The Active Communities Branch consists of a regional team of consultants in sport, recreation and wellness, who are recognized and valued as leaders. They guide and support New Brunswick communities and organizations in building their capacity to engage in accessible and sustainable sport, recreation, physical activity and wellness programs and initiatives that meet the communities’ needs.

Successful implementation of the mission will contribute to New Brunswickers realizing the value and obtaining the benefits of a healthy active lifestyle and an effective sport system. There will be increased levels of physical activity and sport participation, a reduction in sedentary lifestyles and an increase in physically active communities with overall improvement in the health, wellness and physical literacy of New Brunswickers.

**VISION**
Communities that are engaged, mobilized and committed to healthy active living, sport development and participation.

**MISSION**
To empower communities and foster a network of self-sufficient local and regional organizations, capable of providing sport, physical activity and wellness opportunities.

The opportunity for action

There are several factors driving the need for focused and effective action to improve opportunities for sport, physical activity and wellness, including:

- Most New Brunswickers are not active enough for optimal health benefits and spend too much time being sedentary. Rates of chronic disease continue to be very high in NB yet research suggests that most chronic diseases are preventable through lifestyle changes, including increased physical activity.
- The Canadian Sport for Life movement emphasizes the need to develop fundamental movements skills and become physically literate in order to fully realize the benefits of life-long participation in physical activity and sport (Long Term Athlete Development model).
- Changes in the province’s demographics, including an aging population, decreased rural populations and migration, are influencing program delivery. In particular, demographic shifts impact on rural communities through a lower tax base, less resources and fewer volunteers.
- An decline in traditional sport/recreation programs in favour of mass participation recreation activities (e.g. walking clubs) result in fewer opportunities and options for those who are interested in participating in such sport/recreation programs.
Opportunities to tap into and promote the intrinsic value of sport (i.e., social inclusion, leadership development, tourism, economic activity, etc.) are often missed, not valued or not maximized due to a lack of knowledge or capacity.

Increased incidence of poverty and an associated risk of decreased accessibility to organized sport/recreation programs means many New Brunswickers are not benefiting from opportunities to be active that exist in their communities.

Aligning with Community Inclusion Networks could increase the likelihood of successful, collective action on the social determinants of health, e.g., after school physical activity programming.

Approach and guiding principles

Physical activity and sport are important contributors to the quality of life and well-being of New Brunswick citizens and important economic drivers for New Brunswick communities. The Branch has a strong commitment to promote the importance of sport and recreation for all ages and abilities. Everyone should have a range of opportunities and the quality instruction necessary to develop physical literacy in order to fully engage in physical activity and continue a healthy, active lifestyle throughout their lives.

Sport and recreation organizations are vital partners that help build vibrant, healthy communities. Their professional and volunteer leaders, when trained and supported, can have a positive impact on individuals and organizational development within communities and the province.

Each community and region have unique challenges, calling for flexibility in response and when working towards solutions. Connecting with and using regional networks is essential for collaborative success.

To create, enhance and promote sporting opportunities and healthy lifestyles in the community, the Branch is committed to these guiding principles:

- Comprehensive approach to community development and mobilization
- Regional delivery model that encourages flexibility in response to building a community’s assets
- Collaborative approaches to improve inclusion and reduce barriers for all citizens (i.e., economic social, physical, environmental)

“Increasing physical activity is a societal, not just an individual problem. Therefore it demands a population-based, multi-sectoral, multi-disciplinary, and culturally relevant approach.”

— World Health Organization, Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health, 2011
Active Communities Branch in action

The Branch operates a network of eight regional offices and supports the delivery of community-based sport, physical activity and wellness initiatives throughout the province, with a local and regional focus.

The Branch provides leadership and resources to increase opportunities for physical activity and sport development; and assists in the mentoring and training of volunteer and professional sport and recreation leaders at local and regional levels.

It provides consulting, administrative services and financial assistance to a variety of partners including school, sport and community organizations, wellness networks, municipalities and local service districts.

The Branch’s work contributes towards:
- the planning and promotion of events and projects;
- development of sound administrative policies and strong governance for non-profit organizations;
- leveraging of support from other sources;
- initiation of new and innovative programming; and
- encouraging community efforts and events aimed at promoting physical activity amongst the entire population of New Brunswick.

As a central, province-wide agency with a presence in all regions, the Active Communities Branch promotes networking and knowledge transfer amongst community networks.

It leads the promotion and management of school-based wellness and physical activity initiatives for both the Anglophone and Francophone sectors and works directly with Aboriginal schools and communities.

