



Owen Sound
ONTARIO, CANADA

Recreation, Parks & Facilities MASTER PLAN

Final Report
January 2006

mbpc
Monteith♦Brown
planning consultants

In
Association
with

 **The JF Group**



City of Owen Sound

Recreation, Parks & Facilities
MASTER PLAN

FINAL REPORT January 2007



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SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE

Recreation and parks contribute to the social, physical, cultural, and economic well being of residents and enhance overall quality of life. As stated in the City's Strategic Plan, Owen Sound is committed to providing an accessible urban environment focusing on quality of life for its residents through the provision of leisure facilities and programs that appeal to wide range of interests and abilities.

With these objectives in mind, the City undertook the preparation of a Recreation, Parks and Facilities Master Plan to establish policies, goals and objectives aimed at improving services to the residents of Owen Sound and adjacent communities.

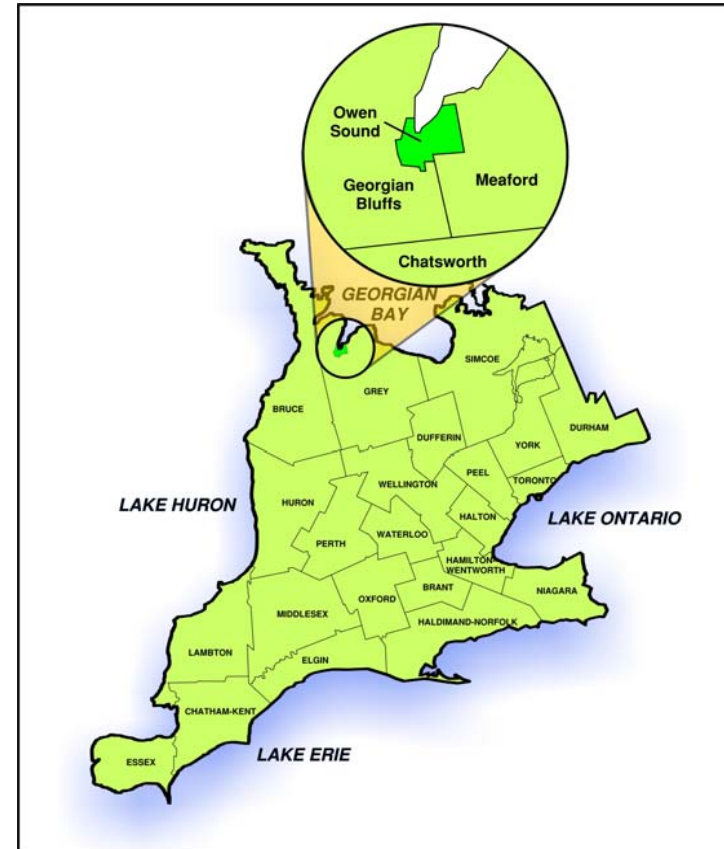
The scope of this Master Plan involves parks, recreation facilities, and related programming and service delivery mechanisms. The Plan is intended to span a period of ten years, although period reviews are encouraged.

1.2 CONTEXT

Located in Grey County, the City of Owen Sound is located on Georgian Bay, at the mouth of the Sydenham River and along the Niagara Escarpment. The Official Plan Background Study (2003) predicted a 2006 population of approximately 21,600 in Owen Sound. Census data from 2001 suggests that the community's age profile is indicative of an aging population, a trend found in most communities across the province.

In addition to the ample recreational activities offered in the area, Owen Sound also contains a vibrant cultural community and a strong industrial and commercial sector that are supported through the City's role as a regional centre for Bruce and Grey Counties.

Figure 1-1: Regional Context of Owen Sound



Recreation and parks opportunities contribute to the physical, social, cultural and economic well being of a community and enhance the overall quality of life for its residents. The City of Owen Sound, like most communities across the province, faces the challenge of providing leisure services that contribute to a healthy community with limited resources and balancing services with those provided by the private and non-profit sectors.

1.3 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A number of key documents and reports have been prepared in recent years that have a direct or indirect impact on the Master Plan. These reports and their findings are useful in the context of the Master Plan as they provide base-line information for this study.

Primary background documents reviewed for the purposes of this Plan include:

- Revised Strategic Plan for the Corporation of the City of Owen Sound (2005);
- City of Owen Sound Official Plan (2006) and Background Study (2003);
- Harrison Park Master Plan Study;
- Owen Sound and Area Physical Activity Plan (2005);
- Seniors Needs Assessment (2005);
- Youth Needs Assessment (2005);
- Bruce Grey Trails Network design brief (2005);
- City of Owen Sound Development Charges Background Study (2005);
- Owen Sound Accessibility Plan (2004);
- Owen Sound Family YMCA Market Feasibility Study for a new Regional Aquatic Centre (2000) and Market Research Study (2001);
- City of Owen Sound Cultural Master Plan (draft); and
- City of Owen Comprehensive Recreation Master Plan (1990);
note: this was never adopted by City Council.

In preparing this Master Plan, one of the expectations was that there would be considerable research and data available which, in turn, would not only streamline the process, but also ensure a comprehensive understanding of the issues. Where appropriate, directions and policies covered by recent and relevant documents have been reviewed and incorporated into the Master Plan. One example is the City's new Official Plan, which contains several applicable goals, objectives and policies related to recreation and parks, including updated policies relating to the acquisition and development parkland and open space.

1.4 PLANNING PROCESS

Guided by the City of Owen Sound Recreation and Parks Advisory Committee (comprised of Councillors and representatives from the City and the Municipality of Meaford and Township of Georgian Bluffs – with which the City has existing recreation agreements), the planning process began in Spring 2006. A Consulting Team consisting of Monteith Brown Planning Consultants and The JF Group was retained to facilitate the project.

The planning process was divided into three logical and appropriate phases, described below.

Phase 1 – Research and Consultation

Culminating in a Planning Context Report (which has been integrated into – and is superseded by – this Master Plan), the research and consultation phase provided the building blocks of the Master Plan through the completion of:

- a community profile;
- a trends analysis;
- public consultation;
- facility and parks inventories; and
- Master Plan goals.

Phase 2 – Needs Assessment (Master Plan Preparation)

The Needs Assessment phase established the degree to which new programs and facilities are required now and in the future. A combination of Owen Sound-specific participation rates and population-based levels of service were developed and compared to the supply of facilities and demographic data to determine the degree of under (or over) supply currently and in the future. An analysis of local parkland and trail needs was undertaken to determine if all or part of the requirements could be accommodated through upgrading or expanding existing facilities. Also addressed at this stage were matters related to service delivery, such as programming, partnerships, and linkages with other service providers. The Needs Assessment Report has been integrated into – and is superseded by – this Master Plan.

Phase 3 – Implementation Strategy (Master Plan Finalization)

The Implementation Strategy Phase involves the determination of priority, timing, and financial requirements pertaining to the primary Master Plan recommended action plans, followed by the finalization of the Master Plan.

1.5 MASTER PLAN ORGANIZATION

The Master Plan is organized as follows:

Section One: Introduction

Provides an overview of the Master Plan's purpose, scope and planning process.

Section Two: Demographic Profile & Trends

Contains an overview of the City's demographic characteristics, population projections, and their relevance to the City's system. Identifies recreation and parks trends and their implications.

Section Three: Public Consultation Program

Outlines and evaluates the public's perceptions of the current state of leisure in the City as well as future needs, opportunities and challenges as identified through the various community consultation methods.

Section Four: Master Plan Goals

Outlines a series of goals for the provision of parks and recreation facilities, programs and services in the City of Owen Sound.

Section Five: Recreation Facilities

Identifies short and long term indoor and outdoor recreation facility requirements and related recommendations.

Section Six: Parks, Open Space & Trails

Establishes parks, open space and trail needs and presents various recommendations related to the acquisition, development, and management of these resources.

Section Seven: Programming & Service Delivery

Contains direction on matters related to the co-ordination and delivery of services, programming and roles, areas of responsibility, planning and management tools, and other key operational aspects.

Section Eight: Implementation Strategy

Provides a listing of the Master Plan's recommended action plans, complete with financial requirements and timing parameters.

SECTION TWO: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

To help identify the specific needs of current and future residents, it is essential to understand and integrate important demographic factors such as age composition, population projections, household income and education into the Recreation, Parks and Facilities Master Plan. In some cases, statistics for the City of Owen Sound, the Township of Georgian Bluffs and the Municipality of Meaford are combined into what is referred to in this study as a “Service Area” because parks and recreation facilities in Owen Sound serve its own residents in addition to residents of these adjacent municipalities as set out through current cost sharing arrangements. Comparing demographic data for will help to determine if and how the provision of recreation and parks facilities and services in the City of Owen Sound should differ from other municipalities.

Effective planning for Owen Sound’s current and future residents also requires the identification of existing and emerging trends that could affect facility and program needs. Understanding trends related to demographics, participation, and facility development can assist with anticipating shifts in the demand for parks and recreation opportunities. This section contains a summary of major trends in participation, demand and the delivery of recreation facilities and services, based largely on information collected from provincial and national research, with references to local implications or data where appropriate.

2.1 HISTORICAL POPULATION FIGURES

According to the *Owen Sound Official Plan Background Study* (October 2003) the City of Owen Sound experienced a modest population growth of 7.2% or an average annual growth rate of 0.38% between 1981 and 2001. The rate of annual population growth in Owen Sound during this twenty year period was slightly greater than that of Bruce County (0.31%), but substantially lower than that of Grey County (0.94%) and the province of Ontario (1.41%).

Although the neighbouring Township of Georgian Bluffs and the Municipality of Meaford have considerably smaller populations than Owen Sound, both experienced greater growth than the City between 1981 and 2001. Like the City of Owen Sound, these municipalities experienced their greatest population growth between 1986 and 1991. Unlike Owen Sound (which grew by only 40 people), Meaford and Georgian Bluffs experienced negative growth between 1996 and 2001 as shown in Table 2.1. 2001 Census data indicates a population of 21,431 in the City of Owen Sound and 41,964 for the entire Service Area.

Table 2.1: Historic Population (1981-2001)

Census Year	Owen Sound	5-Year Change	Georgian Bluffs	5-Year Change	Meaford Municipality	5-Year Change	Service Area	5-Year Change
1981	19,879	n/a	7,999	n/a	8,848	n/a	36,726	n/a
1986	19,804	-0.4%	8,167	2.1%	8,964	1.3%	36,935	0.6%
1991	21,674	9.4%	9,738	19.2%	9,851	9.9%	41,263	11.7%
1996	21,390	-1.3%	10,256	5.3%	10,497	6.6%	42,143	2.1%
2001	21,431	0.2%	10,152	-1.0%	10,381	-1.1%	41,964	-0.4%

Source: Statistics Canada, Census (1981-2001)

2.2 AGE COMPOSITION

According to 2001 Census data, the City of Owen Sound has a lower percentage than the Province of Ontario in the 20-44 age group and higher percentage than the Province of Ontario in the 65 and older age group. This data suggests that Owen Sound still has a strong youth population but due to the City being a regional centre for healthcare, etc., they also have a greater number of older adults. Data to support this observation are presented in Table 2.2., and displayed graphically for comparison in Figure 2.1.

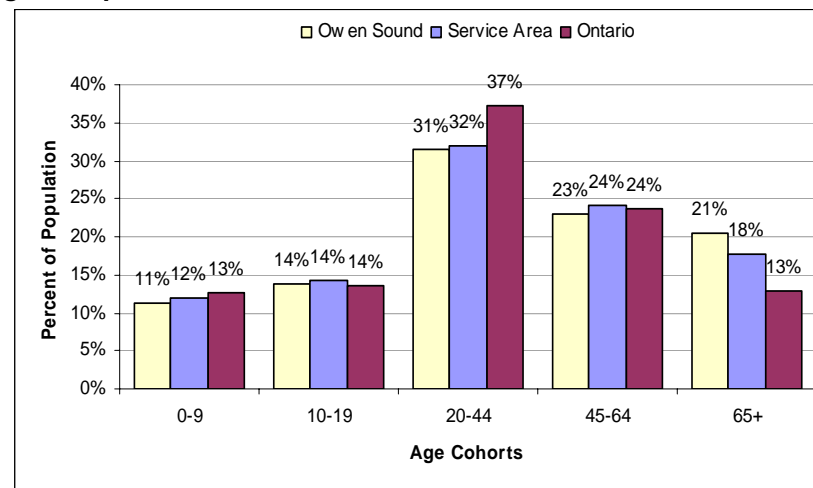
Based on advances in medicine, treatment and healthy lifestyle choices that continue to extend the human lifespan, Owen Sound should expect equal or even greater demands on parks, recreation and leisure services from the City's relatively large senior population. A substantial percent of Owen Sound's population in the 20 to 44 age cohort (albeit somewhat lower than the provincial average) and the 45 to 64 age cohort will continue to age in the next twenty to thirty years and create demand for parks, recreation and leisure facilities dedicated for mature adults and seniors. The existing and anticipated number of seniors in Owen Sound will undoubtedly influence the types and distribution of facilities, programs and services needed throughout the City. At the same time, there will continue to be demands for programs and facilities to serve children and youth – an age group that has historically been the primary focus of most Recreation Departments.

Table 2.2: Population by Grouped Age Cohorts (2001)

Life Cycle Stages	Age Cohort	Owen Sound	Georgian Bluffs	Meaford	Service Area
Children	0-9	2,425	1,365	1,280	5,070
Teens	10-19	2,945	1,645	1,425	6,015
Young Adults	20-44	6,735	3,335	3,390	13,460
Mature Adults	45-64	4,920	2,650	2,585	10,155
Seniors	65+	4,400	1,270	1,810	7,480

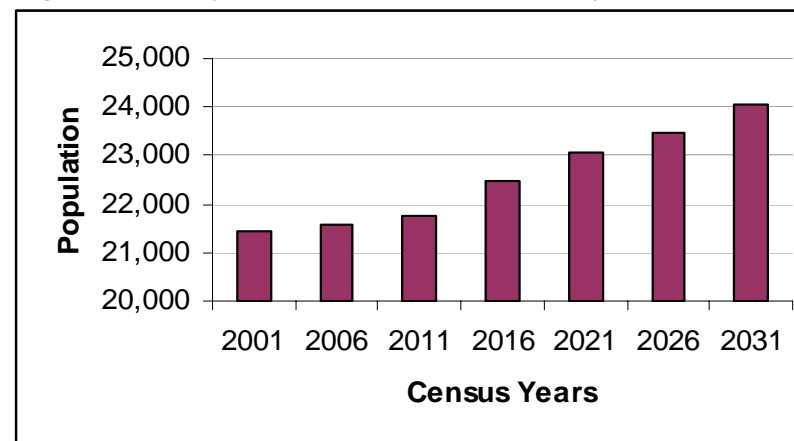
Source: Statistics Canada, Census (2001)

Figure 2.1: Age Composition of Owen Sound Service Area and Ontario (2001)



Source: Statistics Canada, Census (2001)

Figure 2.2: Projected Population for the City of Owen Sound



Source: Will Dunning Inc. (2003 Owen Sound Official Plan Background Study)

2.3 PROJECTED POPULATION FIGURES

Results of a cohort survival model using the “Share of Growth Scenario” presented in the *Official Plan Background Study* indicate moderate to considerable annual growth in Owen Sound between 2001 and 2031 as shown in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3: Projected Population for the City of Owen Sound

Year	Population	Annual Change
2001	21,425	n/a
2006	21,587	0.15%
2011	21,740	0.14%
2016	22,467	0.66%
2021	23,076	0.54%
2026	23,472	0.34%
2031	24,038	0.48%

Source: Will Dunning Inc. (2003 Owen Sound Official Plan Background Study)

Population projections for Owen Sound, Georgian Bluffs and the Municipality of Meaford indicate moderate population growth for the next ten years (2006 to 2016) as illustrated in Table 2.4. Because Owen Sound serves as a regional hub for many recreational activities, it is important to note that recreational facilities in Owen Sound will continue to face additional pressures not only from population growth in the City of Owen Sound but also by population growth anticipated in the surrounding municipalities.

Table 2.4: Projected Population for the Owen Sound Service Area (2006-2016)

Census Year	Owen* Sound	Georgian Bluffs**	Meaford***	Service Area
2006	22,043	10,057	11,986*	44,086
2011	23,087	10,352	12,762	46,201
2016	24,292	10,592	13,700	48,584

* Owen Sound 2003 Official Plan Background Report (Biglieri Group Ltd.)

** Township of Georgian Bluffs Draft Official Plan Background Study (Cuesta Planning Ltd.)

*** Municipality of Meaford Official Plan Background Study, October 2001

Although the *2005 Official Plan* for the Municipality of Meaford indicates an anticipated population increase of 2,000 to 4,000 over the next twenty years, discussions with municipal planning staff suggest that continued resort development by Intra West may double the anticipated growth (between 4,000 and 8,000 more people) over the next twenty years.

2.4 AGE COHORT FORECASTS

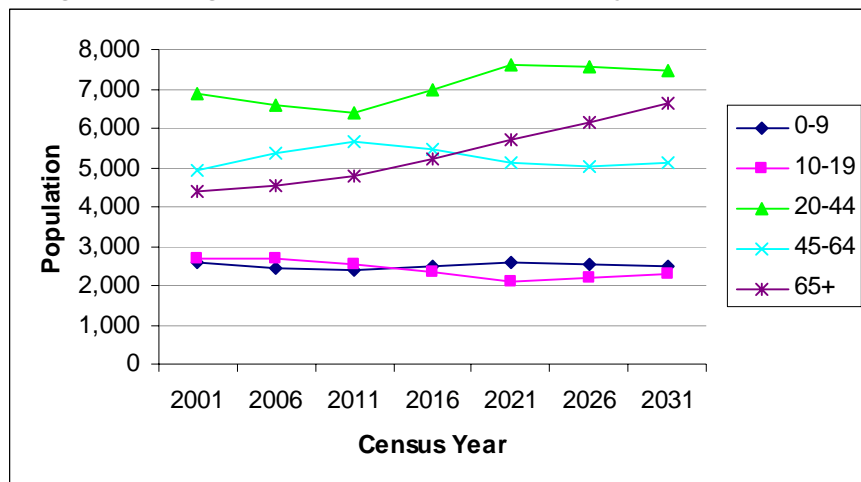
The *2003 Background Study of Owen Sound's Official Plan* presents population forecasts by various age cohorts, assuming a “High Share of Growth Scenario”. Data obtained from the *Background Study* was modified to represent major life cycle stages, in which recreation and leisure needs may differ significantly. Table 2.5 and Figure 2.3 indicate a slight decline in the number of youth between 10 and 19, late growth by adults between 20 and 44, early growth by adults between 45 and 64, and constant growth by seniors of or over the age of 65.

Table 2.5: Age Cohort Forecasts for the City of Owen Sound

"High Share of Growth" Scenario							
Age	2001	2006	2011	2016	2021	2026	2031
0-9	2,573	2,433	2,380	2,485	2,566	2,546	2,511
10-19	2,672	2,689	2,513	2,333	2,109	2,185	2,269
20-44	6,860	6,584	6,414	6,963	7,598	7,548	7,485
45-64	4,920	5,346	5,656	5,465	5,109	5,044	5,146
65+	4,400	4,537	4,777	5,222	5,694	6,150	6,628
Total	21,425	21,588	21,740	22,468	23,076	23,473	24,039

Source: Will Dunning Inc. (2003 Owen Sound Official Plan Background Study),
Modified by Monteith Brown Planning Consultants

Figure 2.3: Age Cohort Forecasts for the City of Owen Sound



Source: Will Dunning Inc. (2003 Owen Sound Official Plan Background Study), Modified by Monteith Brown Planning Consultants

In recreational terms, the City of Owen Sound has stable numbers in the traditionally high demand age groups of youth and young adults. Other than adjusting to any existing deficiencies and future demands based on changing trends, the City is facing a “what you have is what you will have” scenario. As to the aging population there will be fewer demands for traditional seniors’ services and increasing demands by more “active” seniors. However, as Owen Sound also currently meets the recreational requirement of the abutting municipalities, their demographic projections must also be considered. Owen Sound has the task of determining whether or not they can continue to provide capital improvements based on the abutting municipalities needs and, if they do, what cost sharing terms need to accompany such an agreement. Also part of the assessment is whether appropriate programs can be offered if only the City’s youth are permitted to use the facilities.

In addition to serving the recreation needs of local residents, the City of Owen Sound currently serves certain recreation needs for residents of adjacent municipalities. Considerable population growth

expected in Owen Sound and Grey County by 2031 will significantly influence the future recreation and park demands throughout the City. The future provision of recreation and park facilities, programs and services in Owen Sound should consider not only the City’s needs but the demands placed on the local parks and recreation system by other municipalities in its Service Area. Population forecasts by age cohort were not available for the adjacent municipalities.

2.5 HOUSEHOLD INCOME & EDUCATION

Research suggests that participation in recreational activities is directly influenced by income, with a higher degree of participation associated with higher levels of income. As shown in Table 2.6, the 2000 median household income of all households in Owen Sound was substantially lower than the averages for the Province of Ontario, the Township of Georgian Bluffs and the Municipality of Meaford. The relatively low median household income in Owen Sound is believed to be attributed to an above average population of seniors with retirement income levels, as well as a growing proportion of unattached individuals and lone parent families.

Table 2.6: 2000 Median Household Income - All Households

City of Owen Sound	Township of Georgian Bluffs	Municipality of Meaford	Province of Ontario
\$35,746	\$53,136	\$44,263	\$53,626

Source: Statistics Canada, Census (2001)

Based solely on recreation trends related to income, residents of Georgian Bluffs and Meaford may express higher participation levels than residents of Owen Sound. These findings suggest that Georgian Bluffs and Meaford will continue to place demands on Owen Sound’s parks and recreation system.

A person’s level of education also has a bearing on participation, with many studies correlating increased participation with higher degrees of education. When compared to the 2001 Census

education levels in Ontario, the City of Owen Sound has a considerably lower percentage of its population with a University Certificate, Diploma or Degree across all age categories. Education trends presented by the population of Owen Sound were extremely similar to those for Grey County.

2.6 SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PARTICIPATION TRENDS

High Levels of Physical Inactivity in Canada

- The 2000/01 Canadian Community Health Survey reported that 53.6% of all adults age 12 and over in the Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound area are considered to be “physically inactive”; this compares to 49.8% across Ontario.
- Obesity is also a considerable concern, with 17.2% of the Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound population (ages 20-64) being considered obese, compared to 15.3% across Ontario.
- Studies have shown that Canadians are less active due to certain constraints, of which a lack of time is the biggest challenge to participation.

Economic Influences on Leisure Participation Levels

- Income is a significant barrier to participation in leisure pursuits – as a result, higher income households generally participate more frequently in all forms of leisure.
- Statistics Canada reports that less money is being spent on sport and recreation – about 6% of the average household’s total annual expenditures is spent on leisure.
- Statistics Canada research shows that wealth and family income increases with age (the highest net worth is associated with the 55-64 age)¹ – the aging population will likely have more disposable income to spend on leisure services and facilities.

¹ Statistics Canada, The Assets and Debts of Canadians: An Overview of the Results of the Survey of Financial Security.

- A person’s ability to pay needs to be considered as it will be a deciding factor for whether or not residents will participate – for example, younger seniors are likely to be wealthier than previous generations, thus, many municipalities are reconsidering traditional subsidies aimed at seniors in favour of subsidization based upon financial circumstances.

Activity Trends Among Youth and Adults

- The “echo generation” (currently 11 to 26 years old) created a short-term surge in demand for recreation and other services that is now beginning to wane as they age.
- The 2000 Physical Activity Monitor (Ontario Physical Activity Profile) found that 26% of Ontario children spend time in organized activities after school (such as soccer practice or swimming), while 72% spend their time in unorganized physical activities after school (such as bicycling and walking).
- Statistics Canada² found that children who were least likely to participate in organized programs were those in lower income families, with very young parents, whose primary care-giver had less than a high school education, and/or in single-parent families.
- The adult “baby boomer” population (currently 40 to 59 years of age) will soon reach retirement age over the next 5-plus years – this will likely lead to a greater demand for programs and activities aimed at older adults.
- There will be a shift to less physically rigorous activities and personal skill development (this trend is already evident in many communities across Ontario).
- In general, the seniors of today and tomorrow are expected to be more physically active than those from past generations.

² Statistics Canada, “National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth: Participation in Activities 1998/1999”, The Daily, May 30,2001.

- There will be a shift away from participation in traditional recreation activities towards activities that are more informal, casual and self-scheduled; in this regard, it is expected that older adults will prefer a drop-in approach to recreation activities.

2.7 GENERAL SERVICE DELIVERY TRENDS

Role of Government in Supporting Physical Activity

- The Provincial Government has launched a program called “Active2010” aiming to increase physical activity for everyone by improving awareness of the benefits of physical activity and to motivate people to get active.
- Funding is also available through the “Community Use of Schools” program to make public access to school recreation facilities more affordable.
- The Ministry of Health Promotion and Ministry of Culture are promoting the Play Works Partnership Funding Program, which is a one-time funding program aimed at helping young people plan their own play activities.
- Most Canadians (97%), according to the 1997 Physical Activity Monitor, feel that public spending to support physical activity should increase or remain the same.

Facility Planning Based on Market Needs - not Population Entitlement

- Traditionally, per capita provision standards for a variety of recreation facilities have been proposed, however, this concept may not adequately account for demographic, cultural, or participatory differences between jurisdictions, nor does it appropriately reflect the supply and demand equation for facilities that have an age specific orientation (e.g., skateboard parks, splash pads, etc.).
- To avoid some of the pitfalls associated with “one-size-fits-all” per capita standards, many municipalities are developing

provision standards which are linked to target markets and local participation rates – aging populations and declining interest in organized sports are examples of why it is important to undertake needs assessments examining the demographic profile of the community in the future.

- Municipalities are increasingly favouring the development of multi-purpose, multi-generational facilities rather than the traditional standalone facilities (such as dedicated seniors’ centres, community halls, etc.). Multi-use facilities are better able to meet market needs by responding to the “time crunch” issue and offering services capable of being used by a range of ages and interests – the economies of scale generated through capital and operating cost savings are also a boon.

Funding, User Fees & Partnerships

- A survey undertaken by the Sport Alliance of Ontario identified “revenue to operate programs” as the single greatest challenge facing sport in their community³.
- User fees and rental rates are rising across the province, as are insurance costs – the challenge is to maintain equity and fairness and to ensure that lower income households are not excluded.
- Partnerships, alliances and cost sharing relationships of varying types and arrangements are required in today’s day and age to effectively and efficiently provide for the leisure needs of citizens.

Volunteerism

- The National Survey on Giving, Volunteering and Participation (NSGVC), conducted in 2000, found that the number of Canadian volunteers decreased by 13% from 1997 to 2000 and, as a result, the total number of volunteered hours also declined.

³ Sport Alliance of Ontario, Trends in the Sport and Recreational Sector “Sport Alliance Survey”, 2001.

- The NSGVC found that the number of volunteered hours increased with a volunteer's age and that persons over 65 contributed the largest number of volunteer-hours.
- There continues to be a need to attract new volunteers and there are concerns that the "new senior" is not going to be drawn to volunteering to the extent of previous generations, thereby creating an even greater shortage in future years.
- Mandated community service at the secondary school level presents opportunities to increase volunteers and instill these values at a younger age.

2.8 RECREATIONAL & SPECIFIC ACTIVITY-BASED TRENDS

Participation in organized sport has declined significantly in Canada during the last decade. Studies conducted by the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute and Statistics Canada have resulted in a number of relevant findings:

- In 1998, 34% of Canadians aged 15 years and older participated in sports on a regular basis, down significantly from 45% in 1992.
- Male participation rates continue to be higher than female levels, although increasing female participation may help offset potential declines in some male-dominated sports (e.g. hockey, slo-pitch, etc.).
- Sport participation levels decline with age, beginning at the age of 12 and dropping off considerably beyond the age of 20.
- Children whose parents participate in sport are more likely to be active (two-thirds of active children have one or more parent engaged in sport).⁴

⁴ Statistics Canada, Canadian Social Trends, Autumn 2000 Issue, "A Family Affair: Children's Participation in Sports".

- The trend away from structured/organized activities and toward more self-directed, self-scheduled, unorganized, unstructured, and spontaneous activities applies to people of all ages.

Arena Sports

- Ice surface activities continue to be popular in Canada with shortages in ice-time seen in many municipalities.
- Participation in youth hockey has remained relatively stable in recent years, however, future adult participation is harder to predict due to differing theories on physical activity as the population ages.
- Steady growth in women's hockey is predicted as there has been a tremendous growth in both girls' and women's hockey.
- Figure skating has recently experienced a decline in many jurisdictions, although public skating continues to be a preferred winter activity.
- Lacrosse and in-line hockey are beginning to add to the "off-season" revenues of certain arenas, while some traditional summer arena sports like ball hockey have declined in popularity.

Soccer

- After major growth in the 1990s, soccer still enjoys great popularity, although numbers may be levelling off in many jurisdictions.
- Many municipalities continue to have difficulty meeting the demand for one or more program streams including youth and competitive leagues.
- The number of competitive leagues has also increased which has created a demand for higher quality fields.

- As youth soccer players of today become adults, it is expected that an even greater demand for adult soccer (both indoor and outdoor) will be seen.
- Many municipalities are building multi-field sport parks through partnerships with sports groups as well as private sector sponsorships. Driving this trend is operational efficiencies and the desire to capture the potentially lucrative tournament market.

Baseball, Softball & Slo-Pitch

- Baseball leagues have seen a decline partly because of soccer's growing popularity – provincial figures declined by 11% during the past four years.
- Softball has also declined, however, it appears to be stabilizing as the sport is a popular option for adult recreational leagues and women are increasingly finding the game more attractive, especially at a competitive level.
- Slo-Pitch in Ontario has been growing over the past decade – most players are adult, primarily because it is more of a social sport but has a competitive element as well.

Other Field Sports

- In Ontario, tackle football appears to be gaining popularity especially for players in between 7 and 19 years of age (60% growth from 2001 - 2004).
- Despite 100,000 registered players in Canada, only about 10% participate in field lacrosse – box lacrosse has grown by 54% in the past three seasons and field lacrosse has also experienced considerable growth.
- Provincially, there is growing interest in sports such as rugby and cricket, although participation remains modest and localized as it is often reflective of ethnic composition.
- Municipalities are increasingly adopting a multi-use approach to sports fields as they attempt to accommodate field needs

for soccer, lacrosse, football, cricket, rugby and even Ultimate Frisbee.

'Extreme' Sports and Cycling

- Municipalities are increasingly developing extreme sport facilities, often consulting with local youth regarding the design of a new facility and constructing it in partnership with local organizations.
- Skateboarding is one of the country's fastest growing sports and demand for skateboard parks is high – the City has responded to this trend through the development of the Gateway SK8 Board Park.
- BMX / trick cycling has also become a growth area in recent years and shares many of the same attractions as skateboarding – Owen Sound opened a BMX Park in 2005.
- Rollerblading / Inline Skating has increased in popularity as skaters can make use of paved infrastructure such as roads, sidewalks and trails, as well as skateboard parks to add an 'extreme' element to the sport.
- Mountain biking is another form of cycling that has gained popularity – many municipalities are providing designated mountain biking areas and parks, which also helps protect sensitive environmental areas by discouraging unregulated use through the provision of a facility in which the activity can take place safely.

'Passive' Outdoor Recreational Activities

- Outdoor recreation represents a growing market in the leisure sector with activities such as nature study, bird watching, wildlife viewing, hiking and walking, and golf having strong profiles for growth in the coming years.
- The interest of local residents in the outdoors is growing and greater demand for passive park spaces is anticipated – Owen Sound's natural environment presents tremendous

opportunities for new parks and trail development, including parks that are intended to serve the tourism market as well as the local population.

- To serve a broader market there is a desire to provide pathways and trail linkages (trend data and public consultation indicates that walking is favoured by all ages).

Festivals & Special Events

- Municipalities attempt to generate multiplier effects associated with tourism dollars as well as local spending when attending special events – festivals and special events have increasingly been marketed outside of communities to draw tourists in to capitalize on the success of established local events.
- Festivals are reflective of the community, creating a sense of local pride and encouraging people to leave their homes and offering a greater variety of leisure opportunities, thus contributing to the overall well-being of a community by encouraging social interaction within the public realm
- Tourism is a major contributor to the local, provincial and national economies – parks, recreation and cultural facilities are increasingly being assessed for their contribution to the tourism market, whereas traditionally, the emphasis was primarily on the residential population.
- The desire for family recreation (which relates directly to tourism) is growing, creating the need for more multi-purpose and "destination" facilities (e.g., outdoor water parks, unique educational opportunities, waterfront parks, tournament sites, etc.).

Aquatics

- Swimming is a favoured activity for people of all ages, however, aquatic facilities are expensive to maintain and operate – gradually, outdoor pools are being closed and

replaced with fewer, but better, indoor pools or cost-effective outdoor water play features (e.g., splash pads).

- Swimming lessons are the primary market for indoor pools and participation in such activities tends to decline after age 10. The size of the youth population is an important consideration in setting revenue targets for an adequate facility.
- With the aging of the population has come increased demand for therapeutic pools and programs aimed at rehabilitation. Exercise programs such as aqua fitness and water aerobics are also an increasingly significant component of aquatic participation.
- Pool design is changing as 25-yard pools are giving way to leisure designs (slides, zero depth access, climbing walls, etc.) better suited to recreational swimming (although not entirely useful for competitive swim clubs).

Off-Leash Areas

- The demand for off-leash dog parks is increasing across North America – studies suggest that the success of these parks lies in a co-operative community-based approach that promotes better design and space utilization, sets out rules and monitoring, and ultimately encourages the acquisition of more parkland.

Other Key Participation Trends

- Recreational boating is changing due to demographics, an expanding economy and a decrease in fishing opportunities. Larger boats are being purchased and outfitted for on-board living by immediate and extended family members. Although boaters are taking fewer trips, the duration of trips are increasing. Greater demands will be placed on boating amenities and increased levels of service at marinas as the average age of boat owners increases. Many marinas are attempting to meet current and anticipated boater needs by upgrading utilities and renovating docks for larger boats.

Marinas are also choosing to offer fuel, supplies, and restrooms with laundry facilities to accommodate a growing number of destination boaters.

- Modest growth in cross-country skiing has been noted in many Ontario jurisdictions in recent years. Given the flexibility and informal nature of cross-country skiing, it is possible that the sport will continue to remain popular to the aging population. Fitness aspects of cross-country skiing fit well with many identified trends, including greater interest in personal fitness and wellness, as well as the desire to recreate "on one's own time".
- The total number of Canadians over the age of 12 (3.7 million) that participate in one or more forms of alpine skiing, has increased 13.4% since 2001. Although the major increase in visitation rates ultimately represents a greater number of repeat patrons, most new visits to a ski area are by snowboarders.

2.9 TRENDS IN THE PARK SYSTEM

- Parks are Highly Valued By All - Successful parks offer amenities and activities that give people a reason to visit.
- Parks Maintain and Attract Residents - Parks are very closely associated with quality of life, helping to create and sustain stable neighbourhoods, reduce crime, stimulate tourism and special events, and enhance property values. People want to live near parks and to know that they are nearby, even if they are not regular park users.
- Demand for Trails and Linkages - Walking is the number one activity for Ontarians of all ages, translating into a growing demand and interest in safe and accessible trails and linkages.
- Demand for Ancillary Amenities - Within the parks systems (most notably outdoor sports fields), municipalities are dealing with demands for higher quality amenities, such as washrooms, drinking fountains, concessions, better playing

surfaces, benches, etc. With newer and more stringent standards, municipalities have also been devoting significant resources to playground upgrading. Other facilities that are becoming common in urban parks systems are garden plots and off-leash dog areas.

- Integrating Environmental Features into Park Settings - As the population ages and people become more aware of the benefits of environmental protection, demand for more passive settings that connect people to nature is increasing. Municipalities are placing a greater emphasis on the "development" of passive park space (e.g., woodlots, prairie grasslands, flower gardens, civic gathering spaces, etc.), often times ensuring that a portion of new active parks remains in a more natural state.

SECTION THREE: PUBLIC CONSULTATION PROGRAM

The community consultation program is an essential component of the Recreation, Parks and Facilities Master Plan as it provides the necessary insights, public perceptions and attitudes towards the various forms of recreation in the City. Locally collected data, when compiled with an analysis of national and provincial trends and other factors, facilitates the critical formulation of community-specific decisions.

This Plan has employed a number of public participation tools including:

- Stakeholder surveys;
- Household Survey placed in the City of Owen Sound Summer Activities Guide;
- Community Workshops / Public Meetings; and
- Key informant interviews.

These tools gathered valuable input regarding the strengths and challenges, while establishing the desired needs of leisure users in the City of Owen Sound. Each consultation technique offers a unique perspective to the Master Plan and the results must be weighed against other inputs such as trends, demographics, and the consultant's experience when assessing current and future needs.

The consultation process for the Master Plan was guided by the following objectives:

- a) To inform the public of the purpose and scope of the project, emphasizing how the results may affect the provision of parks, facilities and services.
- b) To encourage members of the general public and interest groups to participate in the process.
- c) To promote the many opportunities to provide input and inform the public about how, when and where they can participate and provide feedback.

- d) To identify and explore the key issues relating to recreation and parks in the Owen Sound area.
- e) To achieve consensus with the general public, stakeholder groups, City staff, and City officials around the findings of the Plan and their relative priorities.

3.1 STAKEHOLDER SURVEYS

It is critical that stakeholder groups be involved early in the process in order to gain support for the implementation of the action plans in the latter stages. In general terms, "stakeholders" are considered to be those that will be directly affected by the outcome of the Plan. This includes groups that are involved in the delivery of recreation and parks services or the provision of facilities and those that have historically been involved in such decision-making processes, as well as major user groups.

A stakeholder questionnaire was mailed out to 57 different organizations in Owen Sound who have an interest in parks and recreation-related activities. A total of 17 completed surveys were received back by the deadline; many of these groups also took part in the Community Workshop. The purpose of the stakeholder survey was to solicit information regarding the activities of each group, the parks/facilities they use, any perceived deficiencies, future needs, trends in participation levels, service delivery challenges and opportunities, partnership potential, willingness to expand role, etc.

All survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed that: their organizations would consider partnering with the City or another agency to provide services or facilities; they have a good relationship with the City; and, it is reasonable to expect the community to pay for a portion of new or improved recreation facilities. All but a few survey respondents agreed that municipal recreation facility and/or

field rental fees are reasonable. Additional results from the stakeholder survey are contained in the Master Plan’s background documents.

