recovery basis. Recreation facilities within the district do not produce a profit.

Service Delivery: Core facilities in Stonewall (arena, baseball diamonds, curling rink, soccer complex, etc.) are owned, operated and maintained by the Town through the Recreation Services and Public Works departments.

In other areas of the district, the vast majority of programming is conducted through service groups. Minor hockey, minor soccer, dance and other larger sport/recreation organizations deliver services in their communities. Additional service groups, boards and volunteer organizations operate throughout the jurisdiction. In all cases, the Recreation Facilitator provides support through grant applications, communication and regional connections.

6.4.2 Souris Valley District Recreation Commission

The Souris Valley District Recreation Commission is comprised of the Municipality of Souris-Glenwood and the RM of Whitehead. For 2020, the Souris Valley District Recreation Commission (SVDRC) overhauled their governance system: While they previously had multiple boards, a recreation commission and major facilities with no board or general organization, they moved to a system with a single board structure headed by the Municipality of Souris-Glenwood.

Governance: The SVDRC Board consist of two council members, and additional volunteer members from the previously existing boards in place prior to 2019. Ultimately, the SVDRC reports to the Souris-Glenwood Council.

Funding: Souris-Glenwood handles all financial aspects of the recreation commission. The Municipality of Whitehead contributes \$3.50 per capita annually, whereas Souris-Glenwood provides direct funding of \$300,000+ per year for parks, the recreation commission staff and the main recreation complex in Souris. Additional sources of funding include the Provincial government and grants. All programming is conducted on a cost recovery basis, with core deficits for the pool being offset by the Souris-Glenwood Council.

Service Delivery: Programming and services are split between the SVDRC and local organizations, with core recreation programming being conducted by associations and volunteer groups and the district filling in gaps where necessary.

6.4.3 Macdonald Headingley Recreation District

The Macdonald Headingley Recreation District includes both the RM of Headingley and RM of Macdonald (the latter of which is home to small communities such as Oak Bluff, Sanford, and La Salle).

Governance: The District has a main board comprised of Council members and staff from the District's municipalities. The board meets infrequently, with more direct communication between CAOs and the District's Recreation Director. There are two recreation committees: One in Headingley (which is volunteer-led, with two council members and two residents) and the other in Macdonald (made up of three council members and appointed citizen representatives). The Recreation Director and staff from the District attend as many meetings as possible, and also organize an annual "Community Networking Meeting" once a year.

Funding: Funding for the district is collected on a per capita basis. The total budget District budget is around \$500,000, with some revenue generated from programming; most programming is offered on a cost recovery basis.

The RM of Headingley owns its own facilities, whereas local organizations and groups own facilities in Macdonald. Accordingly, Headingley does not seek grant funding for their municipally-owned facilities, but Macdonald relies heavily on grant funding for theirs.

Service Delivery: The vast majority of programming in the area is handled by volunteer organizations / associations and seniors' groups. Major sports are handled by their provincially-led associations. The District serves to fill in gaps left by other programming vehicles.

6.4.4 Minnedosa & District Recreation Commission

The Minnedosa & District Recreation Commission (MDRC) administers recreation in the Town of Minnedosa and the Rural Municipality of Minto-Odanah.

Governance: The District has a single Board or Directors with representation from the local school division (1 member), the Town of Minnedosa Council (1 member), and local residents from Minnedosa and Minto-Odanah (2 members from each municipality).

Funding: Funding for the Recreation Commission is based on grants and donations, with the shortfall being picked up by the municipality. Most programming is conducted on a cost recovery model, with no programs turning a profit.

Service Delivery: The Recreation Commission hosts a limited number of events, including day camps for children during the summer and skating instruction in the winter. Sporting events are all run by their respective agencies and groups.

6.4.5 Altona & Area Recreation District

The Altona & Area Recreation District's jurisdiction includes the Town of Altona and the Municipality of Rhineland.

Governance: The Recreation District is more closely associated with the Town of Altona, as the recreation district is directly funded and operated as a department of the Town services. All facilities are owned and maintained by the municipalities, with the most heavily-used facilities being owned by the Town of Altona; several smaller arena complexes (e.g. the Plum Coulee Arena and Gretna Rink) are owned by the Municipality of Rhineland.

Funding: All aspects of the office are funded through the general tax revenues of the Town of Altona. The office relies on grants for specific programming; however, these grants are not enough to support the office's mandate. Most programs are operated on a cost recovery basis, where they aim for 50% recovery.

Service Delivery: The majority of services are provided by separate groups including the major sports organizations and the occasional volunteer group. For newer or smaller services that do not have the capacity to manage their own affairs, they rely on the Recreation District to manage initiatives.

6.4.6 Findings

6.4.6.1 Governance

Models of governance, and in turn, the methods of decision-making regarding recreation, vary across the jurisdictions researched for this study. Variables that affect the governance model include:

- **Differing frameworks for ownership, maintenance and operation of recreation facilities and lands where recreation services take place.** In jurisdictions where facilities are owned by community groups, the Recreation District or Commission tends to play a larger role in local governance, whereas in localities where the municipality owns the majority of facilities, the Recreation District plays a smaller role.
- **Geography and population.** Instances where a single large urban municipality with a higher concentration of population and amenities partners with a rural municipality with fewer facilities and a lower population, the single larger municipality typically has more representation and sway in decision-making. In some instances, the Recreation District exists in name only, and is in reality a department of a municipality.
- **Capacity for budgets and financing can often be off-loaded to the municipality.** In several instances, the municipality contributing the majority of funding maintains control over recreation decisions and governance.
- **Less can be more.** For example, in Souris, the multitude of boards, groups and representatives caused significant discord amongst local decision makers and local Councils. A new model was instituted which saw the use of a single board made up of local Councillors and representatives from other groups.

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6.4.6.2 Funding

Models of funding are also tied to the specific makeup of each district. In most instances:

- **The jurisdiction with the largest population and share of recreation facilities contributes the most to general funding.** In instances where a larger, urban municipality makes up half of a recreation jurisdiction, the majority of funding is allocated from that municipality.
- **Instances where a municipality does not own their own facilities, and community groups/organizations own facilities, the majority of funding comes from grants.** Grants continue to play a large part in funding all recreation districts/commissions; however, in instances where community organizations own or maintain recreation facilities, grants take on a more central role in providing funding for programming, maintenance, and operation of recreation facilities.

6.4.6.3 Service Delivery

Service delivery is varied; however, several commonalities exist:

- **Most third-party recreation districts (i.e. those that aren't closely associated with a municipal department), "fill in the gaps" between larger sport organizations and volunteer-led programming.** In many cases, smaller programs, or those without significant volunteer or organizational support, are run by the recreation district.
- **Recreation districts also serve as facilitators for various services around the municipality.** Recreation districts provide a 'single-window' for services, programs, sports and events being run throughout the community. With so many different local organizations, volunteer groups, non-profits and facilities, most recreation districts also facilitate, coordinate, and manage communication efforts within a given jurisdiction.

6.4.7 Financial Comparison

6.4.7.1 Summary Comparison

While the governance, service delivery and geographic context for recreation in Manitoba municipalities may vary greatly across the province, we can compare financial information on a proportional basis for a selection of municipalities to gain an understanding of recreation funding.

The following chart shows recreation as a percentage of total budgeted expenditure for **fiscal year 2021**. To provide the best comparison, municipalities from the previous section of this report were used where possible; however, it should be noted that 2021 Financial Plans were not yet adopted for all comparison municipalities at the time of writing. In their place, a selection of additional municipalities from across the province were surveyed.

Municipality	Recreation District / Commission	Recreation as % of Total Budget
Arborg	Arborg-Bifrost Rec Commission	9.8%
Bifrost-Riverton	Bifrost-Riverton Rec Commission	6.0%
Stonewall	n/a	9.4%

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Municipality	Recreation District / Commission	Recreation as % of Total Budget
Teulon	Teulon-Rockwood Rec Commission	7.6%
Rockwood	Teulon-Rockwood Rec Commission	2.2%
Macdonald	Macdonald-Headingley Recreation District	3.4%
Souris Glenwood	Souris Valley District Rec Commission	20.8%
Whitehead	Souris Valley District Rec Commission	0.2%
Minnedosa	Minnedosa & District Rec Commission	2.1%
Altona	n/a	9.1%
Virden	Prairie West Rec District	11.3%
Lac du Bonnet	Winnipeg River Rec District	1.6%
Melita	Antler River Recreation District	5.3%
Two Borders	Antler River Recreation District	2.2%

6.4.7.2 Observations

Comparing recreation portfolios in any Manitoba municipality can be a difficult task as there are a wide range of governance structures, funding allocations, accounting practices, and service arrangements. However, looking at a simplified proportion of recreation as a percentage of total budgeted expenditure, we can make the following observations:

- In cases where two or more municipalities have formed a recreation district and/or recreation commission, it is typically the larger urban municipality that incurs a higher percentage of their municipal budget to recreation spending. This can be seen in the case of Teulon and Rockwood, Souris and Whitehead, and Melita and Two Borders. In these cases, the urban municipality provides the majority of recreation facilities and recreation costs.
- The proportion of budgets varies greatly, with some municipalities contributing very little (RM of Whitehead) and some contributing a fifth of their total budget (Souris-Glenwood). In the case of Arborg and Bifrost-Riverton, the proportions are near the average.
- Additionally, some of the individual municipalities that are not part of a recreation district or commission fall along similar lines. In the case of Stonewall (which does contribute some budget toward a recreation coordinator) and Altona, both hover around the 9% marker, which is very similar to the Arborg.

7 Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

Genuine public engagement and community consultation are keys to a successful recreation planning process. Over the course of the project, the Project Team employed a range of public consultation techniques to gather input and involvement from all segments of the Arborg and Bifrost-Riverton communities, both at the outset, and throughout the planning process.

The primary goals of the public consultation strategy were to determine needs for current and future recreational programming and facilities, identify the community's priorities, and develop a **vision and philosophy** for recreation in Arborg and Bifrost-Riverton. Public consultation was also key in identifying opportunities and constraints, as well as gaps in the current recreation delivery system.

7.1 Project Initiation Meeting & Site Visit

7.1.1 Project Initiation Meeting

The project initiation meeting with the project steering committee took place in Arborg on July 9th, 2020. The goals of the meeting were to confirm the project scope, discuss the approach to public consultation, identify key stakeholder groups, and share opportunities / constraints. Some of the key highlights of the initial meeting were as follows:

- The need to reach out to the rural and Mennonite communities;
- The opportunity to attract residents from Armstrong, as well as seasonal visitors;
- The opportunities to re-purpose existing facilities (e.g. making better use of the community hall);
- The opportunity to better utilize School Division assets (e.g. gymnasiums and outdoor facilities);
- The need to review the governance model, as well as how the Recreation Commissions operate; and,
- The need to recruit and retain volunteers, particularly in Arborg.

The project team would go on to have several meetings with the steering committee over the course of the following eight months.

7.1.2 Site Visits

On the day of the project initiation meeting, the project team visited and toured many of the key recreation facilities in both Arborg and Bifrost-Riverton alongside staff/volunteers, including the following:

- The Arborg Arena
- The Noventis Aquatic Centre
- The Arborg Community Hall

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- The Arborg Curling Club
- The Riverton Curling Rink
- The Riverton Arena
- The Riverton Community Hall

Detailed descriptions of these facilities is provided elsewhere in this report, as well as in the Facilities Condition Assessment.

7.2 Recreation Commission Meetings

7.2.1 Arborg-Bifrost Parks and Recreation Commission Board

On August 10, 2020, the project team met with the ABPRC for the first time. Some of the key points that emerged from the initial discussion included the following:

- It was noted that Board members are appointed by the Town and RM Councils
- Rental fees are competitive, but not charged on a cost recovery basis
- Events are advertised via Facebook, as well as through a semi-annual brochure sent to residents
- It was noted that perhaps members of each of the largest user groups should sit on the Board
- It was noted that the Board's role is not well understood by Council or by the community at-large
- It was noted that the current model may discourage smaller groups from renting facilities (largely due to costs)
- It was noted that barriers to youth participation are often cost and distance

On October 15th, 2020 the project team met again with the board. Several topics were discussed, including the following:

- There was plenty of discussion regarding the service delivery model, including:
 - The structure, roles, and responsibilities of the recreation commission
 - Questions as to who the staff should be accountable to, and who should undertake performance reviews
 - Whether a volunteer board should be responsible for four staff members, a large budget, and debt
 - It was asked whether perhaps the CAO should be responsible for some of these aspects
- It was noted that there has been an emphasis on budgeting rather than programming
- It was reiterated that there is a lack of understanding of the Board's mandate, both municipally and from the general public
- Some noted that perhaps a new name should be considered
- It was asked whether a restructuring of rental fees should be considered
- It was noted that debt servicing eats up a portion of the budget, and that reserve funds are non-existent for the most part

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- It was noted that in some cases, it seems like there are several internal barriers to programming

7.2.2 The Riverton-Bifrost Parks and Recreation Commission Board

On August 10, 2020, the project team met with the RBPRC for the first time. Some of the key points that emerged from the initial discussion included the following:

- An overview of operations, including that each of the major facilities receives \$14,000 in annual funding from the Commission
- The Curling Club and Arena each have their own boards, while the Hall is governed by the Commission
- Riverton has a broad base of volunteers, and plenty of youth involvement
- The programs using the local facilities typically charge on a cost-recovery basis
- There has been a noted challenge in attracting youth to participate in various team sports
- Many of the top athletes have left the community to participate in 'elite' programs (notably in hockey) elsewhere in the Interlake (or in Winnipeg); there may not be enough members left over to form local teams (while in some cases, remaining members lose interest after their friends leave)
- It was noted that some of the rural communities rent out facilities for their own activities, but do not necessarily join the larger community teams / programs
- There is a solid fundraising base in the community (e.g. Reggie Leach hosted a golf tournament a few years back to raise money for the arena; the Elks have been active in fundraising for numerous events/upgrades)
- The Commission would like to see the continuation of the facilities being run by volunteer boards
- There is a need to keep programs affordable (for example, some children cannot afford the day camp)
- There is a need to keep the recreation facilities local; members do not want to see any of the facilities closed down

On October 13th, 2020 the project team met again with the board. Several topics were discussed, including the following:

- How the differing structures of the recreation commissions would be addressed/considered in the study
- It was reiterated that the commission operates within their budget and does not have any facility debt
- Different funding mechanisms were discussed, particularly as it relates to the RM of Bifrost-Riverton funding 50% of the cost of the buildings in Arborg
- The need to look at different cost-sharing models

7.3 Stakeholder Meetings

As part of the community engagement strategy, the study team organized and coordinated meetings with key community stakeholders to enable the Team to garner

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even greater insights into the recreation needs of the local communities. Key stakeholders were identified by the Commission Board members and local Councils, and included:

- Arborg Bifrost-Riverton Parks and Recreation Commission and Riverton-Bifrost Parks and Recreation Commission members;
- Recreation groups, sports teams (including coaches/managers), program providers, and arts/cultural organizations;
- Representatives from local community centres and recreation facilities, particularly facility management, operating, and maintenance staff;
- Representatives from several churches;
- Representatives from the two municipalities;
- Local school division officials (from the Evergreen School Division) and school administrators; and,
- Others, as suggested by the Arborg Bifrost-Riverton Recreation Commission Sub Committee.

