



**RECREATION MATTERS**  
REAL ESTATE AND RECREATION  
**A RESEARCH SUMMARY**



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The study was coordinated by the Faculty of Kinesiology at the University of New Brunswick in partnership with Recreation New Brunswick and the New Brunswick Real Estate Association.

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# RECREATION

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





## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this study was to establish a baseline of provincial research that captures real estate agent's opinions on how important recreation services and amenities are during the process of selling and buying homes in New Brunswick.

## **NEW BRUNSWICK NEEDS RECREATION**

Recreation is a public good with the power to enhance the wellbeing of individuals, communities and environments. The recreation sector has the potential to address many of our social and economic challenges, such as increases in obesity and sedentary behaviour, decreased contact with nature, and social isolation. The recreation field has developed capacities that can help communities achieve positive outcomes in a broad range of areas, making it a vital tool for New Brunswick.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In order to gain a better understanding of the role that recreation infrastructure and opportunities play in the decision-making process of New Brunswick home buyers, UNB, Recreation NB and the NBREA developed a survey for real estate agents. The questions used in the survey were developed from pertinent literature and formed the basis for the study. The questions and the survey format were approved by Recreation NB and the NBREA. The survey, in both French and English, was distributed to all real estate agents who were members of the NBREA in 2019. The survey dealt with real estate agent's perceptions of the importance of various services and amenities in the selling and buying of homes in New Brunswick.

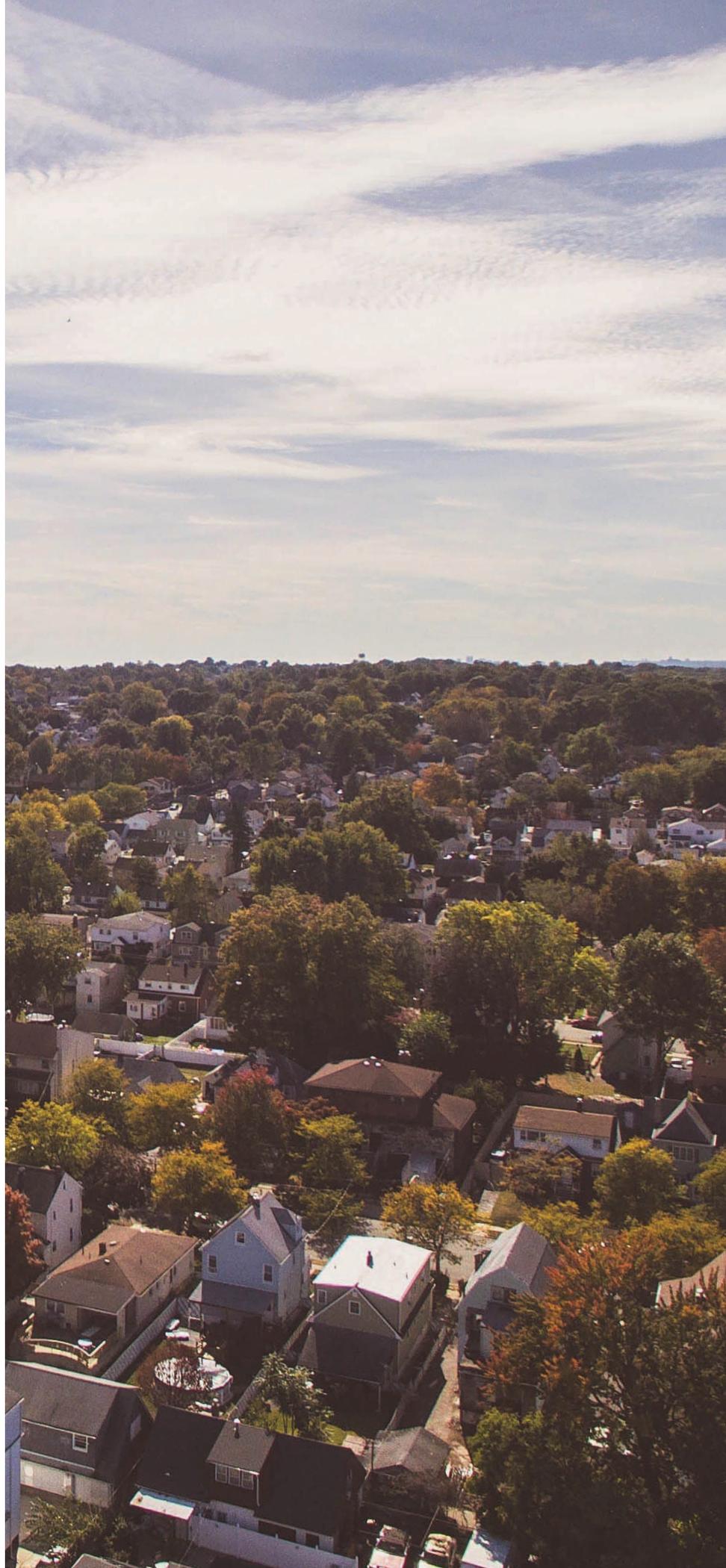
The first section of the survey focused on how much importance real estate agents place on providing information about the availability of various services and amenities (e.g. schools, restaurants, shopping, etc.) as well as recreation-specific services and amenities (e.g. parks, recreation facilities, sports fields, playgrounds, trails, etc.) when selling a home. The second section of the survey focused on real estate agent's perceptions of how important the availability of these same services and amenities are to individuals and families looking to purchase a home. The final section of the survey included questions about homebuyer preferences and the overall impacts of recreation on real estate. The survey included both Likert scales and multiple choice questions as well as opportunities for additional comments by the respondents.