3.2 LEISURE GUIDE SURVEY

To assist in the preparation of the Recreation, Parks and Facilities Master Plan, a survey was distributed with the City’s Summer Leisure Guide. Although the survey is not statistically significant, it provides key insights into attitudes and preferences for recreation services and facilities for a select number of Owen Sound’s residents. The specific focus was participation in different recreational activities while identifying current needs and expectations for recreation activities – questions were also posed regarding a new multi-use recreation complex, potentially in partnership with the Owen Sound and Area YMCA. A total of 144 surveys were received back and analyzed.

This information, when considered with other forms of public input, will allow the City to make pertinent decisions and relevant recommendations specific to the needs of its residents. The Master Plan’s background documents contain the data tables illustrating the results of the Leisure Guide Survey.

Participation in Recreation and Park-Related Activities

The majority of respondents indicated that they participated most often in hiking and leisurely walking, with strong participation also observed in swimming and cycling activities. These activities are likely attributable to the City’s abundant natural areas which are conducive to these types of recreational pursuits. Table 3.1 illustrates all of

the responses by activity type, over the past year.

In comparison to other municipalities in the province, higher than average participation was observed for skiing and boating/sailing, again likely due to the availability and proximity to such activities in Owen Sound. Participation in organized sports such as hockey and soccer ranked moderately, however, baseball/softball usage was on the lower end of the spectrum. Participation in Senior’s Programs was lower than expected, however, this may be a result of the survey’s distribution methodology.

Table 3.1: Percentage of Respondents Participating in Various Activities

Activity	%	Age Group(s) with Highest Participation
Hiking	72%	→ Young Adults & Mature Adults
Walking for Leisure	70%	→ Mature Adults & Younger Seniors
Swimming	62%	→ Children, Youth & Teens
Cycling (road, trail, BMX)	59%	→ Youth & Mature Adults
Aerobics, Fitness or Weight-training	45%	→ Young Adults
Skiing (downhill, cross-country)	41%	→ Youth, Teens & Young Adults
Golf	33%	→ Young Adults & Mature Adults
Running or Jogging	32%	→ Teens & Young Adults
Ice Hockey or Figure Skating	32%	→ Youth
Performing Arts (dance, music, drama)	25%	→ Youth & Teens
Soccer	22%	→ Youth & Teens
Boating or Sailing	22%	→ Young Adults & Mature Adults
Basketball	17%	→ Youth & Teens
In-line Skating / Rollerblading	16%	→ Youth
Tennis	15%	→ Teens
Visual Arts (painting, crafts, pottery)	14%	→ Youth
Softball or Baseball	13%	→ Young Adults
Youth Programs	12%	→ Youth
Curling	10%	→ Young & Mature Adults, Younger Seniors
Skateboarding	6%	→ Youth
Senior’s Programs	3%	→ Younger Seniors & Mature Seniors

Barriers to Participation

Just over half of all respondents indicated that they were not able to participate in recreational opportunities as often as they would like (on the contrary, 37% felt that they were able to participate when they liked).

A lack of desired facilities and programs, along with inconvenient hours, were cited as the primary barriers to recreation, followed closely by those reporting a lack of time.

Most surveys conducted in other municipalities reveal the time issue to be the primary barrier to participation – the fact that time constraints are not as substantial as perceived deficiencies in facilities and services is likely attributable to the fact that respondents in the Leisure Guide Survey may participate in recreation more often than other citizens. This is not to invalidate the views of the survey participants, as it is quite possible that a lack of available recreation facilities and services may be inhibiting participation. Furthermore, 70% of these respondents have indicated that they would participate in recreation activities more often if additional programs or opportunities were provided. Other barriers to participation that were mentioned include (in order of severity):

- people being unaware of the opportunities;
- affordability issues,
- lack of transportation to access opportunities; and
- health problems/disabilities.

Trends suggest that these barriers are not unique to the City of Owen Sound, although the extent to which they hinder a person's ability to participate is community-specific. For example, income is directly correlated with the level of participation in recreational activities since the amount of disposable income affects the ability to pay for services (affordability). With an aging population, many residents (especially older seniors) are less able to participate in certain activities due to health-related constraints. If facilities are not easily accessible by foot/bicycle or transit, certain users (primarily those without access to a private vehicle) will be less able

to travel such distances, thereby reducing their ability to participate. Providing solutions to overcome the effects of these barriers to participation will be discussed in the subsequent phases of this project.

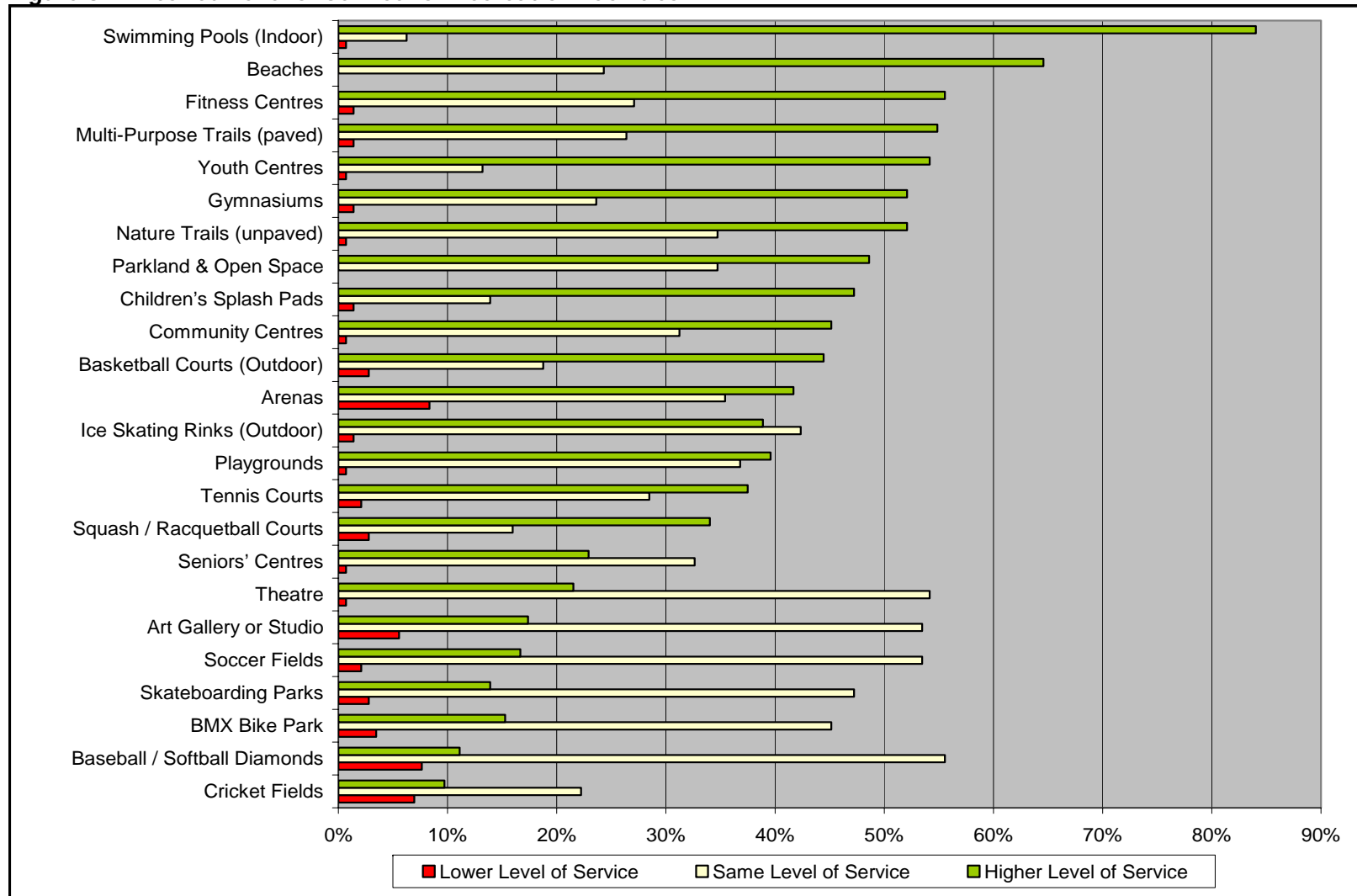
Assessment of Demand

As mentioned in the previous section, 51% of respondents indicated that they were not able to participate in recreation as often as they would like, primarily due to a lack of opportunities and inconvenient hours. With 71% suggesting that they would participate in recreation more often if additional opportunities were provided, respondents were asked what opportunities are needed. The most common response was clearly in favour of aquatic facilities and programming (33% of the sample), followed by an indoor running track (9%) and fitness centre/gym (9%) as well as and ice pads/skating lessons (5%).

Building upon the previous question, Figure 3.1 illustrates facilities that respondents feel the City should be providing more of, providing less of, or maintaining the same level of service.

The demand for aquatic activities is evident, with an indoor swimming pool and more beaches identified as the top two needs. As with the previously stated question, demand for fitness centres was also high, and for multi-purpose paved trails, youth centres and gymnasiums. Respondents generally felt that the level of service for arts and cultural facilities, playing fields and skateboarding/BMX parks were satisfactory.

Figure 3.1: Desired Level of Service for Recreation Facilities



Evaluation & Perceived Importance of Recreation Opportunities

In terms of the perceived quality of these recreational opportunities in Owen Sound, respondents were asked to rate the opportunities for specific age groups. Recreational opportunities for youth/teens and young adults were perceived to need the most improvement while respondents felt that opportunities for children and seniors were very good. It is common for surveys of this nature to reveal opportunities for teenagers as being lower than others due to a higher level of negative perceptions associated with this age group.

Respondents were also asked to evaluate seven different statements using a scale ranging from ‘Strongly Agree’ to ‘Strongly Disagree’. The responses are summarized in Table 3.2 according to those who agreed or disagreed in some form or another.

From the response to these statements, respondents appear to place a high priority on parks and recreation services and, combined with sentiments expressed in the previous section, seem to desire a new multi-purpose community facility which they would be willing to contribute to through fundraising.

Table 3.2: Responses to Various Statements

Statement	Strong Agree /Agree	Strong Disagree /Disagree	No Opinion
The City should develop a new recreation centre in partnership with the YMCA.	86%	6%	5%
In order to build new facilities, the community should contribute through fundraising.	85%	3%	6%
The City should place greater emphasis on “non-sport” activities, such as arts & culture.	32%	29%	33%
The City does a good job of informing the community about local recreation services.	50%	22%	22%
The parks in your area suit the needs of your household.	50%	28%	15%
Taxes should be increased to pay for new or improved parks and recreation facilities.	36%	34%	20%
Parks and recreation services and facilities should be a high priority for City Council.	90%	2%	3%

Note: Percentages do not include “Don’t Know” responses and may not add up to 100%.

Provision of YMCA Facilities

If a new YMCA facility was built (containing an indoor pool, fitness centre and other elements) 68% of respondents suggested that they would be very likely to use it on a regular basis, while another 17% suggested that they would be somewhat likely to use it – only 6% indicated that they would not likely use it at all.

When asked if they would be more or less likely to use a new YMCA if programming was available solely to YMCA members, 40% suggested it would make no difference to their use and 25% would be much less likely to use the new facility.

Figure 3.2: Likelihood of Using a New YMCA

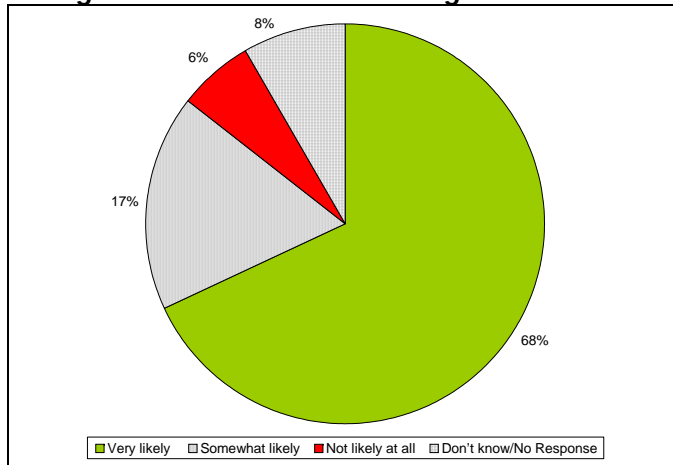
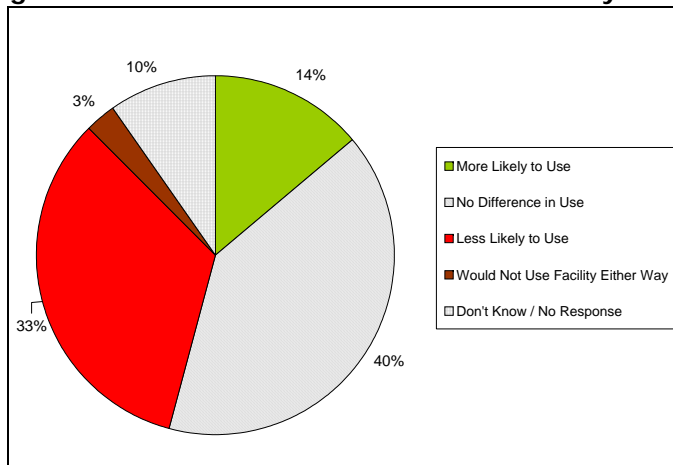
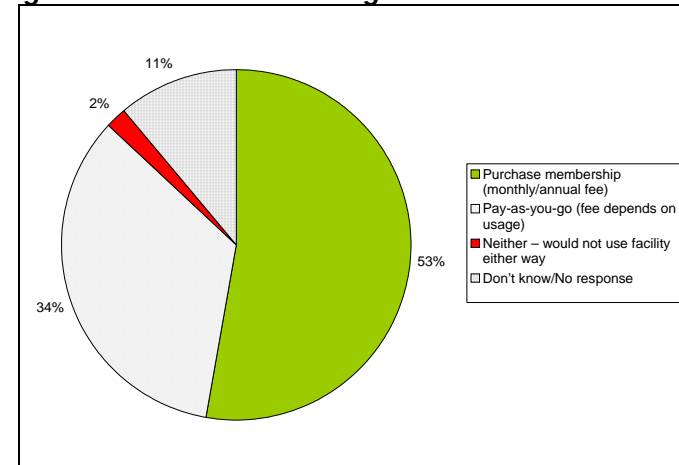


Figure 3.3: Likelihood of Use for Members-Only YMCA



Furthermore, the vast majority of respondents (84%) felt that a new YMCA should be available to the entire community (with an entry or program fee) as opposed to 3% who felt the facility should be available to members only.

Figure 3.4: Preferred Pricing Scheme for a new YMCA



Finally, the majority of respondents (53%) would prefer to purchase a membership to the new facility while 34% prefer a pay per use pricing scheme.

Key Survey Demographics

Key demographic data (not statistically significant) includes:

- 72% of respondents resided in Owen Sound, 14% were from the Township of Georgian Bluffs and 6% from the Municipality of Meaford;
- 63% were frequent users of recreation services and facilities, 24% were occasional users and 9% were infrequent users;
- Average age of respondents was 47;
- The average household size was 3.02 persons; and
- 65% were female and 32% were male.

3.3 COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

On April 27, 2006 a Community Workshop was held in the Shore Room at Owen Sound's Bayshore Community Centre. The purpose of the event was to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and constraints related to parks and recreation within the City of Owen Sound. Discussions revolved around recreation and cultural needs, preferences, and perceived gaps in service.

An emphasis was placed on listening to different perspectives and working together to establish common ground and to set priorities. People with diverse backgrounds and interests were invited to participate in the session. In total, over 42 citizens attended the Workshop in addition to Municipal Staff and the Project Consultants.

The Community Workshop utilized two distinct approaches for gathering public input. The first and most extensive consultation technique was small group brainstorming. In groups of approximately seven people, participants were asked to brainstorm and respond to five key questions and then present a summary of their comments to the larger group. This approach promotes the sharing of ideas and perspectives amongst all participants and creates greater awareness of community-wide issues. Secondly, once the group exercise was completed, participants were given a comment sheet to complete. This handout allows each person to record in considerable detail their specific concerns and priorities relating to the Master Plan's topic areas. These two approaches provide an exceptional breadth of information that will assist the City in developing a Master Plan that considers both broad community priorities and specific localized issues.

The following is an account of the most frequently mentioned comments/needs from the group brainstorming exercise. Comments are listed in general order of the number of group responses. The comments are not intended to be construed as the findings or actions of this Master Plan, but rather are to be used as a resource in establishing future directions.

In terms of OUTDOOR recreation and parks services and facilities:

What does the city and community do well?

- Provide a number of well-maintained sport and recreation facilities and trails for a small City such as the BMX / Skateboard Parks, soccer complex and baseball diamonds at Duncan McLellan Park, and boat launches
- Ensure a good supply of professionally maintained parks, open / green space and access to natural amenities such as Kelso Beach and the Niagara Escarpment
- Festivals and Events such as Summer Folk, Festival of Northern Lights and the Salmon Fishing Derby
- Provide a wide variety of organized sport programs, day camps and water-related activities
- Offer a great trail system, with adequate accessibility and maintenance levels (Harrison Park / Inglis Falls, Tom Thompson, Bayshore Community Centre)
- Compliments were also offered for funding partnerships, program affordability, advertisement (Leisure Guide) and program registration as well as downtown revitalization

What does the city and community need to do better?

- Improve facilities and promote activities at Kelso Beach and other natural areas
- Develop multi-use paved trails and trail linkages with signage and mapping to parks, waterfalls and recreational facilities
- Find more uses for Victoria Park and improve field facilities and parking lot
- Make streets more "user friendly" by providing more designated bicycle lanes on roads
- Better utilization of the waterfront and promotion of water-related activities
- Provide more free play places / activities, upgrade the Skateboard Park and maintain Harrison Park

In terms of INDOOR recreation and parks services and facilities:

What does the city and community do well?

- Offer a variety of cultural and educational facilities such as the Roxy Theatre and the OSCVI auditorium for performing arts as well as the Tom Thompson Art Gallery, Marine Rail Museum, Library, and Harrison Park Inn / Seniors Centre.
- Provide a choice of well-maintained sport and recreation facilities such as the Family YMCA, Bayshore Community Centre
- Ensure accessibility to variety of recreation programs, activities and clubs offered by the City and the YMCA
- Establish partnerships with local organizations for funding and facility sharing arrangements

What does the city and community need to do better?

- Develop a multi-use centre including a 25 m pool with 8 lanes, family pool, amenities for seniors, indoor running track, warm water pool, gyms to support various programs, conditioning / fitness space, meeting rooms, rooms for large events, childcare space, office space
- Provide more ice time by twinning the Coliseum and making Bayshore accessible to the public, improve arena facility standards at the Coliseum
- Develop a self sufficient seniors centre with areas for crafts, walking, shuffleboard, pool, kitchen facilities and a restaurant/cafeteria
- Offer reasonable public access to the pool, programs and meeting rooms and establish innovative partnerships with new groups / individuals

What are some specific ideas and potential solutions to address the concerns that were raised?

- A new multi-use centre should be a centerpiece / landmark of the community, located at Victoria Park, affordable to all ages and accessible to pedestrians, cyclists, public transit users and motorists, financed through an aggressive

fundraising campaign, government grants, innovative partnerships, corporate sponsorship, municipal funds, cost-sharing agreements with adjacent communities and reasonable user-fees.

- Identify new partnerships for additional funding and user groups for volunteer maintenance / stewardship opportunities
- Incorporate senior and youth perspectives in programming to help retain youth within the community and coordinate public / private facilities, programs and services
- Show leadership in identifying needed indoor and outdoor facilities and take specific actions to ensure implementation

A total of 16 comment sheets, provided to each participant at the workshop were completed and returned to the Consulting Team. Results from the comment sheets were very similar to those of the community workshop in that local residents / representatives expressed the greatest interest in the development of a multi-use recreation facility at Victoria Park to serve the local and regional population, more bike lanes on streets for safe and extended commuting opportunities, continuation of park development and maintenance, more free play spaces for children, continued pursuit of partnership opportunities for funding and improved scheduling of community facilities, as well as development of the waterfront for tourism and public enjoyment. Additional findings from the comment sheets also indicated interest by the community / organizations in volunteering and partnering to help maintain outdoor facilities and parks.

3.4 KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

On March 24, 2006, in-person and group interviews were conducted with a variety of local service providers and key municipal Staff in the City of Owen Sound. Additional interviews (in person and by telephone) were also undertaken on an as needed basis. The purpose of these interviews was to gain an in-depth understanding of various issues facing Owen Sound with respect to the adequate provision of parks and recreation facilities, programs and services in Owen Sound. Input received through the key informant interview process will be integrated throughout the Master Plan, where appropriate.

3.5 PUBLIC MEETING

Public meetings were held on June 29, 2006 and December 14, 2006 to present the preliminary findings of the “Facility and Parks Needs Assessment” and the “Draft Master Plan”, respectively. At both meetings, considerable support was displayed for the proposed directions and, where appropriate, this input has been reflected throughout the following sections of this Master Plan.

A short survey was distributed at the June meeting; 32 completed surveys were returned. The survey explored various options regarding the development and operation of an indoor aquatic facility, which was a prime request emerging from the consultation process.

Those in attendance at the meetings strongly agreed that the City should proceed with exploring the development of an indoor aquatic centre as part of a multi-use facility – preferably in partnership with the YMCA. The results of the June public meeting survey not only suggest that there is support for the City proceeding with the process of developing an indoor aquatic facility, but that this initiative should move forward regardless of the financial implications. Most survey respondents disagreed when asked if an indoor aquatic facility should be a City owned and operated facility.

The public meeting survey also asked about the desired components of a multi-use recreation facility. The most support (nearly unanimous) was expressed for a fitness centre, seniors’ centre, youth centre, gymnasium and indoor walking/running track. Moderate support was found for a gymnastics centre, arena, and indoor soccer.

Approximately 80 individuals attended the December 2006 public meeting. The large majority of attendees voiced their support for the vision established for the multi-use recreation centre; support was also offered from the local health services community.

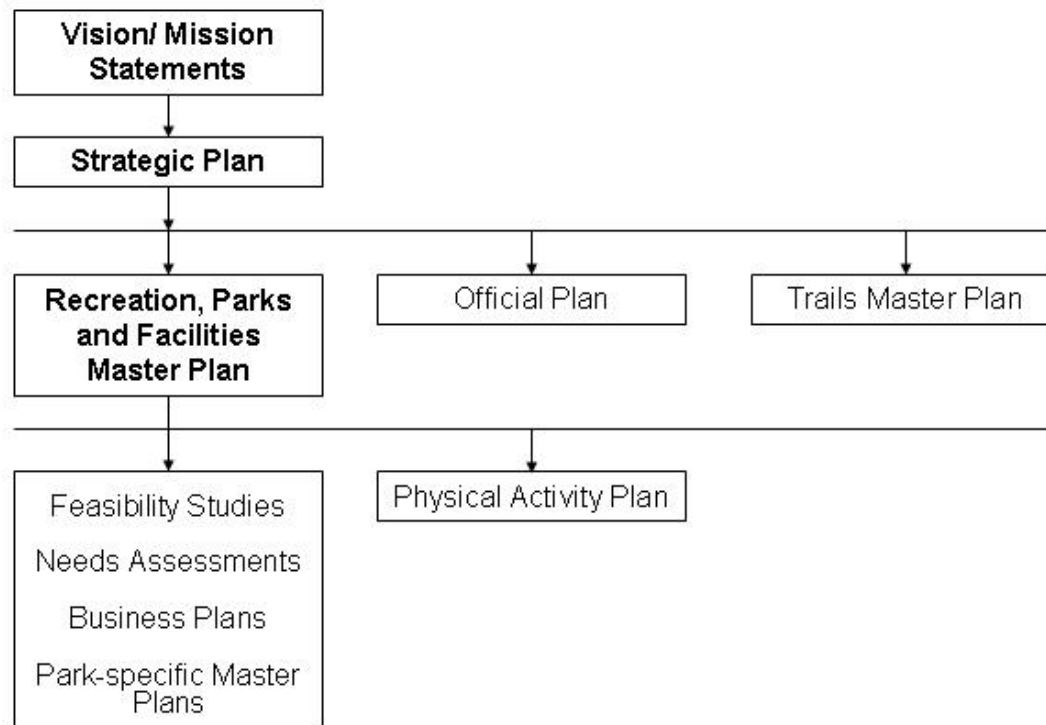
SECTION FOUR: MASTER PLAN GOALS

4.1 CITY OF OWEN SOUND STRATEGIC PLAN

On August 8, 2005, City Council Adopted a Revised Strategic Plan for the Corporation of the City of Owen Sound. This document contains themes, initiatives, and proposed actions for several service areas within City government. The Recreation, Parks and Facilities Master Plan is based on the visioning public consultation process that resulted in the development of vision and mission statements and said Strategic Plan.

This Master Plan is one means the City uses to implement the Strategic Plan through its various planning documents and policies. The relationship of this Plan to the vision and mission statements and strategic plan is outlined in the following diagram:

Hierarchy of City Plans Related to Recreation, Parks & Facilities



For reference, the Vision, Mission and Recreational and Health Initiatives in the Strategic Plan are documented below:

Vision

Owen Sound's vision is to be a community of choice for all, distinguishable by its authenticity, natural amenities, diversity and community spirit.

Mission

The City of Owen Sound governs and advocates on behalf of all citizens by providing infrastructure and services which respect the environment and allow individuals and businesses to prosper.

Recreational Initiatives

1. *The City should give a high priority to the implementation of the City Trails Master Plan and support the Counties of Grey and Bruce, Grey Sauble Conservation Authority and other partners in the development of a comprehensive regional trail network.*
2. *The City should recognize the demographic changes in the community and respond to the needs of an aging population*
3. *The City should increase the recreational potential of the Downtown and harbourfront.*
4. *The City should provide a range of recreation opportunities for youth in the community and promote the concept of fitness for all ages.*
5. *The City should identify partners and stakeholders for the development of a multi-purpose recreation centre including aquatic facilities to meet existing and future demand.*
6. *The City should develop itself as a regional centre for recreation opportunities.*
7. *The City should maximize the potential of City green space and parkland environment.*

8. *The City should encourage and develop recreational activities for youth.*
9. *The City should nurture and support volunteers.*

Health Initiatives

1. *The City should promote the objectives of "Healthy Communities" through program and facility development.*
2. *The City should play an advocacy role identifying and promoting health needs in the community.*
3. *The City should play a support role in the recruitment of physicians and health care professionals.*
4. *The City should have input and provide support in the operation of health services financed and administered at the upper tier.*
5. *The City should establish a clear policy regarding the funding of health related infrastructure.*

4.2 GOALS OF THE MASTER PLAN

The benefits of participation in recreation and parks activities are numerous and of tremendous value to both the individual and collective quality of life of the Owen Sound community. Not only do leisure opportunities encourage active lifestyles, but they also build healthy communities and are significant contributors to the economic, social, cultural, intellectual, and physical landscapes.

The City of Owen Sound strives to provide accessible services through efficient and effective means to all citizens – regardless of age, gender, race, socio-economic status, ability, etc. – however, it needs to be recognized that they alone cannot do it all. There will continue to be a reliance on other delivery agents within the community, including volunteer organizations, educational institutions, service agencies, and private enterprise. Furthermore, in implementing the goals of the Master Plan, the availability of

financial resources will have to be considered, leveraged and maximized in order to continue to provide the high quality services expected by the community.

Based on public input, stakeholder consultation and background research (including a review of the City's Strategic Plan), a series of Goals have been established for the provision of parks and recreation facilities, programs and services in the City of Owen Sound. These goals represent a "desired end result" and, as such, are ideals that the City and local stakeholders should strive to achieve over time. Furthermore, the goals have been used to guide the development of this Master Plan and, in turn, future decision-making in the City of Owen Sound.

These goals are largely complementary, but no one goal takes priority over another – they should be read and interpreted as a set, rather than as separate, isolated statements. It is expected that the City and community will strive to achieve the goals through the various means available and within the limits of financial resources. Although the goals are numbered, this is not intended to imply that there is a priority order.

GOAL #1 – HEALTHY COMMUNITY

A healthy community that recognizes the importance of leisure and active living through the provision and promotion of high quality physical, recreational, cultural, and social opportunities.

GOAL #2 – COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & INVOLVEMENT

A leisure delivery system that assigns responsibilities to the most adequately equipped group through enabling and assisting community providers, supporting volunteers, and providing strong municipal leadership.

GOAL #3 – FACILITY PROVISION

A foremost commitment to the maintenance and renewal of existing recreation facilities and parks, with strategic investments being made toward new leisure infrastructure.

GOAL #4 – ACCESSIBILITY

A community that promotes safe and equitable access to facilities and services for all citizens, regardless of age, physical abilities, economic status, culture or beliefs.

GOAL #5 – COMMUNITY-RESPONSIVE SERVICES

Facilities and services that are flexible in meeting – and responsive to – the changing needs of the community.

GOAL #6 – PARTNERSHIPS

A community that encourages the involvement of community organizations, service providers, and adjacent municipalities in the leisure system through appropriate partnerships and other forms of collaboration.

GOAL #7 – MAXIMIZATION OF RESOURCES

Maximization of school and community facilities and leveraging of available resources and funding opportunities to enhance the quality and range of leisure activities.

GOAL #8 – TRAILS & PARKS

An integrated parks, trails, and open space system that connects the community.

GOAL #9 – ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION / WATERFRONT

Initiatives that build upon the area's considerable natural beauty, environmental features, and waterfront setting by providing leadership to enhance and utilize these resources.

GOAL #10 – SUSTAINABILITY & AFFORDABILITY

A commitment to delivering sustainable and affordable leisure services and facilities through the cost-effective and efficient management of resources.

SECTION FIVE: RECREATION FACILITIES

5.1 NEEDS ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

In identifying the current deficiencies and future needs relating to recreation facilities, parks and open space, Sections 5 and 6 examine both provision (i.e., the total number of each facility/park type as determined by applying "standards") and geographic distribution (where the facilities/parks are physically located). Provision and distribution are both integral components of the analysis and it is important that each be given equal weight, especially for neighbourhood and community-level facilities.

Also referred to as level of provision standards, service standards represent a recommended measure of the demand for recreation areas and facilities. They are targets for facility provision that are based upon a combination of accepted industry standards, market-driven factors (such as demand, trends, and demographics), and the past and present circumstances of the community. Provision standards help to identify current and future facility and park requirements in terms of total demand, but do not provide direction on geographic gap areas.

The first step in the analysis is the identification of overall facility and parkland needs through the development and application of population-based standards (e.g., 1 tennis court per 4,000 population; 1 basketball court per 750 children between the ages of 10 and 19). Once the standards were established, they were compared to the supply of facilities and parks to determine the degree of under (or over) supply currently and in the future.

The standards were established by:

- compiling the required demographic data (historic and projected, by age cohort groupings and neighbourhood, where available);
- obtaining the inventory of municipal facilities in order to identify the total supply and distribution of each facility type;

- reviewing standards used by other municipalities;
- identifying key trends in leisure participation and facility design and assessing their implications on facility provision in Owen Sound; and
- undertaking a public consultation program to identify issues and discuss areas of facility over and under supply (i.e., Are more facilities needed? Where? Why?).

Not all communities and facilities are created equal and this is why population-based standards should be different for each municipality. The analysis of needs incorporates the aforementioned inputs before deciding on an appropriate standard that is right for Owen Sound.

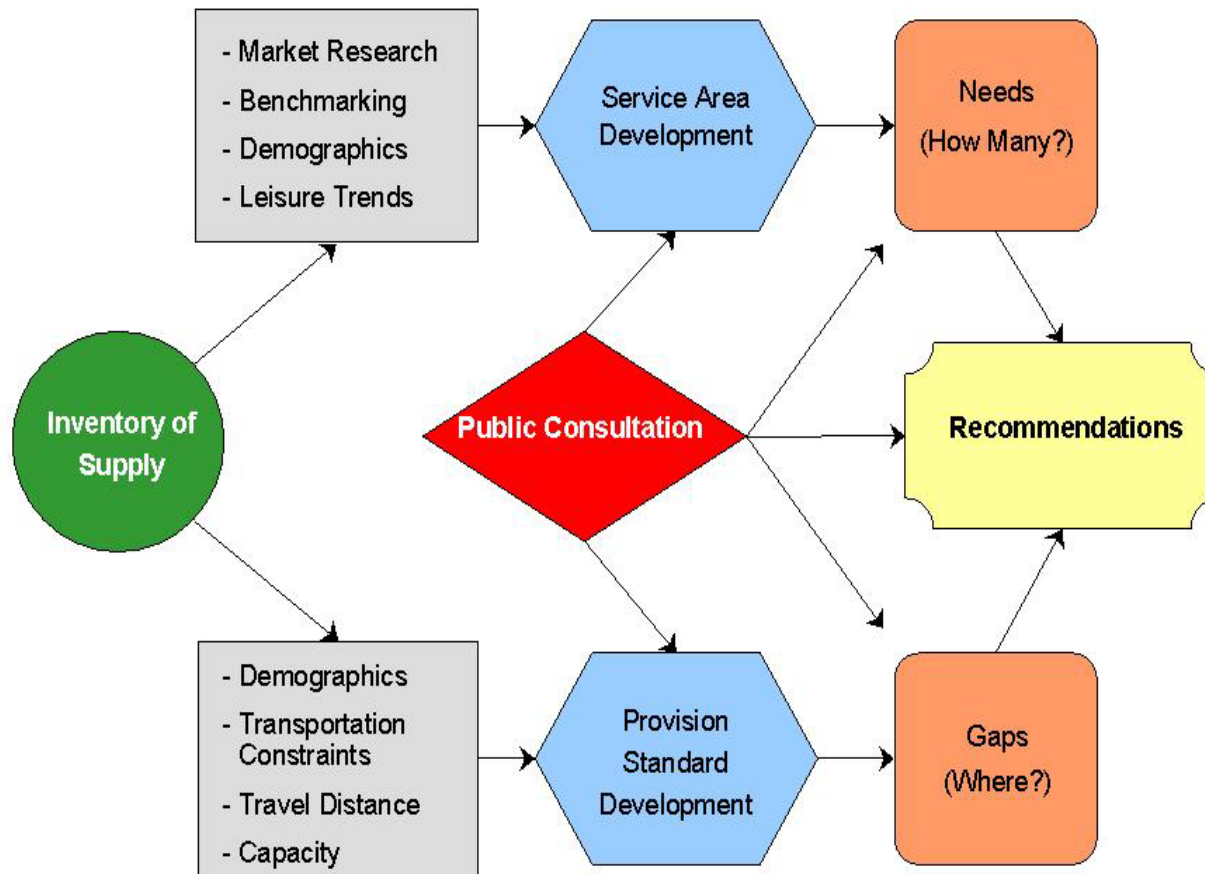
The Consulting Team has developed a set of provision standards for Owen Sound that we believe represent an appropriate balance between standards applied in other municipalities and the true needs of local residents. In some instances, Owen Sound's supply is below the recommended standard, thereby indicating a need for additional facilities and/or parkland. In cases where its supply is above the standard, anticipated population growth may create the need to develop additional facilities and/or parkland in future years in order to maintain the standard. It is important to remember that the recommended provision standards are goals that the City and other providers in Owen Sound should strive to achieve – although many of them may not be realized for a variety of reasons, the key is to continue to work toward meeting them.

Identifying the total number of each facility and park type required in Owen Sound through the use of provision standards is only the first step in analyzing facility needs. The distribution of facilities is equally important, as it is important that the facilities be located close to the people that use them. In order to assess the

geographic distribution of current and proposed/future facilities, the location of facilities and parkland was analyzed.

The following figure graphically illustrates the relationship of the inputs and outputs in the determination of recreation facility needs.

How Park and Facility Needs are Determined ...



5.2 FACILITY INVENTORY

Table 5.1 summarizes the inventory of selected municipal recreation and parks facilities in the City of Owen Sound (school facilities permitted by the City are not included – unless otherwise stated – nor are private facilities). All inventory information has been provided by the City's Community Services Department and is understood to be accurate as of April 2006.

Table 5.1: Recreation Facility Inventory, City of Owen Sound

Facility	Municipal Supply	Location / Comments
Community Centres	1	Harry Lumley Bayshore Community Centre
Community Halls	2	Harrison Park Community Centre, Coliseum Hall
Senior Centres	2	Harrison Park Seniors Centre, Golden Agers Senior Centre
Ice Pads	2	Victoria Park (Coliseum Arena), Bayshore Community Centre (J.D. Mc Arthur Arena)
Indoor Pools	0	The City is served by non-profit/private indoor pools: - Jan Caldwell Aquatics - Owen Sound & Area Family Y - Stone Tree Golf & Fitness Club - hotel pool
Fitness Centres	0	The City is served by 4 non-profit/private fitness centres: - Owen Sound & Area Family Y – Health Fitness and Recreation (non-profit) - Stone Tree Golf & Fitness Club (private) - Women's Health and Fitness Club (private) - Sport Makers (private)

continued...

Table 5.1: Recreation Facility Inventory, City of Owen Sound (continued)

Facility	Municipal Supply	Location / Comments
Soccer Fields:	15	
Mini	4 (8)	Fields are located at the Kiwanis Soccer Complex, Victoria Park, Kelso Beach and schools
Junior	3	Senior fields can be used as two+ mini fields – each mini is counted as 0.5
Senior – unlit	7	There are plans to install lighting on one senior field in late 2006
Senior – lit	0	
Ball Diamonds:	20	
Junior Ball Diamond	9	Each lit diamond equivalent to 2 unlit fields due to the ability to accommodate evening play
Senior Ball Diamond – unlit	1	Due to their poor condition, practice/scrub diamond are not included in the total count
Senior Ball Diamond – lit	10 (5)	Inventory does not include practice/scrub diamonds
Tennis Courts (unlit)	4	St. George's Park (2), Harrison Park (2)
Basketball Courts:	3	
Half Court	3	Getaway Skateboard Park (1 half court), Harrison Park (2 half courts)
Full Court	0	
Outdoor Pools	2	Harrison Park (2)
Outdoor Ice Rinks	1	Harrison Park
Skateboard Parks	1	Getaway Sk8board Park
BMX Bike Parks	1	Airtime Bike Park
Playground Locations	19	18 locations contain creative play equipment, 9 contain traditional play equipment (slides, monkey bars, and 12 contain swings
Beaches	2	Kelso Beach, J. Irvine Brown Children's Park
Boat Launches	6	Kelso Beach, J. Irvine Brown Children's Park, Inner Harbour (2), RCA Boat Launch, West Side Boat Launch

5.3 INDOOR FACILITIES

This section includes a qualitative and quantitative analysis of indoor recreation facility needs for the City of Owen Sound for the next ten years (2006-2016). Facilities have been evaluated in terms of total provision, distribution, and their ability to serve current and future populations of both the City and the two adjacent municipalities with which there are cost sharing agreements.