Six sessions occurred over a two-day period in both Arborg and Riverton. A summary of the key themes that arose during these meetings is outlined below.

7.3.1 Arborg Stakeholder Meetings [October 15, 2020 – Three Sessions]

On October 15, 2020, the project team held three key stakeholder meetings in Arborg. The meetings were well attended and included a diverse range of stakeholders involved in recreation. A high-level summary of these discussions is included below, including the following comments, suggestions, and critiques:

- Make better use of the commercial kitchen, as it's currently underutilized. It would provide an opportunity to explore other cultures' cuisines, and provide opportunities to meet/greet newcomers
- Technology is overlooked – programs like coding classes and computer building classes would be popular for youth who aren't interested in athletics.
- Get summer ice in Arborg – keep the rink functional until at least the end of August
- There's a need to develop volunteers and retain them
- More volunteer recognition is needed; many people do not understand how much work is done by volunteers. Volunteer recognition would help residents appreciate all the work that goes into recreation in the community. Possible ideas include:
 - Town-wide appreciation event annually (e.g. a large dinner / gala)
 - Providing training and resources for volunteers
 - Bringing various groups together to recognize volunteers' efforts, and
 - Prepare testimonials highlighting the effort that coaches, volunteers provide
- It was noted that sometime new volunteers feel intimidated to bring new ideas/suggestions to the table

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- A better calendar (perhaps online) is needed to track events/programs; an increased awareness of events, rentals etc. is also needed, to allow organizations and groups to schedule around each others' events.
- It was noted that both Arborg and Bifrost-Riverton could do more to draw in out-of-municipality users and user groups
- It was noted that transportation can be a major barrier to participation; lots of driving is often needed for activities, while it is often hard to arrange carpools. One possible solution might be centralized information/communication groups for parents to arrange carpools, travel, etc.
- It was noted that there is not currently a way to measure success; metrics should be established (whether that's cost recovery, meeting a need, etc.); there is a need to then monitor and evaluate these metrics on an ongoing basis
- It was noted that just because a program/event failed in the past does not mean that it cannot be attempted again in the future
- There is a need to fix the ice plant in the arena
- There's a need for a centralized directory of recreation groups and contacts, as well as an activity calendar
- Prioritize facility upgrades and budget for them
- The recreation director needs a clear mandate and defined role; a strong mission statement needed
- More effective fundraising is needed to avoid donor burn-out; fundraising shouldn't be sought for ongoing operating costs
- Use the community hall as walking track
- Consider abandoning a cost-recovery model; there needs to be a balance between cost and quality of life / equity considerations
- Attract those who attend private schools or are homeschooled, and live in rural communities
- The focus of recreation staff seems to be facility management / landlording rather than programming
- Collaboration between Arborg and Bifrost-Riverton would be helpful – there needs to be a regional approach rather than the hyper-local approach seen now
- There is a need for more non-hockey winter activities (such as skiing and snowshoeing)
- Utilize the river (canoe / paddleboats / derbies); river pathways are also popular (Storybook Walks)
- Embrace arts and culture – there is lots of participation in arts, but little funding and no facilities (e.g. the kiln does not have a home)
- There's a perception that fees are high (but this might not actually be the case)
- Weekend activities are needed, as the week is generally full
- A proper soccer field needed
- Consider differential pricing based on activity / group size / community / non-profit
- There's a need to ensure that facilities get used or are used more efficiently
- A fitness facility is needed, as well as a walking track
- Utilize technology for the booking of facilities

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- We need a culture of “yes”; we need to make sure facility booking / use is more user-friendly, based on a customer service model; new program proposals are sometimes seen as a burden rather than an opportunity
- There's a need for a central hub for activities / hours / programs / contacts / bookings (online)

7.3.2 Riverton Stakeholder Meetings [October 13, 2020 – Three Sessions]

On October 13, 2020, the project team held three key stakeholder meetings in Arborg. The meetings were well attended and included a diverse range of stakeholders involved in recreation. A high-level summary of these discussions is included below:

- Opportunities exist to better utilize the river and lake (e.g. for kayaking, ice fishing, birding, hosting derbies)
- There's a need to cater to seasonal residents and visitors; host fish fries and movies in the park
- There's a need for washroom / change facilities near the beach (Hnausa)
- Churches can be involved in providing programming / facilities as well
- Volunteer burnout is a concern; new volunteers need to feel welcome
- Youth are not participating as they had in the past
- Need collaboration between Arborg and Bifrost-Riverton
- Invest in a grant-writer to obtain funding (this has been successful in the past)
- Some noted the need to show how recreation fees / funding was being spent, for the sake of transparency
- Some asked whether it was possible to offer a break on user fees for volunteers
- Some would like to see a 'leisure guide' across both municipalities, including sports / arts / other activities (including those at friendship centre, churches, etc.)
- Avoid duplication; more coordination between municipalities
- There is a need for opportunities for inter-generational connections (particularly between seniors and youth)
- Utilize existing resources / organizations (e.g. Interlake Tourism)
- Offer complimentary programming (e.g. what can we offer that Gimli doesn't?)
- Need to preserve institutional knowledge
- Need to bring the school division back to the table (at the board level)
- Distance and travel can be barriers; costs can be barriers for seniors
- Time constraints make things difficult (particularly if child is in a program like hockey)
- Would like to see a recreational hockey option (less practices, less travel, less time commitment); same for soccer
- Consider variable cost structures for rentals
- Concern about funding 50% of the Arborg facilities; concern about Arborg's debt on facilities
- There's a lack of commitment to programs (some register last minute, others are hesitant to register); need a 'five-pack' option or drop in fee structure for

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certain programs – that way, organizers still receive guaranteed funds needed to run a program, while participants receive the flexibility that they seek

- There's a need to ensure that Riverton's facilities do not close; there would be a steep decline in participants if facilities closed
- Some noted that Riverton is losing a sense of community
- Would like to see municipal funding for facilities
- The RM needs to prioritize recreation and spend on it
- Organizations like the Elks have provided lots of funds and support over the years
- The Handi-van could be better utilized for recreation, particularly for seniors
- Need for cross-country skiing amenities
- Need a comprehensive listing of programs / activities / calendar; need better communication
- Capitalize on the new campground
- User-pay model prevents many from participating
- Need to bring in the rural and religious communities; they have a young demographic
- Need funding for capital and operating costs; fundraising shouldn't be used for operating costs
- Concern about need to upgrade facilities to meet accessibility standards; this can be very costly
- Need a more equitable funding model between the two communities

7.4 Community Workshops

Two community workshops were to be held to engage and get input from the community into the Arborg Bifrost-Riverton Recreation Master Plan process. The workshops (with three sessions to be held in Arborg and three sessions held in Riverton) would have included an overview of the project, followed by interactive activities designed to facilitate the public in generating thoughts and ideas about a recreation vision for the community. Invitations were forwarded to key community stakeholders, as well as advertised to the public at large in the Express Weekly newspaper and updates to the two municipalities' webpages.

The purpose of these six community workshops would have been to:

- Introduce the project and validate preliminary findings;
- Understand specific user group and demographic needs;
- Gauge satisfaction with existing facility conditions and suggestions for changes;
- Establish recreation priorities;
- Develop the long-term vision/philosophy for recreation in Arborg and Bifrost-Riverton; and,
- Receive feedback and input into the Recreation Plan process.

Unfortunately, the week before the in-person workshops were to be held, the Province shifted to Code Red in response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. With in-person meetings out of the question, the project team considered hosting the workshops via Zoom or another online video-conferencing platform. Ultimately, the Recreation Commissions decided to shift the focus of community engagement to an online survey format – the survey featured broad participation, and the results are outlined in the following section.

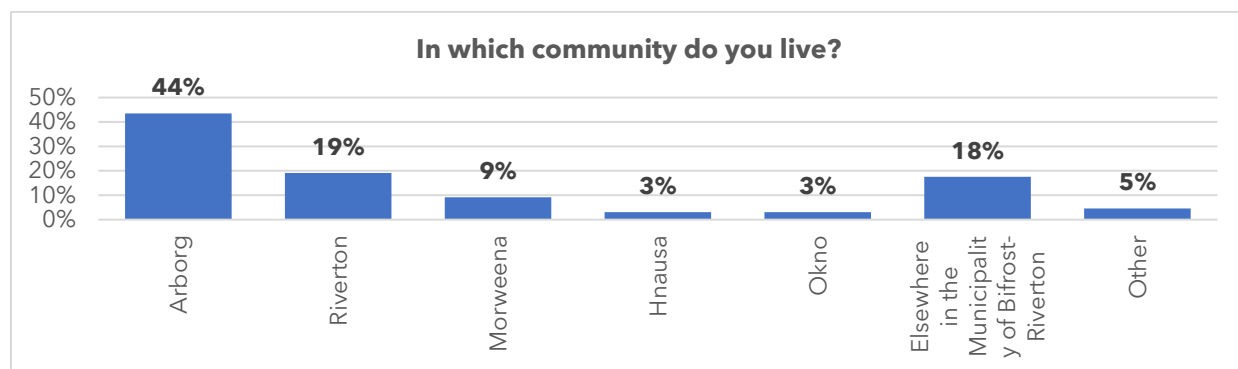
7.5 Community Survey

An online community-wide survey was used to determine residents' attitudes, preferences, priorities, and expectations about existing recreation programming and facilities in Arborg and Bifrost-Riverton. Survey questions focused on sorting out how residents want to spend their leisure time now and in the coming decades. The survey also carefully included questions related to satisfaction with the current condition and quantity of facilities, barriers to participating, willingness to pay (e.g. user fees), priorities for enhancing and/or developing facilities and programs in the future, and potential funding/financing methods.

A total of 131 residents responded to the online survey. The survey data is broken down by demographic characteristics to provide additional insight about user groups, geographic differences, and age cohorts. The survey was advertised through The Express newspaper, the municipalities' websites, and via email. The summary results of the survey are provided below, while the full survey report can be referenced in **Appendix E**.

7.5.1 Demographics

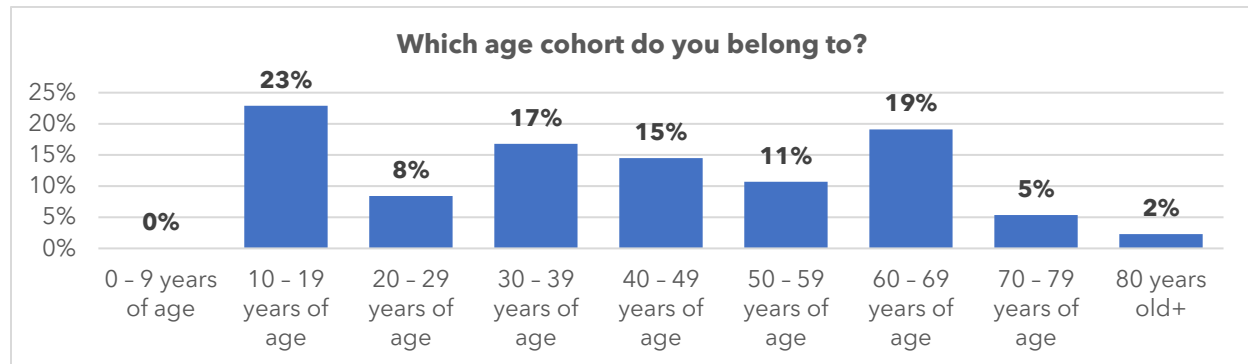
Of the 131 total survey respondents, most were from Arborg (57 respondents), followed by Riverton (25 respondents), and then those from elsewhere in the Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton (23 respondents). There were 12 respondents from Morweena, while Hnausa, and Okno each had 4 respondents respectively. Six respondents stated they were from "Other" (most of these responses came from those residing in the adjacent Rural Municipality of Fisher).



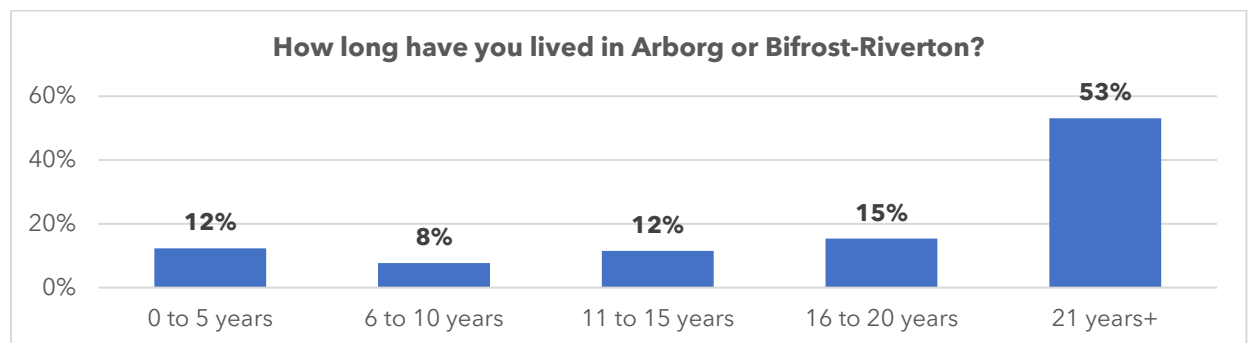
In terms of age, the largest respondent cohort included those between the ages of 10 and 19 years old (30 respondents), followed by those in the 60- to 69-year-old cohort (25

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respondents). Overall, a broad range of age cohorts participated in the Recreation Master Plan Survey, which was great to see.



In terms of tenure within the community, the majority of respondents who answered with question (69 of 130) indicated they have lived in the area for over 21 years, followed by those residing in the community for between 16 and 20 years (20 respondents). This speaks to the fact that the community is home to many long-term (and often life-long) residents.



