

CITY OF PORT COLBORNE

PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

2020 - 2030

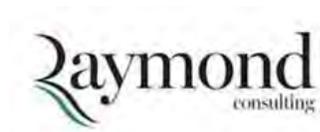


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Background:

The City launched the development of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan in January 2019. The process involved significant community engagement, led by the consulting team of MHBC Planning Ltd. and Raymond Consulting, and guided by the City's Community and Economic Development Department. In total, more than 1,000 residents, visitors, Council members and City Staff, representing a wide variety of stakeholder groups, were engaged to voice their thoughts on parks and recreation in Port Colborne.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan (the 'Plan') identifies needs and priorities for the City of Port Colborne to the year 2030 and provides the City with a long term direction with regards to the provision of parks and recreation services for City residents and visitors. Port Colborne is unique based on its marine history, location along the Welland Canal, its community oriented management, natural assets, and its proximity to major Provincial and Regional transportation corridors, Regional urban centres and other attractions.

This Master Plan provides staff, Council and the public with a framework informed by the City's community values, operational needs and financial realities. The Plan will help shape decision making over the next 10 years, towards achieving a 2030 vision. The Plan provides an assessment and progress tool to ensure that the Community and Economic Development Department achieves success towards providing high quality services and facilities that meet the needs of the community. Additionally, the Plan has been designed to be a flexible, working document that can adapt to changing community values, emerging trends, new opportunities and operational priorities.

The Master Plan provides an opportunity to tell the story of Port Colborne – the current state of recreational programming and services; what is being done well and where there is need for direction to provide high quality recreational services and amenities. This Master Plan reflects the Community's values and goals for Port Colborne's parks and recreation and demonstrates how recreation can support and enhance the City's vision as a vibrant, healthy and connected community. As a result of the master planning process, the following outcomes were achieved:

1. Established the current context for the Department and the Master Plan including industry trends, challenges, population and demographics, user expectations, and a community profile;
2. Defined the City's role in providing Parks and Recreation services, and identified the Department's role;
3. Provided a baseline assessment of the Parks and Recreation service areas, including a review of Departmental policies and infrastructure;
4. Provided an innovative and comprehensive long-term vision and plan for the delivery of parks, recreation, facilities and services in the City;
5. Created an implementation strategy for the 2030 vision that addresses service level changes and human resource needs. This provides staff with a framework for future decision making that allows staff and Council to be responsive to changing needs, trends and opportunities.

The Community and Economic Development Department plays an important role in leading and providing parks and recreation programming, facilities development, and facilitating partnerships to deliver and create healthy and active lifestyles for Port Colborne's residents. Accordingly, it is recommended that the Department adopt the following mandate to guide the development in implementing the 2030 strategy:

"The Parks, Recreation and Culture mandate is to promote and facilitate healthy and active lifestyles in Port Colborne. This is achieved by taking a leadership role through programming,

facility development and creative partnerships with public and private sector groups who share our passion for a dynamic, inclusive, innovative, and fun community.”

Further, the Parks and Recreation Master Plan is intended to complement past studies (e.g. Economic Development Strategic Plan, Arts and Culture Master Plan) and provide a comprehensive strategy, which focuses on program and service delivery to ensure the City continues to meet the recreation needs of residents and visitors of all ages and abilities. The scope of the Master Plan is limited to the programs and services provided by the City of Port Colborne, which are delivered primarily through the City’s Department of Community and Economic Development. This Plan is a ten-year plan, and provides a range of recommended actions to be undertaken in the short-term (within 2 years), the medium-term (3-5 years), and the long-term (6-10 years). In several cases, recommended actions identified in the Implementation Plan (Section 13) are best practices already applied by the Community and Economic Development Department. By including these actions in the Master Plan, it reinforces the importance of continuing to implement these best practices over the ten year timeframe of this Plan.

The Master Plan was supported by a public consultation program, which included several public workshops/public meetings, input from stakeholders, staff and other recreation program service providers, and an on-line survey. Detailed results of this consultation are included in a compendium Consultation Report document which should be read in conjunction with this Master Plan.

The following five themes emerged throughout the process of undertaking the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. These five themes inform the implementation strategy and the key objectives for Port Colborne’s Community and Economic Development Department as it moves forward.

1. **Accessibility & Inclusiveness**
2. **Partnerships & Collaboration**
3. **Communication & Engagement**
4. **Innovation and Building Capacity**
5. **Optimization of Infrastructure**

These five themes have been incorporated into the Master Plan’s Strategic Directions and Implementation Plan as the Master Plan Goal Areas. As a result, over 100 recommendations/strategic actions have been provided under these five general themes, which are intended to help the Community and Economic Development Department build capacity in programming; enhance diversity of opportunities for participants; establish a framework for identifying partnerships; and, provide a framework for assessing feasibility of future Parks and Recreation programming and facilities.

The top fifteen pressing actions for the City of Port Colborne to implement over the next ten years are identified below. These are not presented in any order of priority or timing.