The survey was prepared using Microsoft forms and distributed via email to the NBREA membership on July 18, 2019. Information about the survey was also made available through social media. Follow-up telephone calls and emails were made to local real estate boards to encourage participation in the study. Subsequent email reminders were sent out on August 12th and 19th. The survey was closed on August 23rd.

Responses to the questions were entered into Excel for analysis. Frequency of response information for all queries in the survey were determined and are presented in the following section of the report.

## STUDY RESULTS

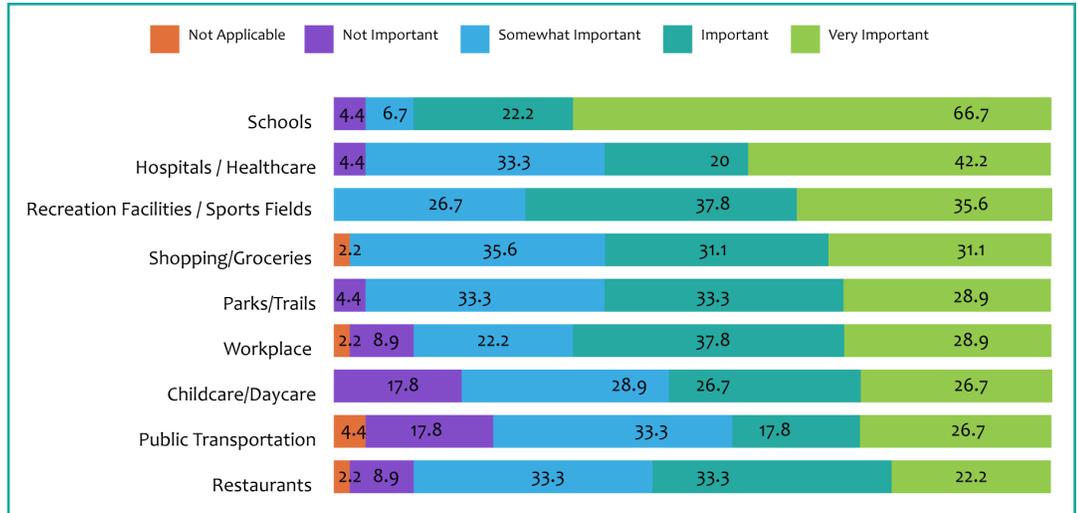
The study included approximately 50 completed surveys from the membership of the NBREA. While representative, this low response rate means that the findings are suggestive rather than conclusive. There is also an imbalance in the origins of the respondents. Of the eight provincial regions identified for this study (Edmundston, Woodstock, Fredericton, Saint John, Moncton, Miramichi, Bathurst, and Campbellton), survey respondents indicated that they did most of their business in just (Edmundston, Woodstock, Fredericton, Saint John, Moncton and Bathurst). The majority indicated that they work most in the Fredericton (45%), Saint John (28%) and Moncton (15%) regions.