7.5.2 Activities and Programming

7.5.2.1 Winter Activities/Programs

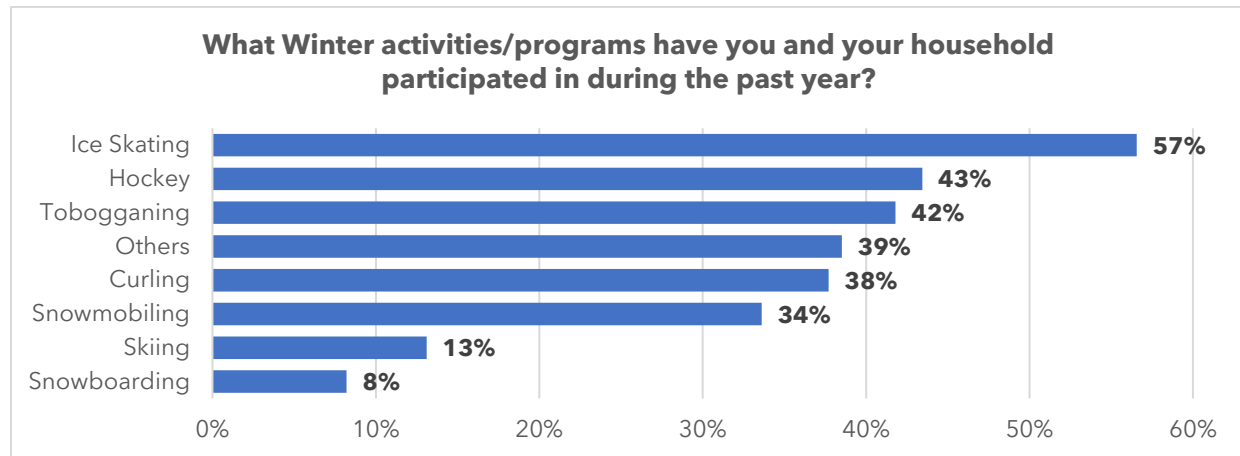
When survey participants were asked “what winter activities/programs have you or your household participated in during the past year (pre-COVID)?”, of the eight options listed, the top three options selected were “Ice Skating” (69 respondents), “Hockey” (53 respondents), and “Tobogganing” (51 respondents).

The breakdown by community showed minor differences for the top three winter activities/programs. The top three options for Arborg residents were “Ice Skating” (31 respondents), “Hockey” (25 respondents) and “Tobogganing” (24 respondents); the top three options for Riverton residents were “Others” (13 respondents), “Snowmobiling” (11 respondents), and “Ice Skating” (9 respondents); the top three options for the residents of Morweena, Hnaua, and Okno were “Ice Skating” (15 respondents), “Hockey” (14 respondents), and “Tobogganing” (11 respondents).

There was also a significant number of participants who selected the “Others” option (47 of 122 respondents) and indicated their participation in activities/programs such as “Ice

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Fishing” (7 times), “Pickleball” (5 times), “Broomball” (5 times), “Hiking” (3 times), and “Floor Curling” (3 times).

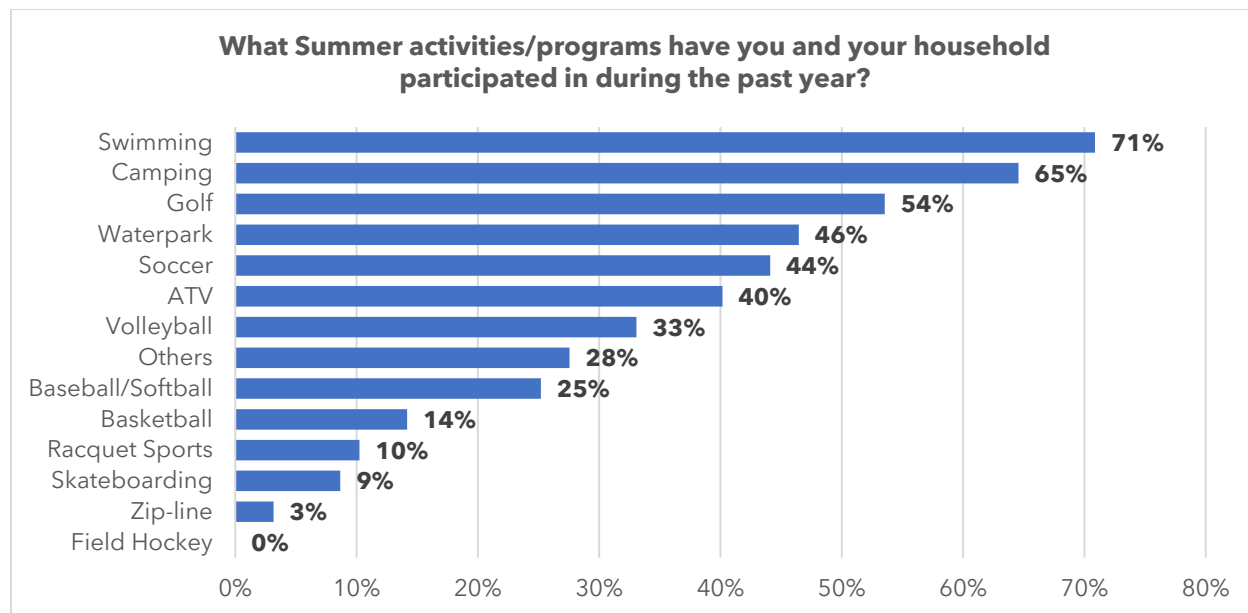


7.5.2.2 Summer Activities/Programs

When survey participants were asked “what summer activities/programs have you or your household participated in during the past year (pre-COVID)?”, of the 14 options listed, the top five options selected from 127 respondents were “Swimming” (90 respondents), “Camping” (82 respondents), “Golf” (68 respondents), “Waterpark” (59 respondents), and “Soccer” (56 respondents).

The breakdown by community showed minor differences for the top five summer activities/programs. The top five options for Arborg residents were “Swimming” (42 respondents), “Waterpark” (33 respondents), “Camping” (31 respondents), “Soccer” (28 respondents), and “Golf” (27 respondents); the top five options for Riverton residents were “Camping” (19 respondents), “Golf” (13 respondents), “Swimming” (13 respondents), “ATV” (10 respondents), and “Others” (9 respondents); the top five options for the residents of Morweena, Hnasa, and Okno were “Swimming” (16 respondents), “Soccer” (14 respondents), “Volleyball” (11 respondents), “Camping” (13 respondents), and “Golf” (11 respondents).

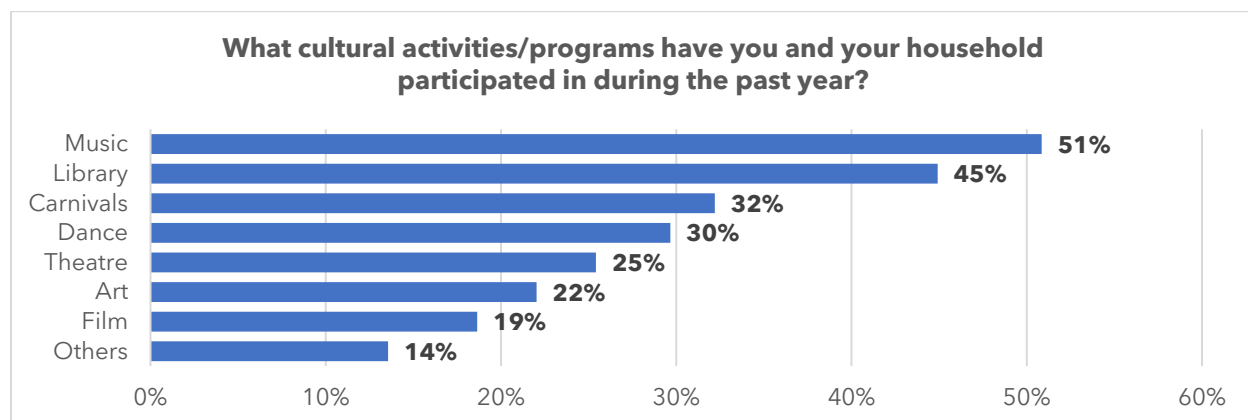
Of all the participants who selected the “Others” option (35 of 127 respondents), the top answers indicated preferences for activities/programs such as “Hiking” (6 times), “Kayaking” (5 times), “Pickleball” (3 times), “Bicycling” (3 times), and “Dancing” (3 times).



7.5.2.3 Cultural Activities/Programs

When survey participants were asked “what cultural activities/programs have you or your household participated in during the past year (pre-COVID)?”, of the eight options listed, the top three options selected from 118 respondents were “Music” (60 respondents), “Library” (53 respondents), and “Carnivals” (38 respondents). The mentions for “Other” cultural activities/programs focussed on outdoor events such as “Festivals” and “Rodeo” and those activities/programs held in all seasons.

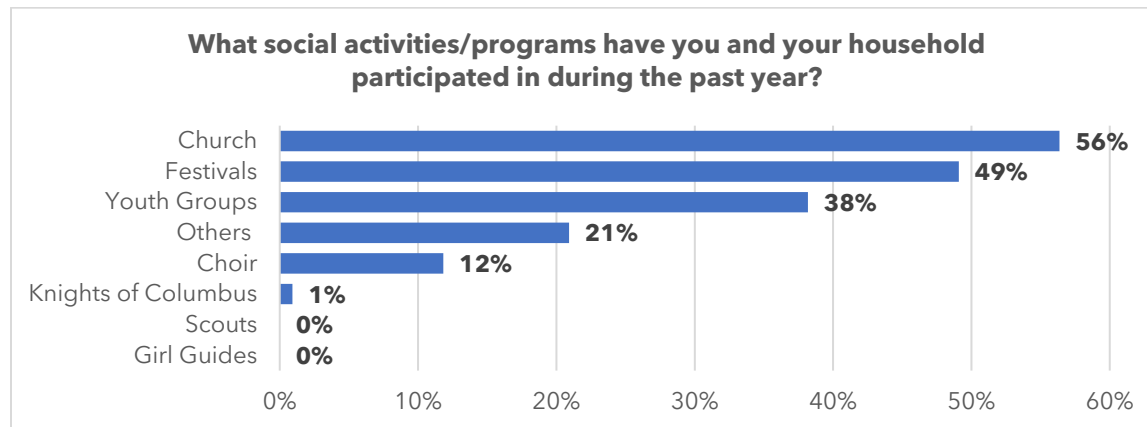
The breakdown by community showed minor differences for the top three cultural activities/programs. The top three options for Arborg residents were “Library” (27 respondents), “Music” (25 respondents), and “Dance” (18 respondents); the top three options for Riverton residents were “Music” (10 respondents), “Dance” (9 respondents), and “Library” (9 respondents). The top three options for the residents of Morweena, Hnaua, and Okno were “Music” (13 respondents), “Theatre” (6 respondents), and “Library” (6 respondents).



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7.5.2.4 Social Activities/Programs

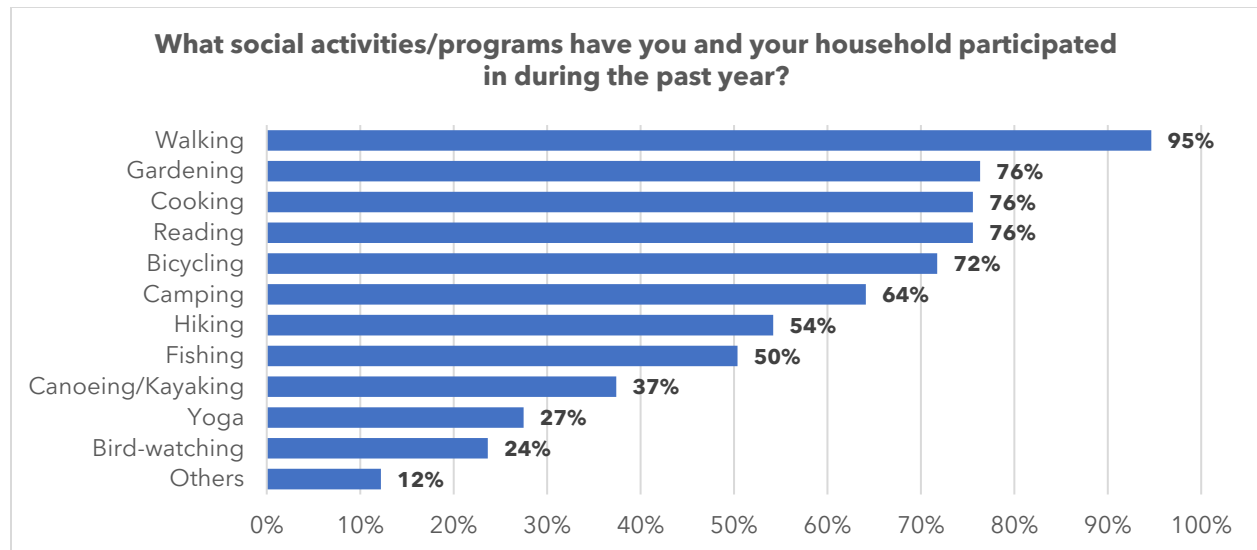
When survey participants were asked “what social activities/programs have you or your household participated in during the past year (pre-COVID)?”, of the eight options listed, the top three options selected from 110 respondents were “Church” (62 respondents), “Festivals” (54 respondents), and “Youth Groups” (42 respondents). There were no significant differences by community for the top three social activities/programs by community. The notable “Other” social activities/programs included “Fundraising Events” and various “Community”, “Committee”, “Elks of Canada (Riverton Elks)”, and “Freemasonry” meetings and activities.



7.5.2.5 Individual Leisure Activities/Programs

When survey participants were asked “what individual leisure activities/programs have you or your household participated in during the past year (pre-COVID)?”, of the 12 options listed, the top five options selected from 131 respondents were “Walking” (124 respondents), “Gardening” (100 respondents), “Cooking” (99 respondents), “Reading” (99 respondents), and “Bicycling” (94 respondents). The breakdown by community showed little difference for the top five individual leisure activities/programs. In all communities, “Camping” or “Canoe/Kayaking” are a close top sixth or seventh option. In terms of “Other” individual leisure activities/programs, running was the only repeat response.