1. Prepare a **Strategic Action Plan for the development of the Port Colborne waterfront of Lake Erie**, including the Welland Canal, Gravelly Bay, Sugarloaf Marina, H.H. Knoll Park and all City beaches to revitalize the area with land and water activities, including a high level of community engagement.

- a. Construct boat launches for non-motorized vehicles
 - b. Identify and designate Recreational Waterways
 - c. Upgrade access to all waterfront destinations including Nickel Beach, Sugarloaf Marina.
 - d. Upgrade public use amenities (washrooms, food and beverage services, watercraft rentals)
 - e. Create/design a waterfront brand. Prepare signs and enhance public information through social media, etc.
 - f. Link trails and improve signage to encourage cyclist, walking and commuters to explore all the waterfront amenities available. Consider re-naming streets to highlight the destination and placemaking theme of the waterfront (e.g. Nickel Beach Way, Welland Esplanade).
2. As part of Port Colborne's Beach Strategy, **develop and implement a Strategy for Nickel Beach Development** by considering establishing the following:
- a. New concession stand
 - b. Updated change room and washroom facilities
 - c. Playground update
 - d. Parking (both on-site and off-site)
 - e. Review operating hours and length of season beach is open to public
 - f. Trail connectivity
 - g. Consideration of a waterfront boardwalk
 - h. Strategy for addressing Fowlers Toad
 - i. Alternative vehicular/trails access to beach
 - j. Explore sustainable solutions to address erosion of the beach
3. **Create park and facility guidelines** that exceed AODA standards and implement inclusive design standards. Develop an accessible park that creates opportunities for all abilities and levels of enjoyment.
4. **Engage in discussion with the YMCA to address internal processes, policies and procedures** in response to current and future needs and recommendations based on this Master Plan (such as the need to enhance programming and available rental space within the gymnasium and fitness/health related spaces at the Vale Health and Wellness Centre) or the needs of both partners.
- a. This may include adjusting procedures to align budgets that better address efficiencies.
 - b. Relocate City staff to front desk in order to highlight partnership at central entrance to Vale Health and Wellness Centre to enhance efficiencies in service delivery of both partners.
5. Ensure **physical accessibility measures are incorporated into existing and new facilities** and considered for all Parks and Recreation programming where possible. Specific facilities/amenities to update include:
- a. Vale Health and Wellness Centre (entrance and seating)
 - b. Bethel Community Centre
 - c. Roselawn Centre for the Arts (access, seating, lighting)
 - d. Surfacing treatments at play structures
 - e. Beach access (wheelchair accessible parking and boardwalk access at Nickel Beach)
 - f. Trail connections between paved, multi-use trails and parks

6. In the longer-term, build on and **incorporate emerging sport and activities into program offerings** (e.g. pre-school mix it up sports, Family Pickleball, Late Night Drop-in for Teens, Open Playtime, Bounce Basketball, Stick and Puck and water sports).
 - a. In particular, consider increasing **waterfront programming** (e.g. Open water lifeguard services, kayak rentals, stand-up paddle boarding) and integrate the marina and waterfront into programming.
 - b. Increase indoor aquatic program offerings (synchronized swimming, water polo, underwater hockey, swimathons, etc.)

7. **Prepare a Canal Days Business Plan** with the primary focus of identifying a Host Organization for the City's flagship event.
 - a. Identify an appropriate organizational structure for Host Organization.
 - b. Conduct public consultation with attendees (residents and visitors) to collect data on level of satisfaction with Canal Days (as currently offered).
 - c. Conduct one-on-one interviews with City staff and Council members to gather input on the long-term vision for this marine heritage festival.
 - d. Consider opportunities to contract an events firm to coordinate/lead Canal Days (with input provided from City staff and host organization/committee).
 - e. Develop and implement the Tourism and Festival Event Assessment Criteria (see **Appendix A**) to determine which festivals and events have the highest potential for tourism.

8. **Develop an "Active Aging" strategy** that focuses on getting older adults into programs and facilities as they age. Components of this strategy would be:
 - a. Staff training on best/leading practices in Active Aging;
 - b. Planning and hosting events/initiatives for active agers;
 - c. Review of the recently released [Shape Niagara](#) community engagement initiative and consider implementation of recommendations into Port Colborne-specific strategy;
 - d. Review of the [Niagara Aging Strategy and Action Plan](#); and,
 - e. Ensure that programming considers an 'Active Aging' component wherever practical.