# SELLING PROPERTY

## The Importance of General Services and Amenities

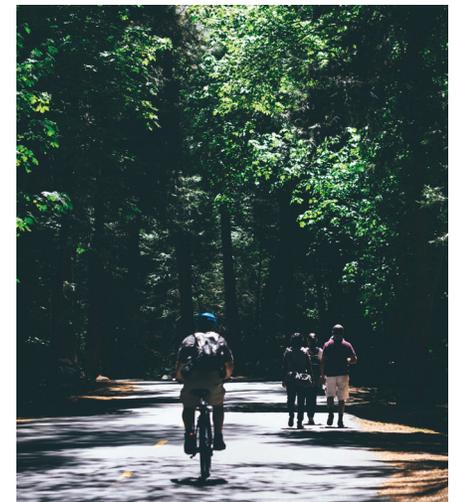
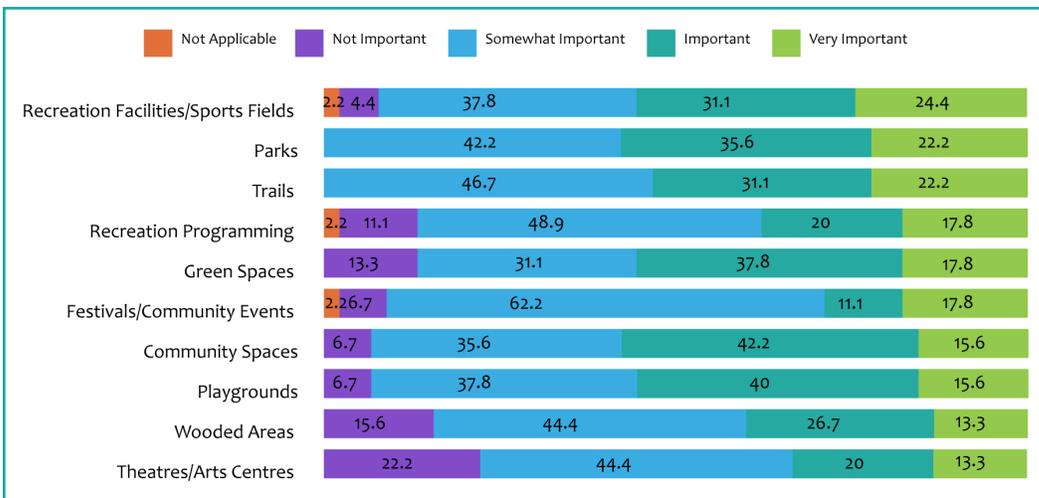
When selling a property, 66.7% of the respondents were of the opinion that it is Very Important for them to provide information on the availability of Schools and 22.2% considered such information Important. Almost three quarters of the respondents (73.4%) indicated that information about the availability of Recreation Facilities/Sports Fields was either Very Important or Important. Over 60% of respondents specified that the availability of Hospitals/Healthcare (62%), Workplace (66.7%), Shopping/Groceries (62.2%) and Parks/Trails (62.0) were either Very Important or Important to provide information about. Of lesser importance was providing information about Public Transportation, Childcare/Daycare and Restaurants/Cafes.



Respondents also noted that it is important to provide homebuyers with information about local crime rates. One respondent explained that they sometimes inform clients of so called “Areas of Questionable Activity”. Others explained that they often discuss the shortage of doctors and information about locating a family doctor or a veterinarian for their pets.

## The Importance of Recreation Services and Amenities

When selling a property, over half of the respondents indicated that providing information on the availability of recreation services and amenities, such as Parks (57.8%), Recreation Facilities/Sports Fields (56.5%), Community Centres (57.8%), Green Spaces (55.6%), Playgrounds (55.6%) and Trails (53.3%), was either Very Important or Important. Approximately 30% of respondents were of the opinion that these services and amenities were Somewhat Important.