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7.5.2.6 Desired Activities/Programs for Arborg Bifrost-Riverton

When asked “what activities/programs would you like to have in Arborg and Bifrost-Riverton that are not already available?”, a diversity of answers was provided by 102 respondents:



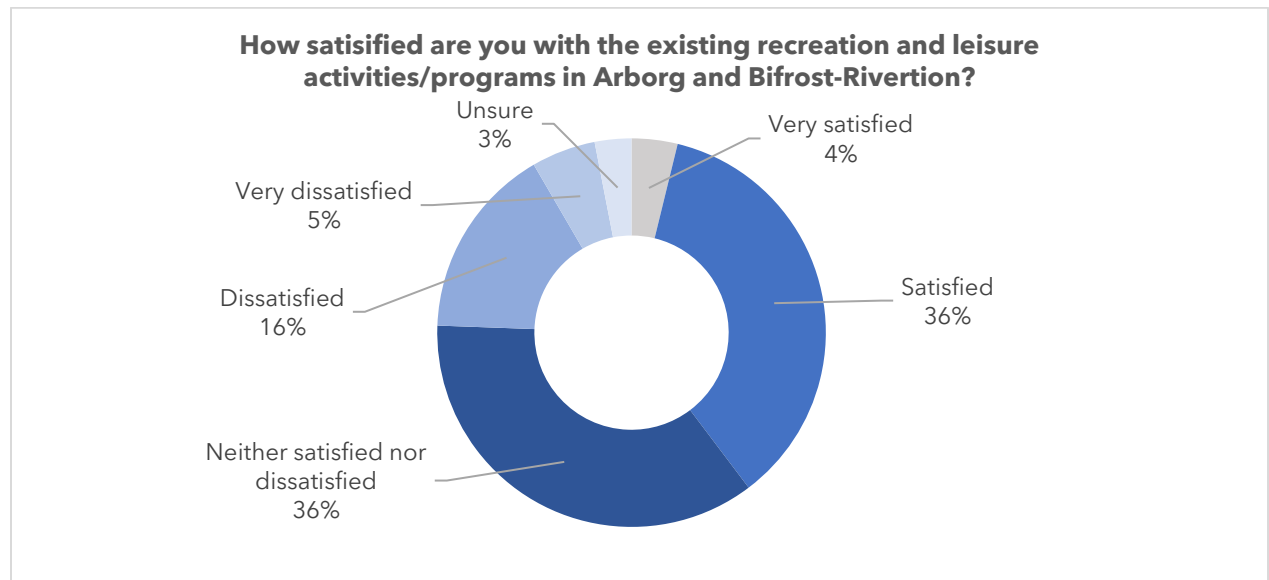
There was a significant number of responses that focussed on activities/programs in “Park” spaces (20 times), as well as a strong desire from residents for “Gym/Fitness” related activities/programs (10 times). Other notable mentions were “Soccer” (9 times), “Arts” (8 times), and “Dance” (7 times) which matched “Bowling” (7 times) to round the top five activities/programs residents would you like to have in Arborg and Bifrost-Riverton that are not already available.

7.5.2.7 Satisfaction with Activities/Programs for Arborg and Bifrost-Riverton

When asked, “how satisfied are you with the existing recreation and leisure activities/programs in Arborg and Bifrost-Riverton?”, of the 131 respondents, an equal amount of participants stated that they were “Satisfied” (47 respondents – 36%) and “Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied” (47 respondents – 36%). Overall, (when the neutral and

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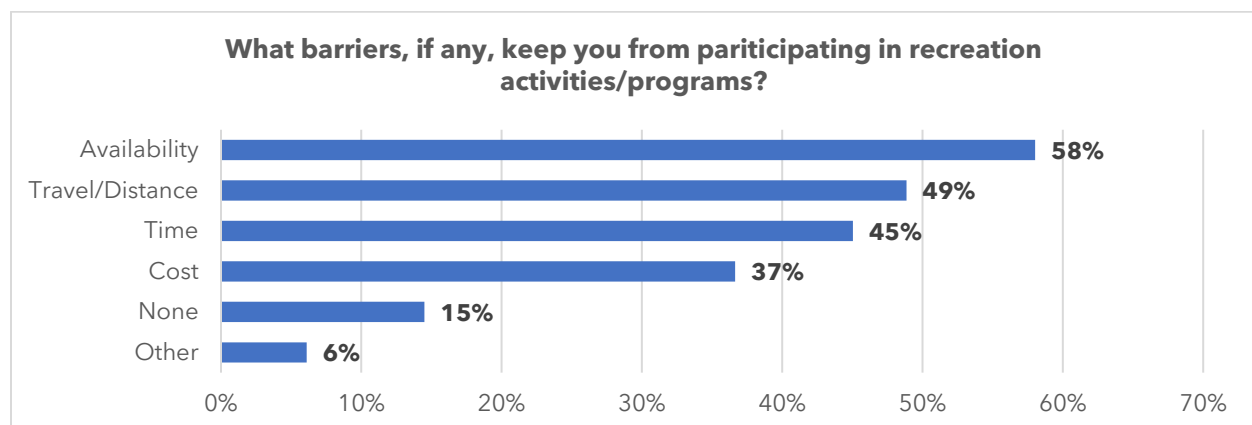
“Unsure” responses are taken out of the equation) 40% of respondents were “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” in contrast to 21% of respondents who were “Dissatisfied” or “Very Dissatisfied”.



The breakdown by community did not reveal any major differences in the top two answers. However, in Arborg, Riverton, and the combined communities of Morweena, Hnaua, and Okno, the percentage of those respondents who were “Satisfied” were 35%, 44%, and 55%, respectively. The younger age cohorts and (10 to 19 years of age) and older age cohorts (those 60 years of age and older) tended to be most satisfied with the existing activities and programs within the community; those between the ages of 20 and 50 tended to be more neutral (with ‘neither satisfied nor dissatisfied’ being the top response).

7.5.3 Barriers to Participating in Recreation Activities/Programs

When participants were asked, “what barriers, if any, keep you from participating in recreation activities/programs?”, the majority of the 131 respondents stated, from six options, that “Availability” (76 respondents) was their greatest barrier, followed by “Travel/Distance” (64 respondents), and then “Time” (59 respondents).



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The breakdown by community showed minor differences for the barriers that keep residents from participating in recreation activities/programs. While the top three barriers for residents in Arborg and residents in Bifrost-Riverton remained the same overall, in the communities of Morweena, Hnaua, and Okno, one of the top three barriers included “Cost” (11 responses) as stated by 55% of respondents in these three communities.

When breaking down that data further with respect to annual household income, households in Arborg and Bifrost-Riverton earning less than \$70,000 per year (34 respondents) selected as their top three barriers: “Availability” (19 responses), “Cost” (17 responses), and “Time” (16 responses). Those with household incomes higher than \$70,000 (62 respondents), selected as their top three barriers: “Availability” (37 respondents), “Time” (29 respondents), and “Travel/Distance” (26 respondents). Understandably, respondents with lower annual household incomes indicated “Cost” as a major barrier to participating in recreation activities/programs.

Comparing the barriers by age cohort, of the top two cohorts who participated in the survey, those 10 to 19 years of age (30 respondents) indicated their top three barriers as “Travel/Distance” (22 respondents), “Cost” (20 respondents), and “Time” (15 respondents). While those 60 to 69 years of age (25 respondents) stated their top three barriers as “Availability” (16 respondents) “Time” (11 respondents) and “Travel/Distance” (10 respondents). In the age cohorts in between, the top three barriers for those 20 to 49 years of age (52 respondents) were “Availability” (33 respondents), “Time” (25 respondents), and “Travel/Distance” (25 respondents).

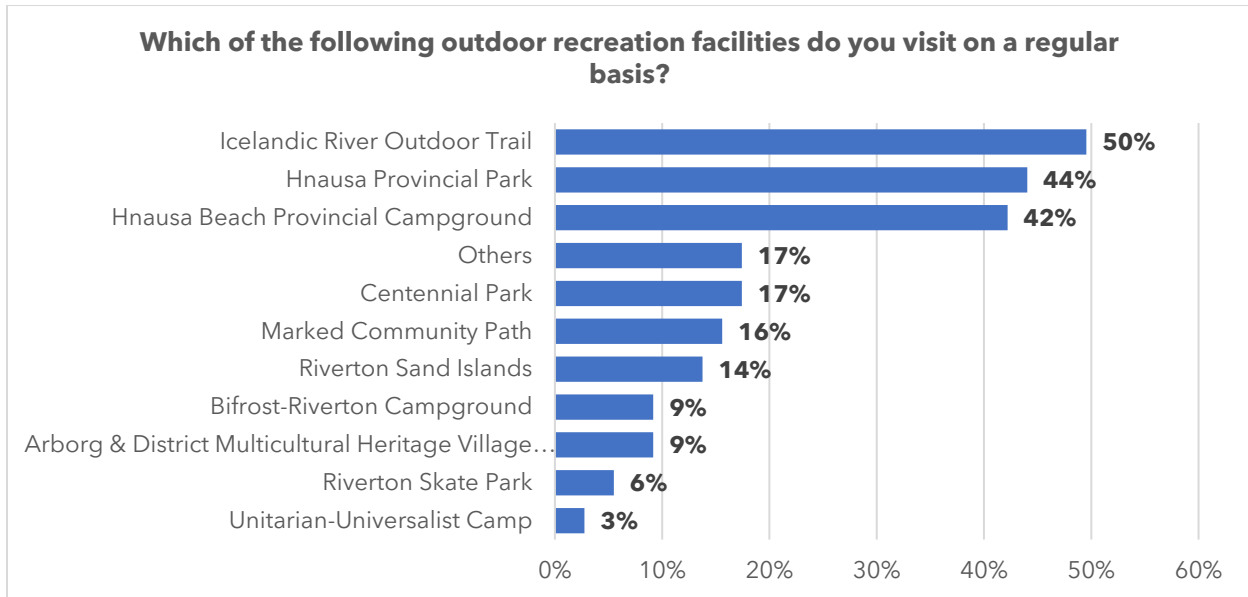
The data shows that regardless of age, “Availability” of activities/programs was perceived as the greatest barrier for residents in Arborg and Bifrost-Riverton.

7.5.4 Facilities

7.5.4.1 Outdoor Recreation Facilities

Respondents were asked “which of the following outdoor recreation facilities do you visit on a regular basis?” The results are as follows:

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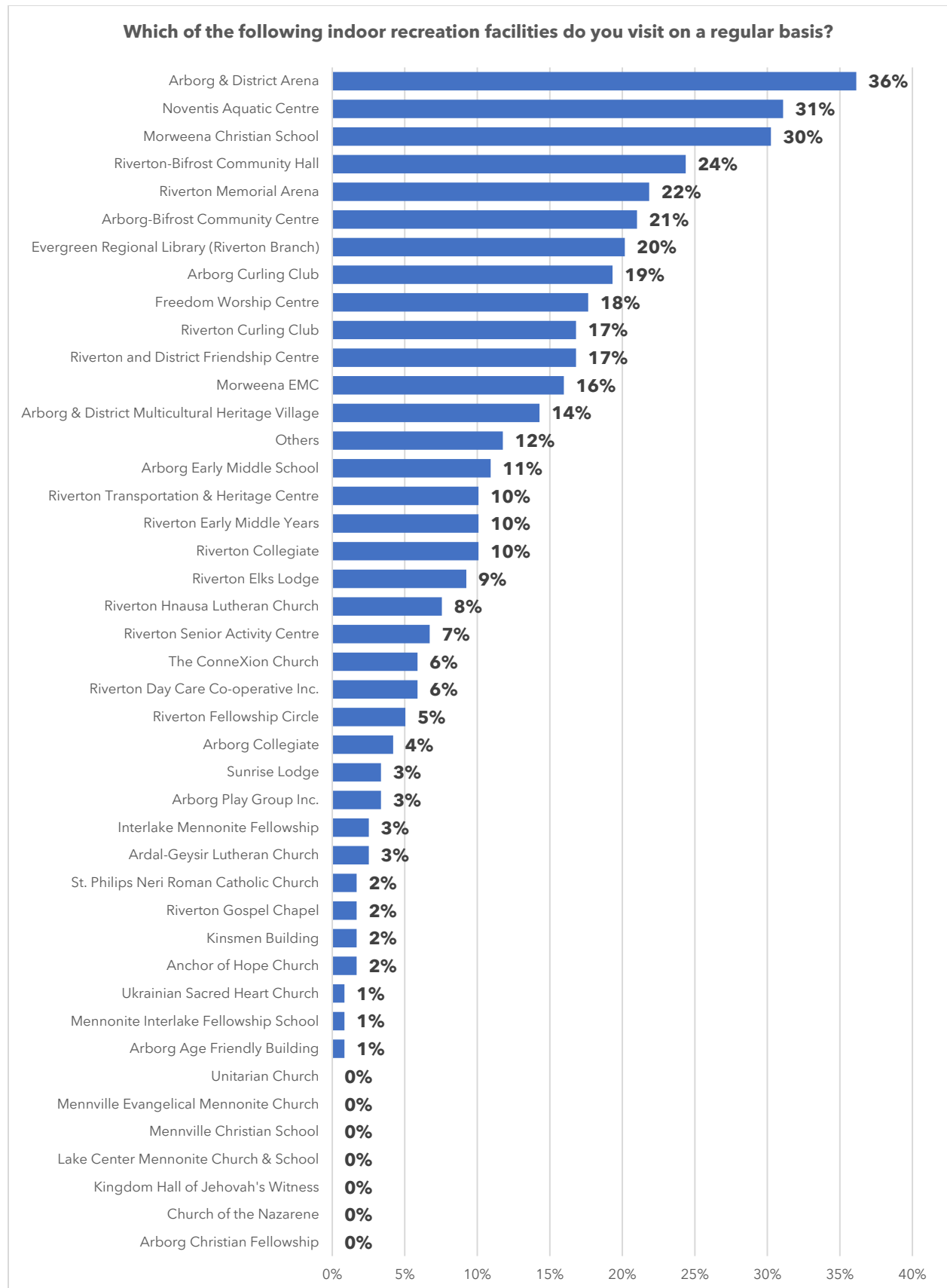


The Icelandic River Outdoor Trail was the most popular response for both Arborg and Riverton Residents, while the Hnausa Provincial Park was the top response from those in the smaller communities of Bifrost-Riverton. Other outdoor facilities mentioned in “others” included the Sandy Bar Beach, the Noventis Aquatic Centre, and variance walking trails in Arborg and Bifrost-Riverton.

7.5.4.2 Indoor Recreation Facilities

Respondents were asked “which of the following indoor recreation facilities do you visit on a regular basis?” Of the 43 options listed, the results were as follows:

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Other indoor facilities not listed on the survey but noted by respondents included a childcare centre, youth drop-in facility, seniors and assisted living facilities, the Creative Cocoon arts and wellness centre, and a faith-based institution.