9. **Invest in trail enhancements/ connections through the preparation of a Trails and Bicycling Master Plan (TBMP)** to assist in identifying options and priorities for developing a comprehensive trails system. As part of the TBMP, consider:
 - a. Utilizing un-opened road allowances for parks and recreational purposes;
 - b. Providing additional trail connections, linkages, and crossings throughout the City;
 - c. Providing on-road bike routes/lanes for improved connectivity throughout the City;
 - d. Constructing paved trails through some naturalized areas;
 - e. Implementing bike trails in public right-of-ways;
 - f. Preparing and implementing trail design standards;
 - g. Design interpretive signage that reflects the unique historical, cultural heritage and natural assets along trails;
 - h. Integrating greater range of interpretive signage (AODA compliant) on existing and future trail networks;
 - i. Including designated bike lanes and look for enhancements where appropriate through consultation with local trail groups;
 - j. Providing secure and safe off-road bike access to Nickel Beach; and,

- k. Review opportunities for designated multi-purpose/multi-use trails (e.g. equestrian, motorized, walking, hiking, cycling).
10. Develop and maintain a **Parks and Recreation Partnership Framework**.
 - a. Work with partners to **negotiate and develop partnership agreements to access sponsorship revenues**. See **Appendix B** for an example sponsorship policy and **Section 3.2 and 12.3.4** of the report for a discussion on Inter-municipal collaboration.
 - b. Proactively **pursue new cost share partnerships** that will enable the City to address eligible parks, recreation and facility gaps identified in the Plan and optimize use of current and future City assets. Continuously **explore partnership options** to provide multipurpose space/services including in-depth evaluation of capital reinvestment/repurposing/expansion needs. Initiate and create Public-Private Partnerships (P3s) between government and private-sector entities for the purpose of providing public infrastructure, community facilities and related services.
 - c. Evaluate operating agreements with partners to ensure coordination of programming **and identify service areas that may be best suited to be delivered by the private sector** (i.e. concessionaire/retail services, commercial hockey, facility rental for profit).

 11. **Consider preparing an Events and Sports Tourism Strategy (ESTS)** by exploring a wide range of opportunities for the City to act as a host to **sponsor and showcase live sporting events**. See **Appendix B** for an example of a proposed Sponsorship Policy and Procedures.
 - a. Opportunities to promote the Niagara 2021 Canada Summer Games should be explored through this strategy.
 - b. Opportunities to leverage Port Colborne’s existing cycling infrastructure should be incorporated into the strategy.

 12. **Engage in discussion with interested private and not for profit organizations to facilitate programming and services at Roselawn Centre for the Arts**. Prepare a facility management partnership agreement and identify prospective programming partners to deliver dramatic, performing and visual arts programming (Showboat Theatre, Schools and business).

 13. **Partner/collaborate with health, education and policing/justice agencies to address the concerns associated with Needle Debris** to raise community awareness about needle safety.

 14. Develop a **long-Term growth strategy for the Sugarloaf Marina** – and adjacent Park and City lands.
 - a. Marina related programming i.e. small craft rentals, paddle boarding, sailing lessons etc.
 - b. Potential to expand commercial business through partnerships and contractual relationships.
 - c. Prepare a Business Case for boat dock/storage expansion.

 15. **Identify opportunities to maximize multi-use recreational space at Vale Health and Wellness Centre** to increase the supply of multi-use and multi-functional rooms (e.g. use of dividing curtains, portable boards, temporary bleachers, bocce club expansion, etc.)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose & Scope

Recreation and leisure opportunities provide physical, psychological and social benefits that contribute to quality of life. Recreation services can also positively impact community cohesiveness and strengthen family bonds. Healthy, diverse, and vibrant communities provide an abundance of “quality of life services”, and focus on producing quality experiences. Likewise these services can help attract new residents and businesses to the community and retain current residents.

The purpose of this Parks and Recreation Master Plan (PRMP or ‘Plan’) is to provide the City of Port Colborne with long term direction with regards to the provision of parks and recreation services to City residents and visitors over the next 10 years. The City of Port Colborne invests in parks and recreation services because it believes in the value and benefit that these services provide to the community.

The PRMP is meant to guide decision-making efforts, inform stakeholders, and the public in understanding the identified needs and priorities related to recreation, parks spaces, City-run events, programs, and facilities within the City. The Master Plan focuses on supporting healthier, more active lifestyles through the development of community parks, recreational programming, and trail resources. In total, five goals have been established for this PRMP:

- **Goal 1 - Accessible & Inclusive:** To ensure community facilities, services and programs are accessible and inclusive of all.
- **Goal 2 - Partnership & Collaboration:** Build capacity and promote healthy lifestyles through partnerships and collaboration.
- **Goal 3 - Communication & Engagement:** Increase Parks and Recreation user retention and growth through the implementation of strategic communication efforts.
- **Goal 4 - Innovation and Building Capacity:** Be an innovative leader in developing and providing recreation services that promote healthy lifestyles and wellbeing.
- **Goal 5 - Optimization of Infrastructure, Programming & Service Delivery:** To efficiently deliver Parks and Recreation Services.

The goals are based on common themes that emerged as a result of consultation with the public, stakeholder groups, City Council, and Staff. These five goals and the resulting recommendations align with the 2015 Canadian national guiding document, “A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Wellbeing”.