*Active Communities Branch consultants serve as agents of change in the promotion of healthy, active lifestyles for New Brunswickers. They contribute to vibrant, active communities through the development of sport, physical activity and wellness initiatives.*
The Active Communities Branch is a critical lever for community development and health promotion activities. While the primary focus is on the promotion of sport, physical activity and wellness, the Branch has a role in contributing directly or indirectly to societal goals such as:

- prevention of chronic disease
- reduced dependence on health care
- education, child and youth development
- social inclusion
- crime prevention
- economic development
- comprehensive school and workplace wellness

Within the Department of Healthy and Inclusive Communities, the work of the Active Communities Branch aligns with and supports the work of the Wellness Branch and the Sport and Recreation Branch. There are strong linkages to the New Brunswick Wellness Strategy and the New Brunswick Sport Plan.

Within New Brunswick, the Active Communities Branch also takes into consideration and aligns, where appropriate, with the work of GNB Departments and agencies such as Environment and Local Government, Social Development, Health, Education and Early Childhood Development, the Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation, the Population Growth Secretariat, the Premier’s Council for the Status of Disabled Persons, the Healthy Aging Secretariat and the Child and Youth Advocate’s Office.

The Branch collaborates in fostering and supporting sport, physical activity and wellness in the province by working with a wide range of partners. Partnerships include: provincial and regional non-government organizations such as the Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Coalition of NB (HEPAC), Sport NB, Recreation NB, Coach NB, Mouvement acadien des communautés en santé (MACS); regional and local sport and recreation organizations, recreation councils and wellness networks; First Nation communities, municipalities, local service districts; early childhood centres, elementary, secondary and post-secondary schools; and the private sector.
Strategic goals

The Active Communities Branch has three strategic goals for 2012 – 2016:

- Develop a sustainable partnership network. A strong partnership network is leveraged for sustainable sport, physical activity and wellness organizations and initiatives.
- Engage and mobilize communities. Communities are engaged and mobilized toward healthy active living and sport participation.
- Empower leaders through sport, physical activity and wellness. Through enhanced capacity and a more comprehensive approach, the Active Communities will foster and support community leadership.

Communities in action… sustainable, vibrant, nourished

Department of Healthy and Inclusive Communities • Interdepartmental
Federal/Provincial/Territorial governments • Networks • Coalitions • Working groups
Multi-partner agencies • Non-profit organizations • First Nations • Sport organizations
Schools • Universities and colleges • Municipalities and Local Service Districts • Private Sector
Strategic goal #1

*Sustainable partnership network—A strong partnership network is leveraged for sustainable sport, physical activity and wellness initiatives.*

A sustainable partnership network provides a stable mechanism, expertise and resources to contribute towards coordinated efforts within a community or region.

**Action steps to move toward achieving this outcome**

- Create and communicate an inventory of funding/resource opportunities (maximize coordination and reach).
- Support communities in accessing new funding partners (NGO, private/business sector).
- Identify the right partners/create the networks in all regions to support sustainable programming.

**Road to success: Designers of a new service delivery framework**

- Effective regional service delivery model in place
- Increased reach and sustained impact through the efforts of the team of Active Communities Branch consultants
- Increased collaboration and effectiveness on initiatives across the three branches (Active Communities, Sport and Recreation, Wellness)
- Increased level of applied research and funding partnerships in place to support evaluation of regional service delivery model

**Metrics**

- Inventory of new and existing partnerships (e.g., increase in number of sustained partnerships; reach/representation of partnerships/multi-sectoral involvement—mapping)
- Examination of the roles of specific partnerships (e.g., assessment of purpose, capacity and contributions including resources allocated to specific partnerships)
- Evidence the partnerships are sustainable (e.g., outcomes, challenges, assets) through evaluation of project reports and follow up surveys of previous grant recipients
- Community/regional uptake in terms of participation in GNB/partner priority areas such as After School Hours, Wellness Pillars, grant programs, social marketing campaign, forums, etc.
**Strategic goal #2**

**Engaged and mobilized communities—Communities are engaged and mobilized toward healthy active living and sport participation.**

Engaged and mobilized communities are empowered to make positive change. They reflect a broad spectrum of the population as a whole working together for the common good of their community.

**Action steps to move toward achieving this outcome**

- Continue to engage local, regional and provincial stakeholders.
  - Fund programs and initiatives that lead to sustainable delivery of sport and physical activity
  - Offer engagement workshops in communities
  - Support regional sport and recreation councils
- Work in partnership to reduce inequities impacting sport and physical activity participation in NB.
  - Support opportunities for schools and communities to adopt and implement pathways to the Long Term Athlete Development model
  - Advocate for increased access to community schools
- Celebrate success.