7.5.4.3 Desired Facilities or Infrastructure for Arborg Bifrost-Riverton

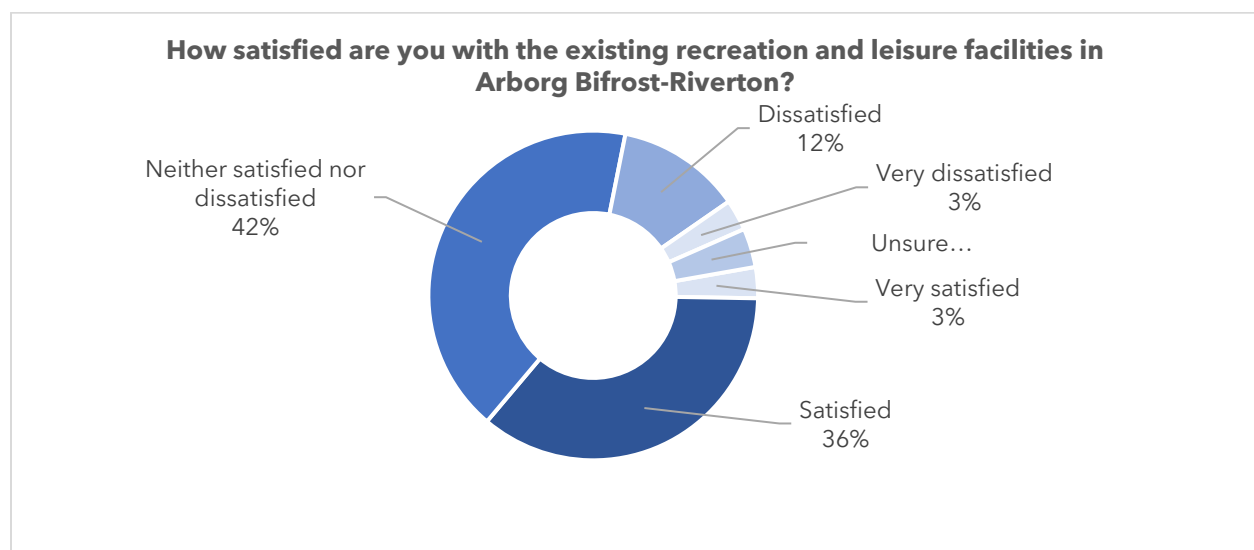
When respondents were asked, “what facilities or infrastructure would you like to have in Arborg Bifrost-Riverton that are not currently available?”, a balanced list of indoor and outdoor facilities were mentioned:



The top two responses by a wide margin were a gym/fitness centre, and a park. These were followed by expanded trail networks (for walking, running, skating and cycling), a skate park, an upgraded soccer field, a play structure, and a pickleball court.

7.5.4.4 Satisfaction of Indoor and Outdoor Recreation Facilities in Arborg Bifrost-Riverton

Finally, when asked, “how satisfied are you with the existing recreation and leisure facilities in Arborg Bifrost-Riverton?”, 42% respondents stated they were “Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied” and 36% respondents stated there were “Satisfied” with the existing facilities in the area.



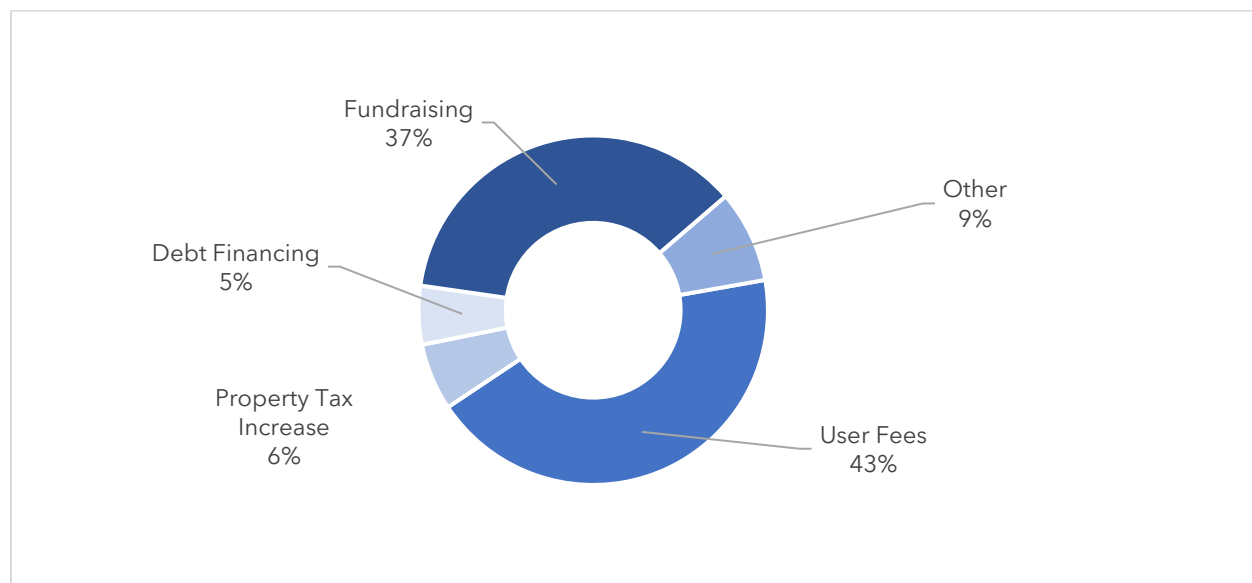
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A summary of the explanations from respondents who were “Dissatisfied” or “Very Dissatisfied” with the facilities in Arborg and Bifrost-Riverton stated there was a lack of facilities dedicated for seniors or youths, lack of a park, lack of a gym/fitness facility, lack of year-round facilities, lack of cultural facilities, lack of funding to upkeep facilities, and poor pedestrian infrastructure. Even respondents who were “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” with the facilities in Arborg and Bifrost-Riverton stated there was lack of capacity at facilities, lack of maintenance at facilities, as well as lack of quality kitchen amenities within facilities.

7.5.5 Willingness to Pay

7.5.5.1 Preferred Method to Finance Recreation Programs and Facilities

When asked “if additional funds were needed to develop recreation programs and facilities, what is your preferred method of financing?”, 43% of respondents indicated that “User Fees” were their preferred method, followed by “Fundraising” by 36% of respondents. Those who answered “Other” (9%) mentioned the possibility for a combination of methods to finance recreation and programming in Arborg and Bifrost-Riverton.



When asked, “Are you willing to pay higher taxes to fund recreation in your community?”, 41% answered “No”, followed by 30% of respondents who said they were “Unsure” and 29% of respondents answered “Yes”. This was actually more balanced than expected, as surveys in other jurisdictions tend to show a strong aversion to raising taxes, regardless of the rationale.

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Top Priorities	Mentions
Gym/Fitness Centre	17
Variety of Activities/Programs	14
Communication of Recreation Opportunities	13
Maintenance/Upgrades to Facilities	11
Park	11
Soccer	10
Trail Development (e.g. walking, running, skating, skiing, etc.)	10
Children-family Facilities and Activities/Programs	7
Affordable Recreation Facilities Costs and Activities/Programs	6
Curling Rink	6
Arena Facility and Improvements	6
Efficient Use of Existing Facilities	5
Sports Activities/Programs	5
Senior-friendly Facilities and Activities/Programs	5
Family-friendly Facilities and Activities/Programs	5
Skatepark	4
Rink (indoor/outdoor)	4
Year-round Activities/Programs	4
Play Structure	3
Kitchen Facilities and/or Upgrades	3
Collaboration and Cooperation	3
Hockey Rink Facility and/or Upgrades	3
Safety	3
Youth-friendly Facilities and Activities/Programs	3
Splash Park	2
Indoor Pool	2
Arts Centre	2
Washroom Facilities and/or Upgrades	2
Coordination	2
Leisure Activities/Programs	2
Bowling Alley	2
Indoor Water Park	1
Cross-Country Ski Trail	1
Evening Classes	1
Community Engagement	1
Snowshoe Trail	1
Ice Plant	1
Community Suppers	1
Music Theatre	1
Fire Pit	1
Picnic Area	1
Floor Curling/Shuffleboard	1
Certified Instructors	1

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The top three priorities for respondents were to provide Arborg Bifrost-Riverton residents a gym/fitness centre facility, a variety of activities/programs to choose from, and improved communications of recreation opportunities in the area. In terms of facilities, other than a gym/fitness centre, respondents prioritized the need for a park, soccer fields, outdoor trails, and a curling rink to round off their top five.

At the same time, respondents want to ensure that existing facilities are well-maintained, clean, safe, inviting or upgraded. Several respondents noted their desire for existing facilities to be used more efficiently, either by repurposing or adapting the spaces for multiple uses.

In terms of priorities for types of activities/programs, other than a desire for a variety and diversity of options, respondents stated that they wished for child-friendly and affordable/low-cost sports, as well as family-friendly and senior-friendly activities/programs.

Lastly, with regards to the delivery of recreation activities/programs and managing or operating recreation facilities in Arborg and Bifrost-Riverton, communication is key. Respondents want improved awareness of recreation opportunities, as well as better promotion, advertising, and outreach to local residents. Several spoke of the need to have more collaboration and cooperation between Riverton and Arborg, as well as more effective coordination between the two Commissions.

8 Recreation Vision

One of the key tasks of the recreation planning process was to devise a recreation vision for Arborg and Bifrost-Riverton. The vision, which will still need to receive buy-in from both Recreation Commissions, was developed through the discussions with both recreation commissions, input from key stakeholders, the review of the existing policy context, and feedback received from over 130 residents who filled out the recreation survey.

Recreation Vision:

The residents of Arborg and Bifrost-Riverton value recreation and the quality-of-life benefits that it affords. Residents are grateful for the robust offerings of local activities and programs, and want to see them expanded and/or strengthened. Residents want to see opportunities offered to community members of all ages and abilities, including opportunities to bridge the gap between seniors and youth. Some note the need to attract visitors, seasonal residents, tourists and neighbours from adjacent municipalities in order to better utilize existing facilities and bolster existing programs. Residents want recreation to be accessible, inclusive, and fun.

In terms of facilities, residents are proud of the locally-owned and supported arenas, curling clubs, and community halls in both communities. They want their local councils and commissions to be proactive in planning and budgeting to ensure that regular maintenance is performed and money set aside for major repairs/upgrades – the goal is

to preserve these community assets for the future generations, without needing to shut down or consolidate facilities in either community. The aquatic centre is a welcome addition to the community as well, and the spin-off benefits have been noted. Many note the need to increase utilization of existing facilities, either through adaptive re-use, repurposing, or by increasing programming and participation.

There has been a noted desire for flexibility in programming, including opportunities for drop-in or pick-up type activities with lesser time commitments to accommodate busier schedules and lifestyles. Many also noted the need to increase awareness of existing programming and activities, through the use of online calendars, databases, program inventories and contact lists, as well as a leisure guide.

Residents agree that the Icelandic River is a major asset that could be further capitalized upon, whether through winter activities like skating, skiing and snowshoeing, or through summer activities such as expanded pathways, fishing derbies, and kayaking. Many want to see the pedestrian and cycling network expanded, whether through the addition of sidewalks and pathways, or the extension of existing infrastructure.

Many noted the need to expand and support arts and cultural programming, in part by helping arts groups and organizations find permanent homes for their activities. Others noted the need to promote civic pride and community by hosting more social and cultural events, such as the dances, socials and reunion days of years past.

Finally, residents acknowledge the many challenges with recreation in smaller communities, including lack of funding, distance, costs, and the decline in volunteerism. They would like to see efforts made to recruit, retain, and recognize volunteers, to help avoid burnout and the ensure a smooth transfer of knowledge to the next generation.

9 Financial Considerations

9.1 Funding and Financing – Current Model

9.1.1 Budget Allocation

Both the Town of Arborg and the Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton have increased their budget allocations as it relates to recreation and cultural services from 2019 to 2020. In their respective budgets for 2020, the Town of Arborg allocated \$300,503 for recreation (an increase of over \$85,000 from 2019) while the Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton allocated \$414,282 to recreation in 2020 (an increase of almost \$75,000 over 2019).

In terms of funding the two Recreation Commissions, the structure is relatively unique among the comparison communities that were examined. While the facilities in Riverton are funded through the Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton (each facility receives \$14,000 annually from the Commission), the facilities in Arborg are cost-shared by both the Town of Arborg and the Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton on a 50-50 basis.