Recently completed/adopted plans, strategies and policies were used to inform various aspects of the City’s Recreation model. These plans include the City of Port Colborne Official Plan, the Economic Development

Strategic Plan 2018-2028, Arts and Culture Master Plan, East Waterfront Improvement Plan and Draft Secondary Plan. Earlier documents that provided context on the parks and recreation needs of Port Colborne were also reviewed including the Downtown Central Business District Urban Design Strategy and facility condition assessments for the City's parks and recreation facilities (e.g. Roselawn Centre for the Arts).

These plans and strategies serve as important planning tools for the provision of parks and recreation programming and facilities. The Parks and Recreation Master Plan is intended to complement these documents and provide a comprehensive implementation plan which focuses on program and service delivery to ensure the City continues to meet the recreation needs of residents and program/ service users from the surrounding area of all ages and abilities.

The scope of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan is limited to the programs and services provided by the City of Port Colborne, which are delivered primarily through the City's Community and Economic Development Department. Since the City recently completed and adopted an Arts and Culture Master Plan, this PRMP did not include a detailed review of the City's cultural recreation amenities. However, the Project Team did undertake a review of the City's events provision approach and facilitated a dedicated session for Canal Days, as this is the City's flagship festival. A review of the Roselawn Centre's programming and future vision has also been undertaken as part of this PRMP.

This Plan is a ten-year plan, and provides a range of recommended actions to be undertaken in the short (1-2 years), medium (3-5 years) and long-term (5-10 years). The Parks and Recreation Master Plan establishes a comprehensive recreation model for the City, which will include the following key outcomes:

- Established the current context for the Department and the Master Plan including industry trends, challenges, population and demographics, user expectations, and a community profile;
- Defined the City's role in providing Parks and Recreation services, and identified the Department's role;
- Provided a baseline assessment of the Parks and Recreation service areas, including a review of Departmental policies and infrastructure;
- Provided an innovative and comprehensive long-term vision and plan for the delivery of parks, recreation, facilities and services in the City;
- Created an implementation strategy for the 2030 vision that addresses areas service level changes and human resource needs. This provides staff with a framework for future decision making that allows staff and Council to be response to changing needs, trends and opportunities.

This Master Plan is intended to guide the City of Port Colborne's policies and actions in recreation by creating an implementation plan that empowers the community to work towards enhancing health and wellbeing for all.

1.2 Benefits of Recreation

Based on the City’s goals and the alignment with the “*Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Wellbeing*” the following definition of *recreation* is adopted throughout this plan¹:

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

Note that this definition includes active recreation such as team sports and individual fitness, but also the full range of cultural activities such as visual and performing arts, and other ‘cultural’ pursuits.

The benefits and outcomes that result from providing a high level of recreation and related services (e.g. culture and parks) to residents are substantiated by numerous studies and supporting research. The [National Benefits HUB](#) is a research database which provides access to resources identifying the positive impacts of recreation, sport, fitness, arts and culture, heritage, parks and green spaces on a community. Identified below are the eight key messages from Canada’s National Benefits HUB, with corresponding evidence related to how recreation can positively impact a community and its residents.

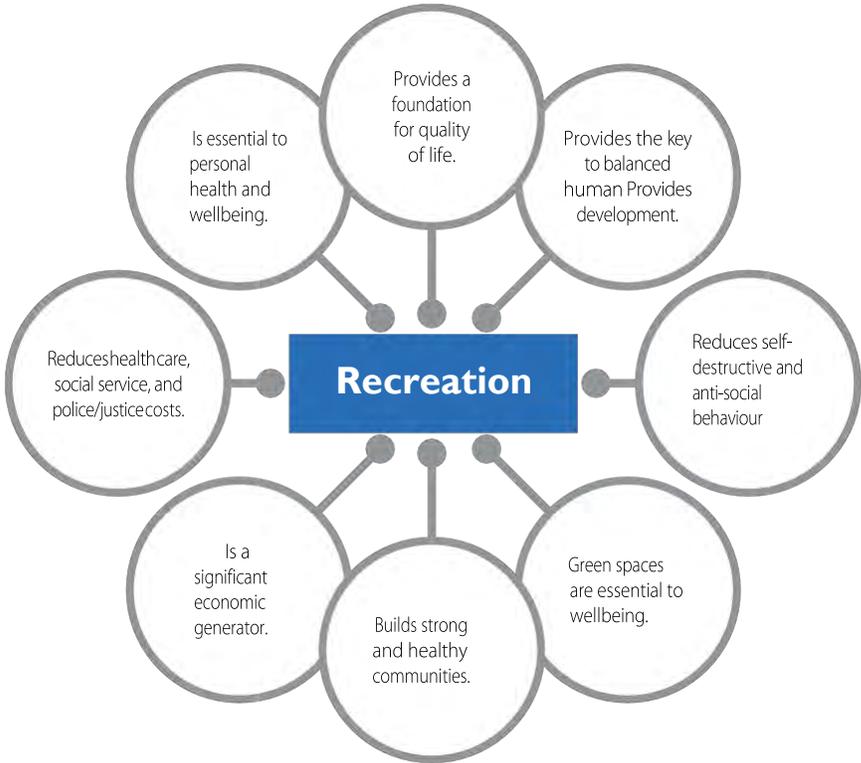


Figure 1: Benefits of Recreation

RECREATION & CULTURE:

Is essential to personal health & well-being

- Increased leisure time and physical activity improves life expectancy.
- Physical activity contributes to improved mental health and reduced rates of depression.
- Participation in physical activity can reduce workplace related stress.