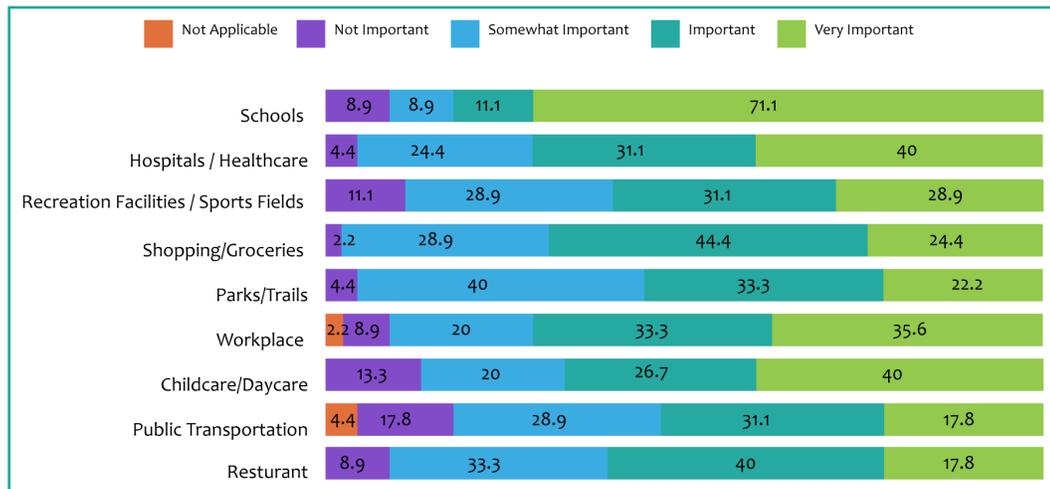
Additional recreation services and amenities suggested as important to provide homebuyers information about were related to seasonal activities such as the proximity to water and the quality of water for recreational activities such as boating, kayaking, fishing, swimming, and visiting beaches. Information about possible winter activities such as downhill and cross country skiing, skating, curling, hockey and snowmobile trails were also included. Others suggested that it is important to share information about driving routes and highway access as well as information about the distance to the nearest cities in Canada and the United States. Information about wineries, farmers markets, access to ATV trails, dog parks, churches and Cottage Association Memberships were also noted as important.

# PURCHASING PROPERTY

## The Importance of General Services and Amenities

When asked about the importance of the availability of various services and amenities to homebuyers, Schools were considered to be either Very Important (71.1%) or Important (11.1%). Other services and amenities thought to be Very Important or Important were Childcare/Daycare (Very Important 40.0%, Important 26.7%), Hospitals/Healthcare (Very Important 40%, Important 31.1%), Workplace (Very Important 35.6%, Important 33.3%), and Shopping/Groceries (Very Important 24.4%, Important 44.4%).

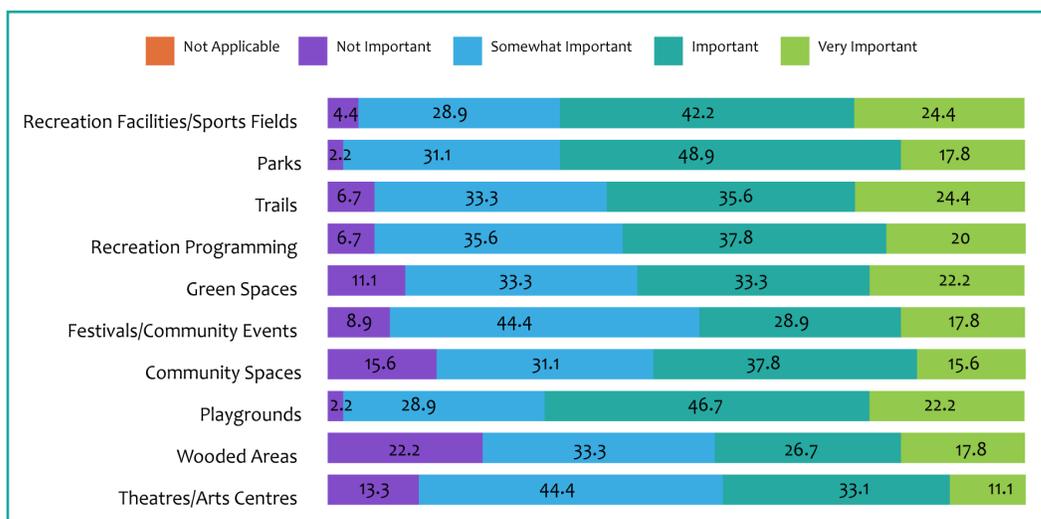
Respondents also believed that the availability of Recreation Facilities/Sports Fields (60.0%), Restaurants/Cafes (57.8%) and Parks/Trails (55.5%) were Very Important or Important to their clients. However, 17.8% of the respondents were of the opinion that Public Transportation was Not Important or only Somewhat Important (28.9%).