Current and future requirements have been identified through the use of measurable level of service/provision standards (market-driven and per capita-based) that are unique to Owen Sound (see section 5.1 for a detailed description of the methodology). In cases where only one City-wide facility is required, the analysis focuses more on established community need than provision standards. Factors such as public and municipal input, trends, demographic characteristics, population forecasts, and experiences in other municipalities have all been considered in undertaking this analysis.

5.3.1 New Multi-Use Recreation Facility

a) Overview

Assessing the need and identifying equitable partnership opportunities, operating strategies and suitable site location for such a regional multi-use aquatic facility represents a significant component for consideration in this Master Plan.

Although the section on the Multi-use Recreation Facility is presented upfront, subsequent analysis in this Master Plan provides an assessment of the demand and justification for specific components of the proposed facility. As such, it is recommended that section 5.3 be read in its entirety.

Furthermore, reference should be made to Appendix A and B, which provide more detail in terms of partnership, funding and management considerations for the proposed facility.

b) Needs Assessment

For several years, the Owen Sound Family YMCA and other community partners (including the Joint Pool Committee, formed in 2002 and having representation from the YMCA and municipalities of Owen Sound, Georgian Bluffs, and Meaford) have been working to identify long-term options to replace the current aquatic centre and overall facility.

The YMCA states that it has outgrown its current location and operates “at capacity and cannot accommodate additional use”; furthermore, its facility is aging and not designed to meet current and emerging needs, nor is its pool regulation size for competitive swim meets. YMCA Board members feel that \$7 million worth of renovations required to upgrade the existing Y facility would be better spent on developing a new facility.

The YMCA has suggested that a new aquatic facility to serve the region (in combination with a fitness centre, gymnasium, activity rooms, running track, and possibly a seniors’ centre and additional ice pad) be integrated with the existing Coliseum Arena at Victoria Park; in fact, a variation of this concept has been proposed for over 30 years.

The YMCA commissioned two independent studies in 2000 and 2001 that revealed “widespread support for a new facility”, but insignificant funding associated with traditional revenue generating sources (membership fees) to support initial capital expenditures or debt service load.

Preliminary cost assessments for this facility have been estimated at \$18-20 million (including a new ice pad), however, these are subject to further review and are dependent upon the site and the proposed components. Although partnership roles have not yet been established, preliminary discussions regarding a joint partnership between the City of Owen Sound and the YMCA have occurred.

A potential funding model presented by the Goderich YMCA (aggressive fundraising by the YMCA and equal contributions from

the City/adjacent municipalities and the provincial/federal governments) is one option being considered at this time; it is generally agreed that the project would not be feasible without contributions from each of these partners and without the City's involvement, the YMCA could not likely leverage government grants (should they become available).

With a broad goal of improving health and fitness levels for people of all ages in the community in mind, the main components for a new multi-purpose aquatic / recreation facility in Owen Sound suggested by the Joint Pool Committee and participants of the public consultation process include:

- A 25 metre, 6-8 lane pool with a separate warm water therapeutic pool as well as a swirl pool, slide and other water play equipment
- A fitness conditioning and strength training centre
- Oval walking / running track (around arena)
- Gymnasium, and activity rooms for classes, meetings and seniors
- Amenity and support rooms (storage, office, daycare, change rooms, etc.)
- Other potential usages such as an ice pad, indoor soccer/turf facility, seniors' centre, arts and cultural centre, gymnastics centre, leased commercial space, etc.

In most cases, maximum cost efficiency and usage can be achieved with a multi-purpose facility as opposed to single-purpose stand-alone facilities. The success of multi-use facilities is mostly attributed to being able to satisfy numerous recreation interests at one location and the associated economies of scale. This is especially important in a day and age where lack of time presents a significant barrier to recreation participation, family recreation outings have become increasingly popular, and almost all individuals seek optimal recreation value for their admission dollars.

Much interest has been shown in developing the new recreation facility in Victoria Park in which it would be possible to "twin" the existing Coliseum arena and benefit from equipment, energy and

cost sharing efficiencies. This site is subject to a long-term lease to the Owen Sound Agricultural Society, however, concept plans have indicated that there is sufficient land to construct a new multi-use complex at this site while still accommodating most of the current events and uses. Should this project proceed, alternative sites should be evaluated for the purposes of due diligence, however, the recommended facility components are based on a location within Victoria Park and a twinning of the existing Coliseum Arena (see Section 5.3.3).

In summary, there is sufficient demand and interest for a multi-use recreation facility to serve the City and its regional market. At present, the Owen Sound YMCA meets a large portion of this demand, but their current facilities are not sustainable due to age, space constraints and other limitations. It is recommended that the City, YMCA and the community pursue the development of a new multi-use recreation complex that would effectively replace the existing YMCA building and provide an enhanced array of services to the area.

The manner in which this facility is provided and managed requires additional examination on the part of the City and its partners. To assist the City in advancing this initiative, a preliminary business case has been developed (see Appendix B) that identifies potential costs and operating scenarios associated with the proposed multi-use recreation facility in Owen Sound.

c) Partnership Considerations

In evaluating a partnership for this project, the City will want to establish principles that relate to the following questions:

- To what extent will the potential partner be expected to comply with municipal values and philosophies?
- What are the minimum attributes the potential partner must bring to a relationship and what mechanisms will be necessary to validate the partner's true capacities?
- Under what conditions will the City absorb risk and what will determine the municipality's risk tolerance threshold?

- How (if at all) will stakeholders and other with a vested interest in the project be included in deliberations regarding the partnership?
- What will be the City's financial expectations for a partnership and under which conditions will certain types of investments to a partnered project be considered?

In addition to these criteria, for this project the City would likely want to protect the public's interest regarding the following:

- Guaranteed public access to the pool with defined hours and times of day that is similar to those of a typical municipal public pool.
- Guaranteed fees for recreational swims and lessons.
- Cost certainty related to the management fees and other charges related to the operations of the building.
- Capital re-investment guarantees (i.e.: money set aside by the operator to maintain the building over time).
- Liability guarantees.
- Net revenue sharing commensurate with the capital investment in the facility.
- Performance thresholds related to participation, programming and financial matters to which the operator contract would be linked.
- Additional items to be addressed during negotiations.

Appendix A contains a preliminary framework for the proposed multi-use recreation centre partnership.

d) Recommended Action Plans

1. The City and community should pursue the development of a multi-use recreation facility consisting of the following components (to be confirmed via a feasibility study):
 - an indoor lane/leisure pool capable of hosting local and regional events (i.e., 25 metre length, 6 lanes) and accommodating unstructured play (e.g., slide, water play equipment);
 - a warm water therapeutic pool;
 - a fitness conditioning and strength training centre;
 - a gymnasium and activity rooms for classes, meetings, youth and seniors;
 - one new ice pad, resulting in the twinning of the Coliseum Arena (see Section 5.3.3); and
 - an indoor walking / running track (if feasible).
2. The City needs to decide if a partnered approach is most appropriate for the construction and/or operation of the proposed multi-use recreation facility. Should a partnership approach be supported, proposals must be evaluated against a set of pre-established criteria.

5.3.2 Indoor Aquatic Facilities

a) Inventory

In the City of Owen Sound there is only one indoor pool that is open to the public – that being the Family YMCA on 2nd Avenue East. The YMCA facility is approximately 40 years old and the pool is a 25-yard, 4 lane tank.

Just outside the City in the Municipality of Meaford is Jan Caldwell Aquatics. This pool, although privately operated since 1986, is not open to the public for recreational swims but does offer a number of swimming programs that are similar to what could be offered in a public pool. The tank is 13.7m long by 6.1m wide pool and is also served by indoor and outdoor hot tubs.

Indoor pools also exist at Stone Tree Resort and a local hotel. Although these pools are occasionally used by the public, their primary purpose is to serve guests/members and cannot be considered part of the supply of public indoor pools.

None of the indoor pools in Owen Sound are owned or operated by the City and all vary considerably in terms of their size, program scope, fees and clientele.

The nearest public/non-profit pools to Owen Sound are located in Collingwood, Hanover and Port Elgin. The City does, however, provide two outdoor pools at Harrison Park, both of which are used for recreational swimming and instructional classes during the summer months. Utilization of these pools is at or near 100%. The latest data available indicates that approximately 650 people register in programs at Harrison Park pools every year.

b) Trends and Issues

YMCA PROPOSAL – As mentioned earlier, the Owen Sound Family YMCA and other community partners have been working for several years to replace the current aquatic facility, which is aging and in need of significant investment. The YMCA and a

large portion of the population supports the development of a new aquatic centre as part of a regional multi-use facility.

DEMOGRAPHIC CONSIDERATIONS – The child and youth population is expected to decline slightly (-6%) by 2016, meaning that there will be decreasing demand for instructional swimming lessons, which is an important revenue stream for indoor pools. Conversely, with the aging of the population has come an increased demand for therapeutic pools and programs aimed at rehabilitation.

'CRADLE TO GRAVE' ACTIVITY – Swimming has consistently been identified as a favoured recreation activity for people of all ages. Swimming participation declines with age, however, there is no age group that does not swim. Recreational swimming (non-structured, drop-in swimming) is the fastest growing segment of indoor pool usage. Swimming lessons are the primary market for most indoor pools; in many cases, participation begins to level off at around age 10 and decreases fairly dramatically at 13.

LEISURE POOL DESIGNS – With the advent of the leisure pool has come a new class of aquatic user – those who come for entertainment, not lessons or programs. Slides, wave pools and a wide range of water toys including basketball hoops, balls, water sprays can now be found in aquatic facilities. The leisure pool concept was first developed in the 1980s and is now commonplace, although it generally precludes use of the tank for any competitive swimming (which requires 6+ lanes, 25-metre length, and deeper water). Newer hybrid designs that incorporate both leisure and lane elements are also popular because fitness (lane) swimming remains a popular activity, particularly amongst the “active living” set.

THERAPEUTIC POOLS – Exercise programs such as aqua fitness and water aerobics are an increasingly significant component of aquatic participation; these activities can utilize either lane pools or therapeutic pools, depending on the clientele. As health professionals are predicting joint replacement to be a “growth

industry” in the future, this is also a component of pool usage that will likely continue to grow.

c) Public Consultation & Background Studies

All components of the recent public consultation process undertaken for the Master Plan identified significant public interest in a new aquatic facility in Owen Sound.

The Community Workshop revealed significant interest in a new aquatic facility developed in conjunction with a multi-use recreation complex as well. When asked what the City and community need to do better, participants expressed overwhelming support for a new pool and multi-use recreation facility. Specific interest was indicated for a 25-metre pool with 8 lanes to support regional swim meets, expansion of aquatic clubs (the Owen Sound Aquatic Club currently has 75 members) and programs and family swimming needs, as well as a warm water therapeutic pool for the aging population and rehabilitation purposes. It is important to note that the aquatic components for a new pool and the associated recreation facilities for a multi-use facility requested by the community were extremely consistent throughout the public consultation process.

The Leisure Guide Survey show swimming as the 3rd most popular recreation activity (62% participation by survey respondents during the last year) in Owen Sound, trailing only behind participation in hiking and walking for leisure. Although swimming participation is greatest amongst the 5-14 age cohorts, participation is relatively high across all age cohorts, including by the 65 and over age cohort. A swimming pool and aqua fit programs were considered the most needed recreational opportunities or programs in Owen Sound according to survey respondents. To support the previous finding, 84% of the survey sample indicated that the City of Owen Sound should provide a greater level of service with respect to indoor swimming pools.

Eighty-six percent (86%) of the survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the City should develop a new recreation centre in partnership with the YMCA, while 85% strongly agreed or agreed

that the community should contribute to the building of new facilities through fundraising. If a new YMCA is built with an indoor pool, fitness centre and other recreational amenities, regular use would be very likely amongst 68% of the survey respondents, while regular use would be very likely or somewhat likely by 85% of the survey respondents. It bears keeping in mind that the survey data is not statistically reliable due to its non-random sample and low response rate.

As mentioned earlier, various surveys and reports prepared by and on behalf of the Owen Sound Family YMCA suggest demand for a new aquatic facility. Between 1998 and 2002, membership reached 2,700, representing more than 40% growth over a four year period. Data provided by the YMCA indicates that there are 2,745 members (as of 2002) as well as a significant number of drop-in users. Approximately 65% of these members live in Owen Sound, 16% in Georgian Bluffs, 9% in Meaford, and the remainder from beyond these boundaries (2002 data). The YMCA suggests that they could boost membership and drop-in usage by 24% with a new facility. The Y is still able to offer a wide variety of programs and lessons to hundreds of people each day, however, the current facility operates “at capacity and cannot accommodate additional use”.

The Market Research Study conducted on behalf of the YMCA in 2001 presented the following highlights – in determining market demand, the results of this study are more reliable (i.e., statistically valid) than those provided by the Master Plan’s Leisure Guide Survey. 33% of Owen Sound residents and 25% of residents in surrounding communities indicated that they are “very likely” to use a new indoor aquatic centre if the new facility were larger, up-to-date, and offered a variety of affordable aquatic services more often to individuals of all ages. To participate in an indoor aquatic facility, residents of Owen Sound were willing to travel up to 15 minutes while residents of the surrounding communities were willing to travel up to up to a half an hour. This Study identified “significant interest in accessing the proposed new indoor aquatic centre through the purchase of a membership (as opposed to participation on a pay-per-program basis)”. More importantly, it was suggested that the revenue generated from YMCA memberships may be sufficient to

cover the annual operating cost, but not the debt service associated with the construction of a new facility. It is the YMCA's position that contributions from partners will be required to fund the capital program.

The provision of a new aquatic facility to serve the Owen Sound Area is also a priority in the City's Strategic Plan.

d) Needs Assessment

Owen Sound, Meaford, and Georgian Bluffs – referred to as the “Owen Sound Service Area” in this Plan – contain approximately 44,100 people at present and are projected to have a combined population of 48,600 by 2016 (representing growth of 10%). Although these figures apply to the “service area” identified in this Plan, it is expected that a publicly-accessible indoor aquatic facility would draw from a larger area, with the number of users decreasing the farther one lives from Owen Sound.

Our experience has shown that one municipal indoor pool per 30,000 to 35,000 is a common provision standard in mid-sized communities such as Owen Sound, however, this service level can be affected by the existence of non-municipal facilities such as a school or YMCA pool. Larger communities may even have provision levels as low as one indoor pool for every 60,000 population. A recent report published by Parks and Recreation Ontario (“Major Municipal Sport and Recreation Facility Inventory”, December 2005) finds that there is an average of one municipal indoor pool per 48,000 people in the Province. The report also cautions against the use of per capita standards:

“While population based standards may be a convenient method to compare supply levels between jurisdictions, this approach can be quite misleading. A more appropriate methodology would be to combine population based standards with analysis techniques to project the capture rate of the facility and the manner in which it will probably be used. This method would take more of a market driven approach thereby enabling its application to most jurisdictions throughout the province.”

With this in mind, it is not enough to simply state that once a community has reached a certain population, it should have an indoor pool. Any community would benefit from having an indoor pool, the major deciding factor relates to economics (how much money is the community willing to spend to build it and to support it on an ongoing basis?) weighed against community benefit. It must be emphasized that a municipally-operated indoor pool (aquatic component only) is virtually assured to run an operating deficit; other components (such as a membership-based fitness centre) must be included in the facility concept in order to generate revenues to offset the pool costs. Despite the financial realities, it remains that a new indoor pool is a very high priority for many residents in the City and its provision must be given careful consideration.

The City's 1990 Comprehensive Recreation Master Plan (which was never formally adopted by City Council) found that there was not sufficient demand to support the provision of an additional indoor pool in Owen Sound – while the YMCA facility was operating at capacity and there was some unmet demand, that level of demand was not great enough to trigger the need for a second pool. Instead, a newer, larger pool that could accommodate more users was recommended. According to more studies on this matter, it would appear that this finding is still applicable.

Most pools twenty years or older are 25-yard (like the Owen Sound Family YMCA) or 25-metre rectangular tanks. Beginning in the late 1980s, municipalities began to develop the leisure pool, featuring zero depth access, waterslides, water toys and usually higher water temperatures. The chief attribute of the leisure pool is the ability to accommodate a larger number of bathers than the rectangular pool. The leisure pool suits recreational swimming (particularly amongst children), learn to swim programs, and aquatic therapy, but has not been popular with competitive aquatic clubs. Leisure pools typically generate more revenue than rectangular pools, but are more expensive to operate and do not recover as large a portion of their total operating costs.

Pool design continues to evolve. The newest template is the multi-purpose pool, which can accommodate the traditional programs associated with a conventional competitive pool (e.g., lessons, laps, deep-water aqua fitness, competitive swimming, etc.) with the entertainment/fun elements of a leisure pool. The most successful indoor aquatic centres include a variety of features that are designed to accommodate all ages and abilities, with an increasing emphasis on the needs of the aging population.

It is clear that there is sufficient demand and interest for one publicly accessible aquatic facility in the City, however, the manner in which that facility is provided and managed (in combination with other potential components of a multi-use recreation complex) requires additional examination on the part of the City. To assist the City in advancing this initiative, a preliminary business case has been developed (see Appendix B) that identifies potential costs and operating scenarios associated with an indoor pool in Owen Sound.

f) Recommended Action Plans

3. The City should pursue the inclusion of an indoor aquatic facility as part of the proposed multi-use facility.

5.3.3 Arenas

a) Inventory

There are 2 ice pads at 2 separate locations (Coliseum and J.D. McArthur) within the City of Owen Sound for a current provision ratio of 1 ice pad per 10,800 City residents. An outdoor ice rink has also recently been developed in Harrison Park, which may help to alleviate some demand for public skating in municipal arenas. Details of each arena are presented in the following table.

During winter months these arenas are used for organized hockey, figure skating, and ringette as well as public skating and pick-up hockey. During summer months they are primarily used for box lacrosse and special events. It is important to note that the

Coliseum Arena accommodates part of an annual Fall Fair hosted by the Owen Sound Agricultural Society. The Bayshore Arena hosts large corporate events as well as concerts throughout the year; many events may be hosted without removing the ice surface.

Inventory of Municipal Arenas in the City of Owen Sound

Coliseum Arena	- located at Victoria Park - contains 1 ice pad (190 x 90 ft.)
J.D. McArthur Arena (Bayshore)	- located at the Bayshore Community Centre - contains 1 ice pad (200 x 85 ft.), 5 dressing rooms, 2,640 seats (1,840 heated, 800 bleacher) and standing room for more than 500 spectators

By way of the recreation cost-sharing agreements the adjacent municipalities of Meaford and Georgian Bluffs have with the City of Owen Sound, residents of these communities are permitted the same level of access to local arenas (for minor sports) as are Owen Sound citizens and vice versa. As such, it is important to consider both the population of the surrounding area as well as its arena facilities (there is 1 ice pad in Meaford at the Meaford & St. Vincent Centre and 1 ice pad in Georgian Bluffs at the Shallow Lake & District Community Centre). In addition to these rinks, organizations in Owen Sound often rent ice time in Chatsworth, Desboro, Keady, and Williamsford Arenas when local rinks are not available; indoor natural ice rinks are also provided in Kemble and Kilsyth. It is understood that many of these arenas are operating at or near capacity during prime time hours.

b) Trends and Issues

The public consultation program and our analysis revealed the following to be the primary issues pertaining to indoor arenas:

CONDITION OF THE COLISEUM – The Coliseum is an older facility that is approaching a point in its lifespan that it will require considerable capital investment. Between 2006 and

2010, various capital projects are planned for the Coliseum (a new arena floor, replacing the Olympia Zamboni, the Roof Top Condensers, the sound system, improving accessibility at the front entrance, etc.), totalling nearly \$600,000. Although the ice plant is over thirty years old, capital funds for its replacement were not allocated within this time suggests that there are not enough dressing rooms to accommodate mixed teams of boys and girls and dressing rooms are too small and in poor condition.

LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS RENT ICE IN OTHER COMMUNITIES –

The Owen Sound minor hockey organization last year rented 40 hours per week from arenas in the surrounding area to support their ice-time needs; arenas in Williamsford, Chatsworth, and Desboro were rented not only for practice but for tournaments as well. The Owen Sound Figure Skating Club also suggested that there was a lack of ice time as their participants are required to practice during school hours three times per week in order to sustain their curriculum.

LACK OF AVAILABLE ICE TIME – The 2003 Official Plan Background Study states “there is limited playing time with only two arenas in Owen Sound”. A review of the ice schedules indicated that the arenas are used to capacity during prime-time hours and there is only limited opportunity for additional late-night/early-morning rentals. Having two junior hockey teams further compounds the need for ice time as these two clubs are major users of prime time ice. A number of groups have requested additional ice time in the past – including, but not limited to, minor hockey, figure skating, the Owen Sound Greys, and a women’s hockey team – however, their requests could not be accommodated as all viable times were booked.

PARTICIPATION LEVELS & TRENDS – The Owen Sound Figure Skating Club experienced a slight overall increase in participation since 2000; this is the reverse of what is being seen in many other municipalities. Participation for minor hockey and ringette suggest that current registration levels in these organizations are similar to 2000 levels, although there has been some fluctuation within this period. There has been growth in girls’ hockey in

recent years (which is expected to evolve into interest in women’s hockey). Adult hockey participation is more a function of ice time availability, therefore, it is difficult to determine true demand.

DEMOGRAPHIC CONSIDERATIONS – Owen Sound’s youth population is currently at a peak, suggesting that minor hockey, figure skating, and ringette ice needs may decline slightly in future years. Adult hockey, on the other hand, is a growing sport nationwide (particularly among the growing over-40 demographic), largely due to the aging of society. This does not necessarily mean that there will be more adult hockey participants than youth in the foreseeable future, however, it can be expected that there will be a greater proportion of adult hockey participants using Owen Sound’s arenas in the coming years.

SCHEDULING – Lacrosse draws participants from a wide area including Durham, Port Elgin, Kincardine, Lion’s Head, Meaford and Wiarton and points in between. Lacrosse try-outs at the beginning of season cannot be accommodated in either of the Owen Sound arenas if the ice is kept in for playoffs for any of the Junior Hockey Teams. If the ice is left in when lacrosse tryouts are scheduled, it is necessary to rent arena time at Shallow Lake, Meaford, Port Elgin, or Desboro.

Minor figure skating runs into similar scheduling conflicts in that they are not able to begin their season until the Fall Agricultural Fair is over and ice can be created in the Coliseum. Representatives of minor lacrosse and figure skating feel that an additional ice surface at the Coliseum would rectify these scheduling conflicts by allowing hockey playoffs and lacrosse try-outs as well as figure skating and the Fall Fair to occur simultaneously. Another option is to develop a separate building that could accommodate the Fall Fair’s indoor activities, instead of requiring the ice to be removed.

Lastly, the Owen Sound Men’s Rec. Hockey League would like scheduling priority over pick-up hockey groups as they have

liability insurance, support local businesses in Owen Sound and adhere to all other applicable rules.

REGIONAL DEMAND – To some degree, Owen Sound serves the arena needs of the greater Owen Sound service area. This may be particularly evident with respect to tournaments. Current and future ice pads needs should reflect demands placed on Owen Sound ice pads by residents of the City as well as by residents of surrounding municipalities.

MULTI-PAD ARENA DESIGNS – There is a strong desire for larger dressing rooms, better showers and washrooms, as well as high quality ice. As mentioned earlier, multi-purpose recreational facilities that contain two or more ice pads, swimming pools, libraries, indoor turf, etc. are also popular. Multi-pad facilities show greater operational efficiencies and revenue generation potential, whereas very few single pad arenas are fully self-supporting. Both the Bayshore and Coliseum have sufficient land that would allow for the development of a second ice pad.

c) Needs Assessment

Usage trends in other municipalities suggest that the demand for arenas is relatively steady, with some growth in the areas of female hockey and tournament markets and some declines in figure skating (the latter of which has not been seen in Owen Sound). The long-term outlook for arena demand is that facility needs will increase generally at the same pace as population growth occurs.

The need for a third ice pad in the municipality has long been discussed. During the public consultation process, arena users revealed substantial interest for an additional ice surface and suggestions were presented in favour of twinning the existing ice pad at the Coliseum Arena in conjunction with the development of a new multi-use recreation facility. The need for additional arenas received moderate support through the leisure guide survey and the community workshop.

Because both demographic profiles and ice sport participation rates can vary from place to place, it is more appropriate to determine arena needs based on rates of participation rather than on a per capita basis. A provision standard for ice pads is generally in the range of one per 400 to 700 participants in smaller urban areas. Larger centres (e.g., Greater Toronto Area) can often achieve a standard around one ice pad per 1,000 participants (largely due to the ability to draw from a much larger population base for demand well into the early morning hours).

The number of youth participants and adult league winter-based participants are not currently able to expand due to the lack of available ice time, indicating that the arenas are being used at capacity. The current number of ice pads in Owen Sound results in a ratio of approximately one ice pad per 690 participants. With these factors in mind, a provision standard of 1 ice pad per 500 participants for a community the size of Owen Sound is deemed to be reasonable and should be used to project future needs. This standard includes all organized and casual users of the local arenas, including both youth and adult, with the general exception of weekday daytime users (there is generally ample ice available at this time of day and, therefore, there is no substantial shortage of supply). This standard reflects a continued effort to schedule youth needs within prime time and to provide sufficient blocks of ice time to the two local junior clubs.

By extrapolating the current number of participants per league with the projected age cohort population data, we have estimated the demand for areas in the next five (2011) and ten (2016) year periods. This methodology relies on age cohort population forecasts and current participation rates; as such, it assumes that participation rates will remain steady into the future. As mentioned previously, adult and girl's hockey has experienced considerable growth in the recent past and may present a potential growth area in the future; some allowance has been made for this in our methodology. The following table illustrates the application of the recommended provision standard.

Projected Demand for Ice Pads / Arenas

	2006	2011	2016
Youth Participants (4-18)*	911	863	832
Junior Team Participants**	43	43	43
Adult League/Casual Rental Participants (19-49)***	410	414	436
Additional Participants that Cannot Currently be Accommodated (e.g., women’s hockey team) – estimated	20	25	30
Total Participants	1,384	1,345	1,341
Supply (# of ice pads)	2	2	2
Demand (1 per 500 participants)	2.8	2.7	2.7
Surplus (Deficit)	(0.8)	(0.7)	(0.7)

* Includes Minor Hockey, Figure Skating and Ringette

** Includes Owen Sound Attack (Jr. A) and Owen Sound Saugeen Shores Greys (Jr. B)

*** Includes Owen Sound Men’s Recreation, Men’s Puffers Hockey Leagues, and typical weekly pick-up hockey participants (estimated)

Note: A certain amount of caution should always be taken when reviewing any data projections – it generally holds that the longer the projection period is, the less accurate the forecasts become. As such, it is suggested that the City continue to monitor arena registration figures to ensure that they compare favourably with the projections and that the projections be revised within the coming years if necessary.

Using a provision standard of 1:500, and assuming Owen Sound will continue to provide ice time to the residents of the abutting municipalities, there is a deficit of 0.8 ice pads at present. The City, however, is currently experiencing a peak in demand as the number of youth is expected to decline slightly over the next ten years (mostly those in their older teens). Although the greatest pressure for ice is being felt in 2006, ice pad deficits are also expected in 2011 and 2016. Based on current participation trends and population projection data, the total number of ice users is expected to decrease by 3% over the next ten years. Because lack of ice time

was a significant complaint identified in the public consultation process, the current and anticipated deficits reflect the inability of the two arenas to support more participants.

Without the existence of arenas in surrounding communities, most notably Shallow Lake, Chatsworth, Keady, and Williamsford, the City of Owen Sound in partnership with the abutting municipalities could easily support a third ice surface. These arenas (and others), however, are heavily used by local ice groups and, therefore, are easing the pressure on Owen Sound’s rinks. If it is the intention of the City to serve all of its residents and a

portion of those living within the cost-sharing municipalities, then a third ice pad can be justified now.

The level of current usage and unmet demand is generally at a level that would permit a total of three rinks to operate near capacity during prime time hours (generally 4 p.m. to 10 p.m. weekdays and 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. weekend), however, usage outside these hours may be limited. That being said, a third ice pad would allow for the full accommodation of local youth ice organizations, increased tournament potential, as well as the likelihood for increased usage by adults during prime time or shoulder hours. Furthermore, while system-wide ice revenues may not increase by 50% with a third ice pad (due to less usage during non-prime hours), operating costs would not increase by 50% either due to the efficiencies associated with the operation of a double pad arena. Given site constraints the only feasible option for consideration would be to consider adding one ice pad to the Coliseum as the development of a new single pad arena is not recommended. Planning for this facility should be

undertaken in conjunction with the proposed multi-use recreation centre.

In the interim, options for maximizing usage of the City's existing rinks are recommended. For example, although the Minor Hockey organization rents considerable ice time outside of the City, an examination of current arena schedules suggests that there is some capacity within existing arenas (largely at later hours that would only be suitable for adult rentals). Furthermore, there are approximately 8 hours per week (mostly between the hours of 5 p.m. and 10 p.m. that are rented to adult groups) that should be made available to youth leagues, should these organizations be able to justify the rental. One way to make this happen is to update the City's Arena Allocation Policy, which was established in 1992 and revised in 1996.

The intent of the Arena Allocation Policy is to allow for fair and equal access to groups within the City and municipalities participating in the cost sharing formula. The policy gives priority (in order) to Jr. "A" Hockey, Jr. "B" Hockey, youth, public skating, school/community groups, and adults. Designated times for youth and adult activities are also specified. While the principles of the policy appear to be appropriate, it lacks the detail necessary to properly assign ice time between user groups based on true needs (e.g., number of participants) and for new groups to become established. It is recommended that the City update this policy to allow for the more efficient and effective allocation of City's ice time. In consultation with user groups, as a preliminary measure to relieve demand pressures, consideration may also be given to extending the youth times from 9 p.m. at night to 10 p.m. to accommodate the older age divisions (e.g., bantam, midget, juvenile).

A preliminary business case has been developed (see Appendix B) that identifies potential costs and operating scenarios associated with a twin pad arena in Owen Sound.

d) Recommended Action Plans

4. If it is the intention of the City to serve all of its residents and a portion of those living within the cost-sharing municipalities, a third ice pad should be provided in Owen Sound if appropriate partnerships can be reached. The City should consider twinning the Coliseum as a new stand alone single pad arena is not recommended. Planning for this facility should be undertaken in conjunction with the proposed multi-use recreation centre and the improvements required to the existing ice pad at the Coliseum Arena.
5. Revise the City's Arena Allocation Policy to allow for the more efficient and effective allocation of City's ice time.
6. Seek partnerships with the Agricultural Society to examine the feasibility of constructing a separate building (e.g., pole barn) that could accommodate the Fall Fair's indoor activities, as well as other community activities throughout the year.

5.3.4 Fitness Facilities

a) Inventory

At present there are four non-municipal fitness facilities operating within or near the City of Owen Sound: the Owen Sound and Area Family YMCA, Stone Tree, Sport Makers, and the Women's Health and Fitness Centre. There is also a Curves for Women in the community, however, this operation has a slightly different focus than a traditional fitness centre. Between these four facilities, there is a current provision ratio of approximately one fitness centre to 5,400 residents.

The fitness centre at the Owen Sound and Area Family YMCA is public (accessible with a membership or a day pass), while the fitness centres at Stone Tree, Sport Makers and the Women's Health and Fitness Centre are private (members only) service providers.

The YMCA is advertised as having a conditioning centre with treadmills, cross training treadmills, Stairmasters, upright and recumbent bikes, Concept II rowers, Gravitron, Technogym strength training machines and Louis Garneau spinning bikes; a gymnasium for fitness classes, sports activities and preschool programs; a climbing wall and traverse wall; free weight room; youth and family change rooms as well as a sauna connected to the adult change rooms.

Stone Tree offers a fully equipped fitness centre in conjunction with their indoor pool facility and banquet halls. The Stone Tree fitness centre is advertised as having “treadmill, cross training, Stairmaster, stationary bicycle, rowing machine, Nordic Track, weight and stretch machines and free weights”. An interview with a representative from Stone Tree indicated that a substantial portion of their members use the fitness facility regularly.

The Women’s Health and Fitness Centre and Sport Makers offers fitness equipment that is similar to that provided at the Stone Tree fitness centre.

b) Trends and Issues

PUBLIC ACCESS – Participants of the Community Workshop identified the YMCA as an important component of the sport and recreation facilities in Owen Sound. They described the YMCA as being well equipped and in an excellent location as well as affordable and accessible to all, with a variety of activities and programs for youth and adults such as the kid’s camp and the cardiac care program for seniors. The climbing wall was specifically mentioned as a unique attraction to users. There are no municipal fitness operations, however, this was never raised as an expectation through the public consultation process.

YMCA EXPANSION – The YMCA fitness centre is part of an aging complex that board members are actively in the process of trying to replace. Representatives of the YMCA feel that a new facility offering a wider variety of equipment and recreational opportunities would be more appealing to an entire family,

suggesting that such a facility would be an important step to encourage active living of families and individuals of all ages in concert with the Action 2010 goals and objectives. This is an identified component of the YMCA’s proposed multi-use recreation centre.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY & ACTIVE LIVING – Overweight and obesity rates remain alarmingly high as do instances of heart disease, diabetes, and other ailments. While the demand for traditional fitness equipment and programs remains relatively high, there is also increasing interest in broad range of new, holistic, health-based, and specialized activities (e.g., pilates, sport-specific training, athletic therapy, etc.). The Owen Sound and Area Physical Activity Plan was recently prepared to address many of these issues and propose a strategy to improve activity levels in the region.

“Active living” programs and services are also an increasing focus of municipal and private sector fitness providers (active living refers to the integration of physical activities into one’s daily routine), especially as the number of older adults increases. The active living concept is one that applies to a number of areas, including fitness programming and spaces. The City should continue to expand its focus, over time, on active living programs that recognize the health benefits of a physically active lifestyle.

c) Needs Assessment

Aerobics, fitness or weight training was the 5th most popular recreation activity in Owen Sound during the past year according to the Leisure Guide Survey. As might be expected, the survey results indicate that these indoor fitness activities are most prevalent amongst individuals above the age of 15 years, including seniors over the age of 65 years. Although some expressed their happiness with the choice of fitness centres in Owen Sound, a fitness centre/gym and an indoor running track were significant needs, as identified by the Leisure Guide Survey.

Comparable provision standards do not exist for fitness facilities as levels of supply vary considerably from municipality to municipality. As fitness facilities typically complement other community recreation facilities, it is recommended that fitness and active living space (either dedicated space or multi-use activity rooms) be included in new multi-use recreation centre, particularly those that contain indoor aquatic facilities. The size and scope of each fitness/active living studio should give consideration to alternate providers in the area.

With there being suitable private sector providers of fitness facilities and programs in Owen Sound, any provision of traditional fitness facilities by the municipality would result in duplication. As such, fitness facilities are not seen as a core municipal service. With that being said, should a decision be made to develop a new aquatic centre in the community, consideration should be given to the provision and operation (either direct or indirect via contract agreement) of a fitness centre. Fitness studios are traffic generators that help to increase the usage of other facilities (such as indoor pools and multi-purpose rooms) and can also help to offset the cost to operate these other components.

A preliminary business case has been developed (see Appendix B) that identifies potential costs and operating scenarios associated with a fitness/healthy living centre in Owen Sound.

d) Recommended Action Plans

7. The provision of fitness facilities should be considered in the development of any new recreation centre containing an indoor aquatic facility. The City should consider a range of potential partnership approaches for operating such a facility so as not to compete directly with existing providers.

5.3.5 Gymnasiums & Gymnastics

a) Inventory

Gymnasiums are provided in the City of Owen Sound at the Owen Sound and Area Family YMCA and area schools. School gymnasiums are frequently used – outside of school hours and requirements – for community programs and activities, such as adult volleyball, indoor soccer, etc.

b) Trends and Issues

PUBLIC ACCESS – Community Workshop participants were pleased with public access to school gyms and facilities for sports. There was also considerable agreement with respect to how well school gyms and facilities were maintained. This is the exact opposite of what is being experienced in many other municipalities, several of which are struggling with community access and affordability issues related to school assets.

GYMNASTICS – The Owen Sound Satellites currently have 167 members between the ages of 3 and 18. The group operates out of their own building which is inadequate for their needs. Their goal is to expand the programming to include tumbling, trampoline, artistic gymnastics, and advanced cheerleading, but they require a new, larger facility with a higher ceiling to do so. A gymnastics facility uses a space similar to a gymnasium, however, the space is typically dedicated due to the specific requirements of the sport (e.g., the difficulty in putting up and taking down apparatuses, safety concerns, etc.).

c) Needs Assessment

Gymnasiums are popular facilities due to their ability to accommodate a wide variety of activities ranging from active team sports to banquets to day camps. In particular, youth basketball has grown in popularity in recent years and adult volleyball has retained a strong following in many communities.

Traditionally, there has been a heavy reliance on school gyms in Owen Sound. Recent agreements with the Provincial government and local school boards have assisted in providing affordable community access to school facilities and gymnasiums, however, long-term access to non-municipal facilities is not guaranteed.

An additional gymnasium facility may be provided if a new multi-use facility is developed in Owen Sound. It should be noted, however, that the gymnasium at the current YMCA facility may not be maintained if a new facility is developed. The City should also continue to work with local school boards to maintain and/or increase accessibility of school gyms to the public.

d) Recommended Action Plans

8. The provision of gymnasia should be considered in the development of the proposed multi-use recreation centre.
9. The City should continue to work with local school boards to maintain and/or increase accessibility of school gyms to the public.
10. The City could consider partnering with the Owen Sound Satellites for the provision of a gymnastics facility, should a group-initiated business plan be found acceptable to the City.

5.3.6 Seniors' Centres

a) Inventory

The Harrison Park Seniors' Drop-In Centre (established in 1993) is a designated senior's facility, located in Harrison Park. The City's second seniors' programming site is the Harry Lumley Bayshore Community Centre, which serves as the primary meeting place for approximately 120 members of the Bayshore Retirees Club (established in 1983). The YMCA also has approximately 300 senior citizen members, many of which participate in the card club and bus

tours, as well as more active endeavours such as fitness and swimming.

Programs and services (such as Tai Chi, Card / Board Games, etc.) are offered throughout the week (between 1 p.m. and 4 p.m.) at the Harrison Park Seniors' Drop-In Centre to retirees over the age of 50. Secretarial services as well as assistance with income tax preparation and meeting room rentals are available to seniors at the Drop-In Centre on Tuesdays and Thursday mornings (between 9 a.m. and approximately 1 p.m.).

Senior activities offered regularly throughout the week at the Harry Lumley Bayshore Community Centre include progressive bridge, shuffleboard, billiards and snooker, as well as pepper, cribbage and euchre.

b) Trends and Issues

AVAILABILITY OF BAYSHORE COMMUNITY CENTRE – Results of the 2005 Needs Assessments of Seniors indicate that seniors currently do not have their own facility and routinely get "bumped" from the Bayshore Community Centre for paying customers. Further inquiry into this issue shows that the percentage of the times that the Bayshore Retirees actually get bumped from this facility is quite low (5% or approximately 9 times out of 200 in 2005). The Bayshore Retirees do not pay any rent for their usage of this facility. A stakeholder survey completed by the Bayshore Retirees indicates that their organization would like to expand but feel they need their own facility to do so.