9.1.2 Town of Arborg Budgeted Revenue and Expenditure

GENERAL OPERATING FUND BUDGETED REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE				
TOWN OF ARBORG FOR THE YEAR 2020				
REVENUE	2019 Budget	2019 Actual	2020 Budget	2021 Budget
Tax Levy - Page 8	\$ 1,681,243.01	\$ 1,681,243.69	\$ 1,669,473.18	
Grants in Lieu of Taxes - Page 8	149,815.00	149,815.02	145,131.38	
Sub-Total	1,831,058.01	1,831,058.71	1,814,604.56	
Requisitions (deduct) - Page 8	892,035.00	892,034.65	703,517.00	
Net Municipal Taxes and Grants in Lieu of Taxes	1,139,023.01	1,139,024.06	1,111,087.56	1,277,801.00
Other Revenue - Page 2	515,577.90	633,010.97	636,585.80	484,712.00
Transfers from Accum. Surplus and Reserves - Page 2	329,500.00	172,285.00	276,500.00	85,000.00
Total Revenue	\$1,984,100.91	\$1,945,128.03	\$2,024,163.46	\$1,857,513.00
EXPENDITURE				
General Government Services	\$ 294,205.00	\$ 269,626.66	\$ 283,865.00	\$ 279,100.00
Protective Services	291,655.00	285,649.31	291,660.00	292,500.00
Transportation Services	214,800.00	193,174.15	233,975.00	220,900.00
Environmental Health Services	123,083.00	110,665.66	116,218.00	126,000.00
Public Health & Welfare Services	50,670.00	51,401.11	50,905.00	49,670.00
Environmental Development Services	28,170.00	20,643.01	21,280.00	24,900.00
Economic Development Services	43,215.00	17,255.52	34,555.00	42,000.00
Recreation & Cultural Services	215,451.00	226,090.22	300,503.00	256,500.00
Fiscal Services	508,786.36	444,845.66	541,286.44	431,627.00
Transfers:				
Deferred Surplus - Page 9	-	-	-	-
Reserves - Page 5	213,302.00	319,178.00	146,302.00	134,316.00
Total Basic Expenditure	\$1,981,337.36	\$1,838,432.32	\$2,020,449.44	\$1,857,513.00
Allowance for Tax Assets - Page 8	\$ 2,763.55	\$ 3,763.55	\$ 3,734.02	\$ -
Total Expenditure - Page 8	\$1,984,100.91	\$1,942,195.87	\$2,024,183.46	\$1,857,513.00
Net Operating Surplus (Deficit)	\$ -	\$ 2,932.16	\$ -	\$ -

Source: <https://townofarbrog.com/local-government/files-documents/category/23-bylaws?download=246:2020-financial-plan>

9.1.3 Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton Budgeted Revenue and Expenditure

GENERAL OPERATING FUND BUDGETED REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton For the Year 2020				
	Previous Year (2019)		Current Year 2020	Next Year (2021)
	Total Budget	Total Actual	Total Budget	Total Budget
Tax Levy - Page 8	3,384,148.81	3,376,958.80	3,705,942.70	3,942,416.27
Grants in Lieu of Taxes - Page 8	97,748.25	97,798.95	185,291.50	105,291.50
Municipal Taxes and Grants in Lieu of Taxes	3,481,897.06	3,474,757.75	3,891,234.20	4,047,707.77
Other Revenue - Page 10	967,303.00	1,200,943.11	960,725.00	915,947.00
Transfers from Accumulated Surplus & Reserves - Page 2	1,168,000.00	864,238.70	518,089.00	0.00
Deficit Reportioning (Grading Leases / Donor fees)	(7,431.54)		(6,972.34)	(6,972.34)
TOTAL MUNICIPAL REVENUE	5,604,668.52	5,539,939.56	5,257,531.28	4,964,682.63
General Government Services	700,885.00	662,949.11	538,110.00	689,174.50
Protective Services	288,120.00	287,074.30	287,785.00	244,847.95
Transportation Services	2,021,795.00	2,116,756.38	2,228,288.00	2,268,410.00
Environmental Health Services	222,660.00	212,421.33	215,180.00	221,119.50
Public Health and Welfare Services	23,320.00	31,205.43	32,308.00	31,175.27
Environmental Development Services	23,575.00	23,888.00	24,821.00	25,888.63
Economic Development Services	114,229.00	106,803.18	127,429.00	133,519.67
Recreation and Cultural Services	340,405.00	370,670.70	414,282.00	426,710.48
Fiscal Services	1,020,400.00	821,054.32	1,108,182.07	91,499.07
Transfers - Debt Recovery - Page 9	58,435.00	58,435.00	66,435.00	58,436.00
Transfers - To Reserve - Page 7	438,793.00	862,801.30	70,380.00	-21,793.00
Total Basic Expenditure	5,894,597.00	5,235,769.18	5,257,101.07	4,985,728.05
Allowance For Tax Assets - Page 8	11,109.53	11,109.64	430.18	430.19
TOTAL MUNICIPAL EXPENDITURE	5,904,696.53	5,236,878.82	5,257,531.28	4,986,158.24
Net Operating Surplus (Deficit)	(0.01)	1,288.44	0.00	288,524.39

		Departmental Use Only	
Adopted by Resolution of Council	Head of Council		
Date:	Chief Administrative Officer		

Source: <https://bifrostriverton.ca/attachments/article/656/2020%20Financial%20Plan%20-%20Final.pdf>

9.2 Capital Costs

Capital costs for recreation infrastructure generally vary more widely year over year, due to the nature of infrastructure provision. Capital improvements, such as major renovations and repairs, are critical to ensuring the ongoing viability and safety of major recreation facilities such as arenas, curling clubs, and community halls. However, quite often the necessary major repairs (e.g. replacements of roofs, ice plants, and boilers) are not budgeted for, and capital reserve funds are either underfunded or non-existent. Further, many municipalities note that their own capital funding for recreation infrastructure is

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often tied to provincial (and sometimes, federal) grants – in cases where grant applications are not approved for funding (or levels of government cut back on funding), municipalities hesitate to allocate scarce budget resources to big ticket capital improvements.

9.2.1 Town of Arborg Capital Budget

CAPITAL BUDGET 2019							
Part 1 - CAPITAL EXPENDITURES							
Particulars of Expenditure	Estimated Total Cost	Borne By General Fund	Borne By Utility Fund	Borne By Reserve Fund	Borne By Borrowing	Borne By Conditional Sale	Other
Sidewalk Renewal	\$ 52,500			\$ 52,500			
Multi-Surface Lawn & Litter Vacuum	\$ 4,000			\$ 4,000			
Drainage	\$ 40,000			\$ 40,000			
Library Cedar Shingle Replacement	\$ 80,000			\$ 65,000			\$ 25,000
Recreation Centre Parking Lot	\$ 200,000			\$ 105,000			\$ 95,000
Sub-Total - General Fund	\$ 376,500	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 256,500	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 120,000
WTP Upgrades - Phase 2	\$ 3,000		\$ 3,000				
Sub-Total - Utility Fund	\$ 3,000	\$ -	\$ 3,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total	\$ 379,500	\$ -	\$ 3,000	\$ 256,500	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 120,000
	Total to Page 5		\$ 3,000	Total to Page 6	\$ 256,500	Part 2	\$ -
						Part 3	\$ -
						Part 3	\$ 120,000

Source: <https://townofarborg.com/local-government/files-documents/category/23-by-laws?download=246:2020-financial-plan>

9.2.2 Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton Capital Budget

For the Year 2020					
Part 1 - CAPITAL EXPENDITURES					
Particulars of Expenditure	Estimated Total Cost	Borne by General Fund	Borne by Utility Fund	Borne by Reserves	Borne by Borrowing
2019 Incomplete Drainage Projects	116,089.00			116,089.00	
Road Rehabilitation	320,500.00	181,793.00		138,707.00	
Centennial Park Revitalization	10,000.00			10,000.00	
Fire Department Camera System	3,000.00	3,000.00			
Fire Truck Purchase (Arborg FD)	75,000.00			75,000.00	
Graders	908,410.00	225,000.00		100,000.00	583,410.00
Hrausa Cottage Development - Preconstruction	7,500.00			7,500.00	
Lagoon Repairs	200,000.00				200,000.00
Lease Pymt SCBA's	43,600.00	37,000.00		6,600.00	
RTHC Expansion	20,000.00			20,000.00	
Riverton Firehall Land and Base	79,900.00				79,900.00
Riverton Mower	24,000.00	24,000.00			
Sandy Bay Washrooms	35,000.00			35,000.00	
Snow Wing	10,000.00			10,000.00	
Storage Shop Renovation	3,000.00	3,000.00			
Street Lights	5,000.00	5,000.00			
Truck (13,000 from MPT)	17,000.00	17,000.00			
	1,877,999.00				
TOTAL		495,793.00			
		Page 7	0.00		
		Page 10		518,898.00	
		Part 2			863,310.00

Source: <https://bifrostriverton.ca/attachments/article/656/2020%20Financial%20Plan%20-%20Final.pdf>

9.3 Funding Programs and Grants

Aside from Municipal funding and user fees, there are a variety of Federal, Provincial, and non-profit grants and funding programs available to support recreation programming and facilities in Manitoba. Each of these programs has differing eligibility criteria, objectives, and funding levels. Often, a combination of these funding sources (as well as traditional means such as sponsorships, fundraising, and donations) can make all the difference in the provision of recreation in smaller and rural communities. The following table outlines the funding sources available, a program description, who can apply, eligible project types, maximum funding available (both cost-share maximums and absolute dollar maximums), and intake timelines. A detailed version of the chart is available in **Appendix F**.

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Funding/Financing Source	Description	Who Can Apply			Eligible Projects/Costs		Funding		Intake Frequency
		Municipalities	Non-Profit	Charity	Businesses	Individuals	Project Type	Max. Grant % Available	
Government of Canada	A list of 40 Government of Canada funding opportunities related to culture, history and sport.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies
Healthy School Grants	Supports projects within the school environment that promotes health and wellness amongst school-aged children.	Yes (School Divisions)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$5,000 +\$2.06 per student	Provincial Grant	Annually (October)
Building Sustainable Communities	Helps build thriving sustainable communities that provide a high quality of life for Manitobans.	Yes	Yes	Yes	n/a	Planning Activities, Capacity Building, Community/Regional Initiatives, Event Hosting, Capital Infrastructure, Equipment.	\$75,000	Provincial Grant	Annually (January)
Recreation Opportunities - Partners in Leisure	The program encourages communities to work together, to hire full-time recreation directors and to provide community recreation services.	Yes (10,000 population)	n/a	n/a	n/a	Varies	RMs and non-industrial LGDs are required to contribute a minimum \$2.50 per capita. The Province will match per capita funding to the lesser of \$5.50 per capita, or \$5,500.00	Provincial Grant	Continuous
Hometown Green Team	Green Team grants are awarded to non-profit organizations and municipal governments in Rural Manitoba to hire youth between the ages of 15 and 29 to work on community projects between May and August.	Yes	Yes	n/a	n/a	Children/youth recreation, grounds maintenance, public works, conservation, trail enhancement, community beautification, community gardens and public education.	Provincial Grant	Annually (Spring)	
Conservation and Climate Fund	Provides support to projects occurring in Manitoba that incorporate actions to combat and adapt to climate change and protect the environment in alignment with the priorities and implementation of the Manitoba Climate and Green Plan.	Yes (Incorporated)	Yes	n/a	n/a	Fit within one or more of the three Categories of the Fund: Climate and Green Technology, Water and Nature and Resilient Landscape Funding for Project development and execution, staffing/salaries, etc.	\$200,000	Provincial Grant	Annually (July)
Heritage Grants Program	The Heritage Grants Program helps Manitobans identify, protect and interpret Manitoba's human and natural heritage.	Yes (Incorporated)	Yes	Yes	n/a	Collections Management, Conservation, Exhibitions, and programs that seek to identify, protect or interpret Manitoba's human and natural heritage.	n/a	Provincial Grant	Annually (Jan/June)
Community Futures - Building Interlake Growth Regionally	The program will support partnership municipalities/towns/villages in the region to undertake regional community economic development projects within East Interlake region.	Yes	n/a	n/a	n/a	Community plans, market analysis (community profiles, projects that demonstrate economic impact.	\$50,000 +matched funds	Regional Grant	Annually (May)
Federation of Canadian Municipalities: Green Municipal Fund (Capital project: Transportation networks and commuting)	We offer combined loan and grant funding for capital projects that reduce pollution in Canadian communities by improving transportation systems and networks or encouraging people to switch to less polluting transportation options.	Yes (and project partners)	n/a	n/a	n/a	Pre-application, admin, advertising, audit, capital, road and servicing costs, equipment rental, engagement, services, transportation costs, travel/accommodation.	low-interest loan of up to \$5 million and a grant worth up to 15% of the loan, cover up to 80% of your eligible costs.	Loan/Grant	Continuous
Innovation Credit Union Community Grant Program	We're passionate about funding local projects that leave a long-lasting impact in the communities we serve. For Innovation Credit Union member in good standing.	Yes	n/a	Yes	n/a	For one-off project-based proposals in which financial assistance is required to start something new or to assist with large purchases that are not normally possible.	\$25,000	Grant	Annually (Jan-July)
Farm Credit Canada AgriSpirit Fund	The FCC AgriSpirit Fund supports rural communities across Canada on a project that will enhance lives or contribute to sustainability in your rural community (fewer than 150,000 people).	Yes	Yes	Yes	n/a	Capital and sustainability projects.	\$25,000	Grant	Annually (March)
Tire Stewardship Manitoba	Provides funding for the use of recycled tire products made from Manitoba tires in projects delivered by local governments, post-secondary and research institutions, community and youth groups.	Yes	Yes	n/a	n/a	Projects for use of recycled tire products made from Manitoba tires.	Up to \$20,000 for Geotechnical, Road Construction, Landfill Systems, Rubber Asphalt Paving, Applied Research Projects Up to \$ 10,000 for Sports Field Infill Material, Playground Surface Material, Rubber Paving Material, Landscape Mulch Up to \$5,000 for Rubber Flooring Surface Mats	Grant	Continuous
Canadian Tire Jumpstart - Community Development Grant and Accessibility Grant	Our Community Development Grants help qualified donee organizations develop or sustain sports and recreational programming for kids aged 4 - 18 in financial need.	Yes	Yes	Yes	n/a	Programming, Equipment, Accessibility renovations, retrofits or construction of community facilities.	\$900,000	Grant	Annually (Fall/Winter/Spring)

Figure 14. Grants for Recreation Funding and Financing

10 Recreation Facility Condition Assessment

As part of the Recreation Master Plan process, Dillon Consulting Limited undertook a facility condition assessment of seven key facilities in both municipalities, including the arenas, curling clubs, community halls, the aquatic centre, and Arborg's baseball diamonds. The report outlines key maintenance and capital replacement requirements, approximate timelines, and Class D cost estimates. The full report is included as **Appendix C**, while the key recommendations are included in the section below.

11 Recommendations

Based on the cumulative analyses of the existing policy context, best practice from elsewhere, recent trends, demographics, discussions with both Recreation Commissions, stakeholder input, and the results of the community survey, the project team has developed a series of recommendations. These recommendations are organized by category, and each feature background, the recommendation itself, and where relevant, the implementation strategy and timeline.

11.1 Volunteer Retention

The provision of recreation in all communities relies on the passion and commitment of volunteers. Coaches, trainers, managers, convenors, activity leaders, and others donate their time and energy to ensure that recreational opportunities are available in their communities, which in turn improves the quality of life for all. Without a passionate group of volunteers, recreation programming and facilities development will not occur. Moreover, if the volunteer base is too small or becomes overworked, recreation will not succeed either. Over-worked volunteers can easily become burnt out – therefore, it is essential to have a large base of support. Across Canada, many communities are facing the same reality – smaller groups of dedicated volunteers are experiencing burnout, as the workload increases and the assistance decreases. Moreover, many seniors who have spent decades investing thousands of hours in their communities are looking to wind-down; often, there are few waiting in the wings willing to pick up the slack, which leads to the disbanding of organizations and the end of activities.