¹ [A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Wellbeing](#)

- The provision of green spaces has been linked with a number of health and well-being benefits including: increased physical activity, improved cognitive development in children², reduced risk of obesity, minimized utilization of the healthcare system, and stress reduction.

Provide the key to balanced human development

- Regular physical activity is likely to provide children with the optimum physiological condition for maximizing learning.
- Low income students who are involved in arts activities have higher academic achievement and are more likely to go to college.
- The arts and other forms of creativity can have profound individual social outcomes and generate a deeper sense of place and local community.
- Individuals that participate in physical activity in a social setting have improved psychological and social health, and often benefit from increased self-awareness and personal growth.

Provide a foundation for quality of life

- The arts are seen as an important contributor to quality of life in communities.
- High quality public spaces can enhance the sense of community in new neighbourhoods.
- Community sport facilities have positive benefits related to increased accessibility, exposure, participation, perceptions of success, and improved sport experiences.

Reduce self-destructive & anti-social behaviour

- Youth participation in recreational activities such as camps increases leadership and social capacities.
- Participation in recreation and leisure related activities by low income and other at risk children and youth populations can result in decreased behavioural/emotional problems, decreased use of emergency services, and enhanced physical and psycho-social health of families.
- Teen athletes are less likely to use illicit drugs, smoke or to be suicidal.

Build strong families & healthy communities

- People with an active interest in the arts contribute more to society than those with little or no such interest.
- Structured sport and recreational activities can help foster a stronger sense of community among children and youth.

Reduce health care, social service, and police/ justice costs

- Physical inactivity has a number of direct and indirect financial impacts on all levels of government.
- Parks and recreation programming during non-school hours can reduce costs associated with juvenile delinquency and obesity.
- Increased fitness leads to lowered risk factors for substance abuse among youth populations.

² See: *Urban Ecology – A Natural Way to Transform Kids, Parks, Cities and the World*, Ken Leinbach, Morgan James Publishing, New York, 2018.

Are a significant economic generator

- Recent Canadian research indicated that recreation & cultural activities have the potential to be significant drivers of economic outputs and employment.
- Evidence suggests that recreational & leisure activities shape the competitive character of a community by enhancing both its innovative capacity and the quality of place, which is crucial to attracting and retaining skilled workers.
- The provision of quality parks and open spaces can have significant economic benefits which include increased property values and tourism potential.

And that green spaces are essential to environmental & ecological well-being—even survival

- Sustainable public green spaces provide crucial areas for residents of all demographics to be physically and socially active.
- Increasing green spaces in urban centres has a number of positive environmental outcomes which can increase sustainability and lower long term infrastructure costs.
- When children and youth have positive experiences with parks and green spaces, they are more likely to have stronger attitudes towards conservation and preservation of the environment as adults.

1.2.1 Additional Literature Highlighting Recreation and Community Belonging

As highlighted by the National Benefits HUB, participation in recreational pursuits has the potential to increase sense of place and community belonging. A survey of over 115,000 respondents across Canada indicates that increased sense of community belonging was strongly related to positive health behaviors including exercise, weight loss and improved diet³.

With respect to Port Colborne’s demographic trend towards an aging population identified later through **Figure 6**, older adults will require new ways to connect with their neighbourhoods and communities in the future. In Vancouver (2012), analyses were conducted with 20 older adults participating in the Vancouver-based program Arts, Health and Seniors Program. The study, published in the Canadian Journal on Aging, concluded that participants were able to connect with their community in new ways, by extending their relationships beyond the seniors centre, and developed a stronger sense of community⁴.

Through consultation with Port Colborne stakeholders, including residents, Council, Staff and recreational providers and organizations, it is evident that these benefits are understood and sought after. In particular, stakeholders demonstrated their value for healthy, active lifestyles and inclusive recreational activities.

1.3 Methodology

The consulting team of MacNaughton Hermsen Britton Clarkson (MHBC) Planning Ltd. and Raymond Consulting were retained by the City of Port Colborne to undertake this Parks and Recreation Master Plan through a five phase process. The foundation of the Master Plan is based upon public, stakeholder and

³ Kitchen, P., Williams, A., & Chowhan, J. (2012). Sense of Community Belonging and Health in Canada: Regional Analysis. *Social Indicators Research*, 107(1), 103-126.

⁴ Moody, E., & Phinney, A. (2012). A Community-Engaged Art Program for Older People: Fostering Social Inclusion. *Canadian Journal on Aging / La Revue Canadienne Du Vieillissement*, 31(1), 55-64.

departmental consultation, with input from the public, stakeholders groups, Staff and other recreation program service providers.