TRANSPORTATION TO HARRISON PARK – The Harrison Park Drop-In Centre is not certain of their ability to expand current senior services and programs as the organization is entirely dependent on volunteers. Volunteers and board members acquired by word of mouth are generally seniors that do not have access to automobile transportation due to health problems. Non-drivers cannot access Harrison Park Seniors Drop-In Centre because there is a lack of public transit out of

the downtown area. The group requested a centralized facility that can accommodate all senior groups and be easily accessed by public transportation.

c) Needs Assessment

Results of the City's Needs Assessment of Seniors (2005) represents data from 147 individuals associated with 40 different groups throughout the City of Owen Sound. 51.1% of the seniors surveyed were content with the recreational facilities and activities currently available to them, although 69% of the respondents felt the need to have a seniors centre. It was suggested that a designated space for uninterrupted senior activities could be incorporated in another existing building (e.g. Legion, Harrison Park Inn, Salvation Army) and did not necessarily need to be a stand-alone senior's centre.

The Study found that card playing was the number one recreational/leisure activity for seniors, followed by shuffleboard, bingo, darts, board games, crafts, tai chi, and carpet bowling. New leisure programs that seniors would encourage the City to pursue included tours, meetings, learning opportunities (computer, card lessons, driving courses), crafts (jewellery and woodworking), gardening, music (playing or listening), plays and arts, dancing, helping other seniors, and bird watching.

With respect to group activities, 74% of the seniors who responded to the survey belonged to an organized group. Organized group activities included cards, shuffleboard, bingo, darts, board games, crafts, tai chi, carpet bowling, sewing, singing, speakers, socials, worships, and fellowship as well as clubs (gardening, special interest groups), in-house activities (book club and writing), church groups, sports (golfing and swimming), music and exercise. It is important to note that the most popular organized activities for seniors are primarily indoor-based.

There was considerable agreement in the Community Workshop regarding the need for a dedicated senior's centre with areas for crafts, walking, shuffleboard, pool, as well as kitchen facilities and even a restaurant / cafeteria. The Leisure Guide Survey, however,

did not confirm this position, ranking the need for additional senior centres quite low.

Despite having access to the Bayshore Community Centre, the Bayshore Retirees feel they need a designated senior's complex with facilities for carpet bowling, crafts, cribbage, darts, table tennis, a writer's club, book club, quilting, computer mentoring, active living and fitness classes, wood working, lawn bowling and other current activities. A representative of this organization suggested that a designated senior's facility will bolster their membership rates as demonstrated by high membership rates for designated senior facilities throughout Ontario.

There is a \$20 annual membership fee to become part of the Bayshore Retirees Club, but members essentially use the meeting space at the Harry Lumley Bayshore Community Centre for free. Because seniors are able to meet for their desired activities during the daytime (non-prime time hours) there are usually few scheduling conflicts with other user groups at this facility.

Owen Sound retirees that currently frequent the Harrison Park Drop-In Centre feel they need a centralized facility that can accommodate all senior groups and be easily accessed by public transportation. Although minor improvements to the Harrison Park Drop-In Centre could make the facility more suitable for senior's activities, the main issue with this facility is believed to be access for seniors without vehicles. Greater public transit to and from the Harrison Park Senior's Drop-In Centre may satisfy the needs of senior users.

Over the next ten years (2006 to 2016 and beyond), the population of Owen Sound residents over the age of 65 years of age is expected to increase considerably. Between 2006 and 2016, the City of Owen Sound can expect to have approximately 5,222 seniors (over 65), representing a 15% population increase (or 685 more seniors). The 45-64 age group is also expected to increase considerably over the next five years; by 2011, the number of residents in the 45-64 age cohorts will increase from 5,346 to 5,656, representing 310 more people in this age cohort or almost 6% population growth. Similar trends will be experienced in Georgian Bluffs and Meaford.

Because early retirement by the baby boomer generation (presently associated with the 45-64 age cohort) is becoming a common trend, anticipated growth by Owen Sound residents over the age of 50 will constitute a significant need for senior facilities and programs in the City. The types of facilities and programs that will be required to meet the needs of “new seniors” in Owen Sound that have embraced “active lifestyles” more so than previous generations, may not be those traditionally offered to retirees.

Multi-purpose recreation facilities that offer casual, low impact and self-scheduled recreation opportunities through the provision of activity rooms and other complementary spaces are expected to suit a growing number of the aging baby boomers that may be generally fitter and seemingly more interested than previous generations in maintaining an active lifestyle. This is expected to translate into increased participation in active recreation pursuits (albeit at a gentler pace), particularly those that are health and fitness related. In this way, the leisure demands of the new senior will closely mirror the needs of older adults (e.g., age 40 to 50), which include activities such as fitness and swimming.

The majority of the needs of the “new senior” are best met at a multi-use centre with gymnasium, swimming, and fitness facilities. With the possibility of a new multi-use recreation facility being developed in Owen Sound, a wide range of senior’s activities could be made available for this demographic. Affordability, however, is a key concern for seniors – particularly older seniors that are interested in “traditional” activities like those offered at the existing clubs – and a membership-based facility would not be responsive to the needs of most users.

A new multi-purpose recreational centre in Owen Sound would relieve pressures currently being placed on other facilities, however, it is likely that a new facility would have a fee structure greater than what is currently in place at the Bayshore and Harrison Park facilities. While a new dedicated facility is desired by seniors’ organizations, particularly one in a central location (as the Coliseum is), the financial realities need to be carefully considered.

d) Recommended Action Plans

11. Should a new recreation centre be developed, programming for seniors should be a key consideration in its design and operation, including the development of a dedicated space such as a quiet room/lounge for seniors’ use. The need for a senior’s coordinator staff position (part-time) should also be assessed.
12. Should a new recreation facility not be built in the near term, renovations to the Bayshore and Harrison Park seniors’ facilities should be considered to make them more compatible to seniors’ programming and seniors’ needs. Considerations could include aspects related to scheduling, transportation, programming, and facility upgrades.
13. Because seniors currently have access to the Bayshore Community Centre and the Harrison Park Senior’s Drop-In Centre, it is not recommended that a new stand-alone exclusive-use facility be developed for seniors. Seniors should be provided equal access to activity and meeting rooms at the proposed multi-use recreation centre, should it be developed.

5.3.7 Youth Centres

a) Inventory

Although various youth and teen programs and camps are available in Owen Sound, a public drop-in youth centre does not exist within the City at present.

Recreation based drop-in programs (within a gymnasium) at the public Y are available for both youth and teens in Owen Sound; the Rotary YMCA Camp Presqu’île also offers programs and services (mostly outdoor) for youth 6 to 16 years of age. The M’Wikedong Native Cultural Resource Centre offers drop in programs for aboriginal youth issues at the Urban Multipurpose Aboriginal Youth

Centre. Youth of the Urban Multipurpose Aboriginal Youth Centre also engage in summer camps offered by the Rotary YMCA Camp Presqu'île.

b) Trends and Issues

SERVING YOUTH – Youth are typically the most difficult demographic for recreation departments to serve. Outside of those involved in traditional sports (which usually account for about one-quarter of all teens in most communities), there is a significant segment that is not engaged in meaningful physical activity. Non-physical environments for youth to explore personal creativity and experience social opportunities are considered very important as well. Teens are looking for non-intimidating environments, affordable opportunities, and drop-in / less structured activities within their immediate peer group.

c) Needs Assessment

Results from the Leisure Guide Survey indicate that recreational opportunities for youth/teens (13-19) were fair, but not as well developed as those for other age groups. The need for youth centres ranked relatively high compared to other capital investments. Further to these survey results, several participants of the Community Workshop indicated a need for a facility that would allow Owen Sound youth to engage in non-competitive, unstructured social activities (e.g., “hang out”). These are typical responses that are seen in many other communities.

Of the youth that participated in the log activity component of the City's 2005 Youth Needs Assessment, 28% were involved in leisure/passive activities, such as spending time with friends (27%) and using the internet and computers (12%). Together, these passive activities surpassed the participation rate for sports (35%), the most popular activity amongst youth survey respondents. Passive activities that youth survey respondents would like to participate in included attending dances, learning about different careers, as well as getting assistance with resume writing and job searching. Youth survey respondents suggested the need for new

facilities and activities to deter alcohol and drug abuse by teens as well as opportunities for dances and local band concerts.

The 2005 Seniors and Youth Leisure Needs Assessment Summary concluded that:

- New youth programs and facilities need to consider transportation and financial constraints; and
- The social aspect of activities/programming is very important.

Youth are traditionally a very challenging market for municipal recreation departments to serve due to their range of needs (e.g., recreational, social support, leisure hang-out, etc.). Opportunities for organized sports for this age group are provided by community organizations, leaving municipal and non-profit agencies to cater more towards unstructured drop-in activities. Much has been written on the subject of engaging youth in meaningful leisure activities, especially given the current focus of senior governments on physical activity levels. In short, some of the challenges relating to youth in the context of recreation activities include:

- the relatively narrow age range of youth peer groups (e.g., 17 year-olds seldom socialize with 14-year olds);
- peer pressure and “trendiness” of certain activities (if no one is participating then the activity must not “cool”; but what is cool and what is not changes frequently);
- the wide range of other interests (e.g., video games, computers, movies, music, etc.) and the “lack of time” factor (e.g., homework, jobs, etc.); and
- a lack of affordable, reliable, timely, and/or independent transportation.

Traditionally, municipalities and community organizations have done a good job at addressing the organized recreational needs of youth, such as soccer, ball, swimming, etc. The challenge in most communities is meeting the social support needs of youth who are not inclined to participate in active recreation. Government

programs and broader initiatives tend to focus on serving “at-risk” youth, however, there is a large portion of youth who do not play sports or are considered to be at-risk – it is this population that are not normally engaged in meaningful leisure activities, whether due to a lack of interest or a lack of opportunity (or both). Not all youth want to participate in organized activities and sports programs, therefore, youth centres should provide a place for youth to occupy their time constructively in a social setting.

Directly involving youth in program development and service delivery decisions is one way to improve participation levels and service uptake, however, many of the aforementioned challenges will persist.

Youth centres need not be stand-alone structures, rather it is preferred that they be integrated into multi-use complexes due to cross-programming opportunities and operational efficiencies. Concerns over safety as a result of the integration of age groups can be alleviated through proper design and the creation of dedicated space for youth. The proposed development of the multi-use recreation centre offers an excellent opportunity for the City to address youth needs – the site is centralized and on a bus route and it is in proximity to several local schools. Therefore, it is recommended that the City consider the provision of dedicated youth space within the recreation complex; a youth centre coordinator will be required to manage the facility.

d) Recommended Action Plans

14. The City should consider the provision of dedicated youth space within the multi-use recreation complex. A youth centre coordinator will be required to manage the facility.
15. Until a dedicated youth space is developed in the proposed multi-use recreation complex – or should it not prove to be feasible to provide – the City should investigate alternate youth centre provision strategies that provide a street-front presence in a central and accessible location.

16. The availability of non-municipal funding (e.g., grants, sponsorships, etc.) should be pursued to offset a portion of the costs associated with the establishment and/or operation of any dedicated youth facility.

5.3.8 Indoor Turf Facilities

a) Inventory

There is no dedicated indoor turf venue in the City. School gyms are used throughout the winter season for indoor soccer. Lacrosse is also a popular sport that could utilize such a facility, however, it is adequately accommodated within local arenas during the summer months.

b) Trends and Issues

GROWTH OF INDOOR SOCCER – In response to the growing demand for outdoor soccer as seen over the past decade, there has been increased interest in year-round programs. There will likely continue to be increasing pressure for an indoor turf facility in the community. Not only is the service area’s population growing (modestly), but more and more youth and especially adults are expected to pick up the sport of soccer. Interest in other sports such as lacrosse is also steady or even increasing, suggesting greater demand for indoor turf venues.

c) Needs Assessment

Calculating demand for indoor turf venues is not as precise as it is for outdoor soccer due to a variety of reasons. Although turf facilities certainly fill a need in the community, there are no hard and fast provision standards that can be applied – municipalities provide them at dramatically different rates. Nevertheless, there are few communities of a size similar to Owen Sound that provide indoor turf facilities.

In Ontario, the development of indoor venues was historically initiated by non-profit soccer organizations and/or the private sector and focused on industrial/warehouse locations where land and large buildings were prevalent. As the popularity of soccer continued to grow in the mid-1990s, many community organizations approached municipalities to request assistance with the development of indoor facilities. In some of these cases, the operation of the facilities is entirely funded by a non-profit third party (and is, therefore, self-sufficient), while the capital and land was a mixture of municipal and community funding. More and more, however, municipalities are directly funding and operating indoor turf facilities with or without some level of financial or management assistance from local soccer organizations.

From our experience, we have found that nearly every urban community in Central and South-western Ontario over 100,000 in population has at least one such facility, however, few have more than two. We estimate that – excluding the City of Toronto – there is approximately 1 indoor turf field per 125,000 people in the Greater Toronto Area. This ratio is likely to change in the coming years as many communities have indoor fields in the development stages (e.g., Brampton, Mississauga).

The provision of indoor turf facilities, especially direct provision by municipalities, is too new of a topic to suggest an appropriate service standard. Furthermore, because indoor turf facilities are often provided in partnership with community associations through fundraising and grant programs when an appropriate opportunity exists (e.g., the development of a new community centre), no provision standard is recommended.

Although Owen Sound's role as a regional centre provides a compelling argument for the provision of higher-order facilities that could not be supported in the smaller surrounding communities, we do not feel that demand is sufficient at this point in time to support such a facility and the associated financial investment.

d) Recommended Action Plans

17. The City should monitor demand for an indoor turf facility and reconsider the needs for such a facility in 5-10 years time. Should there be an identified need that can be justified through a business case, creative provision strategies should be examined, including the re-use of an existing building and local partnerships.

5.4 OUTDOOR FACILITIES

This section includes a qualitative and quantitative analysis of outdoor recreation facility needs for the City of Owen Sound for the next ten years (2006-2016). Facilities have been evaluated in terms of total provision, distribution, and their ability to serve current and future populations of both the City and the two adjacent municipalities with which there are cost sharing agreements.

Current and future requirements have been identified through the use of measurable level of service/provision standards (market-driven and per capita-based) that are unique to Owen Sound (see section 5.1 for a detailed description of the methodology). In cases where only one City-wide facility is required, the analysis focuses more on established community need than provision standards. Factors such as public and municipal input, trends, demographic characteristics, population forecasts, and experiences in other municipalities have all been considered in undertaking this analysis.

For local facilities that are intended to serve neighbourhoods within Owen Sound – such as playgrounds and hard surface courts – facility needs have been projected by applying proposed provision standards to the current and forecasted population of the City of Owen Sound only. The City's current (2006) population is estimated at 21,600 and it is expected to increase to almost 22,500 by 2016. The anticipated population in 2016 represents a relatively steady pace of growth over the next ten years, reflecting the need to address constant demand for recreation facilities and parks in Owen Sound.

For regional facilities that attract usage by residents of Georgian Bluffs and Meaford – such as sports fields, outdoor pools, the City's skateboard and BMX parks, etc. – have considered not only population projections for the City of Owen Sound, but also for the two adjacent municipalities. In these cases, the recreation facility inventory of the entire service area has been accounted for. The current (2006) population of the entire service area is estimated at approximately 41,630 and it is expected to increase to 46,760 by 2016.

5.4.1 Soccer Fields

a) Inventory

The following table highlights the supply of outdoor soccer fields available for community use in Owen Sound, based upon inventory data provided by the City. At present, there is an effective supply of 14 soccer fields: 8 mini fields (for an equivalent of 4 full fields, as each mini field is generally equivalent to 0.5 full fields due to its smaller size and programming characteristics); 3 junior fields; and 7 senior fields. Unlike some municipalities where fields may be used frequently for a variety of sports activities, it is important to note that these fields are used almost exclusively for soccer.

Soccer Field Supply by Location, City of Owen Sound

Location	Mini (x 0.5)	Junior	Senior	Total
Kiwanis Complex	-	3*	4	7
Victoria Park	7 (3.5)	-	1	4.5
Kelso Beach	-	-	1	1
West Hill School	-	-	1	1
Comm-R-Ette Park	1 (0.5)	-	-	0.5
Soccer Fields	4 (8)	3	7	14

* 1 senior field at the Kiwanis Soccer Complex is typically divided into 2 junior fields

It should also be noted that soccer fields located at West Hill School and Victoria Park are typically used for soccer practice, while the Kiwanis Soccer Complex is primarily used for games. Although the Kiwanis Soccer Complex expects to have lighting installed by the end of the 2006 season on one of its senior fields, there are no lit soccer fields within the City of Owen Sound at the time of this study. For the purposes of future studies, lit playing fields may be considered equivalent to 1.5 unlit fields due to the extended opportunities for evening play.

In the surrounding area, there is a minor soccer program offered in Georgian Bluffs (on 4 fields in Shallow Lake). Meaford also has a minor soccer organization. Depending on the location of one's residence, some families have an option between registering in Owen Sound or Georgian Bluffs/Meaford, much like they would for hockey, figure skating and baseball.

b) Trends and Issues

SOCCKER PARTICIPATION – The 2003 Owen Sound Official Plan Background Report indicates that soccer has been the most popular sport in the City over the last 12 years. The Study also claims that soccer facilities have kept pace with growth due to an aggressive program of community fundraising.

Owen Sound Minor Soccer Association (OSMSA) registration rates for 2006 were slightly higher than 2005 registration rates but much lower than 2004 and 2003 registration rates. A major restructuring of the age groups and a new late fee policy initiated by the OSMSA during the 2005 season are believed to have contributed to the decrease in 2005 minor soccer registration. The late fee charge has since been reduced and registration numbers have subsequently increased in 2006.

Throughout Canada, soccer experienced tremendous growth in the 1990s and surpassed hockey as the most popular organized sport; this growth has carried through to this decade and now is beginning to level off. Furthermore, as the youth soccer players of today become adults, it is expected that there will be even greater demand for adult soccer opportunities, thereby creating

demand for additional senior lighted fields. This trend is already evident in Owen Sound as the public consultation process revealed demand for adult soccer leagues (individuals between 19 and 30 years of age). Factors that could affect greater demand for soccer fields in Owen Sound include growth in adult soccer leagues, growth in the registration of non-residents, growth of the OSMSA program as well as changes to fees or quality of programs offered.

DEMAND FOR LIT FIELDS – The Kiwanis complex is often used for games by three adult premier teams in Owen Sound. Because the Complex currently lacks lights, these teams are not able to host games during week nights and as a result, games are scheduled at times that compete with minor soccer field demands. Lights and suitable practice facilities are significant issues for these teams and adult users in general.

ADULT SOCCER – There is demand for recreational soccer leagues for men and women between the ages of 19 and 30. If such leagues were developed the demand for both practice and game quality soccer fields will be even greater. The OSMSA believes that it will be possible to expand the adult soccer league when the lighting is installed on one of the major fields.

UNDER-UTILIZED FIELDS – Since the establishment of the Kiwanis Soccer Complex, most of the organized soccer activities (both practice and play) have shifted to this site, resulting in reduced usage of other soccer fields in the City. Underutilized soccer fields (e.g., Victoria Park and Kelso Beach, should its users be moved to the proposed lit field at the Complex) may be available for other types of active or passive recreation opportunities or may be improved and used for soccer activities should the need become evident.

FIELD EXPANSION / IMPROVEMENTS – Expansion plans for the Kiwanis Soccer Complex show the development of 2 more senior soccer fields and 1 more junior soccer field, but timing has not been established; the provision of sufficient parking areas should be a key consideration when expanding this site.

The OSMSA expressed concern with renting portable washroom facilities for users of mini-fields (and their parents) at the Victoria Park location. Achieving an equitable solution to this issue may be achieved with continued discussions between the OSMSA and the City.

TOURNAMENT VENUES – The need for high quality tournament venues is on the rise in many jurisdictions (multiple fields, lights, clubhouse, parking, etc.). In Owen Sound, the Kiwanis Soccer Complex responds to this need as it provides opportunities to host such high-quality soccer tournaments.

c) Needs Assessment

With an anticipated 2006 population of approximately 21,600, the present supply of 14 soccer fields in the City of Owen Sound results in a per capita ratio of one field per 1,540 residents. While a per capita ratio illustrates the supply of soccer fields for the entire City, a more accurate picture of soccer field supply / demand – and one which better accounts for usage by residents of cost-sharing municipalities – may be presented by calculating the number of soccer fields available to actual soccer field users.

Owen Sound Minor Soccer Association (OSMSA) registration data indicates that there are approximately 1,250 soccer league participants between the ages of 4 and 18 in 2006, while interviews with representatives of adult and premier soccer indicates that there were approximately 155 participants over the age of 18. Approximately 65% of minor soccer players reside in Owen Sound, 23% in Georgian Bluffs, 10% in Meaford, and 2% elsewhere.

Leagues/teams included in the participant count include:

- Owen Sound Minor Soccer Association
- Grey Motors United Men's Soccer Team
- Lady Royals Soccer Team
- Owen Sound Supersonics
- Owen Sound Oldtimers
- Owen Sound Women's Recreational Group

The capture rate of the local youth population (ages 4-18) for OSMSA is approximately 21%. This compares favourably with other similar municipalities (rates typically range from 15% to 30% in most jurisdictions), indicating that there is a strong local demand for minor soccer opportunities.

The present supply of soccer fields in Owen Sound for both youth, premier and adult soccer teams results in a ratio of one field per 100 participants. The current youth soccer participant rates were applied to projected population figures for 2011 and 2016 to estimate the future number of minor soccer participants. For adult soccer – which is expected to be on the rise and for which there is some degree of latent demand – an adjusted capture rate was used to reflect its growing popularity (a rate of growth of 8%/year was used, balanced against overall population changes in this age cohort).

The following table illustrates the demand for soccer fields until 2016. Demand is based on a provision standard of one soccer field for every 80 active participants, which represents a participant to field ratio that better provides for sufficient game, practice and tournament time as well as sufficient periods of field rest. This is a common standard employed by many municipalities.

Projected Demand for Soccer Fields

	2006	2011*	2016*
Minor Soccer Participants (4 to 18)	1,250	1,184	1,142
Adult Soccer Participants (18 to 54)	155	231	349
Total Soccer Participants	1405	1,415	1,491
Provision Standard	1 field per 80 youth participants		
Number of Fields Required	17.6	17.7	18.6
Number of Fields Provided	14	14.5**	14.5**
Total Fields in Supply (Deficit)	(3.6)	(3.2)	(4.1)

* 2011 and 2016 participant projections for youth participants are based on current capture rates; participant projections for adults use an adjusted capture rate that accounts for anticipated growth and latent demand; all projections and have accounted for anticipated population growth in Owen Sound, Meaford and Georgian Bluffs

*** the installation of lighting on one field at the Kiwanis Soccer Complex in 2006 will increase the effective supply by 0.5 unlit field equivalents for the start of the 2007 soccer season

Trends suggest that the adult market (and women in particular) represents a major growth sector for soccer over the coming years. Because adult soccer may be gaining momentum in Owen Sound, the expansion of existing leagues or the creation of new leagues is a distinct possibility. If adult leagues expand differently than projected, it may be necessary to reassess the supply and/or lighting of soccer fields in Owen Sound should pressure for additional fields become apparent.

The need for fields will grow slightly over the next ten years, fuelled by anticipated growth in adult soccer. As mentioned earlier, trends indicate that youth soccer capture rates are levelling off and – coupled with a projected decline in the 4-18 population within Owen Sound, Georgian Bluffs and Meaford – youth registration is expected to decline as well.

Based on the number of projected participants, there is a current need for 17.6 fields, resulting in a deficit of 3.6 “game quality” soccer fields in Owen Sound. The installation of lighting of a senior soccer field at the Kiwanis Complex will help in meeting needs, however, by 2016 a need for 4.1 additional fields is again forecasted.

This need could be met a number of different ways, the most logical would be the development of 2 lit senior fields and 1 junior field at the Kiwanis Soccer Complex (this site is capable of accommodating this configuration). If new fields are developed and/or lights are installed at this site, this should be sufficient to meet future demands. Installing lights on senior soccer fields will not only increase the supply of available soccer fields, but also provide an opportunity for more adult soccer leagues to be established in Owen Sound.

An alternative that would complement the expansion of the Kiwanis Soccer Complex, would be to improve the condition and, in turn, the usefulness of under-utilized fields at other locations in the City, including school properties. For example, the field at Kelso Beach would be a good location for a lit field suitable for adult play or other field sports.

d) Recommended Action Plans

- 18. Local soccer demand can be accommodated through phased expansion of the Kiwanis Soccer Complex over the next ten years (4 unlit equivalent fields will be required).
- 19. Install lighting on 1-2 fields in the City (in addition to the field being lit this fall at the Kiwanis Complex) to better accommodate adult soccer and other field sports, which are expected to continue to gain in popularity in the future. Consideration should be given to both the Kiwanis Soccer Complex and other appropriate fields such as Kelso Beach.
- 20. Several school fields in the community are used to accommodate soccer practices and casual rentals. The City should continue to work with the school boards to maximize access to these fields, while maintaining reasonable standards of field quality and affordability.

5.4.2 Ball Diamonds

a) Inventory

The following table summarizes the inventory of ball diamonds, by type, available for community use in the City of Owen Sound. Because ball diamonds are primarily used during evenings throughout the week and on weekends, lit diamonds are considered to be the equivalent of 2 unlit diamonds. Therefore, the City has an effective supply of 20 baseball, softball and slo-pitch diamonds.

“Scrub” diamonds in the City of Owen Sound were not used by any of the adult ball teams interviewed and subsequently were not included in the inventory or the needs assessment. Of the City’s 7 scrub diamonds, one located in Victoria Park is currently being converted into a Cricket field for a total of 6 remaining scrub quality ball diamonds in Owen Sound.

There are minor and adult ball leagues offered in Georgian Bluffs (on 3 lit diamonds/1 unlit diamond in Shallow Lake, Balmy Beach, and Clavering) and several in Meaford. In speaking with these municipalities, it was indicated that many of their diamonds are under-utilized.

Ball Diamond Supply by Location, City of Owen Sound

Park Location	Junior Unlit	Senior Unlit	Senior Lit (x2)*	Total
Duncan McLellan**			3 (6)	3 (6)
Garafraxa	1			1
Harrison Field	3			3
Kelso Beach		1		1
Milt Brown	4			4
St. George’s			1 (2)	1 (2)
St. Julien	1			1
Tom Williams***			1 (2)	1 (2)
Ball Diamonds	9	1	5 (10)	15 (20)

* Lit diamonds are equivalent to 2 unlit diamonds

** Includes a change room and broadcast booth

*** Includes a Batting Cage facility

b) Trends and Issues

YOUTH BALL PARTICIPATION – Participation in minor ball participation varies dramatically from year to year, but overall has exhibited a declining trend in recent years. Youth registration fell by 37% between 2000 and 2005, largely as a result of declines in minor baseball/hardball. This is typical of what is being seen in many other jurisdictions and is partly due to the popularity of soccer, which burgeoned in the mid to late 1990s. As a result, both youth ball organizations have indicated that the cost of diamonds is a major concern, as is their ability to attract and retain volunteers.

DEMAND FOR SENIOR BALL DIAMONDS – Adult ball participation rates have increased in recent years and adult softball in particular continues to flourish at both recreational and competitive levels. Both the Owen Sound Senior Men’s Fastball League and the Molson Men’s Slow Pitch League have indicated that they feel they could expand if they had additional facilities. Several groups indicated interest in the development of a multi-diamond ball complex as this would be more convenient for participants, more conducive to hosting large tournaments, bolster participation rates and allow the City to reuse underutilized ball diamonds in other parts of the City for other park uses.

SPORTS COUNCIL – At present, there are a number of ball groups in Owen Sound that are divided and representatives feel this causes inefficiencies in terms of coordination, scheduling, maintenance and registration. It was suggested that the creation of a Sports Council would allow a number of separate organizations to work together more effectively.

FIELD SPECIFIC IMPROVEMENTS – Several issues were raised with respect to the design, maintenance and amenities at specific ball diamonds in the City.

c) Needs Assessment

The present supply of 20 ball diamonds results in a per capita ratio of one ball diamond per 1,080 City residents. In 2005 there were approximately 230 minor ball participants and approximately 974 adult participants for a combined total of approximately 1,204 ball participants in Owen Sound – roughly a 4:1 ratio of adult to youth players. Approximately 80% of minor ball participants reside in the Owen Sound, with most of the balance coming from Georgian Bluffs.

The City currently offers one diamond per 60 participants, not including scrub (poor quality) fields. Dramatic decreases have been seen in minor ball participation, while adult demand has generally kept pace with population growth in the municipality.

Leagues/teams included in the participant count include:

- Owen Sound Minor Baseball
- Owen Sound Recreation Minor Softball
- Owen Sound Senior Men’s Fastball League
- Molson Men’s Slow Pitch League
- Ladies Slow Pitch league
- Owen Sound Ladies Recreational Fastball League

The following table illustrates the demand for ball diamonds over a ten year period (until 2016) using a provision standard of one ball diamond for every 60 active participants. This standard is one that is employed in many other municipalities and is generally the same as the current level of service. The methodology assumes that participation rates for both youth and adults will remain stable over the projection period.

Projected Demand for Ball Diamonds

	2006	2011*	2016*
Youth Participants (4 to 18 years)	230	218	210
Adult Participants (19 to 44 years)	974	993	1081
Total Youth & Adult Participants	1,204	1,211	1,291
Provision Standard	1 diamond per 60 participants		
Number of Diamonds Required	20.1	20.2	21.5
Number of Existing Diamonds**	20	20	20
Total Diamonds in Supply (Deficit)	(0.1)	(0.2)	(1.5)

* 2011 and 2016 participant projections are based on current capture rates

** Unlit diamond equivalents (each lit field is considered equal to 2 unlit diamonds)

Based on a service provision ratio of 1 diamond to 60 participants, the City currently has an adequate supply of diamonds, although the design and/or condition of some may require improvement. Population growth in the City and municipalities participating in the cost-sharing agreements are expected to generate sufficient demand to justify 1 additional diamond by the year 2011 and possibly a second new diamond by 2016. As Owen Sound has an active adult ball community, future needs will be for senior diamonds, preferably with lights and in clusters of 2 or more.

Although the recommended provision standard suggests a need for additional diamonds, few municipalities are building such facilities nowadays. Such evidence provides sufficient reason for the City to monitor ball diamond needs/participation and to consult with local ball groups in order to determine a strategy for addressing their short and long-term needs.

Specifically, instead of merely providing more diamonds (which could be a costly proposition), it may be possible to undertake selective improvement to existing ball diamonds, which would increase the number of suitable diamonds available for play. Several groups identified issues with the design, condition and amenities of the existing diamond inventory and there may be opportunities to improve key fields and, in turn maximize use of existing diamonds. Another option involves lighting an existing senior diamond (e.g., Kelso Beach), which would result in creating the same capacity as developing one new unlit diamond. Another alternative is to expand and improve one or more scrub diamonds (of which the City has 7, not including schools). Whichever course of action is decided, local ball organizations should be involved in the planning process and fundraising/sponsorship.

As mentioned, the City has several “scrub diamonds” that are only suitable for some practices and unstructured community use. While the City should maintain some of these sites in order to provide opportunities for local pick-up games, there may be an opportunity to re-utilize some unused diamonds for other park purposes, such as basketball courts or informal play areas. When deciding which scrub diamonds are to be decommissioned/re-purposed, the City should give consideration to geographic distribution, quality of field, usage, complement or park uses, suitability for other uses, etc.

d) Recommended Action Plans

21. The City should maintain its existing supply of usable “game quality” diamonds.

22. Ball groups should be consulted to explore options for improving existing diamonds and/or provide 1-2 additional senior diamonds (or 1 lit diamond) over the long-term.

23. Consideration should be given to phasing out lower quality scrub diamonds when redeveloping parks or where the need for alternative facilities that could make use of the space is identified.

5.4.3 Other Playing Fields (Cricket, Football, Field Hockey, Rugby, Lacrosse)

a) Inventory

Victoria Park provides a regulation-sized football field (110 yards long by 65 yards wide) with a press box, 2,000 person grandstand, change rooms, washrooms and showers; this field is used by nearby St. Mary’s High School and Strathcona Public school for their athletic programs. The Grey Bruce Owen Sound Cattleman (Canadian Major Football League) also use the designated football field at Victoria Park. When not in use for football, this space is used for the Fall Fair, by Owen Sound Minor Soccer for its mini soccer program, and for girls’ field lacrosse.

The Grey-Bruce Cricket Club plays on the old ball diamond at the east end of Victoria Park and are undertaking improvements to convert this space into a proper cricket pitch.

West Hill Secondary School and Owen Sound Collegiate and Vocational Institute (OSCVI) each have a football field for their own high school football and rugby teams.

b) Trends and Issues

FOOTBALL – Despite trends that indicate increasing demand for football fields due to the formation of more community leagues (mostly in larger communities), the public consultation process

did not identify a need for additional football leagues or fields in Owen Sound.

CRICKET – The popularity of cricket has been growing primarily in urban municipalities and is a sport that is generally supported by large populations primarily composed of diverse ethnic origins. The Grey-Bruce Cricket Club is a recently established organization for adults in Owen Sound and the surrounding communities. Up to 35 individuals participate in the cricket matches regularly scheduled on Wednesday nights and Saturday afternoons. They are hosting a youth Cricket Camp this summer.

FIELD LACROSSE – Indoor box lacrosse is a popular sport in Owen Sound and this growth has not yet translated to outdoor field lacrosse. A girl's field lacrosse camp for is offered at Victoria Park by the Owen Sound Recreation Department. A Senior Women's Lacrosse Team recently folded following the 2005 season due to a lack of participants.

RUGBY – Rugby is not seen as a growth sport in most parts of the province, but this sport remains stable in communities with strong programs. Three high school rugby teams exist in Owen Sound. West Hill and OSCVI rugby teams use their own facilities while St. Mary's uses the field at Victoria Park.

c) Needs Assessment

This section describes the present and future need for outdoor fields (other than those for Soccer and Baseball) based on current and anticipated participation trends and the number of fields currently available or expected to be in operation in the near future. The City of Owen Sound provides for most of these sports (i.e., football, cricket, field lacrosse, rugby, field hockey) at Victoria Park. Furthermore, the largest degree of participation in these sports occurs at the high school level.

It should be noted that the availability of secondary school fields can be a concern for community groups. In some cases, football fields

are integrated in a multi-sports field but the main drawback associated with type of facility is the damage that is caused to the turf, which can impair field quality for other users during the subsequent season.

The public consultation program did not identify any latent demand or issues related to the provision of fields for football, cricket (which is currently developing a proper pitch), rugby, field lacrosse or the like. As such, it is believed that there are sufficient venues for these sports in Owen Sound and, although the long-term outlook for these field sports is strong, no additional facilities are recommended. With that being said, should the field at Victoria Park be eliminated in the future, there will be a need to develop a similar sized field on the same site or at an alternate location close by to serve the adjacent schools.

d) Recommended Action Plans

24. The main field located at Victoria Park is presently needed to serve the local area schools and various field sports. Care should be exercised to ensure that a multi-use field remains available to the community at this or another suitable location.

5.4.4 Tennis Courts

a) Inventory

There are 2 tennis courts at St. George's Park, another 2 tennis courts at Harrison Park, and 4 lit courts at West Hill Secondary School (built by City; access to which is provided under a reciprocal use agreement) for a total of 8 tennis courts in the City of Owen Sound. The present supply results in a per capita ratio of one tennis court per 2,700 residents.

Courts are also available at a number of privately-operated golf courses. In the surrounding communities, lit courts are available at Balmly Beach and 2 public courts in Meaford.

Tennis Court Supply, City of Owen Sound

Location	Total
St. George's Park	2
Harrison Park	2
West Hill Secondary School (lit)	4
Tennis Courts	8

b) Trends and Issues

DETERIORATING CONDITION OF COURTS – The four public tennis courts in the City are older and will require improvements to extend their useful life. With 6 courts being eliminated at the former OSCVI site, there are fewer courts available to the community, thereby placing additional pressure on existing courts; the loss of the indoor tennis dome at Stone Tree may also have created more demand for local courts. A comment received through the public consultation program suggested that better lighting is required at Harrison Park tennis facilities.

FUTURE OUTLOOK – Trends research yields mixed forecasts for participation in tennis – some literature suggests that tennis is not a growth sport while other research predicts that the sport will become more popular among the aging population. The unstructured, unprogrammed nature of tennis bodes well for future participation as the sport can be accommodated within a busy lifestyle; for this reason courts that players can walk are preferred, as are multi-court venues (2 or more).

c) Needs Assessment

A small number of people at the community workshop indicated that the City needed to provide more tennis courts and tennis opportunities in Owen Sound. 15% of respondents to the Leisure Guide Survey reported participating in tennis during the past year. Overall, the level of interest in additional tennis facilities was modest when compared with other requested facilities.

An accepted per capita standard for tennis court provision in the range of 1 court to 4,000 residents would be reasonable for Owen Sound. Tennis courts are generally considered to be a community-level facility that predominantly serves Owen Sound residents; as such, the populations of Georgian Bluffs and Meaford have not been factored into this analysis. With a provision of 1 court per 2,700 persons, the City exceeds this target and no additional courts are recommended over the next ten years. Notwithstanding, a joint construction program with a local school could be considered should one be proposed and should it allow for reasonable public access to courts in an under-served area of the City.

Distribution of courts, however, is a key consideration in assessing tennis needs because local tennis courts are often accessed by pedestrians. Furthermore, tennis courts are best provided for in groups of 2 or more for reasons related to accessibility, programming, and operational efficiencies. In Owen Sound, the tennis courts are located just east of the City's downtown core in St. George's Park, at the southern limits of the City in Harrison Park and in the west at West Hill Secondary School (not accessible during school hours). The distribution of courts is considered to be satisfactory.

Last but not least, the quality of tennis courts must be considered. The consultation program identified some concerns with regard to the condition of existing courts, namely the need for resurfacing, new nets, painting of lines, etc. In its long-term capital budget, the City has identified the need for upgrades to St. George's Park and to Harrison Park (implementation of Park Master Plan), as well as the replacement of lighting on the West Hill courts. These improvements are reasonable and required and should be pursued within the next two to three years. Where possible, the installation of lighting on tennis courts is recommended to facility play during the late evening, especially in the Spring and Fall when days are shorter.

d) Recommended Action Plans

- 25. The City, in partnership with the School Board, should proceed with the planned improvements to existing courts, including the replacement of lighting at the West Hill Secondary School tennis courts.