**Road to Success: Builders of capacity**

- Demonstrated capacity to provide increased accessibility to programs and services that build on community strengths
- Increased opportunities of inclusive participation in sport, physical activity and wellness
- Physical literacy and being active for life are recognized and valued at the community level
- Opportunities are optimized and successes celebrated

**Metrics**

- Evaluate organizations’, schools’ and communities’ capacity to engage and mobilize through assets recognition and skill-building requirements for the communities; the impact of their strategic/action plans, new or sustained initiatives, process of engaging partners
- Assessment of reach in terms of quality, number and types of activities; participation rates; and population priority areas
- Evaluate LTAD implementation in terms of club/community, school and performance sport
- Evidence that success is being celebrated within communities and across the province
Empowering leaders through training and support provides them with the skills and resources necessary to develop and strengthen partnerships and work collaboratively towards achieving common, shared goals. This enriches the social capital and assets of the province and its communities and becomes one of our strongest assets.

**Action steps to move toward achieving this outcome**

- Improve the capacity of leaders and volunteers by creating, adapting or adopting effective tools and resources to promote sport, physical activity and wellness.
- Enhance knowledge transfer related to effective sport, physical activity and community development and mobilization.
- Promote best practices for the recruitment, training, retention and recognition of leaders and volunteers involved in community sport, physical activity and wellness organizations and initiatives.
- Align and coordinate Branch efforts to promote sport, physical activity and wellness with others committed to seeing the value for communities.

**Road to success: Empowering leaders in community development**

- Effective knowledge transfer is contributing to increased capacity and improved programming within communities
- Improved capacity of leaders through effective recruitment, training, retention and support strategies
- As a result of enhanced capacity, communities embrace a more comprehensive approach and build social capital through sport, physical activity and wellness.
- Increased awareness of Active Communities Branch and use of its services and resources

**Metrics**

- Evidence of capacity-building activities to support the development of leaders and volunteers in sport and physical activity organizations and initiatives (e.g., workshops, webinars, professional development days, learning opportunities, mentoring, networking opportunities, tools and resources)
- Collaborative inventory of activities and initiatives in which leaders have been empowered, supported, trained and leader statistics (e.g., sport coaches, officials, board members; physical activity leaders; sport and recreation professionals and volunteers; community members/role models)
- Measurement of the perception of Active Communities Branch’s contribution to New Brunswick communities through sport, physical activity and wellness organizations and initiatives
Measuring our progress: 2012 – 2016

An evaluation of the Active Communities Branch Strategic Plan will be conducted in 2015. It will measure:

- Metrics that indicate success in communities
- Contributions to Sport Plan, Wellness Strategy, Community (including government renewal, local government and FPT priority)

Annual reporting will describe the progress made in empowering communities and fostering a network of self-sufficient local and regional organizations, capable of providing sport, recreation, physical activity and wellness opportunities.
Appendix 1: Active Communities Branch conceptual framework

VISION: Communities that are engaged, mobilized and committed to healthy active living, sport development and participation.

MISSION: To empower communities and foster a network of self-sufficient local and regional organizations, capable of providing sport, physical activity and wellness opportunities.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES: Comprehensive approach to community development and mobilization; Regional delivery model; Collaboration to improve inclusion and reduce barriers.
## Appendix 2: Metrics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Goals</th>
<th>METRICS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Reach</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inventory of new and existing partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a sustainable partnership network</td>
<td>Assessment of reach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collaborative inventory of leadership initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Performance Indicators

#### Reach
- Inventory of new and existing partnerships (e.g., increase in number of sustained partnerships; reach/representation of partnerships/multi-sectoral involvement — mapping)
- Assessment of reach in terms of quality, number and types of activities
- Collaborative inventory of activities and initiatives in which leaders have been empowered, supported, trained and leader statistics (e.g., sport coaches, officials, board members; physical activity leaders; sport and recreation professionals and volunteers; community members/role models)

#### Capacity
- Examination of the roles of specific partnerships (e.g., assessment of purpose, capacity and contributions including resources allocated to specific partnerships)
- Evaluate organizations’, schools’ and communities’ capacity to engage and mobilize through assets recognition and skill-building requirements for the communities; the impact of their strategic/action plans, new or sustained initiatives, process of engaging partners
- Evidence of capacity-building activities to support the development of leaders and volunteers in sport and physical activity organizations and initiatives (e.g., workshops, webinars, professional development days, learning opportunities, mentoring, networking opportunities, tools and resources)

#### Participation
- Participation rates; and population priority areas
- Evaluate LTAD implementation in terms of club/community, school and performance sport
- Community/regional uptake in terms of participation in GNB/partner priority areas such as After School Hours, Wellness Pillars, grant programs, social marketing campaign, forums, etc.)