Additional services and amenities that were perceived as important to homebuyers were accommodations for aging parents and the locations of fire departments and police facilities. Other comments indicated that the locations of churches and church services, high speed internet and bars and entertainment centres were of interest to homebuyers.

## The Importance of Recreation Services and Amenities

When purchasing a property, over half of the respondents identified several different types of recreation services and amenities as being either Very Important or Important to their clients. These included Playgrounds (68%), Parks (66.7%), Recreation Facilities/Sports Fields (66.6%), Trails (60%), Recreation Programing (59.85), Green Spaces (55.5%) and Community Centres (53.4%). Among the services and amenities thought to be Not Important to homebuyers were Theatres/Arts Centres (13.3%), Wooded Areas (22.2%), and Community Centres (15.6%).

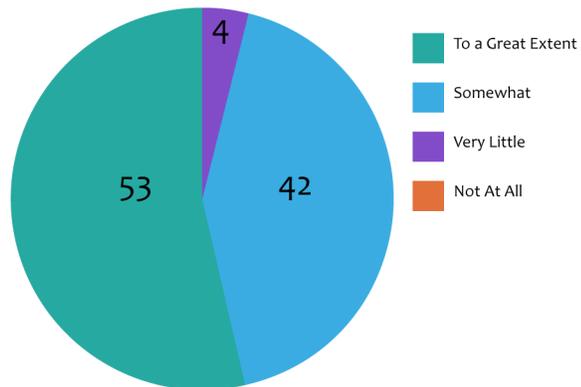


Additional recreation services and amenities perceived to be important were water access and locations for outdoor activities such as swimming, fishing, and boating.