The Plan was developed under the guidance of the Community and Economic Development Department, key Staff, and City Council. The various methods of gathering information and collecting opinions are presented in a comprehensive multi-step process as shown in **Table 1**.

Port Colborne's community consultation program was based on the following principles:

- The community should be engaged at the beginning of the project and at various times throughout the project;
- All community members should have the opportunity to participate;
- There should be a variety of consultation methods (workshops, online surveys, open houses, etc.) so that there are opportunities for people to participate in ways that are the most comfortable and appropriate for them;
- The consultation sessions should focus on going to where the people are rather than having the people come to us; and
- The consultation program should provide for "information out" as well as "information in."

This collaborative process helped to facilitate innovative solutions and recommendations that will help guide strategic decision-making regarding future recreation and parks programs and services. Although the process focuses on the role of the City of Port Colborne in service delivery, programming, and infrastructure, the intent was to provide insight and information for the benefit of all stakeholders, including regional partners, local non-profit volunteer groups, and the private sector (all of which deliver and provide valuable opportunities for residents and visitors to be engaged in healthy, active and creative lifestyles).

The project team and the City of Port Colborne utilized a collaborative approach throughout the engagement strategy. The community's feedback played an integral role in determining the recommendations for the Master Plan.

Public, department, and stakeholder sessions allowed for multiple participants and interest groups to discuss and make comments on what they would like to see for the future of Port Colborne's parks and recreation. Consultation was held both formally and informally, and the public was engaged early on in the project and throughout the process which ensured interested stakeholders had the opportunity to share their concerns and innovative ideas. A variety of engagement opportunities were provided to the community and cold calls/e-mails were always accepted by the consultation team. The goal was to obtain the largest sample size possible, so as to make inferences about Port Colborne that would accurately reflect the community as a whole.

Table 1 below provides an overview of the consultation approach adopted in preparing this master plan.

Table 1 - Consultation Approach

BACKGROUND INFORMATION	CITY ENGAGEMENT	ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATIONS	FINAL PLAN & IMPLEMENTATION
Project Initiation Meeting	Project Initiation Meeting	Determine Capacity of Existing Facilities, Programs, and Services	Prepare Final Master Plan
Policy and Background Planning Review	Facilitated Tour with City Staff	Management Tools and Guidelines (Service Delivery, Promotions, and Marketing, Classifications, Partnering/ Collaborations, etc.)	Circulate draft Master Plan to Council and Public in advance of Public Meeting
Population and Demographics Analysis	Community Services and Economic Development Department Staff Focus Groups (SCOT)	Future Programs, Indoor and Outdoor Facility Priorities	Presentation of Final Plan to Council and Public
Community Description	Facilitated Discussions with Upper Management & Department Heads		
Comparative Research	Council Engagement Public Open House		
Indoor Facility Inventory and Assessment	Telephone Interviews with Recreational Partners	Review draft recommendations with city staff	
Outdoor Facility Inventory and Assessment	Stakeholder Groups Engagement Workshops and SCOT's		
Recreation Trends Analysis	Online Public Survey		
Programs and Service Delivery Assessment			

Live engagement (facilitated face-to-face discussions with participants) included:

- Project Initiation Meeting
- Facilitated discussions with upper management and department heads
- Community and Economic Development staff focus groups
- Council engagement workshops and SCOT analysis (i.e. Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities, Threats)
- Public Open House and Community Working Session
- Stakeholder Groups Engagement Workshops and SCOT Analysis
- Public presentation and facilitated discussion – “What we heard”
- Canal Days facilitated session
- Indoor training facility discussion with stakeholders
- Online public survey

Independent engagement consisted of:

- Cold calls and e-mails from residents and stakeholder groups
- Individual discussion with key City Staff
- Online Public Survey

Through the online survey and public engagement opportunities, the following Port Colborne organizations provided input:

- Short Hills Cycling Club
- Port Colborne Public Library
- Ladies Recreational Volleyball
- Port Colborne Art Club
- Port Colborne Minor Hockey
- Golden Puck Hockey
- Club Frontenac
- Port Colborne Youth Basketball
- Lakeshore Catholic High School
- Dance Expression Inc. (Dance Studio)
- Port Colborne Recreation Youth Volleyball
- Port Colborne Accessibility Advisory Committee

The following organizations were consulted through additional consultation efforts (e.g. Open House, Stakeholder Working Session, telephone interviews/emails):

- Port Colborne YMCA
- Showboat Theatre
- Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Niagara
- Sport by Ability Niagara
- Quad Niagara
- Bethel Community Centre
- Sherkston Community Centre
- Friends of Roselawn Centre
- Niagara Health System
- Sir John Colborne Youth Soccer Club
- Minor Baseball
- Upper Canada Equestrian Association



MASTER PLAN PROCESS

Phase 1 of the Master Plan process commenced in November, 2018 and included the collection and review of an inventory of special events and parks, trails and recreational facilities. The consulting project team met with City Staff to formally kick-off the project to acquire a better understanding of what the City would like to see included in the finished product. During this Phase, the consulting team also attended a day-long site tour of Parks, Recreation and Cultural facilities such as the Roselawn Centre, H.H. Knoll Lakeview Park, Vale Health and Wellness Centre, Bethel and Sherkston Community Centres, Nickel Beach and cemeteries. The tour included meet-and-greets with several recreation/programming Staff. Notes and photo documentation helped inform the additional inventory prepared by the landscape architecture consultant.