5.4.5 Basketball Courts

a) Inventory

The City of Owen Sound currently provides 3 half basketball courts (1 hoop each), one located at the Getaway Skateboard Park near the centre of the City and two at Harrison Park at the south end. The current basketball court provision provides a ratio of one half court per 7,200 residents or one half court per 900 youth between the ages of 10 and 19 years (the primary market for outdoor courts).

Outdoor basketball courts provided by local schools supplement the current supply of municipal courts.

b) Trends and Issues

DESIGN AND LOCATION – Because of the intensity of use and associated noise impacts, along with the need to ensure adequate visibility for safety purposes, the design and location of basketball courts within local and community parks are important considerations.

c) Needs Assessment

Trends research suggests that basketball is a growing sport and is one of the most favoured activities for both children and youth. It can be expected that youth engaged in basketball today will continue to play basketball in some form as they age. A total of 17% of the Leisure Guide Survey respondents played basketball in the past year, with greatest use from those between the ages of 5 and 34 years. Basketball has become a popular sport because youth

have embraced its urban culture, however, the sport is still easily played at a recreational level by adults.

Outdoor courts mostly appeal to youth, therefore, the service standard should be correlated with the size of this age group than the entire population. As illustrated in the following table, a standard of one half basketball court for every 600 youth aged between 10 and 19 is recommended for the City of Owen Sound.

Projected Demand for Basketball Courts

	2006	2011	2016
Number of Youth (10 to 19 yrs)	2,689	2,513	2,333
Provision Standard	1 half court per 600 youth		
Number of Half Courts Required	4.5	4.2	3.9
Number of Existing Half Courts	3	3	3
Total Courts in Supply (Deficit)	(1.5)	(1.2)	(0.9)

Note: School Courts not included

Based upon the recommended standard, the City is not currently meeting the overall basketball needs of its youth. This finding is also supported by the Owen Sound and Area Physical Activity Plan, which recommends that more outdoor basketball/multi-purpose courts be developed.

As mentioned previously, the number of youth between the ages of 10 and 19 are expected to decline slightly over the next ten years (basketball courts are generally considered to be a community-level facility that predominantly serves Owen Sound residents; as such, the populations of Georgian Bluffs and Meaford have not been factored into this analysis). At present, there is a peak undersupply of 1.5 basketball courts. With the youth population in decline, the City will maintain a deficit of 1 basketball court over ten years (2016) unless additional opportunities are provided. It is recommended that the City develop an additional outdoor basketball court in the short-term.

Good proximity to residential areas is also an important aspect to consider as it allows for youth to participate in casual basketball opportunities locally. Although the number of youth is projected to decrease over the next ten years, basketball courts are a neighbourhood-level facility. As such, geographic distribution and accessibility are key considerations that may be used to override the age-based provision guideline. At present, courts are located in the south (Harrison Park) and at the skateboard park (northwest/central), leaving a gap on the east side of the City. The City should identify a location in the east end to develop the recommended court.

It is not recommended that outdoor basketball courts be lit as it encourages use into the late evening, further exacerbating noise-related issues for neighbouring residential homes. Placing courts in highly visible areas will also minimize safety concerns and may also lead to new residents accepting the possibility of higher-than-average noise prior to moving in and reducing the likelihood of noise conflicts. Half courts are generally preferred over full courts.

d) Recommended Action Plans

26. The City should develop a basketball court (single hoop / half court) at a location to be determined on the east side of the City.

5.4.6 Outdoor Aquatic & Splash Pad Facilities

a) Inventory

The City currently has 2 outdoor pools located at Harrison Park and no splash/spray pads (although there is a waterplay area located at the J. Irvine Children's Park). There has been talk of developing a splash pad at the J. Irvine Brown Children's Park, however, this is an unfunded proposal at present.

There are several outdoor pools provided by the public, non-profit, and private sector in the surrounding area. For example, the

Municipality of Meaford operates the Blue Dolphin pool and a splash pad. There is also an outdoor pool at the Rotary-YMCA Camp Presqu'ile in Kemble (in the Township of Georgian Bluffs).

b) Trends and Issues

HARRISON PARK POOL – The Harrison Park pool hosts numerous summer camps for youth. Through the Community Workshop, the Harrison Park pool was identified as a valuable outdoor recreation facility in Owen Sound, although access to the park was seen as a problem for individuals without access to an automobile. The City has identified the need for washroom improvements at this facility through its long-term capital budget.

SPRAY/SPLASH PAD – Spray or splash pads are aquatic facilities comprised of interactive water play features, such as spouts, jets, water walls, fountains, water guns/cannons, water buckets, etc. Standing or pooled water is eliminated, reducing risks associated with West Nile Virus. These facilities primarily serve the needs of children between the ages of 2 and 12. There are presently no such facilities in Owen Sound.

OUTDOOR AQUATIC FACILITY TRENDS – More and more municipalities are constructing spray pads in favour of outdoor swimming pools. Very few communities are building new outdoor pools and, in fact, many are attempting to phase them out where other opportunities for swimming lessons and summertime waterplay exist. From a financial perspective, this is a positive trend considering the large capital and operating expenses associated with outdoor swimming and wading pools. Spray pads tend to be more cost-effective as the amount of maintenance is lower than a pool, as are the operational expenditures (due to lower energy and supervisory costs).

c) Needs Assessment

Results from the Leisure Guide Survey indicate that 62% of residents swam in the past year (this was the third highest activity, behind

hiking and walking). Although there was substantial swimming participation by all ages, the greatest participation rates (92%) were associated with individuals from the 5 to 14 year age cohort.

Swimming is one of the more popular recreational activities for all ages. Because of this, outdoor pools are an important community resource, but they do have a number of significant limitations. In particular, the short season, susceptibility to changing weather, and the desire to maximize usage at indoor pools all reduce the desirability of building any new outdoor swimming pools. Gradually, municipalities are beginning to close outdoor pools and replace them with fewer, but better, indoor pools or cost-effective outdoor water play features (e.g., splash pads). While splash pads will not replace the desire for recreational swimming, indoor pools, and backyard pools also offer venues for this activity.

With only one public outdoor pool location in the City, it is not recommended that the municipality eliminate the Harrison Park pools; these facilities provide a valued service to the community and are well used. One outdoor pool location is sufficient to serve the community and the City should continue to maintain and update the pools as necessary. Although development of a new indoor aquatic centre may cause the City to modify the complement of programs offered at the outdoor pools, there will continue to be a demand for outdoor swimming opportunities.

A spray pad provides a refreshing play area for children during the summer months, acts as a 'cooling' feature, while its simple design minimizes the need for supervision and increases the safety of younger children. The size and number of features per spray pad can vary depending on the neighbourhood that it is intended to serve. The core users of such facilities are ages 2 to 12, specifically catering to the young age group and offering a family-oriented and diverse experience to a park in a manner that is free of charge to its users. Spray pads offer opportunities for "spontaneous free play of youth" as identified through the consultation process as an area that requires improvement in the City of Owen Sound. A moderate level of demand was identified for a children's splash pad through the Leisure Guide Survey.

Based on public demand for "spontaneous free play of youth" and the support that spray pads are receiving in other municipalities, it is recommended that the City develop one such facility. Consideration should be given to making this an unstaffed facility that is free for community use. As this is a new level of service, however, alternative sources of funding are required and a partnership/ sponsorship with the local community would help to defray costs and assist in implementation.

With a location at the J. Irvine Brown Children's Park, the proposed splash pad facility would be accessible via the inner harbour trail, at a location that is heavily used by families with young children due to the playground. Distribution is a key element when it comes to splash pads, however, and one location may not be suitable over the long-term (Kelso Beach Park would also be an excellent location given its proximity to the harbour and trails). Nevertheless, it is reasonable for the City to start with one such facility and then gauge demand for a second over a period of time. A per capita provision standard is not recommended at this time, rather it is suggested that the City install one spray pad and consider additional facilities over time on a site-specific basis.

d) Recommended Action Plans

27. The City should develop a spray pad at an appropriate location in the short-term. Partnership, sponsorship and funding opportunities should be pursued in this regard.
28. Once the City's first spray pad is developed, its use and operation should be evaluated to determine if a second spray pad in another area of the City is warranted.
29. Continue to maintain Harrison Park pools for recreational swimming and instructional courses. Should a new public indoor pool be developed in the City, consideration should be given to modifying the programs currently offered at the Harrison Park pools.

5.4.7 Playgrounds

a) Inventory

There are 39 playground installations (18 creative play equipment sets, 9 traditional play equipment sets, and 12 swing sets) at 19 park sites within Owen Sound. This count does not include playground equipment on school property. This inventory translates into one playground location per 1,137 residents or – more appropriately – one per 193 children between the ages of 0 and 14.

b) Trends and Issues

BARRIER-FREE PLAYGROUNDS – The 2004 Owen Sound Accessibility Plan suggests that it will be necessary to provide accessible playground facilities at Regional Parks including Bayshore Park, Harrison Park and Kelso Beach Park. The City has indicated that playground equipment offered at J. Irvine Brown Children's Park is fully integrated and "accessible".

CSA GUIDELINES - Over the past decade, new playground safety requirements have been developed, thereby encouraging municipalities and schools to replace certain play apparatuses and install additional safety measures on others. In some cases, these standards have resulted in the replacement of traditional play equipment with creative play structures. In other cases, the antiquated play structures remain in service because the resources have not been available to replace them. Continued funding is needed to inspect, repair and replace outdated play structures.

c) Needs Assessment

The provision of playgrounds should be based on geographic accessibility, rather than per capita standards. Where feasible, neighbourhood-level playgrounds should be situated within a 500-metre radius (about six minute walk time) of built-up residential areas, however, this radius should not be intersected by major barriers such as arterial roads, highways, watercourses where no

bridge crossings are available, or railway corridors without bridge or tunnel crossings. Availability of school playgrounds should also be considered when assessing accessibility to children's playgrounds. Although the City has not prepared a map illustrating the locations of playgrounds and the associated radius, there is little doubt that this standard is being met in nearly all neighbourhoods.

Geographic distribution of playgrounds and playground equipment appears to be generally good, although some gaps exist most notably at the southwest and the northeast edges of the City (although the existence of school grounds in these areas helps to mitigate these deficiencies).

Playgrounds continue to be in high demand and are often the key focal element of most parks. For this reason, it is expected that there will be very few instances in which removal of a playground is considered appropriate. There are, however, a couple of areas that have significant overlap in terms of playground provision, specifically at the northwest corner of the City and the east harbour area. Removal of play sites should only occur where two or more structures are located in proximity to each other and where the structures require upgrading/replacement. Consultation with the local community should be required before removing any play sites from the inventory. Although a decrease in population does not necessarily warrant the removal of a play site, significant decreases in the child population of a neighbourhood may warrant the replacement of existing play equipment with smaller structures at the time that major repairs are required.

The provision of barrier-free playground equipment is another trend prevalent in other communities. Outdoor recreation areas should be constructed and designed to accommodate all users – including persons with disabilities – and this is particularly relevant to playgrounds. A barrier-free playground contains equipment that is fully accessible to children with disabilities. The equipment is designed with ramps and railings, allowing children in wheelchairs to move through the apparatus. Elements such as tire nets, ramps, slides, accessible swings and raised sand tables can also be designed to allow children with disabilities to play with their more able-bodied

peers. Entire playgrounds need not be accessible, however, the portion that is inclusive of all users should be reached by a level and firm surface path or walkway. The design should also give consideration to parents and other caregivers with disabilities who want to supervise their children.

The City's 2004 Accessibility Plan has recommended that this Plan provide additional direction regarding accessible play spaces. It recognizes that "*parks and trails inherently cannot be accessible to all persons*" but also stipulates that "*Master Plans for new parks and trails shall consider issues of accessibility, and provide for the implementation of accessible features and/or justify the reasons features of accessibility are not practical due to cost and impact on the landscape*". Where appropriate, this Master Plan supports opportunities to upgrade existing park equipment with barrier-free playground equipment, especially at those parks mentioned previously.

Additional playgrounds accessible to children with disabilities should be provided over time. Currently, the J. Irvine Brown Children's Park (Bayshore Community Centre) is the only playground site with accessible equipment. As barrier-free equipment is more costly than standard creative play apparatuses, it is not feasible to install it at every park. Barrier-free play equipment should, however, be installed in Harrison Park and Kelso Beach Park – both major destination parks in the City – to ensure reasonable access for residents and visitors alike. The Owen Sound Accessibility Advisory Committee should be consulted in the location and design of any accessible playground.

d) Recommended Action Plans

30. The City should strive to provide playground equipment within a 500-metre radius of all residential areas, without causing pedestrians to cross a major natural or man-made barrier.

31. Decisions relating to playground installation and removal should be made on a site-specific basis, in consultation with the community.

32. Barrier-free play equipment should be installed in Harrison Park and Kelso Beach Park.

5.4.8 Skateboard, BMX (Bicycle Moto-Cross) and Mountain Biking Parks

a) Inventory

The City of Owen Sound has a large (30,000ft² or 2,787m²) skateboarding facility with lighting called the *Getaway Sk8 Board Park* in the Leader SRS Park. The facility includes various sized quarter pipes, banks, fun box, stairs, ledges, launch ramps, rails, cement pyramid and beginners area. During the school year, the park is open Saturday and Sunday between 3:00 and 8 p.m. and all week (Monday to Sunday) between 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. during the summer months (July and August; the park is supervised during the summer). The Skateboard Park facility has proven to be quite popular and well used by youth, also serving as a venue for City run summer camps for children between the ages of 9-16 years. It is centrally located and accessible via the City's trail network system.

In June of 2005, the City opened a new BMX Park called the *Airtime Bike Park*, located near the East Side Boat Launch on 3rd Avenue East. This facility offers on-site washroom facilities, off-street parking and is also connected with the City's trail network. The *Airtime Bike Park* hosts city run summer camp programs for children between the ages of 8-18 years and entry passes are available on a daily, weekly, monthly or seasonal basis. The City does not provide a dedicated mountain biking facility, however, the West Rocks Management Area is a popular location for this sport.

b) Trends and Issues

SKATEBOARD PARK – Skateboard parks offer paved areas with specially constructed ramps, quarter pipes, rails and other structures designed specifically for skateboarding, rollerblading and/or free-ride biking.

As mentioned previously, use of this facility has become extremely popular. In addition to repairing substantial cracks in the pavement and parts of the half-pipe ramp, users would like more lighting, a staircase built at the end of one of the banks, and new park components to maintain continued interest and satisfy the needs of advanced users. Representatives of the park indicated growing interest in developing an in ground “bowl” facility near an existing basketball court where the pavement is seriously damaged. Users of the park are willing to help maintain the premises as a volunteer group, in exchange for their time being applied to the mandatory volunteer service required to graduate from secondary school.

There is some concern about the limited hours of accessibility at the skateboard park by users. Limited access to the skateboard facility may result in undesirable skateboarding activity in the downtown areas where skateboarding opportunities exist on city curbs, stairs, railings, benches and other built features.

BMX PARK – BMX facilities appeal to a similar but slightly older age group, as this particular sport requires substantial coordination, endurance and upper body strength. It is important to note that – like skateboarding – BMX serves a demographic that has traditionally been very challenging to serve. Although community workshop participants approved of the accessible location of the BMX Park there were concerns about high costs charged at the facility, which adversely affects usage by youth (\$5 per entry or \$50/month or \$150/season).

FACILITY PLANNING – With the provision of skateboarding, free-ride biking and other “extreme sports” facilities being relatively new to the municipal sector, there are few recognized provision guidelines. Therefore, most municipalities are being cautious in

developing these facilities and ensuring that sufficient demand exists before providing additional opportunities. In many ways, however, Owen Sound is leading the way through the provision of one of the few municipal BMX parks in Ontario.

GROWING POPULARITY – Skateboarding, trick biking, mountain biking, rock climbing and similar “extreme” activities have or are beginning to enter the recreational mainstream. Skateboarding is one of the fastest growing sports in Canada and especially popular among male youth aged between 10-19 years, although the sport is also popular among children, those in their twenties and females.

c) Needs Assessment

The community workshop revealed considerable community pride around the quantity and quality of the skateboard and BMX facilities in Owen Sound. The workshop found interest in providing a greater level of maintenance at the Skateboard Park, improving access to the skateboard park for children without access to automobiles and providing more opportunities for spontaneous play of youth in general. The leisure guide survey did not find considerable support for additional skateboard or bike parks.

Because of the relative newness of these activities, there are no widely recognized provision standards for “extreme sport” facilities. Most communities the size of Owen Sound provide one centrally located skateboard park and very few provide formal areas for BMX riding, although there is a move towards this. Generally speaking, most urban skate parks are suitable to serve youth populations (ages 10-19) between 5,000 and 10,000. Owen Sound, Meaford and Georgian Bluffs combined have approximately 6,000 youth, therefore, it is expected that one skateboard park and one BMX park should be sufficient for meeting needs for the next ten years. As these are growing sports, however, monitoring of demand should occur to ensure that this remains an appropriate strategy over time.

Accessibility to the skateboard park was raised as an issue during the consultation program as there are a number of teens that want

to use the facility, but live too far away and cannot drive. One potential response to this is the development of “skate zones”, which consist of smaller-scale, introductory-level skate apparatuses (e.g., rails, funboxes, etc.) that serve local neighbourhoods. These zones are not dissimilar from playground equipment in that they are a “walk-to” facility that can be incorporated into several local parks to serve specific neighbourhoods. It is recommended that the City consider developing skate zones in one or two key parks; in selecting potential sites, neighbourhood characteristics and compatibility with the surrounding uses must be carefully assessed. A pilot program could be considered before expanding the concept to another location.

These skate zones would be unfenced and unsupervised areas located in City or Community Parks. The intent is to locate them in neighbourhoods that have a greater concentration of youth and that are farther away from the City’s existing skateboard park. Ideally, they should be located near a paved pathway to allow their users to easily access them, but should be out of the pedestrian’s path, yet within view. They are not intended to be “drive-to” facilities, however, off-street parking and a location on a transit route is advised in the event that the skate zones generate significant amounts of use. The design must be appropriate for beginners and intermediate level skaters. The sizes of skate zones are variable and dependent upon the site and desired design as suggested by local youth.

Mountain biking has gained significant popularity in recent years and makes use of natural trails and off-road areas with expansive terrain and obstacles. Municipalities with significant natural open spaces and different terrain are increasingly providing designated mountain biking areas and parks that can help conserve sensitive environmental areas by discouraging unregulated activities. The provision of designated trails is a good way to discourage informal trail development and unauthorized usage in environmentally sensitive areas. At present, the Owen Sound Cycling Club (OSCC) uses the West Rocks area of the escarpment in the City of Owen Sound for a few “no frills” club races and rides every year.

d) Recommended Action Plans

33. The City should continue to work co-operatively with local youth to repair, upgrade and maintain the Getaway Sk8 Board Park. Partnership, sponsorships and community involvement should be pursued to assist with this initiative.
34. Continue to seek solutions to ensure that access to the Airtime Bike Park is affordable to users.
35. Install ‘skate zones’ in 1-2 City or Community Parks in under-served areas of the City (e.g., east and south).

5.4.9 Leash Free Dog Zones

a) Inventory

There are currently no designated off-leash dog parks in the City of Owen Sound, however, an off-leash park is being planned for development at the former landfill site. Despite leash by-laws, the public consultation process revealed that the West Rock site currently serves as a popular location for dog walking in addition to hiking, running and mountain biking. Residents enjoy convenient access to West Rocks for dog walking and other activities.

b) Trends and Issues

GROWING SUPPORT FOR OFF-LEASH AREAS – Successful dog parks are beginning to be developed in municipalities across Ontario and throughout North America. The success of many of these parks can be attributed to the co-operation of community-based sponsoring groups, as well as appropriate site selection and well advertised park rules/regulations. Community involvement and municipal willingness to try pilot projects is a critical step in ensuring the park becomes a success.

c) Needs Assessment

Leash free zones are publicly-accessible designated areas for dog owners who wish to run their dogs off-leash. The establishment of off-leash dog areas is clearly a controversial issue (due largely to liability concerns), yet they have been successfully employed in other municipalities and are becoming more and more common. In fact, dog parks are quickly becoming a reality of urban living and are as much a facility for humans – many of whom value their pets like children and rely on them for their daily exercise – as they are for dogs. With municipal by-laws regulating the use of leashes, dedicated off-leash areas provide residents with the opportunity to let their dogs to run free. Furthermore, growing concerns about dog attacks and the recognition that dog walking is the only form of exercise for many dog owners have led to the development and popularity of fenced dog zones in other jurisdictions.

Interest in a leash free dog park was identified at the community workshop and the City has plans to develop a leash-free dog park at the former landfill site in Owen Sound. We support the proposal to establish a dog park in the City as there is sufficient demand to warrant such a facility. One location – if large enough – should be sufficient to serve the community for several years to come.

As mentioned, a key aspect to the operation of leash-free zones in other municipalities is the involvement of community groups in their establishment, maintenance and ongoing management. In this regard, it is suggested that the City identify groups (or assist in establishing groups) that would be willing to be involved with such an area. We are not familiar with the proposed location, however, in the design of the park, it is suggested that consideration be given to impacts on surrounding land uses, as well as fencing and other necessary site infrastructure.

d) Recommended Action Plans

36. Continue with plans to develop an off-leash dog park. This facility should be adequate to serve as a City-wide facility.

37. Identify groups (or assist in establishing groups) that would be willing to be involved in the development, maintenance and/or management of the proposed off-leash dog park.

5.4.10 Other Outdoor Facilities

This section examines the issues and needs relating to less prominent and/or more specialized outdoor recreation facilities.

a) Campgrounds

The City of Owen Sound offers a fully-served campground at Harrison Park with approximately 108 sites. The Harrison Park Master Plan recommends a number of high priority improvements (each of which are appropriate and should be undertaken as resources permit) including, but not limited to:

- upgrade electrical service to each campsite;
- reduce the number of campsites to 100;
- undertake washroom renovations and accessibility improvements; and
- implement a tree planting program.

A number of campgrounds are also available outside of Owen Sound, including the Rocksprings KOA Kampground, Meaford Memorial Park, etc.

The public consultation revealed that the City's local campground is considered a unique asset to Owen Sound residents. No major issues relating to campground conditions or provision were raised during the public consultation program, although the matter of allowing of-season camping has arisen in the past. Our assessment through the scope of this Master Plan suggests that no additional campgrounds are recommended at this time. Should there be a proposal to establish a new campground site in the future, it should be accompanied by a business plan examining market demand and cost/benefit factors.

b) Beaches

The City of Owen Sound offers two beaches at Kelso Beach Park and J. Irvine Brown Children's Park (Bayshore Beach), although neither facility is very well used for swimming due to various reasons.

Kelso Beach is home to the annual Summerfolk Festival and visited by many local residents as well as tourists. When water levels at Kelso Beach dropped several years ago, the area became naturalized and over run by weeds and aquatic plant species. The condition of the beaches at Kelso was the most significant issue presented by participants of the community workshop. Results of the workshop indicate that Kelso Park needs to be cleaned up and better promoted for swimming and beach activities (e.g., volleyball). 65% of respondents to the leisure guide survey suggested that the City invest additional resources into its beaches, ranking it behind only the need for an indoor aquatic facility.

It is recommended that the City undertake the necessary steps to restore a permanent beach environment at Kelso. This process would likely require an environmental assessment and other work beyond the scope of this Master Plan. As identified in the City's long-term capital budget, we support the recommendation to undertake a Park Master Plan for Kelso Beach; the consideration of establishing a sand beach should form part of this planning process.

A sandy beach at the Hibou Conservation Area – located just outside the City – is often used by Owen Sound residents. This day use park provides two natural sandy beaches as well as picnic and playground equipment. The beaches may be accessed with a day or season pass and parking is subject to a nominal fee during prime summer months.

c) Outdoor Rinks

A newly constructed artificial outdoor ice skating surface is provided at Harrison Park. Some residents feel that the location is an issue as Harrison Park is isolated from the downtown and not easily accessible for individuals without a car, such as young children.

Challenges associated with using the rink for shinny are also ongoing issues that staff are working to resolve. Some participants of the community workshop expressed interest in a second outdoor ice surface, however, this is not recommended during the timeframe of this Plan as artificial rinks are City-wide facilities and cannot reasonably be located to be equally accessible to all.

Natural outdoor skating rinks are quickly becoming a thing of the past due to unpredictable weather patterns and the effort required to safely maintain them. This is one of the reasons why the City chose to construct an artificial rink, which was developed with the assistance of community organizations. The cost to develop and operate artificial ice rinks are significantly higher than those for natural rinks, although they are typically able to operate for a longer season. The City of Owen Sound, like many other municipalities provide access to outdoor ice skating free-of-charge.

d) Track and Field

Victoria Park is the only municipal track and field facility in Owen Sound; other facilities exist at local high schools. The provision of track and field facilities is not considered to be a core municipal service and, should the facility at Victoria Park be eliminated in the future, outdoor track and field facilities provided by local secondary schools are expected to be suitable to accommodate basic training needs for local athletes.

e) Harbour / Boat Launches

The City of Owen Sound provides a total of three municipal boat launches and one marina (400 slips, privately owned and operated). Municipal boat launch facilities are available at the following locations:

- West Side Boat Launch (fish cleaning station); scheduled for significant capital upgrades in the coming years;
- RCA Boat Launch (in poor condition); and
- East Side Boat Launch (behind the Bayshore Community Centre).

The City also contracts out the operation of boat launches at Kelso Beach Park and Inner Harbour Park (2 ramps).

There was some agreement amongst participants of the community workshop that the boat launches in Owen Sound may be some of the best in the province and are important facilities to the City. In addition to recreational boating activities, the boat launches are used to host a large annual event called the Salmon Spectacular Fishing Derby that brings tourism dollars into the City. The boat launches in Owen Sound are well used; 22% of survey respondents indicated that they went boating or sailing during the past year.

In 2001, the City completed a *Harbour and Downtown Master Plan*. This Plan identified a number of recreation and park issues in downtown and harbour areas. Amongst other things, the Plan recommends establishing various pedestrian and bicycle routes throughout the downtown, connecting the harbour area to key attractions, community facilities and the larger regional trail system and establishing a new waterfront park area by closing sections of streets around the harbour.

Also of note policy 5.3.2.1 of the City's Official Plan (2006) indicates that:

"[The City] shall encourage transient small craft public dockage and appropriate marina support facilities, particularly between 11th and 12th Streets West."

Issues relating to trails and waterfront parks are discussed in more detail in the next section of this Plan.

f) Recommended Action Plans

38. Implement the recommendations in the Harrison Park Master Plan with respect to campground improvements, as resources permit.

39. Undertake a Park Master Plan for Kelso Beach and begin the process for restoring a permanent beach environment at the site.

40. Plans for improvements to the West Side Boat Launch should continue to be pursued, however, usage levels of the City's boat launches should be monitored prior to undertaking any significant capital investment in order to ensure that demand is sufficient to justify the expense.

SECTION SIX: PARKS, OPEN SPACE & TRAILS ASSESSEMENT

6.1 OVERVIEW

Public parkland is the land base required for many leisure activities and outdoor facilities. Among other benefits, parks and open space also contribute to the preservation and conservation of natural features, provides opportunities for passive recreational activities, provides physical linkages for the movement of humans and wildlife and contributes to the aesthetic value of communities. Within Owen Sound, developed parks are primarily provided by the City and schools, while undeveloped open space is owned by both public agencies and private individuals.

Owen Sound currently has nearly 233 hectares of public parkland and open space, including larger land holdings such as the Greenwood Cemetery and the West Rocks Management Area.

Our experience in similar municipalities suggests that a minimum standard for parkland – active parkland only (i.e., neighbourhood, community and city parks) – is 3-4 hectares per 1000 residents; this is often sufficient to accommodate needed recreational facilities while still providing some space for informal community use. This standard is useful in the current context and is one that, when applied to Owen Sound, suggests the City has sufficient amounts of parkland. There are 10.8 hectares of municipal parks and open space for every 1,000 residents and 6.7 hectares per 1,000 when only considering Neighbourhood, Community and City Parks.

Additionally, while the leisure guide survey revealed that nearly 50% of residents wanted additional parkland or open space, it ranked 8th on the priority list, indicating that the need for more parkland is important, but not a pressing issue. Nevertheless, 30% of survey respondents felt that parks in their area did not suit the needs of their household, indicating that perhaps there are concerns with the amount, location, design, maintenance or facilities within one or more local parks.

Two of the key elements of any parks system are equity and accessibility. In this regard, it is imperative that the City strives to provide parkland in populated areas that are void of any park facilities as well as those that are under-supplied.

With only moderate growth anticipated in the City over the coming years, there will likely be few opportunities – and little need – to acquire significant parcels of land for park purposes to serve new residents. The emphasis, therefore, needs to be placed on ensuring that the current inventory is appropriate for the community now and into the near future.

6.2 PARKLAND INVENTORY

Table 6.1 contains a listing of parkland as provided by the City's inventory database using the classifications in the City's Official Plan (see definitions in section 6.3). The parkland totals include municipal lands as well as those leased to the City and provided by the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority.

Table 6.1: Parkland Summary by Park Class

Parkland Class	# of Sites	Supply (hectares)	Avg. Size per Park (ha)	Per Capita Ratio
Neighbourhood Parks	24	9.9	0.4	0.5 ha/1000
Community Parks	8	38.3	4.8	1.8 ha/1000
City Parks	10	96.6	9.7	4.5 ha/1000
Regional Parks	5	78.1	15.6	3.6 ha/1000
Open Space Corridor	1	10.1	10.1	0.5 ha/1000
TOTAL	48	233.0	4.9	10.8 ha/1000

Totals may not add due to rounding

Table 6.2 breaks the same inventory out into two categories – active and passive (as defined below):

***"Active"** parks are those designed to serve the organized sport and activity needs of the municipality. Examples of facilities within active parks could include sports fields, hard surface courts, playgrounds, recreation centres, etc.*

***"Passive"** parks include both landscaped areas designed for aesthetic appeal (and possibly a specific municipal purpose, such as a War Memorial) and/or natural areas with limited active uses (e.g., playgrounds and picnic areas). They are primarily used for walking, viewing, sitting, bird watching, hiking, wildlife habitat, environmental protection, etc.*

Table 6.2: Parkland Summary by Park Type

Parkland Type	# of Sites	Supply (hectares)	Per Capita Ratio
Active Parks	28	119.6	5.5 ha/1000
Passive Parks	29	113.4	5.3 ha/1000
TOTAL	51	233.0	10.8 ha/1000

Totals may not add due to rounding

Note: The City created a parkland map for the Official Plan Background Study (2003) that shows the location and general boundaries of municipal parks and schools. City staff assisted with the application of parkland typology as well as an inventory of sports fields, playgrounds, etc. The parks and open space map was used to determine the total acreage and location of parks for this Plan. The data, however, does not provide an entirely accurate picture of parkland acreage due to its limitations, nor is it linked to any information pertaining to park classifications, type, ownership, or associated facilities. As a result, the total acreage of municipal parkland may be slightly different from what is reported in Tables 6.1 and 6.2. As the City's Geographic Information System continues to evolve, it is suggested that more accurate and comprehensive data on parks and recreation facilities be developed and incorporated

as appropriate in order to assist in the effective planning and management of municipal resources.

In addition to the City's inventory, there are several conservation areas owned and managed by the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority in the immediate vicinity of the City including:

- Pottawatomi Conservation Area – The property features Jones Falls and encompasses 116 hectares of Niagara Escarpment land along the Pottawatomi River. This site offers opportunities for picnicking, hiking and scenic views.
- Inglis Falls Conservation Area – Inglis Falls Conservation Area is a 200-hectare parcel containing the well-known Inglis Falls waterfall on the Sydenham River. This site offers opportunities for picnicking, hiking and scenic views.
- The Arboretum – The arboretum encompasses approximately 12 hectares of land, containing hundreds of individual plants and different species of trees and shrubs. The site includes a Butterfly Garden, Memorial Forest, and the Conservation Authority Administration Centre. The Arboretum is connected by hiking trails to Harrison Park and to Inglis Falls Conservation Area.
- The Hibou Conservation Area and Indian Falls Conservation Area are also located just outside the City of Owen Sound boundaries.

6.3 PARKLAND CLASSIFICATION

The definition of a park classification system that encourages a broad range of park types and facility combinations is an important first step in meeting the varied needs of the public. A parks hierarchy typically defines that various aspects of each park type, including such items as the general intensity of development, intended service area and potential complement of facilities. In most municipalities, decisions relating to the future planning, acquisition and development of parks are guided by park classification systems in

their Official Plans (and to a degree, by parks master plans, if applicable).

Parkland classification systems are important because they help to focus planning, development and management efforts in a manner that balances public needs and expectations with dimensions related to physical, natural and financial resources. Through a classification framework, a consistent management approach can be created that improves equity and responsiveness to community needs.

The City of Owen Sound is currently in the process preparing a new Official Plan. One emphasis of the Official Plan is its identification of a park system plan and policies relating to the acquisition, development, and design of parks, trails and open space. The following depicts the classification of parks as set out in the City's Official Plan (2006) and Background Study (2003).

Neighbourhood Parks

Generally small open space areas serving a local neighbourhood area of 2,000 to 3,000 people, and containing recreation facilities and complementary services primarily for younger children and their parents (e.g., children's playgrounds, small sports facilities, passive areas for sitting or walking). They are generally within a walking distance of 0.5km of the homes they serve. The City's existing residential areas have been divided into 9 neighbourhoods: Brooke, West Harbour, West Hill, Moore's Hill, Downtown, East Harbour, East Bluff, East Hill and Park View. Future areas of residential development may form new neighbourhoods.

For Neighbourhood Parks, the City will try to achieve a minimum standard of provision of 0.5 hectares per 1000 population.

Community Park

Open spaces containing a range of recreational facilities and services primarily for teenaged children and adults (e.g., sports fields and major green spaces), serving a community with a population of between 4,000 and 10,000. They are generally within a walking distance of 1.5 to 2.5km of the homes they

serve. The City would be well served with 3 to 4 community parks distributed into the 4 quadrants of the City.

For Community Parks, the City will try to achieve a minimum standard of provision of 1.5 hectares per 1000 population.

City Parks

Open spaces providing unique, specialized recreational facilities and services, serving users from throughout the City, as well as their immediate communities.

For City Parks, the City will try to achieve a minimum standard of provision of 1.5 hectares per 1000 population.

Open Space Corridors

Open space elements that provide connection between various parks and open space. They are linear parks and trails, wildlife corridors and riverbanks and may also be located through lands designated as Hazard Lands.

There is no minimum provision requirement for Open Space Corridors.

Regional Parks

Open spaces that usually serve both as major nature preserves and recreational facilities or areas for residents and visitors from a large surrounding area. They are usually provided by a senior level of government or Conservation Authority.

There is no minimum provision requirement for Regional Parks.

The proposed classification system is reasonable as it not only provides sufficient variation between park types, but it also defines classes according to their function and intended service target as opposed to park size (which is an antiquated approach). The system also incorporates a linear park / corridor category, which more and more municipalities are recognizing due to its value in establishing a comprehensive trail network. It also bears noting that the minimum provision standards established in the Official Plan should be construed as targets only and, due to various reasons, may not be fully achieved, particularly within specific neighbourhoods or communities.

In developing this Plan, it became quite evident that the City does not have accurate and complete inventory data on its park holdings, trails and outdoor facilities. Although some information and mapping was generated for the City's Official Plan, the storage/format of the data is not conducive to its use in future planning studies. For example, several parks do not have IDs, parks are not appropriately classified, one polygon is used to depict multiple parks, etc. Furthermore, the City did not have an inventory of the contents of each park until one was developed for this Plan; this data should be verified and kept up to date as well.

Given the widespread use and functionality of Geographic Information Systems (GIS), the City should endeavour to develop accurate layers within its GIS for parks, trails and recreation facilities. Once completed, the City will possess a powerful tool to assist in the effective planning and management of municipal resources.

The following tables present a categorization for each municipal park, as determined by the consultant.

Neighbourhood Parks	Size (ha)
Alexandra	0.36
Bayview*	n/a*
Beattie St.	0.26
Bill Inglis	0.30
Black's	0.75
Centennial Towers	1.05
Charlie Kelly	0.11
Comme-r-ette	0.54
Ed Taylor	0.35
Evans	0.08
High Park*	n/a*
Maitland	0.85
Mary Miller	0.48
Owen Heights	0.88
Parkview	0.46
Pinecrest	0.25
Pottawatomi	0.17
Ryerson	0.61
Soundview	0.84
Stobbe	0.11
Tot Lot	0.26
Unopened Road Allowance	1.08
Westmount	0.07
Total	9.85

* land base calculated under Timber McArthur (Community Park)

** land base also includes Bayview, High Park, and Stoney Orchard (Neighbourhood Parks)

Community Parks	Size (ha)
Duncan McLellan	4.89
Garafraxa	3.67
Harrison Field	1.35
Milt Brown	1.21
Queen's	0.99
St. Julien	1.21
Stoney Orchard	n/a*
Timber McArthur**	23.78
Tom Williams	1.19
Total	38.30

City Parks	Size (ha)
Air Time Bike Park	1.51
Bayshore Community Centre / J. Irvine Brown Children's Park	5.20
Getaway Skateboard	0.32
Harrison Extension	20.73
Harrison Park	21.38
Kelso Beach / Newwash	9.12
Kiwanis Soccer Complex	20.88
Leader SRS Park & West Side Boat Launch	1.76
RCA Boat Launch	n/a
Victoria Park / St.George's	15.72
Total	96.61

Open Space Corridors	Size (ha)
Former CN Rail R.O.W.	10.11
Total	10.11

Regional Parks	Size (ha)
Greenwood Cemetery	17.71
Inner Harbour	1.67
Jervis Bay	3.53
Mill Reserve	1.46
West Rocks	53.73
Total	78.10

Recommended Action Plans

- 41. Building from the information in this Plan and the Official Plan, the City should develop a comprehensive inventory of municipal parks and open space that contains information on the size, location, and associated facilities of each parcel. This information should be linked to the City's Geographic Information System in order to assist in the effective planning and management of municipal resources.

6.4 PARKLAND REQUIREMENTS

As mentioned, the leisure guide survey found moderate support for the acquisition of additional parkland. The community workshop revealed that residents were generally pleased with the supply and maintenance of parks and open space and access to natural areas in particular. Suggestions were received, however, for improvements to Kelso Beach, Victoria Park and for greater utilization of the City's waterfront. Consultation with various stakeholders has not revealed any significant issues that would suggest there is a lack of park space in the community.

The preceding table illustrates the current levels of parkland provision by park type in the City. The figures indicate that Owen Sound has adequate amounts of Neighbourhood and Community parkland, while its City park inventory far exceeds the standards established in the proposed Official Plan. Regional Parks and Open Space Corridors are acquired as opportunities arise and, therefore, no minimum standards have been set.