#### Impact
- Evidence the partnerships are sustainable (e.g., outcomes, challenges, assets) through evaluation of project reports and follow up surveys of previous grant recipients
- Evidence that success is being celebrated within communities and across the province
- Measurement of the perception of Active Communities Branch’s contribution to New Brunswick communities through sport, physical activity and wellness organizations and initiatives
Appendix 3: Active Communities Branch Road Map for 2012 – 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>◆ Create database to capture incoming data from regions from grant submissions and evaluation reports</td>
<td>◆ Support communities in accessing new funding partners (NGO, private/business sector)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◆ Create community/regional profiles</td>
<td>◆ Identify the right partners/create the networks in all regions to support sustainable programming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◆ Establish baseline metrics to evaluate the reach, capacity, participation and impact of partnerships, community engagement and leadership training and development throughout the regions</td>
<td>◆ Create, adapt or adopt effective tools and resources to promote sport, physical activity and wellness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◆ Create an inventory of funding/resource opportunities</td>
<td>◆ Create surveillance and monitoring reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◆ Refine regional service delivery model to improve efficiencies</td>
<td>◆ Plan and deliver leader and volunteer training and development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◆ Increase collaboration and effectiveness across the three branches</td>
<td>◆ Plan and deliver knowledge transfer events and tools (conferences, workshops)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◆ Continue to engage local, regional and provincial stakeholders by:</td>
<td>◆ Develop capacity inventories (community assets)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– funding programs and initiatives that lead to sustainable delivery of sport and physical activity</td>
<td>◆ Gather evidence the partnerships are sustainable through evaluation of project reports and surveys of previous grant recipients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– offering engagement workshops in communities</td>
<td>◆ Measure community/regional uptake in terms of participation in GNB/partner priority areas such as ASH, Wellness pillars, grants, social marketing, forums, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– supporting regional sport and recreation councils</td>
<td>◆ Evaluate organizations’, schools’ and communities’ capacity to engage and mobilize through assets recognition and skill-building requirements for the communities; the impact of their strategic/action plans, new or sustained initiatives, process of engaging partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◆ Gather evidence the partnerships are sustainable through evaluation of project reports and surveys of previous grant recipients</td>
<td>◆ Evaluate LTAD implementation in terms of club/community, school and performance sport</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ongoing 2012 – 2016

◆ Work in partnership to reduce inequities impacting sport and physical activity participation in NB through the provision of grants and consultation, including:
  – supporting increased accessibility to programs and services that meet community need
  – supporting opportunities for schools and communities to adopt and implement pathways to the Long Term Athlete Development model, so that physical literacy and being active for life are recognized and valued at the community level
  – advocating for increased access to community schools.
## 2014 – 2015

- Work to increase levels of applied research and funding partnerships in place to support evaluation of regional service delivery model
- Measure awareness of Active Communities Branch and use of its services and resources
- Create a collaborative inventory of activities and initiatives in which:
  - leaders and volunteers have been empowered, supported and trained (e.g., leader statistics on sport coaches, officials, board members, physical activity leaders, sport and recreation professionals and volunteers, community members/role models)
  - communities have built enhanced capacity (e.g., workshops, webinars, professional development days, learning opportunities, mentoring, networking opportunities, tools and resources.
- Monitor whether efforts are leading to improved capacity of leaders through effective recruitment, training, retention and support strategies
- Monitor communities’ capacity to embrace a more comprehensive approach and build social capital through sport, physical activity and wellness
- Measure the perception of Active Communities Branch’s contribution to New Brunswick communities through sport, physical activity and wellness organizations and initiatives
- Gather evidence that success is being celebrated within communities and across the province

## 2015 – 2016

- A full evaluation will include a review of the service delivery model, strategic goals, the comprehensive approach and the relevance of the metrics (reach, capacity, participation and impact).
- Based on the results and recommendations of this evaluation, an enhanced strategic plan with targets will be developed.

## Ongoing 2012 – 2016

- Enhance knowledge transfer related to effective sport, physical activity and community development and mobilization.
- Promote best practices for the recruitment, training, retention and recognition of leaders and volunteers involved in community sport, physical activity and wellness organizations and initiatives.
- Align and coordinate Branch efforts to promote sport, physical activity and wellness with others committed to seeing the value for communities so that opportunities are optimized and successes celebrated.