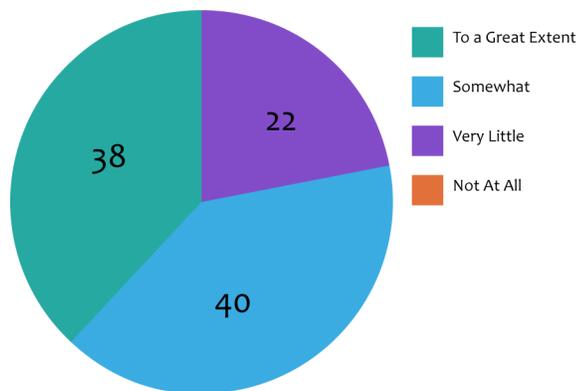


## EXTENT OF POSITIVE IMPACT ON:

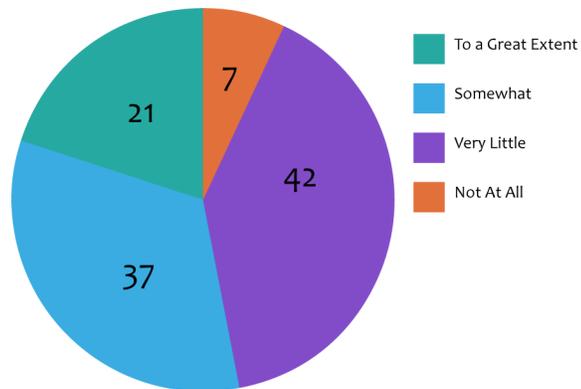
### Community Quality of Life



### Residential Property Value



### Commercial Property Value

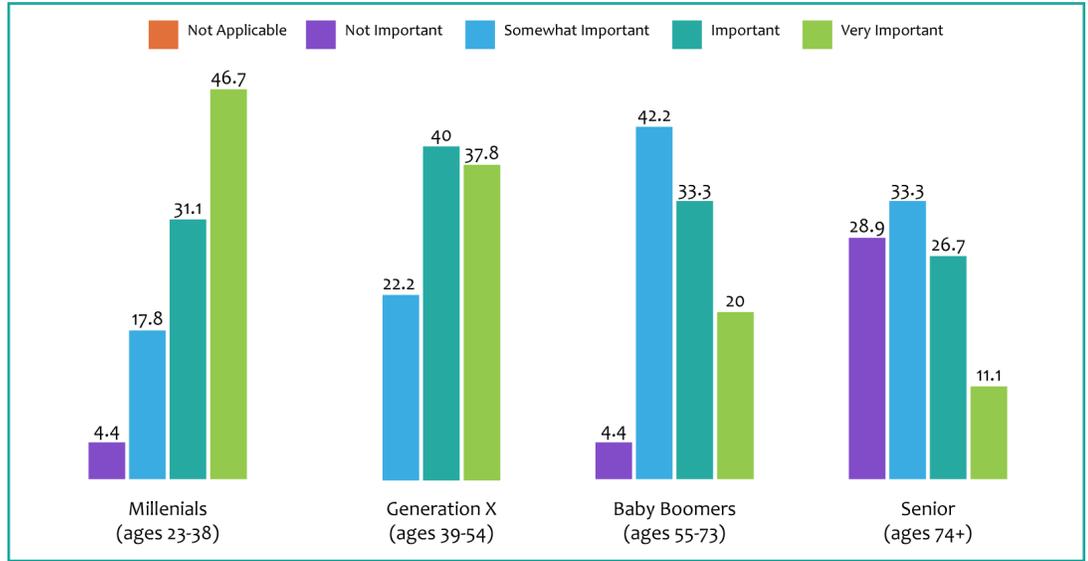




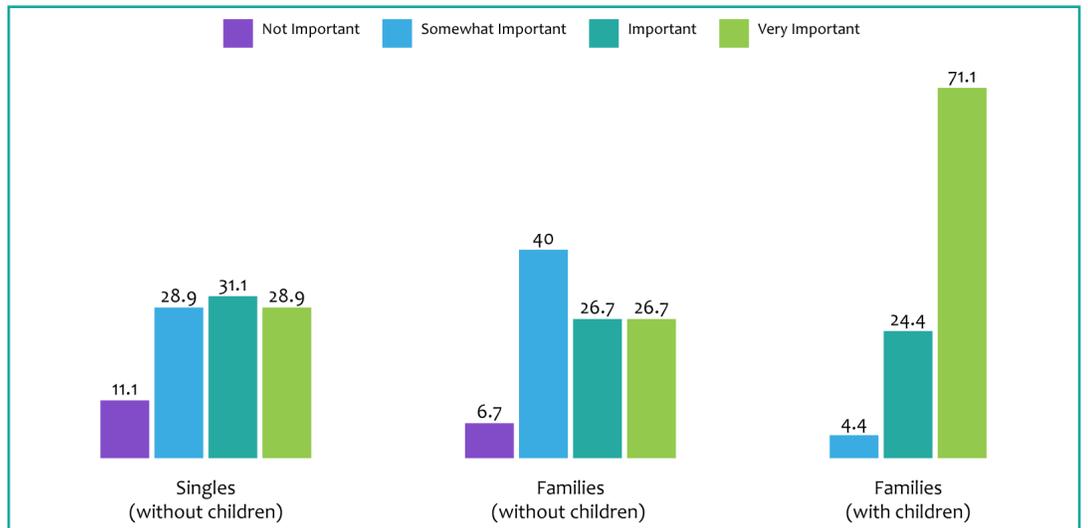
# THE AVAILABILITY OF RECREATION TO:

Respondents were of the opinion that the availability of recreation services and amenities are either Very Important (46.7%) or Important (31.1%) to those in the Millennial group (ages 23-38) followed closely in Importance to those in the Generation X category (ages 39-54). Recreation services and amenities were considered to be either Very important (71.1%) or Important (24.4%) to families with children and thought to be only Somewhat Important (40%) to families without children.