Future population growth in the City (which could amount to nearly 900 new residents over the next ten years), is not dramatic enough to have a considerable effect on parkland supplies, although the City should continue to obtain parkland dedications and/or cash-in-lieu through new development and redevelopment (as discussed in the next section). Furthermore, there are no major geographic gaps in terms of park provision across the City. Although the majority of the City's parks are near the harbourfront and at the south end along the river valleys and escarpment, several parks of varying size are scattered throughout residential areas.

Minimum Parkland Standards, City of Owen Sound

Parkland Class	Supply (hectares)	Current Per Capita Ratio (population = 21,600)	Proposed Minimum (draft Official Plan)	Status / Comments
Neighbourhood Parks	9.9	0.5 ha/1000	0.5 ha/1000	meeting standard
Community Parks	38.3	1.8 ha/1000	1.5 ha/1000	meeting standard
City Parks	96.6	4.5 ha/1000	1.5 ha/1000	exceeding standard
Regional Parks	78.1	3.6 ha/1000	n/a	acquisition is opportunity-based
Open Space Corridor	10.1	0.5 ha/1000	n/a	

Recommended Action Plans

42. The City should strive to maintain the minimum provision standards for Neighbourhood Parks (0.5ha/1000), Community Parks (1.5ha/1000) and City Parks (1.5ha/1000) as outlined in its Official Plan.

6.5 PARKLAND ACQUISITION

Overall parkland provision throughout the City is adequate and residential growth over the next ten years is expected to be modest. As such, there will not be a significant need to acquire additional lands to serve new growth, with the exception of the Sydenham Heights Phase II and East Bluffs Planning Areas (which will likely require one or more Neighbourhood Parks, as identified in the Official Plan).

Acquisition of waterfront lands in the East and West Harbour Planning Areas – and in other areas of the City where there are missing links in the trails system – has also been identified as a priority of the City. Development of the waterfront for tourism and public enjoyment was a key theme of both the public consultation program and the Owen Sound Official Plan. Although the issue largely relates to the objective of developing a continuous walkway and trail along the waterfront, a focus is also on establishing open spaces that can support year-round gatherings for both everyday use and special events. The City already has secured significant segments of waterfront and has established walkways along portions of the east and west harbour.

In fact, policy 7.5.4.1 of the Official Plan states that *"it is the City's objective that all of the water's edge in these areas be acquired and maintained in public ownership or with full public access for recreational uses and to provide a continuous waterfront trail."* In this light, the City should pursue not only parkland dedication, but also alternatives for securing such lands.

There are a number of tools that may be employed in acquiring parkland, both through legislative authorities vested by the *Planning Act* or through municipal finance mechanisms. In order to utilize the provisions of the *Planning Act*, the municipality's Official Plan must contain appropriate implementing policies.

The City of Owen Sound Official Plan contains policies stating that, for development or redevelopment, the City may:

- (1) collect up to 5% of the subject lands for residential applications;
- (2) collect up to 2% of the subject lands for industrial and commercial applications;
- (3) collect cash-in-lieu at a rate appropriate to the value of the required land; or
- (4) collect 1 hectare of parkland for every 300 units for higher density residential developments.

The Official Plan further states that stormwater management facilities will not be accepted as part of the required dedication.

Recommended Action Plans

43. Open Space Corridors that are required for the development of a linked trail system may be acquired as part of the City's dedication requirements through the development process. Alternative acquisition strategies for ensuring long-term public access of Open Space Corridors (e.g., negotiation, long-term lease arrangements, etc.) may also be pursued.
44. Lands designated "Hazard Lands" (as identified in the Official Plan) will not be considered as parkland dedication.
45. As existing parkland supplies are expected to generally be adequate to meet community needs for the foreseeable future, it is recommended that the City give preference to obtaining cash-in-lieu over land from developers (in keeping with the policies of the *Planning Act* and the City's Official Plan), except in areas where no Community or Neighbourhood Park exists.

46. In the Sydenham Heights Phase II and East Bluffs Planning Areas, parkland dedication in the form of land may be considered if there is no existing park of an appropriate nature within 500-metres and there is a sufficient land base associated with the dedication to create one or more meaningful Neighbourhood Park sites (i.e., 0.5 hectares or greater).
47. In the Downtown, East and West Harbour Planning Areas – and other areas of the City, should the need for additional parkland become evident – the City should look to secure parks and open space through various means including, but not limited to: dedication from development; acquisition through cash-in-lieu fees; partnerships with public or private organizations; public trusts/donations; restrictive covenants; easements; bonusing, etc. While it is preferred that these lands be in public ownership, where this is not possible, the City should seek to secure a right of access across these lands for public use.
48. When utilizing cash-in-lieu funds, preference should be given to spending it on park and facility upgrades and creating trail linkages within the subject lands' planning area.
49. Undersized parcels received for park development purposes – particularly in areas containing adequate parkland supplies – may be sold and the revenues utilized to offset improvements to existing parks and facilities.

6.6 TRAILS

a) Inventory

Blessed with an abundance of natural landscapes and scenic vistas, Owen Sound and area is a location of choice for hiking, cycling and snowmobiling. The following page contains a listing of major trail systems within and surrounding the City.

b) Consultation and Trends

Participants in the community workshop identified several positives and negatives concerning local trails. Although Owen Sound possesses a great trail system that provides good access to key destinations within the City, it was felt that there is a need to better connect the trails and for more multi-use paved trails, signage and mapping, trail construction standards, and bike lanes on major streets. Furthermore, the need for additional multi-use paved trails and nature trails ranked high in the leisure guide survey. Hiking and walking were the two most frequently mentioned activities for nearly all age groups.

Trends research and surveys undertaken in many other municipalities indicate that walking is the second most popular leisure activity, behind only reading. Furthermore, as age increases, so too does the propensity to identify walking as a favourite leisure time activity. This bodes well for future demand given that the 50+ year age group is expected to grow substantially over the course of the planning period. Bicycling and walking are also important parts of a sustainable and efficient transportation system (studies show that bicycles are the most efficient mode of travel for distances under 5k).

The increasing age of the local population will influence leisure program structures and provision. As a result, Owen Sound will need to continually assess its programming concentrations to ensure that a sufficient focus is placed on senior's leisure activities (however, not at the expense of opportunities for children and youth). Though

people over the age of 50 continue to pursue active lifestyles, it is in a more passive manner (e.g., walking is replacing jogging for many individuals). Trails are an especially flexible and responsive type of facility as they permit "unprogrammed" fitness or "active living" opportunities for all ages.

Trails in or Directly Adjacent to Owen Sound

Name	Description
Bruce Trail	The Bruce Trail runs along the Niagara Escarpment from Niagara to Tobermory, spanning more than 850km. Owen Sound is linked to the trail via Harrison Park.
West Rocks Management Area	Part of the Bruce Trail, there are 10km of hard-packed trails that link to Inglis Falls in the south and into the southwest corner of the City of Owen Sound. The trails follow the escarpment overlooking the City and Georgian Bay and looping back to Black's Park and 6th Avenue West.
Inglis Falls Conservation Area	Part of the Bruce Trail, there are 7.5km of hard-packed trails of varying difficulty and topography. To the South is the Inglis Falls and to the North is Owen Sound's Harrison Park.
CP Rail Trail (proposed)	This is a proposed trail that brings a multi-use trail into Owen Sound from Dundalk along the abandoned CP rail corridor, linking into the Owen Sound harbour area and Tom Thomson Trail.
Tom Thomson Trail (under construction)	This is a new trail being developed between Owen Sound and Meaford by a volunteer group, with some assistance from the City. One completed, the trail – of which 4.7km are now in use – will travel through fields, wooded areas and country roads and will eventually connect Owen Sound's many trails with the Georgian Trail, which begins in Meaford and continues to Collingwood. The trail currently runs from Owen Sound's Harry Lumley Bayshore Community Centre north towards Hibou Conservation Area.
Freedom Trail (being formalized/improved)	The Freedom Trail (located between Harrison Park and Inglis Falls) is an existing trail that will soon be undergoing improvements planned by the City in conjunction with the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority.
Sarawak Rail Trail	This trail runs west from Kelso Beach, through flat farm land, up the escarpment, and then connects to the Keppel Rail Trail section of the Georgian Bluffs Trail and continues to Park Head. The trail is also accessible at the west edge of Owen Sound at Range Road.
Owen Sound Harbour	The harbour walkway is approximately 3km of asphalt and interlocking brick for use by both walkers and cyclists. It follows the harbour from Kelso Beach on the west to past the Bayshore Community Centre on the east.
Harrison Park	Contains a series of hard-packed natural paths internal to the Park, with linkages to the Bruce Trail.
Sydenham River	A hard-packed natural path that runs along the Sydenham River (and local streets) and connects Harrison Park to the Owen Sound Harbour pathway.
Various Bicycle Routes	Located throughout the city, these routes are either asphalt paths or follow less well-travelled roads.
Various Snowmobile Trails	There is also a system of snowmobile trails that are off-road for the most part throughout the City. There is also a by-law which prohibits snowmobiles on certain arterial roads.

Sources: City of Owen Sound Official Plan Background Report, Bruce-Grey Trails Network, Bruce Trail Association

c) Background Documents

Direction for the provision of regional and local trails is provided by the Owen Sound Trails Master Plan, the Bruce-Grey Trails Network Master Plan, and the City's Official Plan.

The *Owen Sound Trails Master Plan* was prepared in 1997 and has been integrated into the City's Official Plan (Schedule D of the Official Plan). The Trails Master Plan identifies trails for walking, cross-country skiing, and snowmobiling, as well as the Bruce Trail, cycling routes, and linkages to adjacent municipalities. The foundation of the Trails Master Plan involves the establishment and/or improvement of walking trails along the harbour (along the east shoreline north of 10th Street East and along the west shoreline from 10th Street West to the north end of Newash Park), as well as the former Canadian Pacific Railway and Tom Thomson Trail to the east, the Sydenham River in the downtown and extending south to Harrison Park/Bruce Trail, and the former Canadian National Railway (Sarawak Rail Trail) to the west.

This Trails Master Plan map, however, does not indicate which trails are existing and which are proposed, making it difficult to determine priorities for acquisition and development. Furthermore, the document does not identify the preferred surface for each trail, trail gaps, priorities or any standards for development; these are areas that require additional attention by the City in the short-term. The Master Plan needs to be updated to reflect current trail conditions, to recognize the needs of both pedestrians and cyclists, to identify trail development objectives and standards, and to propose strategies to achieve successful implementation of a comprehensive City-wide system with regional linkages.

The *Bruce-Grey Trails Network Master Plan* (2005) provides a long-term vision, route options, and priorities for the development of a regional trail network in Bruce and Grey Counties and beyond. The Bruce Trail runs along the Niagara Escarpment from Niagara to Tobermory, spanning more than 850km of main trail. The Plan identifies a proposed multi-use trail route from Owen Sound to Dundalk (along the C.P. Rail Trail); development of this trail will be

an ongoing process that will proceed as funding becomes available. The proposed trail network will provide outdoor recreation opportunities for local residents and generate substantial tourism for various service industries located within the City of Owen Sound.

Some of the objectives of the City's Official Plan related to trails include:

"Promote, protect and maintain the City's natural linkages including trails." (section 3.1.2.5)

"Achieve a highly integrated system of recreational areas and trails, and recreation programs throughout the City, particularly within the Downtown, harbour areas and escarpment parks." (section 3.4.2.4)

"Provide a regionally renowned system of recreational facilities, programs, parks and trails" (section 3.5.2.8).

An "Active Transportation Workshop" sponsored by Go for Green was held in the City of Owen Sound in 2005. This process revealed that Owen Sound's "walkability" currently is very good, but its "bikeability" is poor. Specifically, the following points were made:

- Where sidewalks do not exist, there is no consideration made for pedestrians by traffic calming measures.
- Automobile traffic does not respect walkers.
- Bike paths and lanes do not have clear signage and markers for direction and regulation.
- Bicycles are not given adequate consideration in road and traffic planning and design.
- There are inadequate dedicated on-road bike lanes.
- There are too many accidents involving bicyclists.
- Public transit does not provide facilities for bikes.
- Owen Sound does not include "Active Transportation" in its official plans.
- There are no staff or budgets designated for "Active Transportation".

- It does not appear as if safety audits have been completed to identify potentially dangerous areas.
- Crime and accident rates for pedestrians and bicyclists suggest potential problems.
- Planning and design inadequately accommodates mixed uses.
- Streets, sidewalks, paths, and trails are inadequately interconnected.

Results from the workshop recommended that the profile of “Active Transportation” be increased through a variety of initiatives, such as painting bike lanes lines, trail and bike route signage, program and special event promotion, etc.

d) Analysis

The development of a recreational trail system throughout the City that connects to major destinations (e.g., civic facilities, parks, schools, residential areas, tourist attractions, waterfront, etc.) and links to regional trail networks is clearly a high priority for both the public and the City and should be aggressively pursued.

Trail development offers many positive benefits for local residents in addition to recreation, including an increase in community liveability, an increase in transportation options, patronage to trail-side businesses, an increase in personal health and fitness, tourism development, scenic beautification and improved air to water quality (Rails to Trails Conservancy, 1999). Furthermore, trails provide opportunities for both residents and visitors to travel to and experience local heritage, recreation and cultural attractions.

The most easily identifiable benefits of a multi-use recreational trail program involve recreational opportunities. Leisure trends suggest an increasing demand for “unprogrammed” active living recreational opportunities that are more compatible with the lifestyles of the aging population. The use of trails is unorganized and spontaneous and thus more attractive for busy individuals whose leisure time is at a premium and often unplanned. Trails appeal to people of all ages

and abilities because of their flexibility, low cost and accessibility. Skill is not a factor – the same trail is equally attractive to people with varying levels of fitness and expertise.

There are a number of existing trails within Owen Sound and opportunities to develop additional trails given the abundance of abandoned railway lines and the City's harbourfront areas. As mentioned, the Bruce Trail provides connections to surrounding areas and there is an opportunity to expand these connections through the development of the CP Rail Trail to Dundalk. The extension of the Tom Thomson Trail and the development of the Freedom Trail are also key priorities for the City, local agencies, community organizations and surrounding municipalities.

For the most part, the City has the routes in place for a very comprehensive trail system that links neighbourhoods within Owen Sound as well as neighbouring communities. Additional resources will, however, be required to formally establish and extend the Tom Thomson Trail (to Meaford) and the CP Rail Trail (to Dundalk).

Furthermore, there is a need for a comprehensive review of existing trails and routes and their responsive to local and regional user needs. As such, it is recommended that a Trail Implementation Strategy be prepared as an update and companion document to the Trails Master Plan. This report will assist in identifying options and priorities for trail development and improvements, including a phased plan for upgrading existing trails and infrastructure, acquiring key linkages, and developing new neighbourhood and community trails and routes. The scope should include multi-use trails, cycling routes/bike lanes, snowmobile trails, cross-country skiing trails, and historic walking tours, with consideration being given to support infrastructure (e.g., parking, benches, rest stations, signage), design standards, promotion and marketing, funding/partnership opportunities, and cost implications. Through this process, consideration should be given to laying asphalt along the Sydenham River trail that links to Harbour trail to Harrison Park.

e) Recommended Action Plans

50. A continued emphasis on trail establishment is supported by trends and community interest. High priority should be assigned to multi-use trail development and improvements, particularly the Tom Thomson Trail (to Meaford), Freedom Trail, and the CP Rail Trail (to Dundalk). This will require additional funds and partnerships for trail development, enhancement, and maintenance, as well as continued efforts to secure abandoned rail corridors and harbourfront lands (or access to same) in partnership with other government agencies or departments and non-profit groups.

51. As an update to the City's Trails Master Plan, a Trails Implementation Strategy should be prepared to assist in identifying options and priorities for developing a comprehensive trails system.

- This document should include consultation with the public and affected stakeholders and include a phased plan for upgrading existing trails and infrastructure, acquiring key linkages, and developing new neighbourhood and community trails and routes.
- The scope of the Strategy should address not only multi-use trails, but also cycling routes/bike lanes, snowmobile trails, cross-country skiing trails, and historic walking tours, with consideration being given to support infrastructure (e.g., parking, benches, rest stations, signage), design standards, promotion and marketing, funding/partnership opportunities, and cost implications.
- Through this process, consideration should be given to laying asphalt along the Spine Trail that links to the Harbour trail and to Harrison Park.

52. Existing and future trails should be appropriately signed, with trail entry or access points identified. Local trails should also be promoted through various means such as publications, brochures, and websites. Direction relating to these aspects should be addressed in the proposed Trails Implementation Strategy.

53. Development applications should be reviewed by the City with trail and pathway linkages in mind. Additionally, whenever road construction / reconstruction is planned, the City should include designated bike lanes.

SECTION SEVEN: PROGRAMMING & SERVICE DELIVERY

7.1 OVERVIEW

This section contains an assessment of the City's recreation and parks delivery system, including recreation programming available to the community.

The purpose of this section is to provide an outline of the major topic areas uncovered during the Master Plan's research and consultation phase and to highlight the key operational and organizational recommendations associated with each issue.

Specifically, this part of the Plan addresses the City's role in the provision of recreation services, the framework through which the City interacts with its users and organizations, and the policies and procedures that will help guide the City in meeting community demands.

The public has confirmed the importance of the City's role in the provision of leisure services. As such, service elements and concepts presented in the following sections are intended to help the City sustain community engagement to maximize the reach and impact of service provision throughout the municipality.

7.2 PROGRAMMING

7.2.1 Overview

The City promotes a community development approach to programming by encouraging community groups to directly provide programs and services. In this way, volunteers and recreation agencies (e.g., minor sports, YMCA, seniors' clubs, private fitness clubs, service clubs, etc.) play a very key role in the area's leisure delivery system. The City facilitates programming at its parks, facilities and several schools by providing rental space and playing fields, and initiatives such as the distribution of a semi-annual activities guide and coordination of minor sports registration.

The City has retained a direct programming role in certain core areas such as day camps, aquatics, and select introductory level activities (e.g., public skating, yoga, cricket, snowshoeing, etc.). Other related service functions of the City's Recreation Services Division include facility provision, future planning, event facilitation, volunteer recognition, and facility bookings. The majority of the Recreation Services Division's direct program offerings are focused on children, although some activities are aimed at teens, adults, seniors, and families.

A lack of desired facilities and programs was cited as the primary barrier to accessing recreation in the area, according to the survey undertaken for this Master Plan. Based on input received through the public consultation sessions, however, it would appear the lack of facilities is limiting the availability of programs, particularly opportunities for swimming (for which there were numerous requests).

Recommended action plans are listed in Section 7.2.4.

7.2.2 Trends & Areas of Emphasis

Trends indicate that programs which are self-initiated, self-directed, unscheduled, non-competitive, and high quality are increasing in popularity. There is also increasing demand for family-oriented activities, as well as active living and wellness opportunities. Swimming is anticipated to remain one of the most favoured activities as it holds a strong appeal to all ages. In general, casual and unscheduled activities such as skateboarding and walking/hiking are also becoming more popular. Drop-in programs that engage youth that are not currently active or involved in recreation are especially important in the City in order to address youth issues and to help this group improve its physical fitness levels. These findings are also supported by the Owen Sound and Area Physical Activity Plan (2005).

With the size of the older adult and senior populations expected to grow considerably over the coming years, demand for programming for these age groups will increase. The newer generation of seniors is more interested in active recreation choices, whereas passive recreation and social activities appeal more to traditional seniors. At the same time, the child population (0-9) is expected to increase very slightly, resulting in steady demand for mainstream programs.

The City of Owen Sound recently completed a Youth Needs Assessment that investigated the specific leisure requirements of local teenagers. The research found that the most significant barriers to participation were transportation and program cost. Strategies are required to alleviate these barriers and to help attract and maintain youth interest.

7.2.3 Programming Role

In municipalities that offer a complex mix of direct and indirect leisure programs, there is often concern about competing with non-municipal providers. In the City of Owen Sound, the municipality focuses on camp programs and outdoor aquatics; each of these activities are also offered by agencies such as the YMCA, however,

the philosophies, fees, and access create suitable differentiation between the programs. At the same time, it would be prudent for the City to ensure that it continues to explore ways to operate without competing with other providers (and vice versa), instead encouraging the development of complementary services and programs that fill gaps. The key is managing these assets and opportunities so that they meet the needs of all residents in the most equitable, efficient, effective, and affordable manner.

The City does not presently have the resources (financial or human) to be a major provider of recreation programs. As such, the City should maintain its emphasis on coordinating and facilitating recreation services within the community. It is, however, recommended that the City's role in programming be reviewed should the municipality proceed with the development of the proposed multi-use recreation facility as this would have a dramatic impact on local leisure opportunities.

In the meantime, in order to ensure that an appropriate array of core programs is offered, the City should maintain an active role in both recreation program provision and facilitation. The City should directly provide and facilitate a program supply that:

- ensures that an appropriate range of traditional and non-traditional opportunities are offered;
- is flexible and adaptable to emerging community demands;
- is reflective of the City's aging demographic profile; and
- is consistent with the Goals of this Plan.

The City should continue to be involved as a direct programmer in areas where introductory level skills, instruction/training, broad appeal, and affordability are key criteria and where there are no suitable non-municipal providers available to offer the services. Although the City's aging demographic composition will translate into increased demand for seniors' programming, the Department should continue to ensure that appropriate opportunities are available to the children and teens of Owen Sound and area as they represent a major priority in terms of local recreation programming. New programs may also be required to meet emerging demands due to changing activities and interests.

In supporting programming provided by non-municipal agencies/groups, the City should consider the following:

- encourage other organizations and providers to diversify the supply of programs;
- coordinate the efforts of community organizations through sharing of non-financial resources and involving all parties in the assessment of program needs;
- continually review program needs through the implementation of a formalized procedure;
- act as an “information broker” by centralizing information about program providers and opportunities within the community in an effort to provide enhanced customer service and to identify gaps and duplications in leisure programming;
- offer opportunities for promoting and publicizing leisure program opportunities available from both municipal and non-municipal providers; and
- support the recruitment, training, and recognition of volunteers at a grassroots level in the provision of recreation programs in the area.

7.2.4 Recommended Action Plans - Programming

54. Encourage the creation of non-programmed (e.g., unscheduled, self-initiated, and self-directed) activities for all ages and abilities.

55. Encourage residents of all ages to maintain physical, social and mental well-being through provision and/or facilitation of a range of programming opportunities and choices (including lifelong learning opportunities).

56. The City and community service providers should explore ways to increase teen “drop-in” and unstructured recreational play opportunities.

57. Work with seniors’ organizations to expand delivery of seniors’ programs (particularly those focussed on wellness and active living). Until there is a dedicated seniors’ facility in the City, a focus should be on integrating these activities into existing facilities within the community.

58. The Division should work with community organizations to expand programming opportunities to meet the needs of younger, more healthy and active seniors.

59. Work to enhance enrolment in youth leadership programs in an effort to build a future volunteer base.

60. The City and its partners should continue with their efforts to implement the recommendations contained within the Owen Sound and Area Physical Activity Plan.

61. Arts and culture programs for introductory-level activities should be considered when developing or redeveloping community facilities. In this regard, the City should look to leverage alternate funding streams and partnerships with other organizations. For more recommendations related to arts and culture, reference should be made to the City of Owen Sound Cultural Master Plan.

62. The City should continue to be involved as a direct programmer in areas where introductory level skills, instruction/training, broad appeal, and affordability are key criteria and where there are no suitable non-municipal providers available to offer the services.

63. The City should maintain its emphasis on coordinating and facilitating leisure services within the community. This role should be reviewed if the municipality proceeds with the development of the proposed multi-use recreation facility.

64. The City and community service providers should explore ways to improve program coordination and provide complementary services with a view towards addressing gaps in delivery.

7.3 SERVICE DELIVERY

7.3.1 Overview

This section examines issues related to the planning, delivery, and administration of services within the Recreation Services Division.

The issues addressed in this section were identified through consultation with the Recreation and Parks Advisory Committee, staff interviews, public consultation, and key informant interviews. These issues include:

- volunteer management;
- coordination between the City and other service providers;
- responding to special requests from the community;
- cost sharing agreements with adjacent municipalities;
- formation of a Sports Council;
- amalgamation of baseball groups;
- capital improvement/reserve fund; and
- the need for a Cultural Master Plan.

Recommended action plans are listed in Section 7.3.9.

7.3.2 Volunteer Management

The active involvement of volunteers plays an essential role in community development by improving the quality of life for all Owen Sound residents. The City – through its Strategic Plan – is committed to fostering a healthy, active community by providing volunteer opportunities that allow residents to use their skills and interests to respond to the needs of the community.

The increasing pressures being placed on community volunteers and the declining membership of many organizations, however, were key issues raised through the stakeholder interviews and at the community workshop. Concerns were expressed regarding the ability of volunteer groups to sustain their membership, an inability to engage younger volunteers, and the need for continued support

from the City. At present, the City organizes a volunteer recognition event and also provides guidance to groups on an ad hoc basis through the day-to-day activities of Recreation Services staff.

This problem is not limited to Owen Sound – volunteer recruitment and retention are challenges experienced by most communities. Consequently, the likelihood of volunteer burnout is heightened and volunteer committees are experiencing greater difficulty in effective succession planning. Additionally, the efficient and cost-effective delivery of municipal recreation services is becoming more complex, requiring specific talents and skills of volunteers. This means that it is becoming increasingly difficult for volunteers to manage tasks that were relatively simple undertakings in years past.

The role of the Recreation Services Division with respect to community volunteers should be to provide support for the effective management of volunteers including screening, training, placement, evaluation, discipline, recognition, etc. The City's current relationship with its volunteer organizations is managed through a community driven approach, an essential ingredient of which is a clear and consistent understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the City and volunteer organizations. It is also important that the allocation of responsibilities be consistent with the skills, attributes and resources of each group.

Defining “who does what” should involve an assessment of the requirements of the activities in question to ensure that the responsible party is adequately equipped to be successful. This may result in the identification of new or additional supports that the City should provide volunteer groups or opportunities where organizations can become more effective with increased assistance from municipal staff.

It is recommended that a volunteer management policy, procedures and program be developed to define and clarify the responsibilities and parameters of this role. This initiative should be completed in collaboration with the City's community partners. Role assignments as well as decision-making and operating functions should be consistent with the abilities and resources of the responsible party.

7.3.3 Coordination between the City and Other Service Providers

With a large number of recreation service providers in the community (e.g., municipality, YMCA, community organizations, private enterprise, etc.), there is bound to be some duplication of service. In this way, regular communication and effective coordination between the major providers is essential in providing the community with the most appropriate services in the most efficient and effective manner. To achieve a true collaborative effort, all parties must keep an open-mind, work through conflicting viewpoints, set aside competitive positions, and keep the community's best interests in mind.

This Master Plan supports the following actions – recommended in the Owen Sound and Area Physical Activity Plan – in an effort to reduce duplication and competition between providers:

- Organize an annual workshop with all physical activity service providers to educate, synchronize programs, share resources, etc. or consider using the existing forums of the Children's Alliance and Dimension Network.
- Coordinate programming planning between the YMCA, City and other providers, held prior to finalizing seasonal programming.

7.3.4 Responding to Special Requests from the Community

The City is often asked by local organizations and residents to provide certain facilities or services and has a grant program in place to facilitate several of these requests. The City, however, does not have a standard approach for evaluating these requests or determining the proper priority and level of municipal investment (initial capital and ongoing operation/maintenance). Consistent guidelines for addressing such requests are required so that a fair and equitable process can be put into place (to separate "squeaky wheels" from true community needs) and that all parties understand what is required of them. This requires the development of a policy

framework to assist with the implementation of the capital support program.

Based on the direction provided by the Goals of this Master Plan, the City should be willing to consider providing financial assistance to community-initiated proposals that satisfy each of the following criteria. Specifically, the proposal must:

- a) address an under-served segment of recreation and/or culture in the City;
- b) reflect demonstrated need and support within the community;
- c) give priority to residents in general and children/ youth in particular;
- d) promote physical activity and/or lifelong learning;
- e) properly consider the area's current and future demographic composition as well as leisure trends seen in similar municipalities;
- f) provide reasonably equitable access for all segments of the population;
- g) not unduly conflict with other providers in the community, including municipal services;
- h) provide a positive local impact (particularly if a tourism-related activity);
- i) be proposed by an organization with the capacity/resources to become a suitable partner to the City;
- j) not burden the City with unreasonable long-term financial commitments;
- k) attempt to operate at full or near full cost recovery levels;
- l) be within the financial means of the City;
- m) include appropriate targets for fund-raising and/or non-municipal funding opportunities; AND
- n) be consistent with the Department's mandate, the direction of the Master Plan, and all other policies and guidelines of the City.

The requesting organization should be required to submit a written report to the City outlining the details of their proposal and how it addresses the aforementioned criteria to the satisfaction of the City. Furthermore, in order to understand the cost effectiveness of the proposal, the organization should also submit:

- capital and operating cost estimates relating to the proposal so that the appropriate level of funding required from the City can be determined;
- an examination of other funding opportunities (one-time and ongoing); AND
- an examination of other partnership opportunities for the proposed initiative.

It is recognized that not all groups will have the level of experience required to address these requirements. As such, it is expected that the City will have to provide some guidance and assistance to groups in preparing their submissions, however, the onus shall ultimately be on the groups to provide the required information to properly justify their proposal.

7.3.5 Cost Sharing Agreements with Adjacent Municipalities

The City of Owen Sound is the largest urban community in the area and, therefore, acts as a regional centre for various services and facilities, including recreation and parks. The City recognizes its role in the area and works in partnership with neighbouring municipalities, other agencies and boards to serve area residents.

For quite some time the City has had formal agreements with the Township of Georgian Bluffs and the Municipality of Meaford with respect to recreation programs and services including minor sports, direct programs run by or on behalf of the City, as well as the use of municipal recreation facilities. Capital improvements are not covered by the agreements. The 5-year agreements allow residents of Meaford and Georgian Bluffs equitable access to Owen Sound facilities without having to pay a surcharge over and above the prescribed program or rental fee. Cost sharing is largely based on

historic participation figures from area residents. A Recreation and Parks Advisory Committee consisting of representatives from all three municipalities has been formed to oversee this agreement and related matters. The current cost sharing agreements are scheduled for renewal at the end of 2006 and the parties are currently involved in negotiations.

Recommendations regarding the specifics of the cost-sharing agreements are outside the scope of this Master Plan. We do, however, concur that it would be in the best interest of all parties to continue to explore ways to work together in an effort to maximize use of facilities and benefits to all area residents.

With that being said, the City of Owen Sound should strongly consider a clause that requires the cost-sharing municipalities to contribute to capital projects that will serve all area residents. Although the City may decide to pursue this through an avenue separate from the cost-sharing agreements, it is evident that Owen Sound cannot maintain/ refurbish its existing facilities and develop needed new facilities without alternate sources of funding, and the entire area would benefit from the pooling of resources.

Furthermore, to assist in defining appropriate contribution levels for the program fee portion of the cost-sharing agreements, all organizations renting City of Owen Sound facilities should be required to report annually on the number of registered participants by municipality (e.g., Owen Sound, Georgian Bluffs, Meaford, etc.).

7.3.6 Formation of a Sports Council

The consultation process yielded several comments pertaining to a desire for a volunteer Sports Council that act as a single voice for the promotion of sport in Owen Sound.

Several Ontario communities are forming Sports Councils in an effort to pool their knowledge and resources to address increasingly complex issues affecting the local sports and recreation sector. Dwindling financial resources, rising insurance costs, volunteer burn-

out, initiatives to improve physical activity levels, and a need to keep recreation on the political agenda are just a few of the reasons why many communities have installed Sports Councils.

The objectives of a typical Sports Council (the following example is taken from the London Sports Council) are to:

- promote the availability and benefits of sport and recreation;
- develop opportunities for networking, mentoring and leadership development in the sport and recreation community;
- provide leadership and a voice for collective sports and recreation initiatives; and
- celebrate sport achievements and the value of volunteers.

A case can be made that each of these objectives are relevant to Owen Sound. In fact, the City of Owen Sound Strategic Plan (under strategic initiative #9 – “The City should nurture and support volunteers”) proposes that youth volunteers be encouraged and supported, possibly through initiatives such as a Sports Council.

Given the interest expressed by the community, it is recommended that the City take a lead role in establishing an Owen Sound Sports Council and in identifying the on-going role of the Recreation Services Division with regard to the Council. Involvement could entail working with volunteer sport groups to develop and facilitate governance and training models, help with codes of conduct, and act as a resource to acquaint groups with access to grant funding.

In an effort to improve coordination, scheduling and registration, the City may also wish to encourage youth ball groups to amalgamate (similar to that of soccer). It is also recognized that many of the ball organizations are struggling with decreased participation making it difficult to provide full programs – this direction should assist in maximizing resources and coordination of players.

7.3.7 Capital Improvement/Reserve Fund

Through this Master Plan process, several facility and park improvements – for which there is no dedicated stream of funding – have been identified and substantiated. Examples include renovations to the Coliseum Arena (physical accessibility and to prolong its useful life) and the redevelopment of Harrison Park.

While the *Development Charges Act* allows for planned growth and respective contributions to capital facility development, this funding source is not intended to be used for improvements to existing facilities and levels of service. As such, Owen Sound must proactively plan for facility capital maintenance and develop alternate funding sources to support ongoing capital repair, replacement, accessibility upgrades and refurbishment.

While the City has a capital replacement fund in place for the Bayshore Community Centre (through the imposition of a small ticket surcharge), there is no such fund that applies to other facilities. The establishment of a Capital Improvement/Replacement Fund with an annual contribution from Departmental revenues (or other similar funding source, such as a levy on facility rentals) is recommended. Industry standards suggest a 1.5 to 2% annual contribution to reserves, respective of the capital replacement value and total equipment costs for each facility. While such a target may not be achievable at the outset, it remains an appropriate guideline for the City to work towards.

7.3.8 Cultural Master Plan

Concurrent with preparation of the City's Recreation, Parks and Facilities Master Plan was the preparation of a Cultural Master Plan through the Cultural Advisory Committee. The purpose of the Cultural Master Plan is to identify strategic initiatives that will continue the City's progress as a leader in culture and arts in the region, province and nation.

Efforts were made to ensure consistency between the two Master Plans; in fact, many recommendations are complimentary to each other. The City should work to identify synergies in implementing the Recreation, Parks and Facilities Master Plan and the Cultural Master Plan. Conversely, conflicting recommendations between the two plans – should any exist – should be reconciled.

7.3.9 Recommended Action Plans – Service Delivery

65. A volunteer management policy, procedures and program should be developed to define and clarify the responsibilities and parameters of the City's role in assisting community volunteers.
66. In an effort to reduce duplication and competition between service providers, the City should organize an annual workshop with all physical activity service providers to educate, synchronize programs, share resources, etc.
67. The City should establish a formal policy framework to assist in responding to special requests from the community with regard to recreation and parks facilities and services.
68. The City should require that grants and/or fundraising cover an appropriate percentage of the capital costs required to develop new recreation facilities. The City may, at its discretion, require that the difference between development charges and the cost of the facility be provided by grants and/or fundraising, particularly for specialized or exclusive-use facilities that only serve a limited or single segment of the population.
69. The City of Owen Sound should continue to work collaboratively with the adjacent municipal governments to ensure appropriate access to facilities and programs in Owen Sound for all residents in the area.

70. The adjacent municipalities of Georgian Bluffs and Meaford should be pursued as partners with the City of Owen Sound in municipal capital recreation projects that serve all area residents. The amount of the contribution should be commensurate with the level of service provided and benefit derived.
71. All organizations renting City of Owen Sound facilities should be required to report annually on the number of registered participants by municipality (e.g., Owen Sound, Georgian Bluffs, Meaford, etc.).
72. The City should take a lead role in establishing an Owen Sound Sports Council and in identifying the on-going role of the Recreation Services Division with regard to the Council.
73. Consider the establishment of a Capital Replacement Fund (as a percentage of the Recreation Services Division's revenues or through the initiation of a surcharge on programs) to be used toward the improvement or replacement of existing municipal recreation facilities (not just the Bayshore Community Centre).
74. The City should work to identify synergies in implementing the Recreation, Parks and Facilities Master Plan and the Cultural Master Plan. Conversely, conflicting recommendations between the two plans – should any exist – should be reconciled.

SECTION EIGHT: IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

8.1 OVERVIEW

The implementation strategy is a multi-year phased plan to guide the actions, responsibilities and budget decisions of the City with regard to recreation, parks and facilities. Priorities, timing, and estimated cost implications for the life of this Master Plan, as well as a process for monitoring and updating the Plan, are presented in this section.

8.2 TIMING & PRIORITY

The tables on the following pages (tables 8.1 to 8.10) provide a listing of the action plans required to achieve the Goals established for this Master Plan. All action plans identified have been reproduced in the implementation tables and have been listed under the Goal to which they most apply; some action plans relate to more than one Goal.

Plan implementation is based on the following timing and priorities:

Phase/Timing

- Short-term: 2007-2009
- Medium-term: 2010-2012
- Long-term: 2013-2016

Priority

- High Priority: Immediate attention is recommended
- Medium Priority: Attention is required when high priority actions have been initiated or completed, or when suitable partners have been identified for funding
- Low Priority: Attention is required when high and medium priority actions have been initiated/completed.

8.3 COST ESTIMATES

Many of the action plans are related to policy, procedures and best practices and, therefore, can be integrated into the regular workload of existing City staff without significant financial impacts. For those action plans requiring initial and/or ongoing financial investment, cost estimates have been shown in 2006 dollars. These estimates reflect the current operational and capital/construction environment; costs for certain construction materials could escalate considerably in the coming years and the City should account for these factors in its annual and long-term budgeting.

With any estimate, it is expected that a more comprehensive financial analysis will be undertaken prior to implementing each action plan in order to ensure that the budget accurately reflects the level of investment required.

Furthermore, it bears noting that this Plan has recommended a number of more detailed studies that could identify additional capital/operating requirements, such as a multi-use facility feasibility study. Partnership proposals and cooperative efforts with other service providers could also affect the level of investment required to meet the directions of this Plan. Future parkland dedications and trail acquisitions will also require additional resources relating to development and maintenance.

For those costs that can be quantified at this time, this Plan has identified the total estimated cost for capital projects to be \$1.82 million to \$2.43 million (one-third of which is campground improvements at Harrison Park), plus \$18 to \$20 million for the proposed multi-use recreation complex. It bears noting that these estimates do not address all proposed capital items as many cannot be established without further study and/or input from the City. The operating implications of the proposed action plans are to be identified in the City's annual business plans.

8.4 MONITORING & UPDATING THE PLAN

The City should continue to review and assess the recommendations of the Recreation, Parks and Facilities Master Plan in order to ensure that remain relevant. This will require monitoring of activity patterns, conducting annual reviews of the achievements of the Plan, tracking satisfaction levels of residents, and undertaking a detailed ten-year update to the Plan.