In the community survey, residents who do not currently volunteer were asked what barriers made it difficult for them to donate their time. Most respondents noted a lack of time (63%), consistent with trends seen elsewhere, while 45% noted that they were not aware of opportunities. These two main barriers can be addressed, partly through the recommendations outlined below:

Recommendations:

11.1.1 Volunteer Recruitment:

In order to recruit volunteers, recreation coordinators and their teams need to appeal to what motivates volunteers: Some want to give back to their communities; others want to gain skills and networking opportunities; and still others want to pass along their skills or experience to others. It is also key that volunteers are matched with tasks/opportunities that they are passionate about. Regular volunteer surveys can help ascertain what motivates local volunteers and what their passions are.

Another key recruitment tool involves providing clarity in terms of time and effort commitments for specific volunteer positions. Is it a position that will require two hours a week of a volunteer's time for six months? Is it a 50-hour commitment over a roughly two-month period to organize and execute a major event? Being upfront about time commitments is crucial for those who note that their major barrier to volunteering is the lack of time – those who feel that the opportunity might balloon into a commitment that they cannot keep will hesitate to put their name forward at all.

Many respondents noted that they were not aware of the volunteer opportunities available to them in their communities. Advertising volunteer opportunities is critical to attracting volunteers, whether through existing channels (e.g. Recreation Commission Facebook pages and posters at recreation venues) or future channels (e.g. a dedicated recreation webpage). The greater the awareness, the more likely it is that volunteers will be found to lead and assist with various sports, programs and events.

Finally, recruiting volunteers in groups, teams, or partnerships can be an effective tool in bringing in new volunteers. Being able to volunteer with a friend or family member can be more appealing than volunteering on one's own – not only do more hands make for lighter work, but positive relationships during volunteering can increase willingness to help (and to keep coming back).

11.1.2 Volunteer Retention:

In terms of volunteer retention, many of the same recommendations for volunteer recruitment also apply, including appealing to what motivates existing volunteers. Young volunteers often seek to acquire skills, experience, and/or training which will support their chosen field of education or a future career path. By enabling opportunities for training and skill development (through workshops, courses, or experience), young volunteers are likely to continue in their roles for several years.

However, as noted earlier on, while there are generally a large group of volunteers in both the youth cohort and seniors cohort, there is a 'missing middle' of volunteers in the 30- to 55-year old age group. This group, often raising a family, looking after aging parents, and entering their prime earning years in their chosen careers, tends to be the group with the lowest rates of volunteerism. One key to retaining them during this busy period of life is succession planning.

Succession planning in a volunteer context is crucial to help avoid burnout. When volunteers know that there is someone 'waiting in the wings' who can take over once they leave their role (or can help share some of the burden), they're much more likely to continue on in that role (rather than quit out-right). Succession planning can help connect generations, keep ideas fresh, and facilitate the transfer of institutional knowledge.

It has also been noted that volunteer management training can be very useful for recreation directors and coordinators. Training courses and workshops are offered by Volunteer Manitoba in volunteer retention and recruitment, and offer official certifications. The Canadian Code of Volunteer Involvement also offers certification in volunteer administration, which can be a helpful tool for recreation directors and others in charge of leading large groups of volunteers.

11.1.3 Volunteer Recognition:

According to Volunteer Canada's 2017 publication, *Recognizing Volunteering*, the vast majority of volunteers want to be recognized in the following two ways:

- They want to be thanked personally, throughout the year – not just once at the end of the year through a volunteer appreciation banquet or gala; and,
- They want to know the impact of their time and effort has made, heard directly from those who they've helped (e.g. a handwritten note from an event organizer outlining how their specific efforts and skills helped lead to a successful event) – they want to know how they've made a difference.

So, while banquets, galas, certificates, and small gifts are always appreciated, it is the personal touch, sincere thanks, and ongoing encouragement that make a much more profound impact on the majority of volunteers.

Volunteer Manitoba also hosts an annual Volunteer Awards, which honour the contributions of individuals and groups who volunteer in their communities. These awards provide a great opportunity to recognize volunteer efforts on a larger scale, while nominees receive recognition from those within their communities who nominated them.

11.2 Reducing Red Tape

While not unique to Arborg or Bifrost-Riverton, program coordinators and those looking to launch new programs often note that regulations (particularly related to liability insurance, permits, and supervision requirements) can make ease of use difficult – this is especially true for programs that may need to use space through a joint-use agreement, which results in dealing with more than one authority for a given program (e.g. School Division, Recreation Commission, and potentially a provincial recreation association).

The reduction of regulation and red-tape can be challenging, particularly when it comes to important items such as liability insurance and safety protocols, which need to be taken seriously. However, when recreation directors or staff can help coordinate and take care of the various technical aspects of recreation provision, it can free up those

who are eager to volunteer to focus on program material, coaching, or crafting a recreation opportunity.

Recommendation: Appoint a staff member (potentially the recreation director or a part-time employee) to coordinate and file paperwork related to items such as insurance, permits, and other agreements, enabling prospective program providers and volunteers to focus on recreational programming.

11.3 Facility Recommendations

As part of the Recreation Master Plan process, Dillon Consulting Limited undertook a facility condition assessment of seven key facilities in both municipalities, including the arenas, curling clubs, and community halls, among others. The report outlines key maintenance and capital replacement requirements, approximate timelines, and Class D cost estimates. The full report is included as **Appendix C**.

11.3.1 Phased Approach to Recommended Facility Upgrades

As noted, a Facility Condition Assessment was prepared as part of the scope of work for this Recreation Master Plan (**Appendix C**). The assessment included a comprehensive inspection and review of seven key facilities in Arborg and Riverton, including the Arborg & District Arena, the Noventis Aquatic Centre, the Arborg Curling Rink, the Arborg Baseball Diamonds, the Arborg-Bifrost Community Centre, the Riverton Community Hall and Curling Rink, and the Riverton Memorial Arena. The facilities were reviewed from various lenses, including architectural, electrical, mechanical, and structural. The report outlines various repairs and replacements to be made, their level of priority (expressed in years), as well as Class D cost estimates. For ease of review, the recommended upgrades are organized in two different tables – one sorting the upgrades by system type, and the other sorting upgrades by priority timeframe.

Recommendation: Review the recommended facility upgrades outlined in the Facility Condition Assessment with the local facility operators, the recreation commissions, and Councils. Based on the level of priority and cost noted, prepare a short-, medium- and long-term schedule for the repairs/replacements, as well as a preliminary budget. As part of this phased approach to improvements, it is also recommended that a reserve fund be established for the larger ticket items that are prioritized for replacement (e.g. Arborg & District Arena Plant Equipment), taking into account life-cycle and promoting long-term asset management.

11.3.2 Pedestrian Network

In both Age Friendly Manitoba reports completed for Arborg and Riverton nearly a decade ago, seniors noted the need for upgrades to the pedestrian network within both Arborg and Riverton. This included not only the addition of sidewalks to many of the major routes in the two communities, but pedestrian amenities such as benches and crosswalks at key intersections. Others noted the desire for enhancements to the Icelandic River trails and improvements to the lighting along pedestrian infrastructure to increase the feeling of safety.

Recommendation: Adopt a policy that requires sidewalks to be considered as part of any rehabilitation of major streets within both Arborg and Riverton. Also, continue to expand the pathway network (particularly along the Icelandic River), making the system accessible to various user groups (pedestrians, cyclists, skiers) and age cohorts.

11.3.3 Adaptive Re-Use to Encourage Usage

As noted in the recent recreation trends, many municipalities are seeing value in the adaptive re-use of existing facilities to accommodate new activities, as well as the push to encourage multiple additional uses to increase the efficiency of use. An excellent local example of this trend in action is the re-use of the curling rink in Arborg as pickle-ball courts during the summer months – not only does this allow for an underutilized facility to gain significant usage during its off-season, but it has also allowed for the growth of a popular activity without the need for significant investment. Examples in other communities include the adaptive re-use of libraries as community hubs for training, technology, and meeting spaces.

Recommendation: Playing off of the local success (as well as those seen in other communities), it is recommended that usage levels in existing facilities are monitored on a yearly basis, in order to understand if spaces are being under-utilized; consider getting more use out of the commercial kitchens in both communities and consider using a portion of the Arborg Community Hall for a gym / fitness centre that can be moved in cases where the full hall is needed. Consider pouring an additional asphalt lift for the existing tennis courts at the Arborg High School; paint additional lines on the tennis courts so that they can alternatively be used for pickleball and/or basketball.

11.3.4 Space for Arts and Culture

Through both the stakeholder engagement process and the community survey, some respondents noted the desire for arts and culture groups to have a permanent home for equipment, as well as to run programming. One notable example was the community kiln, which does not currently have a permanent home – if a suitable location was to be found, it would be a major boon to local pottery lessons. Other arts and cultural programming include cooking, computer programming, and art lessons.

Recommendation: Similar to recommendation 11.3.3, consider adaptively reusing or sharing currently under-utilized recreation spaces to allow for arts and cultural programming. Suggestions include formalized cooking classes using the commercial kitchen facilities, finding a permanent home for the community kiln, and partnering with non-municipal facilities such as the Riverton & District Friendship Centre to host programming and equipment.

11.3.5 Accessibility

Over the past decade, recognition has increased significantly for the need to ensure that programming, activities, and facilities are accessible for those who are differently-abled, have mobility issues, or have other barriers to participation. The Accessibility for Manitobans Act has been in effect since 2013, and since that time, many regulations and

policies have been adopted to help decision-makers understand the importance of considering universal design in facilities and public spaces.

One of the major challenges with retro-fitting existing buildings, particularly those built in the 1960s and 1970s, is making them accessible after the fact. This can include anything from making buildings fully wheelchair accessible (through ramps, lifts, and elevators) to having barrier-free washrooms, changerooms, and kitchens in existing arenas and community halls.

Recommendation: Work to ensure that facility upgrades consider the principles of universal design, barrier-free design, and accessibility when major capital upgrades are being planned for major public facilities.

11.3.6 Facility Access

Across Manitoba, many long-time recreation facilitators note the changes in facility access over the years. Decades ago, coaches, instructors, and in some cases, even participants, would have keys to local recreation facilities – hockey coaches would host team practices in the morning before school and gym teachers would open up the school gym for basketball shootarounds on weekends, to name a few. However, due to security considerations, liability issues, and supervision requirements, this type of access is nearly unheard of today (at least as it relates to municipal and school recreation facilities). However, in cases where insurance, liability, security and custodial requirements can be met through blanket agreements, permits, and other measures, there are opportunities to allow for access to facilities in off-peak times, in order to increase their utilization and allow for additional programming.

Recommendation: Consider upgrading doors to facilities to be accessible via key-fob or individual codes – by allowing coaches and instructors to access facilities (where liability and insurance policies allow), recreation commissions can increase facility utilization rates, particularly in cases where custodial services are not required.

11.4 Programming Recommendations

11.4.1 Flexibility in Programming

As noted in the recent trends and community survey, families feel that their schedules are tighter than ever. Between increasing commitments at work, more activity options, and faster-paced lifestyles, residents are finding it more difficult to carve out time for scheduled programming and long-term commitments. Residents in the region (and elsewhere in Western Canada) have expressed a desire for flexibility in their recreation activity schedules, both in terms of time commitment and specific dates/times.

For the reasons noted above, 'pick-up' or 'drop-in' activities have become much more popular over the last decade. Rather than having to make an 18-week commitment to a program where every Tuesday and Thursday evening from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM is accounted for, many like the idea of being able to attend only as their schedule allows (e.g. having the opportunity to drop-in any Thursday between 6:00 PM and 10:00 PM for pick-up volleyball – rather than being organized, participants make teams with those

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who show up and play at their leisure). Of course, the challenge with this type of recreation delivery model is that it is difficult to gauge participant numbers (and by proxy, user fees, which are crucial to providing programming). There are several solutions to address this problem, allowing program organizers the up-front revenue they need to make a program feasible:

- Charging an up-front registration fee, allowing for a pre-determined amount of 'drop-in' visits during the year – the fee is charged whether or not the participant attends throughout the duration of the program;
- Charging a drop-in fee, for those who may not have registered early – the drop-in fee is typically charged on a 'per-use' basis, and is higher than it would be if a participant registered beforehand (which incentivizes pre-registration); and,
- Charging for a 'flex-pack' – for example, a participant pays for 10 yoga classes up-front for program that runs for 20 weeks (any extra attendance would be charged on a per-use basis) – this provides the instructor with guaranteed revenue to make the program feasible, while offering flexibility to the participant in terms of their weekly schedule.

Recommendation: Work collaboratively with recreation providers of select programs to offer flexible registration and payment methods in order to attract participation from those who may otherwise not join due to time constraints.

11.4.2 Inclusivity

In the community survey, a significant portion of respondents used the word "all", "everyone", "accessible" or "inclusive" to describe their vision for recreation in Arborg and Bifrost-Riverton. Some respondents noted their hopes that rural residents in Bifrost-Riverton, particularly youth, would be included on local sports teams, which would help ensure the viability of programs with decreasing registration. Moreover, there was a particular emphasis on the need to include seniors in programming, and even more so, in social events. Connecting seniors with youth was a recurring theme not only through the engagement process, but in both the Arborg and Riverton 'Age-Friendly' studies. Finally, it was noted that recreation is a great way to incorporate newcomers into the larger community (two examples included soccer as a way for newcomers to make new friends, and the commercial kitchen as an opportunity to share different cultures through cuisine).

Recommendation: Look to build connections through recreation with residents of the rural communities of Bifrost-Riverton, working with school, church, and community leaders to integrate teams and activities where possible. Continue to expand the recreational offerings for seniors, particularly those that connect youth with seniors – this can be done by connecting those with similar interests, through high-school volunteer hours, and through initiating intergenerational learning programs. Utilizing resources and contacts from Eastman Immigrant Services, continue to use recreation (particularly team sports and arts and cultural activities) as a tool to welcome and integrate new Canadians into the community.

11.4.3 Attract Tourists, Seasonal Visitors and Adjacent Municipality Residents

Arborg and Bifrost-Riverton have the geographic advantage of being in very close proximity to one of Manitoba's major tourist attractions and seasonal draws – Lake Winnipeg. While Arborg is roughly 10 minutes west of Hnaua Beach via PTH 68, Riverton is only about two miles from the Lake. During the summer, many cottagers visit both communities on their way to cottages or provincial parks (and resort destinations like Hecla). The proximity to the Lake offers opportunities to attract seasonal residents and visitors to both communities, whether just for weekend activities (e.g. an afternoon at the Noventis Aquatic Centre, where over 75% of visitors are from outside of the community) or longer term programming (e.g. a week of day camp while the family lives at the cottage for the summer). Ice fishing also brings many visitors during the Winter months. Of course, besides recreation, attracting visitors to the community has spin-off benefits for local restaurants, gas stations, and other commercial enterprises. Moreover, there are adjacent municipalities such as Armstrong and Fisher that have minimal recreation facilities and programming within their boundaries – attracting their residents (particularly youth) could bolster programs like hockey and soccer that often struggle to meet team participation requirements for certain age cohorts.