## Age Groups

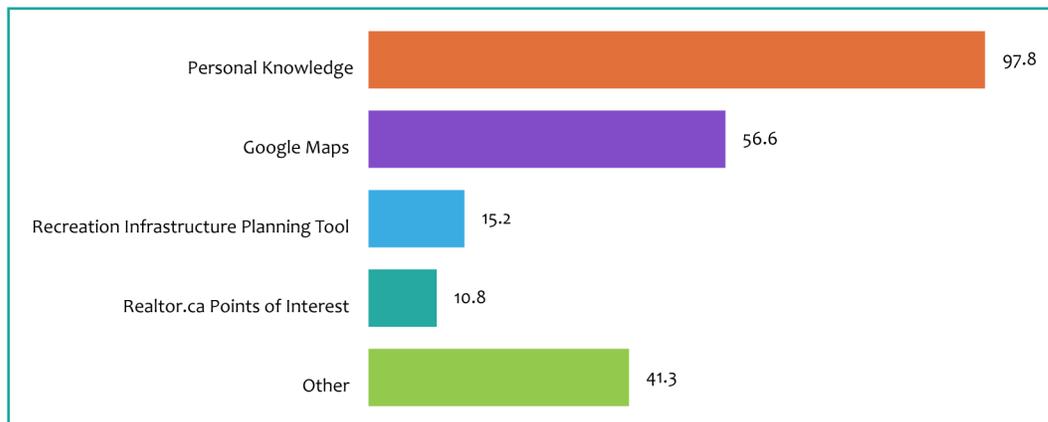


## Family Types



# SOURCES OF RECREATION INFORMATION

When selling a property, most of the respondents indicated that they used their personal knowledge as a source of information on the availability of nearby services and amenities. The second largest group of respondents used Google Maps. Respondents shared that they used additional sources of information such as municipal offices and websites, information from local businesses, and Service New Brunswick.



## CONCLUSION

Research illustrates that recreation services and amenities can help build strong families and communities, enhance mental and physical health, connect people to nature, and provide economic benefits. Less understood is the influence of recreation in relation to the real estate sector in New Brunswick. The evidence that has emerged from this study helps to expand this understanding.

### Key Findings

- The majority of survey respondents agree that the availability of recreation services and amenities positively affects the quality of life in a community as well as the value of residential and commercial property.
- While important to all homebuyers, real estate agents view recreation services and amenities as being most important to families with children and millennials (ages 23-38) who are considering purchasing a property.
- The majority of real estate agents rely on personal knowledge as a source of information about the various services and amenities in their areas. Municipal Offices and websites are used as additional sources of information.
- Next to information about the availability of schools, information about recreation facilities/sports fields was considered very important for real estate agents to share when selling homes.
- Among recreation services and amenities, information about parks, community centres, recreation facilities/sports fields, playgrounds, green spaces and trails were noted as most important to include when selling a property.
- The majority of respondents were of the opinion that the availability of schools, childcare/daycare, hospitals/healthcare, shopping/groceries and recreation facilities/sport fields are the services and amenities of highest importance to potential home buyers.
- Among recreation services and amenities, the availability of playgrounds, parks, recreation facilities/sport fields and trails were identified as being most important to homebuyers.
- There are some differences between the services and amenities identified as when selling a property and those identified as being important to homebuyers. For example, information on childcare/daycare was of lesser importance when selling a property than it was noted as being to homebuyers. Also, providing information about parks/trails and recreation facilities/sport fields was considered more important when selling a property than it was to homebuyers.
- Information about the availability of theatres/arts centres did not emerge as important when selling or purchasing property as compared to other recreation services and amenities.









## RECOMMENDATIONS

The myriad of recreation infrastructure and opportunities available throughout the province along with the unique needs of homebuyers makes it impossible to discern the exact influence the availability of recreation services and amenities has on the selling and purchasing of homes in New Brunswick. However, the study establishes a connection between the recreation and the real estate sectors and a point of departure for further collaboration between the two.

- Real estate agents should take a more active role in supporting the development of recreation services and amenities in their communities due to the important role recreation plays in the process of selling and purchasing homes.
- Those in the recreation profession should provide information pertaining to recreation services and amenities directly to real estate boards and agents so it can be used when selling properties and communicated to potential homebuyers.
- There is a need to elevate the perceived importance of theatres, art centres and community events to the vitality of communities. Recreation advocates should increase their efforts to communicate how these opportunities are part of the recreation spectrum and worthy of support and promotion.
- Future research should be undertaken to understand homebuyers' perspective on the role recreation services and amenities play in their property purchases.
- Future research should be conducted to determine the impact of recreation services and amenities on property values. Recreation agencies historically have endured the most aggressive budget cuts during times of fiscal austerity and economic downsizing. Creating an understanding of the connection between recreation and economic prosperity among stakeholders is the best defense against budget reductions.
- Due to the growing number of people who have opted to rent, research should be conducted with renters to determine the influence recreation services and amenities on their location choices.
- In addition to the real estate sector, there are other sectors with close connections to recreation. These sector connections should be investigated further and the results used by recreation leaders to effectively communicate the story of how their departments and organizations can shape local economies and community wellbeing.