Recommended Action Plans

75. Undertake an annual review of the recommendations in this Master Plan as part of the municipal budgeting process, including a description of recent achievements and future objectives.
76. Undertake a comprehensive update of the Recreation, Parks and Facilities Master Plan prior to the end of the ten year timeframe of the Plan (2016).

GOAL #1 – HEALTHY COMMUNITY

A healthy community that recognizes the importance of leisure and active living through the provision and promotion of high quality physical, recreational, cultural, and social opportunities.

Table 8.1: Action Plans to achieve Goal #1 – Healthy Community

Subject / Topic	#	Action Plans	Timing			Priority Level	Financial Implications	Comments
			2007-2009	2010-2012	2013-2016			
Programming	55.	Encourage residents of all ages to maintain physical, social and mental well-being through provision and/or facilitation of a range of programming opportunities and choices (including lifelong learning opportunities).	X	X	X	High	--	Also applicable to Goal #5
Programming	60.	The City and its partners should continue with their efforts to implement the recommendations contained within the Owen Sound and Area Physical Activity Plan.	X	X	X	High	As identified in the Physical Activity Plan	
Programming	61.	Arts and culture programs for introductory-level activities should be considered when developing or redeveloping community facilities. In this regard, the City should look to leverage alternate funding streams and partnerships with other organizations. For more recommendations related to arts and culture, reference should be made to the City of Owen Sound Cultural Master Plan.	X	X	X	Medium	--	Also applicable to Goals #3,6,7
Service Delivery	74.	The City should work to identify synergies in implementing the Recreation, Parks and Facilities Master Plan and the Cultural Master Plan. Conversely, conflicting recommendations between the two plans – should any exist – should be reconciled.	X			Medium	--	

GOAL #2 – COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & INVOLVEMENT

A leisure delivery system that assigns responsibilities to the most adequately equipped group through enabling and assisting community providers, supporting volunteers, and providing strong municipal leadership.

Table 8.2: Action Plans to achieve Goal #2 – Community Development & Involvement

Subject / Topic	#	Action Plans	Timing			Priority Level	Financial Implications	Comments
			2007-2009	2010-2012	2013-2016			
Leash Free Dog Zones	37.	Identify groups (or assist in establishing groups) that would be willing to be involved in the development, maintenance and/or management of the proposed off-leash dog park.	X			Medium	--	Also applicable to Goal #3
Programming	59.	Work to enhance enrolment in youth leadership programs in an effort to build a future volunteer base.	X	X		High	--	
Programming	62.	The City should continue to be involved as a direct programmer in areas where introductory level skills, instruction/training, broad appeal, and affordability are key criteria and where there are no suitable non-municipal providers available to offer the services.	X	X	X	High	--	
Programming	63.	The City should maintain its emphasis on coordinating and facilitating leisure services within the community. This role should be reviewed if the municipality proceeds with the development of the proposed multi-use recreation facility.	X	X	X	High	--	
Programming	64.	The City and community service providers should explore ways to improve program coordination and provide complementary services with a view towards addressing gaps in delivery.	X	X	X	Medium	--	
Service Delivery	65.	A volunteer management policy, procedures and program should be developed to define and clarify the responsibilities and parameters of the City's role in assisting community volunteers.		X		Low	Potential cost if prepared by external organization	
Service Delivery	66.	In an effort to reduce duplication and competition between service providers, the City should organize an annual workshop with all physical activity service providers to educate, synchronize programs, share resources, etc.	X	X	X	Medium	--	Also applicable to Goal #7
Service Delivery	72.	The City should take a lead role in establishing an Owen Sound Sports Council and in identifying the on-going role of the Recreation Services Division with regard to the Council.	X			Medium	--	

GOAL #3 – FACILITY PROVISION

A foremost commitment to the maintenance and renewal of existing recreation facilities and parks, with strategic investments being made toward new leisure infrastructure.

Table 8.3: Action Plans to achieve Goal #3 – Facility Provision

Subject / Topic	#	Action Plans	Timing			Priority Level	Financial Implications	Comments
			2007-2009	2010-2012	2013-2016			
New Multi-Use Facility	1.	<p>The City and community should pursue the development of a multi-use recreation facility consisting of the following components (to be confirmed via a feasibility study):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an indoor lane/leisure pool capable of hosting local and regional events (i.e., 25 metre length, 6 lanes) and accommodating unstructured play (e.g., slide, water play equipment); a warm water therapeutic pool; a fitness conditioning and strength training centre; a gymnasium and activity rooms for classes, meetings, youth and seniors; one new ice pad, resulting in the twinning of the Coliseum Arena (see Section 5.3.3); and an indoor walking / running track (if feasible). 	X	X		High	<p>Previously estimated to cost \$18-20 million to construct the proposed facility. Include some improvements to the existing Coliseum rink, but not a complete rebuild.</p> <p>Operating costs dependent upon numerous unresolved factors (see Appendix A & B for more).</p>	<p>Also applicable to Goals #5,6.</p> <p>Alternate funding sources will be required to develop this facility. Partnerships to be determined.</p> <p>Detailed capital and operating cost estimates to be developed once facility concept and operating structure is decided upon.</p>
Indoor Aquatic Facilities	3.	The City should pursue the inclusion of an indoor aquatic facility as part of the proposed multi-use facility.	X	X		High	See action plan #1	Also applicable to Goal #6
Arenas	4.	If it is the intention of the City to serve all of its residents and a portion of those living within the cost-sharing municipalities, a third ice pad should be provided in Owen Sound if appropriate partnerships can be reached. The City should consider twinning the Coliseum as a new stand alone single pad arena is not recommended. Planning for this facility should be undertaken in conjunction with the proposed multi-use recreation centre and/or the improvements required to the existing ice pad at the Coliseum Arena.	X	X		High	See action plan #1	Also applicable to Goal #4

Table 8.3: Action Plans to achieve Goal #3 – Facility Provision

Subject / Topic	#	Action Plans	Timing			Priority Level	Financial Implications	Comments
			2007-2009	2010-2012	2013-2016			
Fitness Facilities	7.	The provision of fitness facilities should be considered in the development of any new recreation centre containing an indoor aquatic facility. The City should consider a range of potential partnership approaches for operating such a facility so as not to compete directly with existing providers.	X	X		High	See action plan #1	Also applicable to Goal #6
Gymnasiums	8.	The provision of gymnasiums should be considered in the development of the proposed multi-use recreation centre.		X		High	See action plan #1	Also applicable to Goal #6
Seniors' Centres	11.	Should a new recreation centre be developed, programming for seniors should be a key consideration in its design and operation, including the development of a dedicated space such as a quiet room/lounge for seniors' use. The need for a senior's coordinator staff position (part-time) should also be assessed.		X		Medium	See action plan #1 New part-time staff position = approx. \$20,000/yr	See also action plans #12,13
Youth Centres	14.	The City should consider the provision of dedicated youth space within the multi-use recreation complex. A youth centre coordinator will be required to manage the facility.	X	X		Medium	See action plan #1 New part-time staff position = approx. \$20,000/yr	
Indoor Turf Facilities	17.	The City should monitor demand for an indoor turf facility and reconsider the needs for such a facility in 5-10 years time. Should there be an identified need that can be justified through a business case, creative provision strategies should be examined, including the re-use of an existing building and local partnerships.			X	Low	Completion of a Business case, if done externally, is approximately \$30,000.	
Soccer Fields	18.	Local soccer demand can be accommodated through phased expansion of the Kiwanis Soccer Complex over the next ten years (4 unlit equivalent fields will be required).	X	X	X	Medium	\$225,000 to \$300,000 (based on 3 new fields)	Cost dependent upon size and number of fields
Soccer Fields	19.	Install lighting on 1-2 fields in the City (in addition to the field being lit this fall at the Kiwanis Complex) to better accommodate adult soccer and other field sports, which are expected to continue to gain in popularity in the future. Consideration should be given to both the Kiwanis Soccer Complex and other appropriate fields such as Kelso Beach.		X		High	\$120,000 to \$240,000 (based on 1-2 fields receiving lights)	With each field that is lit, the field inventory increases by 0.5 unlit equivalents
Ball Diamonds	22.	Ball groups should be consulted to explore options for improving existing diamonds and/or provide 1-2 additional senior diamonds (or 1 lit diamond) over the long-term.		X	X	Low	\$200,000 to \$250,000	Subject to findings of future review.

Table 8.3: Action Plans to achieve Goal #3 – Facility Provision

Subject / Topic	#	Action Plans	Timing			Priority Level	Financial Implications	Comments
			2007-2009	2010-2012	2013-2016			
Ball Diamonds	21.	The City should maintain its existing supply of usable "game quality" diamonds.	X	X	X	Low	--	
Ball Diamonds	23.	Consideration should be given to phasing out lower quality scrub diamonds when redeveloping parks or where the need for alternative facilities that could make use of the space is identified.	X	X	X	Low	To be determined	Also applicable to Goal #10
Other Playing Fields	24.	The main field located at Victoria Park is presently needed to serve the local area schools and various field sports. Care should be exercised to ensure that a multi-use field remains available to the community at this or another suitable location.		X	X	High	--	Could be impacted by the proposed multi-use recreation facility.
Tennis Courts	25.	The City, in partnership with the School Board, should proceed with the planned improvements to existing courts, including the replacement of lighting at the West Hill Secondary School tennis courts.	X	X		Low	\$75,000	
Basketball Courts	26.	The City should develop a basketball court (single hoop / half court) at a location to be determined on the east side of the City.		X		Low	\$25,000	
Outdoor Splash Pad Facilities	27.	The City should develop a spray pad at an appropriate location in the short-term. Partnership, sponsorship and funding opportunities should be pursued in this regard.	X	X		Medium	\$100,000 Cost dependent upon scale and features.	Also applicable to Goal #6. Fundraising or sponsorship could defray costs.
Outdoor Splash Pad Facilities	28.	Once the City's first spray pad is developed, its use and operation should be evaluated to determine if a second spray pad in another area of the City is warranted.		X	X	Medium	To be determined subject to future review.	
Outdoor Splash Pad Facilities	29.	Continue to maintain Harrison Park pools for recreational swimming and instructional courses. Should a new public indoor pool be developed in the City, consideration should be given to modifying the programs currently offered at the Harrison Park pools.	X	X	X	Medium	\$100,000+ estimated in the Harrison Park Master Plan	
Playgrounds	31.	Decisions relating to playground installation and removal should be made on a site-specific basis, in consultation with the community.	X	X	X	Low	--	

Table 8.3: Action Plans to achieve Goal #3 – Facility Provision

Subject / Topic	#	Action Plans	Timing			Priority Level	Financial Implications	Comments
			2007-2009	2010-2012	2013-2016			
Skateboard Parks	33.	The City should continue to work co-operatively with local youth to repair, upgrade and maintain the Getaway Sk8 Board Park. Partnership, sponsorships and community involvement should be pursued to assist with this initiative.	X	X	X	Medium	Estimate \$1,000/year	Also applicable to Goals #7,10
Skateboard Parks	35.	Install 'skate zones' in 1-2 City or Community Parks in under-served areas of the City (e.g., east and south).		X	X	Medium	\$5,000 to \$10,000	Also applicable to Goal #4
Leash Free Dog Zones	36.	Continue with plans to develop an off-leash dog park. This facility should be adequate to serve as a City-wide facility.		X		Medium	\$20,000	Also applicable to Goal #5. Fundraising or sponsorship could defray costs.
Other Outdoor Facilities	38.	Implement the recommendations in the Harrison Park Master Plan with respect to campground improvements, as resources permit.	X	X	X	High	\$560,000 to \$800,000 depending on desired upgrades (see Harrison Park Master Plan)	Although not seen as a high priority by the residents, the profits generated support the many other elements of the park.

GOAL #4 – ACCESSIBILITY

A community that promotes safe and equitable access to facilities and services for all citizens, regardless of age, physical abilities, economic status, culture or beliefs.

Table 8.4: Action Plans to achieve Goal #4 – Accessibility

Subject / Topic	#	Action Plans	Timing			Priority Level	Financial Implications	Comments
			2007-2009	2010-2012	2013-2016			
Arenas	5.	Revise the City's Arena Allocation Policy to allow for the more efficient and effective allocation of City's ice time.	X			High	--	Also applicable to Goal #7
Seniors' Centres	13.	Because seniors currently have access to the Bayshore Community Centre and the Harrison Park Senior's Drop-In Centre, it is <u>not</u> recommended that a new stand-alone exclusive-use facility be developed for seniors. Seniors should be provided equal access to activity and meeting rooms at the proposed multi-use recreation centre, should it be developed.		X	X	High	--	Also applicable to Goal #7
Playgrounds	30.	The City should strive to provide playground equipment within a 500-metre radius of all residential areas, without causing pedestrians to cross a major natural or man-made barrier.	X	X	X	Medium	--	Also applicable to Goal #3
Playgrounds	32.	Barrier-free play equipment should be installed in Harrison Park and Kelso Beach Park.	X	X	X	High	\$100,000 to \$200,000 (depends on scale)	Also applicable to Goal #3
Service Delivery	69.	The City of Owen Sound should continue to work collaboratively with the adjacent municipal governments to ensure appropriate access to facilities and programs in Owen Sound for all residents in the area.	X	X	X	High	--	Also applicable to Goals #6,10

GOAL #5 – COMMUNITY-RESPONSIVE SERVICES

Facilities and services that are flexible in meeting – and responsive to – the changing needs of the community.

Table 8.5: Action Plans to achieve Goal #5 – Community-Responsive Services

Subject / Topic	#	Action Plans	Timing			Priority Level	Financial Implications	Comments
			2007-2009	2010-2012	2013-2016			
Programming	54.	Encourage the creation of non-programmed (e.g., unscheduled, self-initiated, and self-directed) activities for all ages and abilities.	X	X	X	Medium	--	Also applicable to Goal #4
Programming	56.	The City and community service providers should explore ways to increase teen “drop-in” and unstructured recreational play opportunities.	X	X	X	High	--	Also applicable to Goals #2,6
Programming	57.	Work with seniors’ organizations to expand delivery of seniors’ programs (particularly those focussed on wellness and active living). Until there is a dedicated seniors’ facility in the City, a focus should be on integrating these activities into existing facilities within the community.	X	X	X	High	--	Also applicable to Goals #1,2,3,6,7
Programming	58.	The Division should work with community organizations to expand programming opportunities to meet the needs of younger, more healthy and active seniors.	X	X	X	Medium	--	Also applicable to Goals #1,2
Service Delivery	67.	The City should establish a formal policy framework to assist in responding to special requests from the community with regard to recreation and parks facilities and services.	X			Medium	--	Also applicable to Goal #2

GOAL #6 – PARTNERSHIPS

A community that encourages the involvement of community organizations, service providers, and adjacent municipalities in the leisure system through appropriate partnerships and other forms of collaboration.

Table 8.6: Action Plans to achieve Goal #6 – Partnerships

Subject / Topic	#	Action Plans	Timing			Priority Level	Financial Implications	Comments
			2007-2009	2010-2012	2013-2016			
New Multi-Use Facility	2.	The City needs to decide if a partnered approach is most appropriate for the construction and/or operation of the proposed multi-use recreation facility. Should a partnership approach be supported, proposals must be evaluated against a set of pre-established criteria.	X			High	--	Also applicable to Goal #3
Arenas	6.	Seek partnerships with the Agricultural Society to examine the feasibility of constructing a separate building (e.g., pole barn) that could accommodate the Fall Fair's indoor activities, as well as other community activities throughout the year.	X	X		Medium	To be determined.	Also applicable to Goal #3. Could be impacted by the proposed multi-use recreation facility.
Gymnastics	10.	The City could consider partnering with the Owen Sound Satellites for the provision of a gymnastics facility, should a group-initiated business plan be found acceptable to the City.	X			Medium	To be determined.	Also applicable to Goal #3

GOAL #7 – MAXIMIZATION OF RESOURCES

Maximization of school and community facilities and leveraging of available resources and funding opportunities to enhance the quality and range of leisure activities.

Table 8.7: Action Plans to achieve Goal #7 – Maximization of Resources

Subject / Topic	#	Action Plans	Timing			Priority Level	Financial Implications	Comments
			2007-2009	2010-2012	2013-2016			
Gymnasiums	9.	The City should continue to work with local school boards to maintain and/or increase accessibility of school gyms to the public.	X	X	X	High	--	Also applicable to Goal #6
Seniors' Centres	12.	Should a new recreation facility <u>not</u> be built in the near term, renovations to the Bayshore and Harrison Park seniors' facilities should be considered to make them more compatible to seniors' programming and seniors' needs. Considerations could include aspects related to scheduling, transportation, programming, and facility upgrades.		X	X	High	To be determined.	Also applicable to Goal #3. Dependent upon the construction of the proposed multi-use recreation facility.
Youth Centres	15.	Until a dedicated youth space is developed in the proposed multi-use recreation complex – or should it not prove to be feasible to provide – the City should investigate alternate youth centre provision strategies that provide a street-front presence in a central and accessible location.	X	X	X	High	To be determined.	Also applicable to Goal #3. Dependent upon the construction of the proposed multi-use recreation facility.
Soccer Fields	20.	Several school fields in the community are used to accommodate soccer practices and casual rentals. The City should continue to work with the school boards to maximize access to these fields, while maintaining reasonable standards of field quality and affordability.	X	X	X	Medium	--	
Service Delivery	68.	The City should require that grants and/or fundraising cover an appropriate percentage of the capital costs required to develop new recreation facilities. The City may, at its discretion, require that the difference between development charges and the cost of the facility be provided by grants and/or fundraising, particularly for specialized or exclusive-use facilities that only serve a limited or single segment of the population.	X	X	X	High		Also applicable to Goals #3,10

GOAL #8 – TRAILS & PARKS

An integrated parks, trails, and open space system that connects the community.

Table 8.8: Action Plans to achieve Goal #8 – Trails & Parks

Subject / Topic	#	Action Plans	Timing			Priority Level	Financial Implications	Comments
			2007-2009	2010-2012	2013-2016			
Parkland Requirements	42.	The City should strive to maintain the minimum provision standards for Neighbourhood Parks (0.5ha/1000), Community Parks (1.5ha/1000) and City Parks (1.5ha/1000) as outlined in its Official Plan.	X	X	X	High	--	
Parkland Acquisition	43.	Open Space Corridors that are required for the development of a linked trail system may be acquired as part of the City's dedication requirements through the development process. Alternative acquisition strategies for ensuring long-term public access of Open Space Corridors (e.g., negotiation, long-term lease arrangements, etc.) may also be pursued.	X	X	X	Medium	--	Also applicable to Goal #9
Parkland Acquisition	45.	As existing parkland supplies are expected to generally be adequate to meet community needs for the foreseeable future, it is recommended that the City give preference to obtaining cash-in-lieu over land from developers (in keeping with the policies of the <i>Planning Act</i> and the City's Official Plan), except in areas where no Community or Neighbourhood Park exists.	X	X	X	Medium	May result in the creation of funds that can be used for parkland development.	Also applicable to Goal #10
Parkland Acquisition	46.	In the Sydenham Heights Phase II and East Bluffs Planning Areas, parkland dedication in the form of land may be considered if there is no existing park of an appropriate nature within 500-metres <u>and</u> there is a sufficient land base associated with the dedication to create one or more meaningful Neighbourhood Park sites (i.e., 0.5 hectares or greater).	X	X	X	Medium	--	

Table 8.8: Action Plans to achieve Goal #8 – Trails & Parks

Subject / Topic	#	Action Plans	Timing			Priority Level	Financial Implications	Comments
			2007-2009	2010-2012	2013-2016			
Parkland Acquisition	47.	In the Downtown, East and West Harbour Planning Areas – and other areas of the City, should the need for additional parkland become evident – the City should look to secure parks and open space through various means including, but not limited to: dedication from development; acquisition through cash-in-lieu fees; partnerships with public or private organizations; public trusts/donations; restrictive covenants; easements; bonusing, etc. While it is preferred that these lands be in public ownership, where this is not possible, the City should seek to secure a right of access across these lands for public use.	X	X	X	Medium		Also applicable to Goal #9
Parkland Acquisition	48.	When utilizing cash-in-lieu funds, preference should be given to spending it on park and facility upgrades and creating trail linkages within the subject lands' planning area.	X	X	X	Medium	--	Also applicable to Goal #10
Parkland Acquisition	49.	Undersized parcels received for park development purposes – particularly in areas containing adequate parkland supplies – may be sold and the revenues utilized to offset improvements to existing parks and facilities.	X	X	X	Medium	May result in the creation of funds that can be used for parkland development.	Also applicable to Goal #10
Trails	50.	A continued emphasis on trail establishment is supported by trends and community interest. High priority should be assigned to multi-use trail development and improvements, particularly the Tom Thomson Trail (to Meaford), Freedom Trail, and the CP Rail Trail (to Dundalk). This will require additional funds and partnerships for trail development, enhancement, and maintenance, as well as continued efforts to secure abandoned rail corridors and harbourfront lands (or access to same) in partnership with other government agencies or departments and non-profit groups.	X	X	X	High	To be determined by proposed Trails Master Plan Update / Implementation Strategy.	Also applicable to Goals #4,5

Table 8.8: Action Plans to achieve Goal #8 – Trails & Parks

Subject / Topic	#	Action Plans	Timing			Priority Level	Financial Implications	Comments
			2007-2009	2010-2012	2013-2016			
Trails	51.	<p>As an update to the City's Trails Master Plan, a Trails Implementation Strategy should be prepared to assist in identifying options and priorities for developing a comprehensive trails system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This document should include consultation with the public and affected stakeholders and include a phased plan for upgrading existing trails and infrastructure, acquiring key linkages, and developing new neighbourhood and community trails and routes. The scope of the Strategy should address not only multi-use trails, but also cycling routes/bike lanes, snowmobile trails, cross-country skiing trails, and historic walking tours, with consideration being given to support infrastructure (e.g., parking, benches, rest stations, signage), design standards, promotion and marketing, funding/partnership opportunities, and cost implications. Through this process, consideration should be given to laying asphalt along the Spine trail that links to the Harbour trail and to Harrison Park. 	X	X		High	Preparation of the study, if done externally, is approximately \$45,000.	
Trails	52.	Existing and future trails should be appropriately signed, with trail entry or access points identified. Local trails should also be promoted through various means such as publications, brochures, and websites. Direction relating to these aspects should be addressed in the proposed Trails Implementation Strategy.	X	X		Medium	To be determined by proposed Trails Master Plan Update / Implementation Strategy.	
Trails	53.	Development applications should be reviewed by the City with trail and pathway linkages in mind. Additionally, whenever road construction/reconstruction is planned, the City should include designated bike lanes.	X	X	X	High	Cost of bike lane development to be determined when roadwork is planned.	

GOAL #9 – ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION / WATERFRONT

Initiatives that build upon the area's considerable natural beauty, environmental features, and waterfront setting by providing leadership to enhance and utilize these resources.

Table 8.9: Action Plans to achieve Goal #9 – Environmental Protection / Waterfront

Subject / Topic	#	Action Plans	Timing			Priority Level	Financial Implications	Comments
			2007-2009	2010-2012	2013-2016			
Other Outdoor Facilities	39.	Undertake a Park Master Plan for Kelso Beach and begin the process for restoring a permanent beach environment at the site.		X		High	Preparation of the Master Plan, if done externally, is approximately \$25,000. Costs for improvements to be determined by Master Plan.	
Other Outdoor Facilities	40.	Plans for improvements to the West Side Boat Launch should continue to be pursued, however, usage levels of the City's boat launches should be monitored prior to undertaking any significant capital investment in order to ensure that demand is sufficient to justify the expense.	X	X	X	Medium	\$150,000	Also applicable to Goal #5
Parkland Acquisition	44.	Lands designated "Hazard Lands" (as identified in the Official Plan) will not be considered as parkland dedication.	X	X	X	High	--	Also applicable to Goal #8

GOAL #10 – SUSTAINABILITY & AFFORDABILITY

A commitment to delivering sustainable and affordable leisure services and facilities through the cost-effective and efficient management of resources.

Table 8.10: Action Plans to achieve Goal #10 – Sustainability & Affordability

Subject / Topic	#	Action Plans	Timing			Priority Level	Financial Implications	Comments
			2007-2009	2010-2012	2013-2016			
Youth Centres	16.	The availability of non-municipal funding (e.g., grants, sponsorships, etc.) should be pursued to offset a portion of the costs associated with the establishment and/or operation of any dedicated youth facility.	X	X	X	Medium	--	Also applicable to Goals #3,7. See also action plan #15.

Table 8.10: Action Plans to achieve Goal #10 – Sustainability & Affordability

Subject / Topic	#	Action Plans	Timing			Priority Level	Financial Implications	Comments
			2007-2009	2010-2012	2013-2016			
BMX Parks	34.	Continue to seek solutions to ensure that access to the Airtime Bike Park is affordable to users.	X	X		Medium	To be determined	Also applicable to Goal #4
Parkland Classification	41.	Building from the information in this Plan and the Official Plan, the City should develop a comprehensive inventory of municipal parks and open space that contains information on the size, location, and associated facilities of each parcel. This information should be linked to the City's Geographic Information System in order to assist in the effective planning and management of municipal resources.	X			Medium	--	Also applicable to Goal #8
Service Delivery	70.	The adjacent municipalities of Georgian Bluffs and Meaford should be pursued as partners with the City of Owen Sound in municipal capital recreation projects that serve all area residents. The amount of the contribution should be commensurate with the level of service provided and benefit derived.	X	X	X	High	May result in changes to the existing cost-sharing agreements and transfer of funds.	Also applicable to Goal #6
Service Delivery	71.	All organizations renting City of Owen Sound facilities should be required to report annually on the number of registered participants by municipality (e.g., Owen Sound, Georgian Bluffs, Meaford, etc.).	X	X	X	Medium	--	
Service Delivery	73.	Consider the establishment of a Capital Replacement Fund (as a percentage of the Recreation Services Division's revenues or through the initiation of a surcharge on programs) to be used toward the improvement or replacement of existing municipal recreation facilities (not just the Bayshore Community Centre).		X		Medium	Annual contribution level to be determined.	Also applicable to Goal #3
Monitoring & Updating the Plan	75.	Undertake an annual review of the recommendations in this Master Plan as part of the municipal budgeting process, including a description of recent achievements and future objectives.	X	X	X	Medium	--	
Monitoring & Updating the Plan	76.	Undertake a comprehensive update of the Recreation, Parks and Facilities Master Plan prior to the end of the ten year timeframe of the Plan (2016).			X	High	Preparation of the Master Plan, if done externally, is approximately \$50,000.	

APPENDIX A

PARTNERSHIP OVERVIEW & PRELIMINARY FRAMEWORK FOR A MULTI-USE RECREATION FACILITY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The goals of this Master Plan indicate an intention to collaborate with others in the pursuit of quality facilities and services. As in most communities, partnerships could become a key strategy to achieve the Department's goals in the most cost effective fashion, particularly in relation to the construction and operation of an indoor aquatic facility and recreation centre.

Recently, many municipalities have become more proactive in investigating non-traditional relationships for the development and/or operation of facilities. As a result, there is growing interest in public-private partnerships, arrangements with Trusts acting on behalf of community organizations, and formal operating relationships with user groups involving predetermined liability and financial risk allocation.

The current economic and political environment requires public leisure service providers to design program delivery mechanisms from a client perspective, obtaining good value, utilizing systematic management practices and striving for positive results. This can be achieved by building on the strengths of the potential partners, utilizing information technology and focusing on core competencies of those involved in the relationship.

1.2 POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIP APPROACHES

There is a broad spectrum of program delivery and facility development options available to the City. The traditional self-managed approach involves municipal personnel operating facilities developed with public funds. On the other end of the continuum is a privatization strategy involving a transfer of operating responsibilities to the private sector. Options in between these extremes involve joint service agreements with affiliated not-for-profit groups, service or operating arrangements with community associations, facility development and operating partnerships or outsourcing services to private providers. Decisions related to service delivery alternatives must be made on a case-by-case basis.

1.3 OVERVIEW OF A STANDARDIZED PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORK

Methods of selecting appropriate service delivery approaches vary between municipalities and frequently departments employ a variety of methodologies, depending upon the circumstances and complexities of the services in question. A standardized framework provides a backdrop for fair and equitable evaluation of acceptable service delivery relationships. Such a framework should help municipal decision-makers answer questions such as:

- Is the proposed service/facility needed in the community?
- Is the proposed service/facility consistent with municipal values?
- Who is best equipped to deliver the service?
- Will municipal interests be protected within the selected approach?
- To what extent will potential partners be expected to comply with municipal values and philosophies?
- What are the minimum attributes a potential partner must bring to a relationship and what mechanisms will be necessary to validate the partner's true capacities?
- Under what conditions will the City absorb risk and what will determine the municipality's risk tolerance threshold?
- How (if at all) will stakeholders and other with a vested interest in the project be included in deliberations regarding the partnership?
- What will be the municipality's financial expectations for a partnership and under which conditions will certain types of investments to a partnered project be considered?

1.4 METHODS OF LOCATING PARTNERS

There are four basic means of locating potential partners:

- Sole source negotiation by the City with targeted organizations. Sole sourcing is generally most appropriate when dealing with not-for-profit groups or other public sector organizations for modestly valued agreements and inherently limited risk. Sole sourcing may also be appropriate when there is only one provider of the desired product or service available in the market place.
- Tender call process. This process is appropriate when the City is seeking a well-defined product, service or commodity and detailed specifications are available. It should be understood that the tender process generally limits the potential for creativity on the part of candidate partners.
- Unsolicited proposals submitted to the City by outside groups.
- Request For Proposals (RFP's). This process is appropriate when the City identifies a need or opportunity, but the means to achieve the desired outcomes are variable or unreadily known and creative solutions could improve the success or output of the relationship.

1.5 ELEMENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIP

Each potential partnership must respond to specific needs and be structured consistent with the requirements of the project. However, several common elements are usually inherent with successful partnerships.

- The venture will be mutually beneficial to the partners.
- There will be clearly defined roles and responsibilities.
- There will be a performance evaluation methodology.
- There will be shared commitment to serve the needs of those affected by the venture.
- There will be a commitment to improve.

- There will be fair and honest recognition of each partner's contribution.

1.6 EVALUATION CRITERIA

Each potential relationship with outside interests should undergo two levels of assessment. The Level One Assessment Phase will identify the City's desired role and potential involvement in the venture. The process of establishing a productive relationship will largely hinge upon successfully completing the planning groundwork identified in the Level One analysis. At a minimum, the following criteria should be employed during the Level One analysis:

- the proposition's relevance to the Department's vision;
- the potential partner's compliance with the City's corporate culture and evidence of a public service attitude and commitment;
- confirmation that there is legal authority to undertake the proposal;
- the proposition responds to a demonstrated need or presents an attractive benefit to the municipality's public service; and
- there is clear community benefit and/or economic impact spin-offs for or within the municipality.

The Level Two Assessment Phase evaluates the merits of various proposals to establish a relationship with the City. At a minimum, the following criteria should be employed during the Level Two analysis:

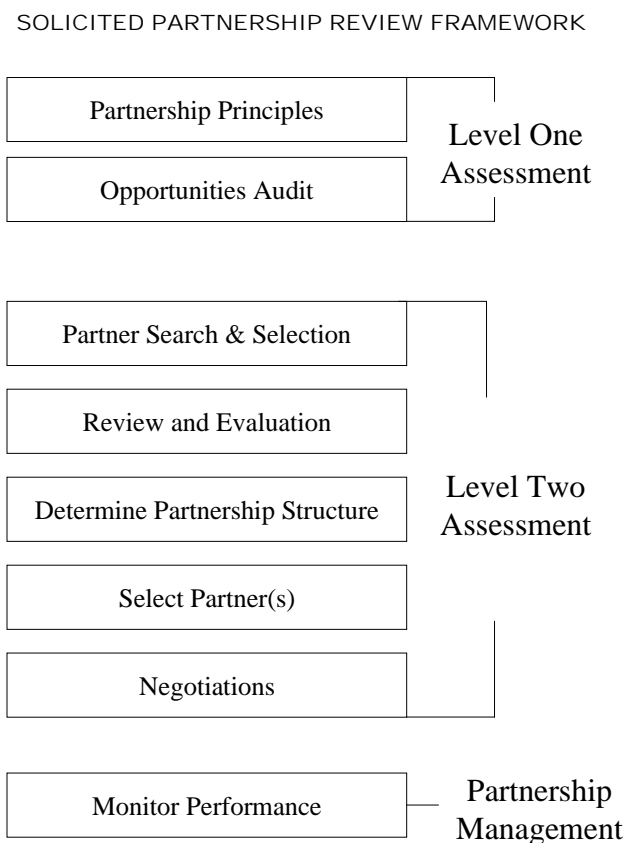
- there is a business plan demonstrating the revenue/cost and operating advantages of the proposal, relative to other proposals or to the City's ability to deliver the service;
- there is value inherent in the proposal that would provide the municipality with enhanced levels of service;
- the City's proposed financial and risk obligations are acceptable;

- the proponent is capable of demonstrating operating and technical qualifications and financial ability commensurate with the nature and scope of the project;
- the project is clear of any environmental concerns;
- the proposal includes a risk analysis (financial, continuity of service, public relations, liability, etc.) that is acceptable to the City; and
- the proposal includes a benefit analysis for both the municipality and the proponent that is acceptable to the City.

Although the proponent will have identified the major requirements of the partnership, the negotiation phase involves in-depth discussions and reviews with the intent to creating a mutually acceptable and viable working relationship. Normally, detailed negotiations are quite time consuming, especially for complex projects.

After implementing the project, the partners should engage in a mutual evaluation of the relationship. Where necessary, adjustments to roles and responsibilities should be considered to improve the working arrangement between the partners and the results of their efforts. Outcomes should be tested against the partnership principles and new directions should be guided by the predetermined municipal positions regarding the partnership. The consequence should be consistent with the objectives for the venture and the expectations of the partners.

The following framework illustrates the application of the two levels of analysis and the process through which the municipality would evaluate solicited proposals.



APPENDIX B

BUSINESS IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSED MULTI-USE RECREATION FACILITY

DISCUSSION PAPER

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This Master Plan has identified demand for a multi-use recreation facility consisting of several components, including a public access indoor aquatic centre. As part of the planning process, the City has requested that a detailed examination of the likely financial performance, partnership options and potential management model associated with the development the multi-purpose recreation complex be undertaken.

A number of factors will influence the City's decision regarding the development of the contemplated facility. These include:

- The YMCA is an important provider of health and wellness, youth development, seniors and outreach programs to Owen Sound and its adjacent municipalities. For many years the Y and its community partners – most notably the Joint Pool Committee – have been considering long-term options to replace the existing YMCA facility. To this end, the organization has undertaken various studies that have examined the market potential and feasibility of a new complex as well as a number of development alternatives. Although detailed discussions with the City have not taken place, the YMCA is generally considered a primary partnership candidate in terms of a new multi-purpose complex.
- The needs assessment portion of the Master Plan has determined that there is a current deficit of approximately 0.8 ice pads to meet the needs of groups that utilize Owen Sound's arenas. Although the total number of ice users from within municipal boundaries is expected to decrease by about 3% over the next 10 years, lack of ice time was a significant issue identified during the public consultation process. Furthermore, the City's rinks serve the needs of users from neighbouring jurisdictions, which exacerbate the deficit situation. As such, an arena component – preferably in a twin pad configuration – would be a useful addition to a

multi-purpose facility both from a programmatic and financial perspective.

- The YMCA, Curves, Stone Tree and the Woman's Health and Fitness Centre currently provide a variety of fitness, wellness and active living services to City residents and fitness enthusiasts from neighbouring jurisdictions. Although a detailed market analysis has not been performed, aerobics, fitness and weight training were the fifth most popular recreation activity in Owen Sound during the past year according to the Leisure Guide Survey. Even though fitness facilities are not seen as core municipal services, it is reasonable to suggest that a fitness component would be a useful addition to a multi-purpose facility, given its potential to generate traffic and produce net income that could improve the financial viability of the complex.
- Most modern multi-purpose recreation facilities offer program rooms and open spaces that can be used by a variety of groups for multiple purposes. The needs assessment portion of the study suggests that either dedicated rooms or general spaces could be included in the new complex to accommodate the needs of seniors and youth. The addition of these types of spaces would round out the multi-use intent of the facility, even though these uses are not likely to bolster the financial performance of the complex.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THIS DISCUSSION PAPER

The research and consultation phase of the Master Plan has found sufficient demand for a new, public access aquatic facility in the City. Furthermore, the study substantiates that one new ice pad could usefully be added to the City's inventory and that if a multi-purpose facility were to be developed a number of supplementary facility components should be considered.

Capital funding pressures, competing municipal priorities and the public's desire for an efficient and effective delivery system implies that it is prudent for the City to investigate innovative capital development options and management models to deliver required recreation facilities and services to ratepayers. To this end, the Master Plan has identified specific goals related to collaboration, partnerships, maximization of resources, sustainability and affordability, which in combination suggest the availability of new approaches to achieving the study's action plans within an environment of limited financial resources.

The purpose of this Discussion Paper is to examine the implications of utilizing a partnered and/or collaborative approach in the development of the multi-purpose recreation complex in Owen Sound. **The contents of this Discussion Paper are intended to help municipal decision makers understand the financial ramifications of a partnered facility and to explore potential management options that may be considered for the project.**

In preparing this Discussion Paper, the consultants performed the following activities:

- Reviewed relevant trends, partnership models, management approaches and operating considerations pertinent to the study.
- Reviewed the document "Market Feasibility Study for a New Regional Aquatics Centre" (Leisure Plan International Inc. 2000).
- Reviewed the document "YMCA's and Municipalities: Working Together for Canadians" (YMCA Canada 2005).
- Reviewed the document "Vision Update For an Owen Sound Regional Multi-purpose Multi-Generational Recreation Facility" (Joint Pool Investigation Committee 2004).
- Interviewed municipal representatives.
- Interviewed representatives from the Owen Sound and Area Family YMCA and the Joint Pool Investigation Committee.
- Reviewed related financial and operating records of municipal recreation facilities and programs.

This Discussion Paper presents the financial implications of the potential multi-purpose facility components on both a "business unit" and consolidated basis. The management and operating parameters of each business unit are fully described in order to provide City officials with adequate background about the factors that will influence the financial and operating performance of the facility and to facilitate a thoughtful decision regarding possible development directions and partnership discussions with the YMCA and others.

1.3 CONTEXT

The spectrum of program delivery and facility development options is broad. Therefore, it will be important that officials consider the following important trends and influences that will likely affect facility use, program participation and lifestyle choices of individuals likely to patronize the new development.