Phase 2 of the Master Plan included extensive stakeholder, Staff and community consultation. In December 2018, the consulting team facilitated a discussion with Upper Management and Department heads, followed by a focus group session with the City's frontline staff to gather input and feedback on their roles, responsibilities, strengths and challenges. This was also an opportunity for all members of the Community and Economic Development Department to discuss their role and vision. The consulting team also facilitated an engagement workshop for Council in mid-December, and conducted a one-on-one interview with the City's CAO in January. All of the sessions incorporated a Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities and Threats (SCOT) analysis to narrow the input of participants into defined themes for future analysis and review.

During the months of January through May, 2019, the consulting team facilitated four engagement sessions. First, a Public Open House to formally introduce the Parks and Recreation planning process to the public, and to gather the public's input on Parks and Recreation in Port Colborne. During the public session, attendees had the opportunity to provide feedback through a facilitated discussion. Second, in late-February 2019, the consulting team facilitated a Stakeholder Engagement Workshop to meet representatives of community organizations, and service providers (e.g. the Minor hockey, baseball, Quad Niagara, Equestrian groups) that contribute to the City's recreation landscape or utilize amenities. Feedback was provided through a SCOT analysis. In April 2019, the project team returned to Port Colborne to report back on "what we heard" to share consultation findings from the open house as well as the Online Survey. This session was important as the project team was able to share key findings and check-in with attendees to confirm key recreational issues were not missed.

An online survey provided an additional opportunity and digital platform for community members to engage. The survey was posted on the City's website and shared through social media and local media outlets. Staff used the following innovative methods for circulating the survey:

- Hand deliver hard copies to larger residential buildings (apartments);
- Attended community/recreation events at Vale Health and Wellness Centre with iPads available to complete the survey;
- Mailed hard copies/email digital copies to community groups and organizations;
- Provided the online survey link to all tax payers through tax bills;
- Distributed hard copies at key community hubs (e.g. City Hall, Vale Health and Wellness Centre, Roselawn Centre for the Arts, etc.);
- Invited residents to complete the online survey via local newspaper and radio.

The survey was open for the entire month of February 2019 providing a significant window of time for receiving feedback.

During the one month window the survey was active, 372 respondents had participated. However, nearly 56% of respondents indicated they were completing the survey on behalf of their household. Based on data gathered related to household size, the online survey is estimated to represent approximately 1,198 residents in Port Colborne. This equates to 6.5% of Port Colborne's entire population being represented by the online public survey alone and represents an excellent response rate, demonstrating that there was great enthusiasm for the overall plan and a keen desire to be involved.



Based on a need identified by City staff, the project team also facilitated a session with the Canal Days Committee (Council) and City managers to focus specifically on the Canal Days Festival. The purpose of this meeting was to help staff gather input on priorities and key objectives for this signature festival in terms of staff resources, scope of events and programming offered.

The results of Phase 2 of the Master Plan were consolidated into a 'Stakeholder Summary Report', prepared as a separate compendium report to this Master Plan.

Phase 3 of the Master Plan process involved an assessment of the community needs for existing and future recreation programs and services. This analysis was informed by consultation findings, as well as trends and best practices in recreation. The project team, through review of the Phase 2 and 3 findings, then determined priorities for investment in Parks and Recreation in Port Colborne.

Phase 4 of the Master Plan commenced in summer 2019 and involved the preparation of a draft Master Plan Report, communication and review of the draft recommendations, and the preparation of a draft Master Plan Report to City staff.

The final phase of the Master Plan process, **Phase 5**, involved the presentation of the Master Plan document to City Council and formal submission of the final Master Plan Report to City Council and Staff.

1.4 Organization of the Plan

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan includes the following components:

- **A Review of Background Information**, including a review of local demographics, a summary of background studies, plans, programs and policies completed by the City, which inform and compliment the findings and directions of this Plan (Sections 1.0 - 2.0);
- **An overview of trends in recreation and culture**, including trends in both indoor and outdoor recreation and programming (Section 3.0 – 5.0);

- **A summary of consultation findings** (Section 6.0) which are to be read in conjunction with the appended Consultation Report.
- **A review of parks and recreation amenities and services in Port Colborne**, including inventories, best practices and trends in recreation and recommendations for each area: parks, trails, facilities, events/festivals, programming and Staffing (Section 7.0 – 12.0);
- **Vision of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan; identification and summary of key themes**, identified through community consultation and background research and analysis (Section 13.1); and,
- **Action Plan and implementation strategy**, developed based on the recommendations proposed for each of the identified key themes (Section 13.2).

