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**SUMMARY OF ENGAGEMENT TO DATE**

Recreation, Parks and Culture is planning for the development of a 12-year strategy which will replace the County's existing Open Space and Recreation Facility Strategy (OSRFS). The new strategy will focus on a more holistic view of recreation, parks and cultural priorities throughout Strathcona County.

As part of Strathcona County's commitment to public engagement, community groups and stakeholders were invited to share feedback related to recreation and culture priorities through a survey and small group interviews.

**WHEN DID THE ENGAGEMENT TAKE PLACE?**

The online survey was open from October 17 through to December 10, 2018. In addition, 30 community groups and cultural organizations participated in small group interviews from October to November.

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**AUDIENCE**

Over 300 community groups and stakeholders were invited, via email, to complete the survey. Seventy of these community groups were invited to participate in small group interviews to better understand the challenges and successes faced by their organization. Participating community groups include those who are directly involved, sponsor or support the delivery of recreation or culture services in Strathcona County. In total, 87 organizations completed the survey, and 30 groups attended the small group interviews.

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**RESULTS**

The most important issues, opportunities and/or trends related to recreation and culture identified by the groups include:

- A need for facility enhancement and development to address unmet demand in both indoor and outdoor spaces.
- Concern over the increasing organizational costs to get program space and costs for participants.
- The need for organizations to work together with other organizations including the municipality, the private sector, facility user groups, and others, to best accomplish their missions.
- The changing demographic profile of the County. Its population is becoming more diverse – from all aspects (including age, ethnicity).

According to the community groups and stakeholders, the main factors affecting participant / membership numbers are:

- Increased cost of participation. The cost for groups to get programming space is a hurdle and contributes to the cost of participation.
- Promotion/advertising challenges.

- Insufficient access to facilities (available times and amount of space) has impacted participation rates – they are able to accommodate only so many participants. Some groups indicated sufficient facility access has enabled positive levels of participation.
- Volunteerism was identified as both having a positive impact and as a struggle. Some groups indicated their volunteers have a significant positive impact on their participation levels. Others have experienced challenges with the number and energy of volunteers limiting participation.
- Level of expected commitment from participants in activities and programs can serve as a deterrent for some participants.

## **NEXT STEPS**

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Community organizations and stakeholders who were invited to participate in the survey and interviews will be invited to participate in the Community Conversation in February 2019. The Community Conversation will test the themes that have emerged from the feedback to date and strive to better understand what these themes mean to the overall development of the Recreation and Culture Strategy.