Provincial and National Physical Activity Initiatives

As highlighted in the Owen Sound and Area Physical Activity Plan, there is increasing evidence that the majority of Canadians face increased risk to their health due to low levels of physical activity. The country's inactive population has a higher incidence of chronic disease and longer periods of impairment leading to a lower quality of life. Only about half of Canadians participate in physical activity endeavours to the extent that health benefits are realized. In response to the significant health issue, provincial and national governments have adopted programs to encourage a reduction in physical inactivity.

A Federal-Provincial/Territorial Advisory Committee on Fitness and Recreation prepared a document entitled "*Physical Inactivity: A Framework For Action*". The report identified several key issues that must be addressed if levels of physical activity are to be increased. Although these points were originally intended for the physical activity community, they illustrate the need for changes to the manner in which general recreation, sport and leisure programs and

services are delivered. The recommendations included in the framework are summarized below.

Economic Conditions Are Changing

- Full-time employed Canadians are working longer hours – the result is less time for recreation and leisure activity, independent of work and household chores.
- The restructuring of the economy is creating a larger group of part-time employed, unemployed, and under employed persons who must devote greater attention to the basic necessities of life.
- Reductions in public sector expenditures have resulted in significant cutbacks to programs and services – recreation, education, and fitness – that support physical activity.

The Nature of Institutional Public Services Is Changing

- The resource capacity of local level public institutions that have traditionally provided a range of services is being eroded, resulting in a concentration of new program areas within the purview of Parks and Recreation departments that often consider these additions as secondary to traditional core services.
- The school system is being pressed to focus its resources on (what are considered) core subjects at the expense of physical education and cultural education components of the curriculum.
- The renewal of the health system is recognizing the need for increased emphasis on a health promotion and disease prevention, but new resources to support this priority are scarce.
- There is a greater need and willingness among the various sectors to establish new partnerships and networks to eliminate duplication and support collaborative planning and action.

The Social Structure and Environments Are Changing

- The traditional family, with a working father and stay at home mother has shrunk from 30% of all families in 1970 to 7% in 1991.
- The work time demands of many parents limit their ability to spend time with their children recreating or being physically active or to serve as positive role models for their children's development.
- The ability of low-income Canadians to engage in recreation, leisure and physical activity opportunities that contribute to their health and well being is limited by cost of participation.

Public Expectations Are Changing

- The public is demanding greater control over the decisions that affect their communities and lives. At the same time there is increasing pressure for the public to contribute volunteer leadership and human resources necessary to support what have been previously considered basic community services formally provided by government.
- Governments are being required by the public to demonstrate greater accountability in the use of public resources to provide priority services in effective and proven ways.

1.4 BASIC FACILITY, MANAGEMENT & PARTNERSHIP CONCEPT

This analysis focuses on the basic multi-purpose recreation facility concept that has for some time been promoted by the Joint Pool Investigation Committee. The concept involves building a new multi-dimensional complex in Victoria Park with a view to replacing the existing facilities and services currently provided by the Owen Sound and Area Family YMCA. It appears that the site offers sufficient land to accommodate a new and expanded pool, a twin pad ice rink (one new ice pad plus the pad provided by the Coliseum), a

fitness/conditioning/wellness centre, program rooms and related support amenities. According to the Joint Pool Committee's investigations, these facilities could be constructed at **Victoria Park** without negatively impacting current events and other uses of the site. It is noteworthy that we have not undertaken an independent analysis of the site or examined other considerations normally included within a site selection process. Therefore for the purposes of due diligence, should the project proceed, it is recommended that alternative sites be evaluated.

The multi-purpose nature of the complex contemplated for the Owen Sound project requires a degree of management sophistication and specialized expertise to maximize financial and program performance. Municipalities usually elect to either self manage multi-purpose complexes or contract the management and operations to a third-party – such as a not-for-profit organization like the YMCA or a private sector management company. Although there are some examples where community organizations are adequately equipped to run these sorts of facilities, generally they are unable to respond to municipal concerns or requirements regarding risk obligations, compliance with preset standards of operation, board member or senior staff secession issues, etc. **It is, therefore, quite likely that the City's management options would be restricted to either a self-operated or contract management approach.**

Largely through the efforts of the Joint Pool Investigation Committee, some form of alliance between the YMCA and the City has been the general premise within which the multi-purpose recreation facility has advanced. In view of the long-held perception that this potential relationship with the most effective means to bring the facility to fruition, **we have assumed that the City would engage in discussions with the Y before entertaining management options with other service providers.**

Although the operating relationship between the City and the YMCA is yet to be determined, the financial projections included in this report are based upon a very simple premise:

- **the Central Services staff would be municipal personnel and the City would run the arena portion of the complex; and**
- **the YMCA would run the pool and conditioning / healthy living centre.**

As such, the aquatics centre and healthy living centre would be membership-based facilities, with access being provided to non-members through pay-as-you-go and program-specific pricing. Drop-in visitors would receive the same level of service and attention as members. This is consistent with the approach used at the Maitland Recreation Centre in Goderich, a facility which has often been cited as a template for Owen Sound and area.

1.5 KEY CONSIDERATIONS

It will be important that the City be mindful of the following considerations when it engages in partnership discussions with the YMCA:

- The facility will be expected to serve public recreation requirements – especially in terms of aquatic services – while providing an environment that is conducive to a membership based YMCA program. It will be exceedingly important that the management team is fully capable of balancing the service agendas implied by both of these mandates, particularly the issues of access and priority. Therefore, one of the negotiating teams' first tasks should be to define methods to protect delivery of services consistent with the minimum expectations of their target audiences to ensure that the joint venture and operating alliance is capable of fulfilling the balanced agendas.
- The facility's financial viability is largely linked to the net revenue performance of the conditioning/healthy living centre. The operating premise described above would have

the YMCA in complete control of this important business unit. Therefore, it would seem reasonable that the Y would be responsible for a large portion of the financial risk for this project/operation.

- The structure of the relationship will be an important precursor to the tone of the ongoing operating alliance between the City and the YMCA. For example, a relationship that would have the Y operate the pool on behalf of the municipality would have different operating implications than if the Y became a tenant in a municipal building and offered services to the City such as public swims and lessons at guaranteed pricing. A close working relationship between the two entities requires that negotiations deal with the finer details of operating nuances and service delivery methods to ensure that the interest of both partners – and their related constituencies – are protected.
- In other comparable situations, partners have focused on capital issues – for example, “can we raise the money?” – before thoughtfully dealing with “how will the relationship work?” if the capital funding was to become available. It is much safer to utilize a “form follows function” approach, which means that management, operating and service issues are clearly fleshed out to ensure that the project is worthy of the time and energies necessary to create fund-raising campaigns, establish strategic lobbying initiatives to attract infrastructure funding, etc. Therefore, it is essential to determine that the partners can coexist and flourish under the same roof before the “prospect” becomes a “project”!
- Land and building ownership issues, management fees, risk allocation, net revenue distribution, capital replacement, program subsidization for lower-income participants and a host of other variables will require thoughtful and focused negotiation.

1.6 MULTI-PURPOSE FACILITY SERVICE SEGMENTATION

The diverse nature of the project implies that the management and operating team must have the skills, specialties and expertise necessary to ensure quality service delivery and acceptable financial performance. To fully meet the assortment of service and program expectations exhibited by a widely varied patronage, it will also be important that the management model utilize a mix of delivery approaches. To this end, the structure of the management team should be flexible and adaptable because the needs of the facility's clientele will likely change over time.

For the purposes of this examination, the management structure would involve four business units. Each unit would have specific and identifiable target audiences and would employ staff with the skills and training unique to the particular service environment. The independent business unit approach allows for each discipline to be viewed as a “single project”, which can be examined on its own merits. Consolidated units under one roof provide a number of cost advantages resultant from economies of scale, especially in terms of a central management team. The business units would be:

- **Central Services:** A team of managers and supervisors that would oversee operations of the entire complex.
- **Arena:** A unit that would oversee ice rentals and programs as well as complementary services available from a new twin pad ice facility – one surface would utilize the existing Coliseum with the other meeting the deficiencies identified in the needs assessment portion of the study. All costs and revenues associated with the arena would be bundled within one operating unit.
- **Aquatic Centre:** A unit that would oversee all water based activities and dry land training or other pool related programs available from the new aquatic centre. All costs and revenues associated with the new pool would be bundled within one operating unit.

- **Healthy Living Centre:** A unit that would oversee all programs and initiatives related to physical activity, wellness, fitness, and lifestyle choices available from a new centre. All costs and revenues associated with the new centre would be bundled within one operating unit.

The following sections provide details of each of these business units. All financial figures are illustrated in year 2006 dollars.

1.7 CENTRAL SERVICES TEAM

The magnitude of the complex calls for a diversified Facility Management Team that would ultimately be responsible for the entire operation and would develop systems that would allow each business unit to operate toward common objectives. Team members include the Facility Manager, Customer Service and Marketing Supervisor, Maintenance Supervisor and Administrative Clerk. The entire Central Services Team would work to ensure that each business unit employed appropriate management tools for setting priorities, monitoring results and increasing productivity through the implementation of effective operating techniques. The Manager would motivate the Team to work with each business unit in the pursuit of synergistic results.

Expenses associated with the Central Service Team would be restricted to salaries because supplies and general operating costs would be contained within the budgets of the other three operating units. Salary levels of the Central Service Team are estimated as follows.

Position	Annual Salary (\$)
Manager	55,000
Marketing and Customer Service Supervisor	37,500
Operations Supervisor	35,000
Administration clerk	30,000
Net Annual Income	(157,500)

1.8 ARENA BUSINESS UNIT

Owen Sound's two existing ice surfaces are used to capacity. The needs analysis of this study suggests that there is a certain degree of pent-up demand from users in the community as a result of lack of additional available ice time. Yet, on a cautionary note, the City is currently experiencing a peak in demand as the number of youth is expected to decline slightly over the next 10 years. However, Owen Sound based groups are currently utilizing facilities in other jurisdictions which helps to ease pressures on local rinks. The needs assessment suggests that if it is the City's intention to serve all its residents as well as a portion of those living within the cost sharing municipalities, then a third ice pad can be immediately justified.

Twinning an existing arena would result in economies of scale cost efficiencies not available in a traditional stand-alone single pad configuration. Typically, a twin pad arena's payroll and utility costs can be proportionately reduced by up to 50% (on a per pad basis) compared to single pad facilities. These savings are connected to the integration of service functions, common amenity spaces and the cross-utilization of staff. Additionally, twin pad arenas are often able to attract more special events or tournaments, which can augment revenue streams.

The following assumptions have been employed in the financial projections for a new twin pad facility as part of the new multi-purpose complex:

- Prime-time ice allocation would conform to the use profile of the current Coliseum operation with 76% youth hours and 12% adult hours.
- Five hours of weekly public skating would be available at the complex.
- In accordance with current operating trends, groups and individual renters would book a modest number of non prime-time hours (9.5 per week).
- 95% of prime time would be used on a weekly basis.

- The ice season would be 30 weeks in length.
- Ice rental rates (exclusive of GST) would be as follows: youth prime-time - \$94, adult prime-time - \$138, and all non prime-time - \$75.
- Labour rates would increase by 50% over current expenditures.
- Utility costs would rise by 50% from current expenditures.
- Supplies, repairs and maintenance costs would rise by 20% from current expenditures.
- All revenue and cost items would escalate 2% per year as a result of inflation.

The following table provides the first and fifth year financial projection of the new twin pad arena based upon the preceding assumptions.

	Year 1 (\$)	Year 5 (\$)
<u>Revenue</u>		
Ice Rental	376,542	407,581
Public Skating	11,250	12,177
Miscellaneous	42,900	46,436
Total Revenue	430,692	466,195
<u>Expenses</u>		
Labour	165,133	178,764
Utilities	185,364	200,644
Operations	37,690	40,796
Repairs and Maintenance	63,774	69,031
Total Expenses	451,961	489,217
Net Annual Income	(21,269)	(23,002)

It is noteworthy that the preceding projections are based largely upon existing operating profiles of the current Coliseum facility. Estimates do not take into account opportunities to improve the facility's financial performance by attracting additional tournaments, organizing adult leagues, facilitating special events or other revenue generating initiatives. Although the projected net cost of the new

twin pad facility represents an approximate improvement of \$50,000 compared to the existing Coliseum, it is quite likely that the new management team could derive additional net revenue streams hence augmenting the estimated financial performance (i.e., resulting in a break even or slight profit situation).

1.9 AQUATIC FACILITY BUSINESS UNIT

The community consultation portion of this study revealed significant interest in a new aquatic facility developed in conjunction with a new leisure project. Participants in the community workshop expressed "overwhelming support for a new pool and a multi-use recreation facility". This sentiment is consistent with the findings of earlier studies either commissioned for or conducted by the Joint Pool Investigation Committee.

According to the Leisure Guide Survey, swimming is one of the top recreational activities enjoyed by Owen Sound residents. It is noteworthy that participation is relatively strong across all age cohorts, which would indicate that a new aquatic facility would have relatively broad community appeal. These findings are completely in line with national physical activity participation profiles, which indicate recreational swimming and lap training are two of the most popular physical activity endeavours pursued by Canadians.

A new pool, developed as part of a multi-use complex has the potential of becoming a major recreational facility serving broad ranges of aquatic, fitness and wellness interests. The operations would most likely balance hours offered for swim lessons with opportunities for recreational (public) swimming, aqua fit programs, fitness lap swimming, special events and rentals. Where possible, the pool could be programmed to accommodate a number of simultaneous uses thereby increasing bather loads and revenues.

The public consultation process also indicated general public support for a partnership between the City and the YMCA regarding the development of a new recreation centre. Although the statistical reliability of existing data does not allow for an accurate estimate of

pool activity, the aforementioned previous studies suggest demand for a new and expanded aquatic facility. YMCA officials have indicated that both membership numbers and drop-in pool use could be expected to grow by at least 24% if a new facility was developed. Officials expressed optimism that if Owen Sound were to follow the path of other comparable jurisdictions that have developed new multi-purpose facilities, the membership roster could climb to significantly.

If the new facility were to be developed in partnership with the YMCA, it is reasonable to expect that the Y would manage the pool consistent with its current operating profile. As such, members would have use privileges of the pool, conditioning/healthy living centre and the various facility amenities in exchange for membership fees (generally paid monthly). Program admission fees (such as swim lessons) would be generally waived for members although fees would apply to certain specialty programs (e.g., yoga, pilates, etc). Non-members (public) would be able to access the pool on a drop-in basis in exchange for a pay-as-you-go charge. Non-members may also pay additional fees to participate in registered programs on a space available basis.

According to Owen Sound YMCA officials, members' use of the pool for both recreational swim and instructional purposes outweighs drop-in swims and lesson registrations by the general public. Based upon experiences in other jurisdictions that have recently developed new partnered aquatic facilities, it is reasonable to expect that a new pool in Owen Sound would attract at least 25,000 annual bathers for recreational swims. This would represent an annual bather ratio of 1.17 visits per capita of City residents or 0.6 visits per capita of residents in the total service area. While annual bather ratios vary between jurisdictions across the country, our experience suggests that in communities similar to Owen Sound between two and four annual recreational swim occasions per capita could be expected. Given that there are other recreational swimming options available to residents in the Owen Sound Service Area, the preceding estimates would seem reasonable for the new facility.

For the purposes of this discussion, it is estimated that the aquatic instructional program would attract an average of 500 registrants per session. At this registration level, approximately 10% of the City's children (0-9 years) and teens (10-19 years) – or 5% of the age cohorts throughout the service area – would be involved in swimming instruction programs at the new facility.

It is likely that the introduction of the new pool would impact bather traffic and instructional registrations at other existing pools in this service area. However, it is impossible to accurately predict the degree to which these operations would be affected.

The following assumptions have been employed to project the financial performance of the new aquatic centre:

- Approximately 10% of the child and teen population residing in Owen Sound would participate in instructional programming (500 individuals).
- Children and youth in instructional programs would register (on average) for 2.5 instructional sessions per year.
- Members would represent 75% of lesson participation, while the general public would account for the balance (25%) of instructional registrations.
- Lesson fees would average \$88 per session per non-member registrant.
- Annually, 25,000 bathers would use the pool for recreational swimming, approximately 30% of which would be non-members.
- Recreational swim fees for the general public would average \$4 per visit.
- The pool would be the responsibility of an Aquatic Coordinator who would work with a staff complement of guards and instructors (largely part-time personnel).
- Part-time labour costs are based upon the appropriate guard coverage during hours of recreational swims and the number instructors necessary to conduct the lesson programs.

- Utility costs are based upon water volume of 140,000 gallons and an annual operating cost of \$1.00 per gallon.
- Other operating costs are drawn from comparable examples elsewhere.

The following table provides the first and fifth year financial projection of the new pool based upon the preceding assumptions:

	Year 1 (\$)	Year 5 (\$)
<u>Revenue</u>		
Recreational Swims	30,000	32,473
Lessons	27,500	29,767
Rentals	15,000	16,236
Total Revenue	72,500	78,476
<u>Expenses</u>		
Labour	215,000	232,723
Utilities	140,000	151,541
Operations	25,000	27,061
Total Expenses	380,000	411,324
Net Annual Income	(307,500)	(332,848)

It is noteworthy that swimming pools serving the general public generally require an operating subsidy. Indeed, a 25-metre indoor municipal pool offering the customary mix of recreational swimming, instructional programming and rentals could be expected to lose as much as \$150,000 per year. The primary difference between the preceding financial projections and a typical municipal operation is that the revenue produced from lessons and recreational swimming is significantly reduced by the all-inclusive nature of a YMCA membership, thereby offsetting a large portion of the usual income derived from swim passes or instruction. However, under the management approach contemplated for the partnered multi-purpose facility, this foregone revenue would be realized through the sale of Y memberships (see membership revenues identified under the Healthy Living Centre Business Unit).

1.10 HEALTHY LIVING CENTRE BUSINESS UNIT

The Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute estimates approximately 14% of the Canadian population are members of public, commercial and not-for-profit recreation, fitness and sports centres. This ratio of members versus the total population is commonly referred to as the penetration rate. In 2002, the International Health, Racquet and Sportclub Association estimated that approximately 14.1% of the population over six years of age was a member of a parks and recreation centre, hospital fitness centre, YM/YWCA, college and university centre, or a commercial club. Applying a standard penetration rate (14%) to the residential and workplace populations within the primary and secondary markets of a facility helps to determine the total number of potential members available to the organization. This percentage has been included in calculations of the possible member potential of the proposed centre.

Although the new conditioning facility would cater to individuals who fall into a broad range of age categories, it is likely that the majority of members would be between 20 and 54 years of age. While programming initiatives and other techniques may be capable of attracting a larger proportion of younger and older cohorts, the lion share of the centre's users would probably arise from the historical age profile of fitness centre patrons.

Based upon an adult population in the target age categories who reside in the City of Owen Sound and utilizing a penetration rate of approximately 14%, it would be reasonable to expect that there is a potential member pool of about 2,250 individuals interested in fitness or physical conditioning. Expanding the service area to include Georgian Bluffs and Meaford would increase this potential member pool by an additional 2,000 individuals. However, it would be unlikely that the new facility would be capable of attracting this entire group, as it would require a substantial migration from fitness facilities that fitness enthusiasts already patronize.

YMCA officials report that the current membership roster is in the range of 2,750 members, approximately a third of which are children

or youth. About 65% of the current members reside in Owen Sound while, collectively, Georgian Bluffs and Meaford residents account for another 25% of the membership roster. Only about 10% of Y members come from outside of the service area.

Based upon the existing membership demographic profile, the new multi-purpose facility would likely begin with an adult membership base of approximately 1,800-2,000 individuals – 1,200-1,300 of which would be Owen Sound residents. As is typically the case with any new facility of this sort, promotional, communications and marketing efforts will likely be used to attract additional individuals from the potential member pool in the surrounding markets.

However, it is noteworthy that people join the Y for reasons other than fitness and conditioning. Therefore, in combination, the appeal of a modern and attractive multi-purpose facility as well as the general, educational and community based programs and services normally offered by the YMCA could easily increase the percentage of individuals that would be potential Y members.

Retaining members is the single most important factor in the financial success of membership-based organizations like the YMCA. It has been proven that the most successful approach to maximizing member retention is not a single program or last ditch effort to keep the participant coming back, but rather a well orchestrated, long-term relationship-building philosophy that is embedded into the day-to-day management of the facility. Cultivation of a caring environment coupled with consistent attention to the details necessary to guarantee the delivery of top quality services are vital ingredients to a retention-oriented operation.

Despite best efforts, the fitness industry's average retention rate is between 60% and 70%. In other words, a facility with a membership base of 2,000 individuals would be required to sell between 600 and 800 new memberships per year simply to make up for the number of people who decided not to renew their relationship with the facility. This is extremely troubling in small markets where the number of potential members is limited. Given that income derived from members will be the single largest revenue

stream of the proposed new multi-purpose facility, it will be exceedingly important that the management team remain vigilant and focused on the implementation of a fulsome member retention strategy.

The following assumptions have been employed to predict the operating and financial performance of a new conditioning/healthy living centre developed as part of the multi-purpose recreation facility:

- The conditioning centre would be accommodated in 10,000 square feet, approximately 1,500 of which would be dedicated to a group exercise area (aerobic room) with the balance of the space being used for strength training machines, cardiovascular equipment, free weights, core training, etc.
- The fitness facility would open with 2,000 adult and 1,000 children/youth members. Thereafter, the facility would sell 700 new adult and 325 children/youth memberships per year.
- Retention rates would rise from 66% in the first year of operations to 69% in year five.
- Each new adult member would pay a joining fee of \$25 beginning in year two of operations.
- The facility would realize \$400 in annual revenue for each adult member and \$200 for each child/youth member. This anticipated revenue per member is about 8% below the average relative annual membership fee to account for the downward income pressure caused by short term memberships, mid term cancellations, member subsidies, etc.
- About 5% of the members would participate in revenue generating program such as personal training.
- Utilities for the conditioning/healthy living centre are estimated based upon \$6.50 per square foot of floor space.

- The marketing and promotions budget is expected to climb after the first year of operations (from \$25,000 in the first year to \$75,000 in year two) to support an aggressive new membership sales program and member retention strategy.
- The group exercise class schedule would include an average of four classes per day of varying types of programs such as aerobics, yoga, etc.
- The operation would be the responsibility of a Fitness Manager who would work with a team of specialists including group exercise leaders (such as aerobic instructors), personal trainers, fitness coordinators, etc.
- A fitness coordinator would supervise the training and workout area during each prime-time hour. Coverage would be reduced by 75% for non prime-time hours.
- All other operating expense projections are based upon similar operations elsewhere.

The following table provides the first and fifth year financial projection of the new conditioning centre based upon the preceding assumptions:

	Year 1 (\$)	Year 5 (\$)
Members	3,000	3,157
<u>Revenue</u>		
Joining Fee	0	17,500
Memberships	1,000,000	1,289,482
Class and Guest Fees	10,000	12,155
Programs	20,000	24,310
Miscellaneous	50,000	58,623
Total Revenue	1,008,000	1,384,570
<u>Expenses</u>		
Labour	307,060	332,371
Operations	157,000	210,507
Total Expenses	464,060	542,878
Net Annual Income	615,940	841,691

The preceding projections assume that the management team described in the Central Services section would oversee the facility. Therefore, although the net income of the condition/healthy living centre appears impressive, a significant proportion of the administration labour cost could legitimately be apportioned to this operating unit.

It is assumed that the organization would be able to maintain estimated membership levels throughout the course of each 12-month fiscal period and that month-by-month fluctuations in either the adult or child/youth member rosters would not have a significant impact upon membership revenues.

The projections also assume that the majority of conditioning and healthy living centre activity would arise from members as opposed to drop-in guests. Additionally, to protect the revenue certainty associated with membership fees, it will be important that pay-as-you-go traffic does not inhibit the facility's capacity or the organization's ability to adequately serve its members. Consequently, it will be important for the management team to balance its focus on serving the community to the fullest extent possible, while providing top-notch quality services to its members – which will be essential in maintaining acceptable member retention performance.

1.11 CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS

The combined operations of all facility components and programs in the new multi-purpose facility would produce first-year net operating proceeds of about \$130,000. Based upon the operating and pricing assumptions described in previous sections, the net revenue would increase to approximately \$315,000 by the fifth year of operations. It is noteworthy that decisions associated with adjustments to pricing, policies, programs, schedules, allocation and participant profiles could either positively or negatively influence the facility's operating performance.

The following table illustrates the financial performance of the facility in the first and fifth year of its operations:

	Year 1 (\$)	Year 5 (\$)
<u>Revenue</u>		
Arena	430,692	466,195
Pool	72,500	78,476
Conditioning/Healthy Living Centre	1,008,000	1,384,570
Total Revenue	1,583,192	1,929,241
<u>Expenses</u>		
Central Services	157,500	170,483
Arena	451,961	489,217
Pool	380,000	411,324
Conditioning/Healthy Living Centre	464,060	542,878
Total Expenses	1,453,521	1,613,903
Net Annual Income	129,671	315,338

1.12 FUNDING THE NEW FACILITY

We understand that a number of funding scenarios have been discussed by the YMCA, community groups and municipal officials. However, to date, we are not aware of a firm funding commitment or reliable fund-raising initiatives that could underwrite a substantial portion of the facility's development cost.

Very preliminary estimates suggest that the total construction and development cost of the multi-purpose facility would amount to between \$18M and \$20M. The public has expressed a degree of support for the project and, therefore, it would be reasonable to assume that a well-orchestrated fund-raising campaign might be successful in raising a portion of the total project construction cost. Also, there may be future opportunities to access funds from programs available through senior levels of government – although currently, there is no provincial or federal dedicated recreation infrastructure-funding program. Finally, the municipality may consider the project as part of its long-range capital funding program and also solicit capital contributions from its adjacent cost-sharing municipalities.

In similar situations in other communities, project partners have considered financing a portion of capital costs when fund-raising efforts or access to senior level funding programs was insufficient to underwrite the cost of the development. Based upon a conservative municipal borrowing rate of 6% and assuming a 20-year amortization, projected net proceeds from operations would only be capable of covering debt service charges for amounts of between \$2M and \$3M in financed capital. **Therefore, the project would only seem financially viable if virtually none of the required capital funds attract interest or debt service charges, unless the City and its partners are willing to incur significant interest charges on a long-term basis.**

It would be important for municipal officials to consider a number of other issues related to development decisions for the new multi-purpose facility, including the following:

- Owen Sound represents a relatively small market for a large facility of this sort. In order to reach the projected revenue levels, the facility must reach retention rates equivalent to the top performing recreation centres in the province. Furthermore, the operator would be required to sustain these retention rates over time in order to realize the projected revenue streams; Owen Sound's relative isolation may be a positive factor in attaining high retention rates. From the information we have been provided about current operations in the City, it would not be unreasonable to assume that a new multi-use complex can sustain the capture rates and revenues proposed in this report, however, it is imperative that these assumptions be reviewed and validated by the City and its partners.
- The size of the local market does not offer sufficient potential members to support two large wellness operations. Therefore, the development of a conditioning and healthy living centre as part of the new complex would necessitate that the current YMCA operation be discontinued.

- To fulfill the projected financial performance, the two ice surfaces would be required to operate at approximately 95% capacity for the foreseeable future. While this may be achievable, it bears noting that it represents a 50% increase in prime time rentals over current levels.
- The development of the indoor pool would have a detrimental impact (quantifiably unknown) on the operations and financial performance of the City's other swimming venues (e.g., Harrison Park pool, private facilities).
- Commitment from the adjacent municipalities to this project needs to be secured and quantified.

1.13 NEXT STEPS

This Discussion Paper is intended to frame several issues and considerations relating to the development and operation of a multi-use facility in the City of Owen Sound. In terms of next steps, we recommend that the City share this discussion paper with the Joint Pool Investigation Committee and work towards:

- 1) validating the accuracy of the assumptions contained in this discussion paper; the City and its partners should verify that the assumptions are generally consistent with their expectations;
- 2) initiating discussions to crystallize the facility concept and explore capital estimates and funding options for the proposed facility (e.g., grants, fund-raising, etc.), as well as reasonable expectations for each funding stream; and
- 3) identifying basic partnership principles with the Joint Pool Committee and/or YMCA to establish the potential structure of the relationship; other potential partners (e.g., Agricultural Society, school boards, etc.) should also be at the table early on in the process.

APPENDIX C

PARKS & TRAIL MAPS

Sources:

- City of Owen Sound Official Plan Background Report (Parks, Open Space, Sports Fields, and Neighbourhoods map);
- City of Owen Sound Official Plan (Park Trails Master Plan map)

Parks

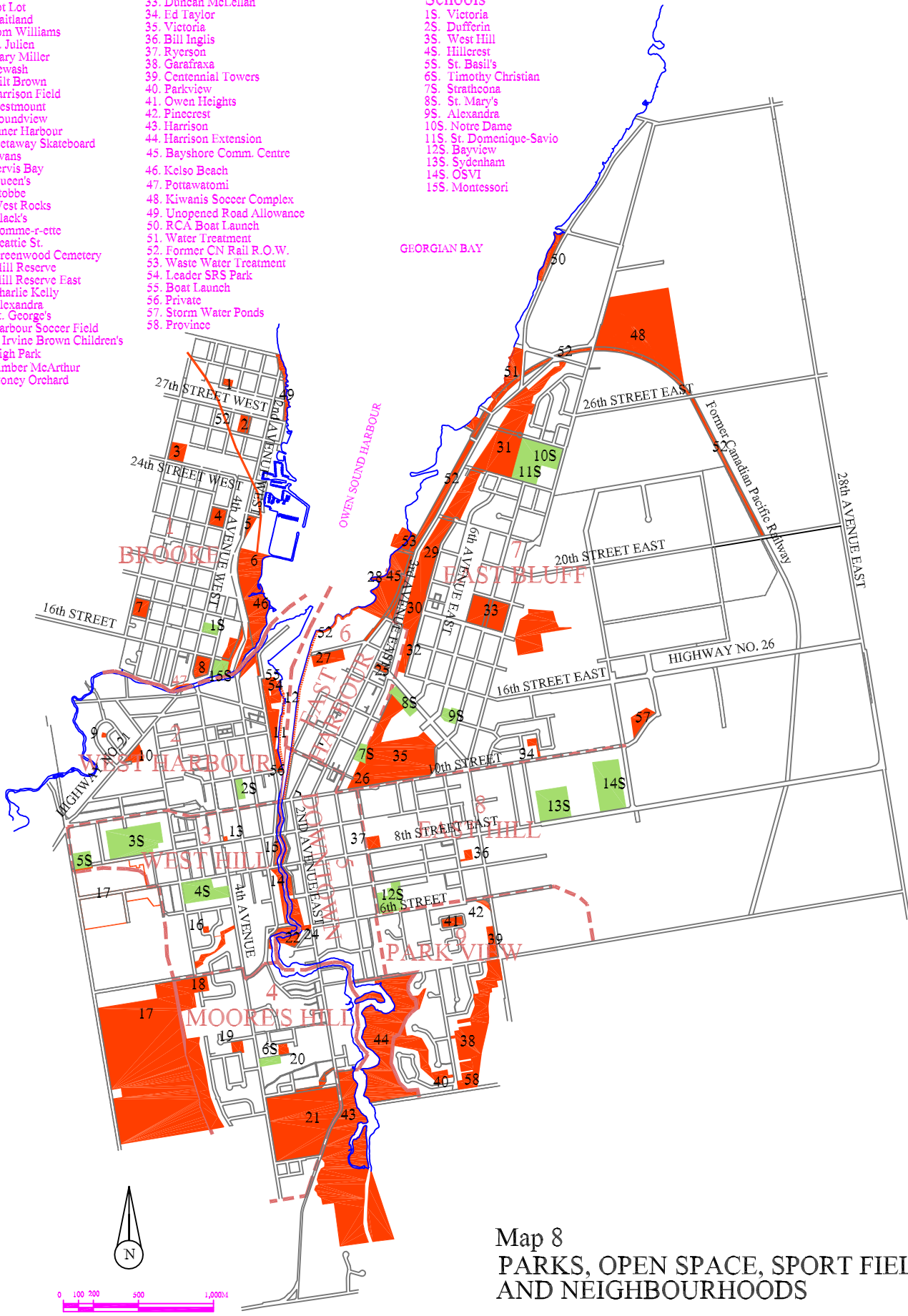
1. Tot Lot
2. Maitland
3. Tom Williams
4. St. Julien
5. Mary Miller
6. Newash
7. Milt Brown
8. Harrison Field
9. Westmount
10. Soundview
11. Inner Harbour
12. Getaway Skateboard
13. Evans
14. Jarvis Bay
15. Queen's
16. Stobbe
17. West Rocks
18. Blacks
19. Comme-r-ette
20. Beattie St.
21. Greenwood Cemetery
22. Mill Reserve
23. Mill Reserve East
24. Charlie Kelly
25. Alexandra
26. St. George's
27. Harbour Soccer Field
28. J. Irvine Brown Children's
29. High Park
30. Timber McArthur
31. Stoney Orchard

Schools

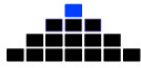
32. Bayview
33. Duncan McLellan
34. Ed Taylor
35. Victoria
36. Bill Inglis
37. Ryerson
38. Garafraza
39. Centennial Towers
40. Parkview
41. Owen Heights
42. Pinecrest
43. Harrison
44. Harrison Extension
45. Bayshore Comm. Centre
46. Kelso Beach
47. Pottawatomi
48. Kiwanis Soccer Complex
49. Unopened Road Allowance
50. RCA Boat Launch
51. Water Treatment
52. Former CN Rail R.O.W.
53. Waste Water Treatment
54. Leader SRS Park
55. Boat Launch
56. Private
57. Storm Water Ponds
58. Province

Schools

- 1S. Victoria
- 2S. Dufferin
- 3S. West Hill
- 4S. Hillcrest
- 5S. St. Basil's
- 6S. Timothy Christian
- 7S. Strathcona
- 8S. St. Mary's
- 9S. Alexandra
- 10S. Notre Dame
- 11S. St. Dominique-Savio
- 12S. Bayview
- 13S. Sydenham
- 14S. OSVI
- 15S. Montessori



**Map 8
PARKS, OPEN SPACE, SPORT FIELDS
AND NEIGHBOURHOODS**

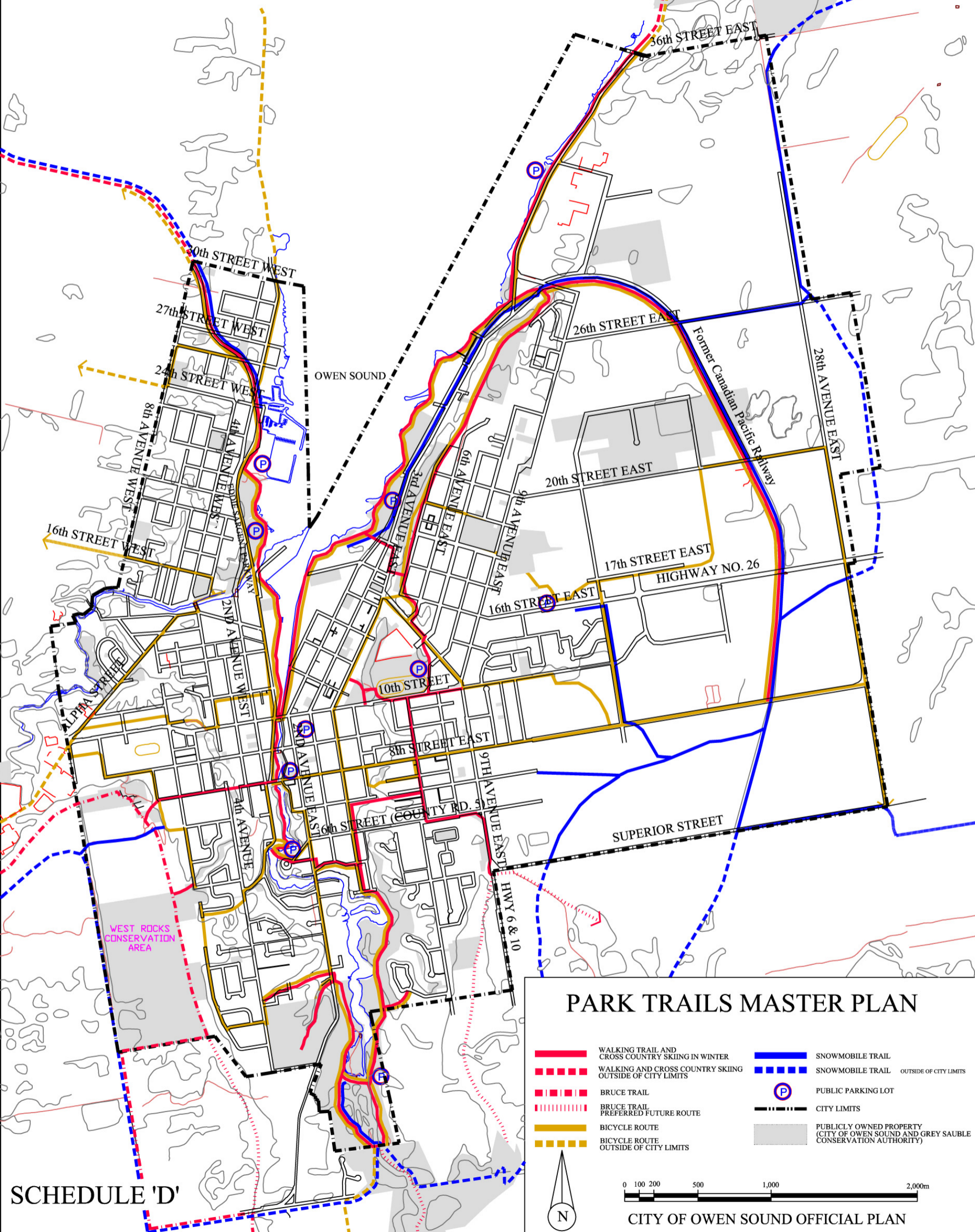


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|--|---|--|---|
| | WALKING TRAIL AND CROSS COUNTRY SKIING IN WINTER | | SNOWMOBILE TRAIL |
| | WALKING AND CROSS COUNTRY SKIING OUTSIDE OF CITY LIMITS | | SNOWMOBILE TRAIL OUTSIDE OF CITY LIMITS |
| | BRUCE TRAIL | | PUBLIC PARKING LOT |
| | BRUCE TRAIL PREFERRED FUTURE ROUTE | | CITY LIMITS |
| | BICYCLE ROUTE | | PUBLICLY OWNED PROPERTY (CITY OF OWEN SOUND AND GREY SAUBLE CONSERVATION AUTHORITY) |
| | BICYCLE ROUTE OUTSIDE OF CITY LIMITS | | |



0 100 200 500 1,000 2,000m

CITY OF OWEN SOUND OFFICIAL PLAN

SCHEDULE 'D'