Recommendation: Work to advertise to and attract residents from outside the boundaries of Arborg and Bifrost-Riverton to participate in recreational programming and activities in the community year-round. This could be implemented by targeted advertising and notification to cottage resident associations, adjacent RM newsletters / social media, and via posters at key locations within communities such as Fisher Branch and Armstrong.

Look to regional neighbours (e.g. Armstrong, Teulon, Rockwood, Fisher, Gimli) as well as within (e.g. rural communities of Bifrost-Riverton) in cases where age cohorts are not large enough to make up a team or numbers are not high enough to viably host an activity. Proactive discourse with these communities will help to avoid duplication and enable the feasibility of programs / activities that would otherwise not take place in a smaller community.

11.4.4 Arts and Cultural Activities

Traditionally, sports, athletic and active pursuits were the main activities to fall under the purview of recreation districts and recreation commissions – arts and cultural activities tended to fall outside of their jurisdiction. However, more recently, activities and programming that fall under the banner of 'arts and cultural' activities have increasingly been integrated into the fold of recreation districts. These include activities such as arts and crafts, music, theatre, technology, and certain socials clubs/events. While often, these programs and activities are run by volunteers or non-profit organizations (as are many sports), many stand to benefit from formalized relationships with recreation commissions, not only in terms of facility usage and equipment storage, but from the advertising and promotional reach that recreation districts tend to have.

Recommendation: Bring select arts and cultural programming under the purview of the recreation commissions, where there exists a mutual interest; ensure that these programs

have the same access and supports that sports and athletics have within the commissions, primarily in terms of facility usage and promotion.

11.5 Communications

An overarching theme that emerged during the engagement phase of the project was the need for better communication as it relates to recreation in both Arborg and Bifrost-Riverton. The vast majority of respondents to the community survey noted that they learned about recreation and leisure opportunities via word-of-mouth (82%) – while this is not unusual in smaller, tight-knit communities, many did express concern that they were missing out on opportunities (both recreational and volunteering) because they simply were not aware that they existed. While many noted their appreciation for the use of social media for advertising events and activities (as well as posters at venues and advertising in *The Express*), some noted that they wanted a centralized ‘one-stop-shop’ to learn about programs, volunteer opportunities, and schedules.

Recommendation: Create a joint recreation webpage to serve as a one-stop-shop for recreation activities, programs, facilities and schedules that is linked to both municipal websites and is updated regularly by staff members. The webpage would include the following:

- A program and activity inventory;
- A list of contacts for each of those programs and activities;
- A facility inventory (already prepared as part of this plan);
- An online recreation calendar, listing all programs and activities (as well as their venues);
- An online registration portal, where participants can register online for several programs via a fillable form; and,
- A ‘volunteer opportunity’ board, for groups/organizations seeking volunteers.

11.6 Funding Model

11.6.1 Continue to Seek Partnerships

As outlined in the recent trends, decreases in recreational funding (particularly for facilities) has necessitated creativity in the funding of recreation facility upgrades, equipment, operating costs, and programming.

Recommendation: Continue to seek out funding partnerships, whether through municipal budgeting, federal and provincial grants, grassroots fundraising efforts, partnerships with non-profit organizations and charities, corporate sponsorships, and partnering with notable alumni/residents.

11.6.2 Undertake Financial Review of Both Recreation Commissions

Through the review of several comparison municipalities and recreation districts, it became clear that while there is no ‘one-size-fits-all’ model of recreation funding or service delivery, the structure in Arborg and Bifrost Riverton is somewhat unique. Not only is the population of Bifrost-Riverton split between two commissions based on catchment

area, but the funding of facilities in Arborg are cost-shared between the two municipalities while the facilities in Riverton are not. Concerns were raised throughout the engagement process as to the equity of the funding model, not only related to facility funding, but to items such as debt servicing as well.

Recommendation: It is recommended that the Recreation Commissions undertake a detailed financial analysis of the current cost-sharing models, debt service levels, and funding models of the Recreation Commissions and local Councils. The goal of the review would be to gain an in-depth understanding of funding for recreation in the region, including how to make funding more equitable between municipalities, user groups, and Commissions.

11.6.3 Grant Applications

As noted, there are several funding sources available not only for recreational programming and events, but for facility upgrades and repairs as well. Some of these funding sources are through the Province of Manitoba, including the Building Sustainable Communities Program (for recreation capital infrastructure projects) and Health Together Now community funding for programs aimed at preventing chronic disease. To address affordability gaps where they exist, there are funding opportunities through charities like KidSport or Jumpstart. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) provides funding for retrofitting municipal recreation facilities, while the Federal Government often contributes to tri-partite funding of larger facilities. While there are numerous sources of funding available to support recreation in communities, these pots are only available to those who apply – often, Recreation Directors are so busy with running the day-to-day operations in their districts that they do not have the time to apply for these grants. It was noted that in Riverton, a part-time summer student was hired to write grants one year, with successful results.

Recommendation: It is recommended that both Recreation Commissions jointly hire a part-time grant writer each year in order to apply for the various funding sources that exist for recreation programming, events, equipment, and facilities. The Commissions would need to work together in order to prioritize projects and programs – while there might be some concern that the joint model would limit the amount of applications for each commission individually, by applying jointly as a region (rather than individual municipalities or commissions), the chances of success would be higher (particularly for certain funding sources that encourage working together and where funding is allocated to larger populations).

11.6.4 Reserve Funds and Proactive Capital Improvement Strategy

As noted in the recent trends section, one of the major challenges facing communities across the country is the growing infrastructure deficit as it relates to municipal facilities (including recreation amenities). As most of these facilities were built 50 to 60 years ago, many are approaching the end of their usable lives, and are facing the prospect of major capital upgrade requirements (most that have not been budgeted for). The Facilities Condition Assessment outlines many of these major capital upgrade requirements, including the eventual costly replacement of the plants in facilities in both Arborg and

Riverton. While some of these costs are imminent, and upgrades likely required prior to the accumulation of a robust reserve fund, it is still important to lay the groundwork for such reserve accounts to be created and funded through the annual budgeting process.

Recommendation: Develop a life-cycle costing strategy, with the help of a consultant, in order to appropriately budget and save for major one-time capital cost upgrades to the major facilities in both Arborg and Bifrost Riverton. Recent recreation literature suggests setting aside approximately 1% to 2% of the replacement value costs into reserve accounts annually; typically, only a municipality through its annual budget would have the means to contribute such an amount.

11.6.5 Transparency in Funding

One major criticism that arose during both the stakeholder meetings and the community survey was a perceived lack of transparency and accountability within the funding models of the Recreation Commissions. Many noted their hesitancy to fund additional recreation opportunities through increased tax dollars as they did not feel they had a good understanding of how recreation is currently funded. Moreover, many find the unique funding model between the two municipalities and commissions confusing, while the different ways in the commissions manage facility debt has created concerns over perceived equity and fairness. While recreation cost-sharing can be a contentious issue any time there are two municipalities partnering to provide recreation to residents, the rather unique scenario in Arborg and Bifrost-Riverton has created an additional layer of complexity. Studies have shown that when transparency, clarity and accountability in funding models are emphasized, residents are more open to paying more (whether through taxes or user fees).

Recommendation: It is recommended that each Recreation Commission provide a very high-level annual financial brief, which could be shared via the Municipal and Town webpages. The report would provide key financial details, including cost-sharing between municipalities, costs for major upgrades, and percentage of program costs that are subsidized. An emphasis could be made on key policies (e.g. whether programming is charged on a cost-recovery basis), while comparisons could be made to costs in other municipalities (e.g. to show how reasonably ice time is priced).

11.6.6 Booster Fees

While the goal is generally to charge user fees for programming on a cost recovery basis, in many cases (particularly for new programs, or programs with lower registration numbers), there may be a funding gap in which cost-recovery is not possible (at least in the short term). Charging for venue rentals on a full cost-recovery basis might deter volunteers, instructors, or coaches looking to launch new programs, activities, or teams in the community. One potential solution might be to charge 'booster fees' or supplemental registration fees for all those who participate in programs at the local arena, curling clubs, or community halls, using the funds from this fee to subsidize new programs for the short term.

Recommendation: It is recommended that both Commissions consider charging a small 'booster fee' for each community member (or family) that participates in recreational activities at any of the major community facilities (particularly the arenas). While booster fees are a commonly used method for community centres and facilities to raise money for various projects, programs, or operations, in some cases they may be used specifically for off-setting the costs of new programs until they have a chance to 'break-even'.

11.7 Departmental Structure and Recreation Delivery Model

Over the course of the study, an increased emphasis was placed on reviewing (and providing recommendations for) the departmental structure of both recreation commissions, as well as their recreation delivery models. Much of the background is covered in both sections 3 and 6, the latter in which recreation delivery models were reviewed in comparison municipalities.

It is important to note that when it comes to departmental structures and recreation delivery models, there are many different approaches in Manitoba's many recreation districts and municipalities, each approach with its pros and cons. That can make it difficult to suggest changes, particularly in the rather unique recreation models in Arborg and Bifrost-Riverton. That being said, while the departmental structure and recreation delivery model in both commissions is somewhat unique in its de facto operations, the enabling by-laws for the commissions, as well as their policy manuals, are actually quite similar not only to each other, but to those found in other recreation districts in the province.

11.7.1 Uploading Responsibilities

In reviewing the operations, roles, and responsibilities of recreation districts / commissions elsewhere in Manitoba, a few notable differences stood out. First, very few volunteer boards were responsible for overseeing facility debt (a role typically taken on at a municipal level), as is currently the case with the ABPRC. At most, volunteer boards elsewhere are responsible for overseeing their annual recreation budgets. Second, in many cases, the responsibility of operating, maintaining and staffing recreation facilities falls upon the municipality in which the facilities are located – this is especially true for arenas, and to a lesser extent, community halls. Third, there are different models for performance reviews – however, generally these are not conducted by volunteer boards, but municipal CAOs and/or Councils.

Recommendation: Consider uploading certain ABPRC responsibilities to the Town of Arborg, including responsibility for the recreation facilities' debt, as well as staff performance reviews. Another possible consideration would be to shift what has been noted as a focus on 'facilities management' to a 'recreation management' focus, to free up the Commission (and its recreation director) to focus more on programming and coordinating recreation.

11.7.2 Public Relations

Over the course of the recreation stakeholder meetings, it became clear that many of the stakeholders were uncertain about the roles, responsibilities, and purpose of the recreation commissions (or had vastly differing views of what the roles entail). This was reinforced by the results of the community survey, where almost 50% of respondents noted that they either didn't know the role that their local recreation commission played in the provision of recreation, or were unsure. In order for recreation districts or commissions to operate successfully, there needs to be a broad understanding of their mandates, objectives, and responsibilities. While these are all generally laid out quite concisely in the commission recreation manuals, few (if any) outside of the board members and staff even know that the policy manuals exist.

Recommendation: Clarify to the community the roles of the Recreation Commission Boards and Recreation Directors, possibly through a brochure or one-pager (with Frequently Asked Questions) made available at recreation facilities and on the centralized recreation webpage. Make the recreation commission policy manuals available as well.

11.7.3 Collaboration

As noted, there are varying degrees of overlapping jurisdictions when it comes to the two recreation commissions. Moreover, the confusion among residents in both municipalities as to the roles and responsibilities of each are well documented. Based on discussions with stakeholders and the commission boards themselves, it was noted that at times there has been a severe lack of collaboration and communication between the two commissions. In the comparison communities reviewed as part of this study (particularly those where an urban municipality and rural municipality partner to form a recreation district), it was noted that occasionally minor disagreements in terms of funding allocation and cost-sharing arise; moreover, there is often a spirit of 'friendly rivalries' between neighbouring municipalities. However, in most cases, it was observed that collaboration, open communication, and even integration have been pursued with the common end goal of achieving better recreational outcomes in all of the communities within the district.

Recommendation: Look to increase collaboration and coordination between the two recreation commissions. This could be done in various ways, including collaboration on the centralized recreation website (recommendation 11.5), semi-annual joint board meetings, and coordination on programming (particularly in cases where the critical mass needed to ensure the viability of a program cannot be met within one of the communities on their own.

11.7.4 Board Makeup

Based on the enabling by-laws for the two recreation commissions, as well as their policy manuals, the make up of the boards are quite similar to what is seen across the province – a volunteer board made up municipal councillors, community appointees, and school division representatives. However, it has been noted that in some jurisdictions, a number of citizen board members are appointed from some of the largest recreational

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organizations or associations (e.g. soccer, hockey, baseball, etc.). It has been suggested that by having members from each of those associations on the board increases communication and collaboration, while ensuring that Councils, recreation commissions, and the represented associations are on the 'same page' and 'in the loop' as it relates to major recreation activities. These association/organization representatives can share their insights, suggestions, and concerns at recreation commission board meetings, while bringing back input and direction to their association boards as needed.

Recommendation: Consider formalizing a policy in which the appointment of a certain number of the citizen board members are taken from key recreation groups / associations / boards within the community (e.g. the hockey association, soccer association, etc.).

11.7.5 Policy Manual Review

First of all, it should be noted that the policy manuals for both the ABRPC and RBPRC are thorough and in line with those found elsewhere. They have mission statements, visions, and lay out the roles and responsibilities of the commissions. They focus to varying extents on the roles of the commissions in programming, facilities, staffing, and finances, and have detailed descriptions of the roles of the Recreation Directors. Both emphasize the importance of promoting activities and programs, better utilizing existing facilities, and setting / reviewing goals. However, policy manuals are only effective if they are known, understood, and reviewed periodically, as they provide valuable direction, as well as clarity for those involved in providing recreation within the community.

Recommendation: It is recommended that both recreation commissions set up half day workshops (with their respective Recreation Directors) to review and recommit to the direction outlined in the respective policy manuals. The review could take place bi-annually, or whenever there is a significant turnover in board membership.

12 Appendices

12.1 Appendix A – Recreation Facilities Inventory

12.2 Appendix B – Recreation Programs Inventory

12.3 Appendix C – Recreation Facilities Condition Assessment

12.4 Appendix D – Stakeholder Meeting Presentation

12.5 Appendix E – Community Survey and Results Summary

12.6 Appendix F – Funding Program and Grant Matrix