The Stakeholder Consultation Report includes detailed results from the online public survey and consultation results. This report is a separate document that should be reviewed in conjunction with this Master Plan.



2.0 CONTEXT

2.1 Port Colborne Context

The City of Port Colborne is located within the Greater Golden Horseshoe, along the northern Lake Erie shoreline between the City of Fort Erie and Wainfleet and south of Welland. This geographic region of Ontario is also referred to as the Niagara Peninsula and contains prominent environmental features that include the Niagara Escarpment and an agricultural land base defined by tender grapes and fruits. Key transportation routes that provide service to the City include Ontario Highway 3 and Highway 140, also known as the King's Highway.

The City of Port Colborne is one of twelve (12) lower-tier municipalities in the Region of Niagara. According to the 2016 Census, the total population of Region of Niagara was nearly 448,000, with the population of Port Colborne being just over 18,300.

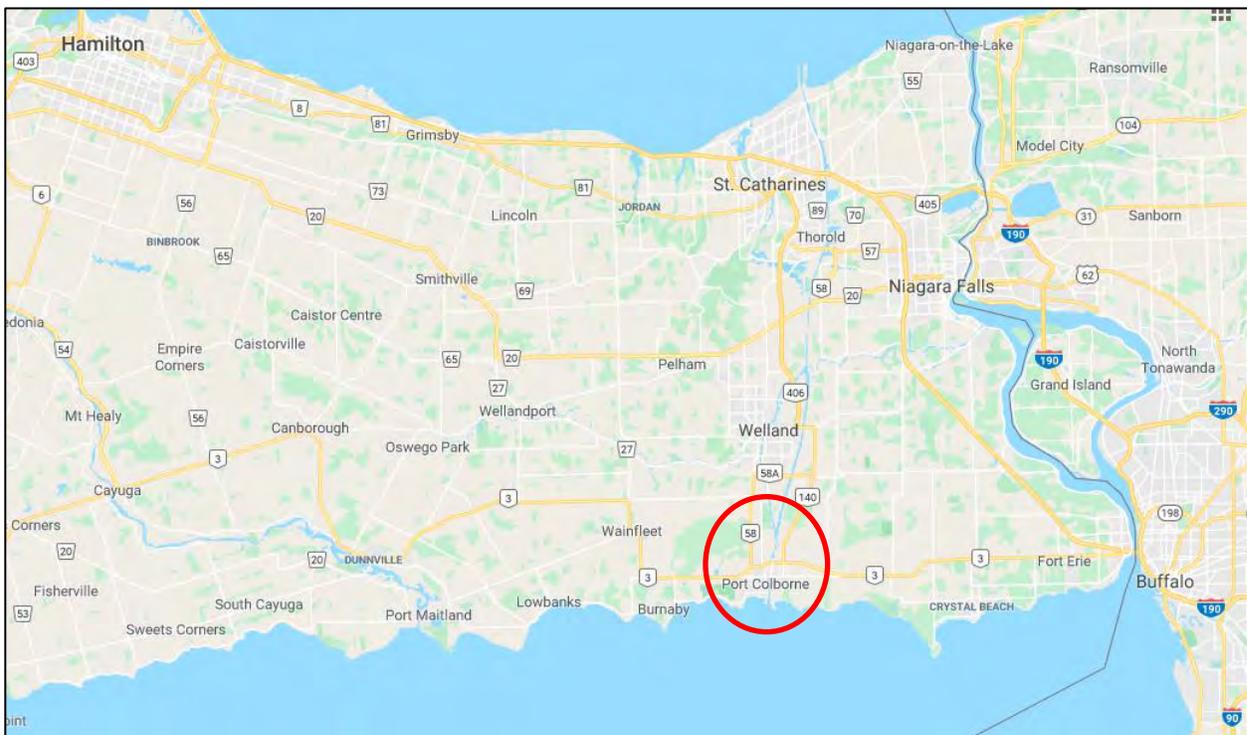


Figure 2 - Locational Context Map of Port Colborne

Gravelly Bay, as it was originally known, was first settled in the 1780's by United Empire Loyalists from the northeastern United States. Gravelly Bay was named a port-of-entry in 1834 and was renamed and given its present name in honour of Upper Canada's then Lieutenant-Governor Sir John Colborne. The Welland Canal, which bisects the City, was completed in 1829 and has largely been the determining factor in the City's

pattern of growth. The City developed into a business community serving the marine trade and became an incorporated village in the 1870's.

Tourism has been and continues to be important to the City's economic base. As an important summer tourist resort area, Port Colborne historically attracted hundreds of tourists who came to the City and visited lake-side amenities such as the Lake View Grove in the 1880's. The discovery of natural gas in the area led to the industrialization of the City and surrounding areas as companies utilized the new source of fuel. Several improvements to the harbor and the enlargement of the Welland Canal further attracted large commercial and manufacturing works.

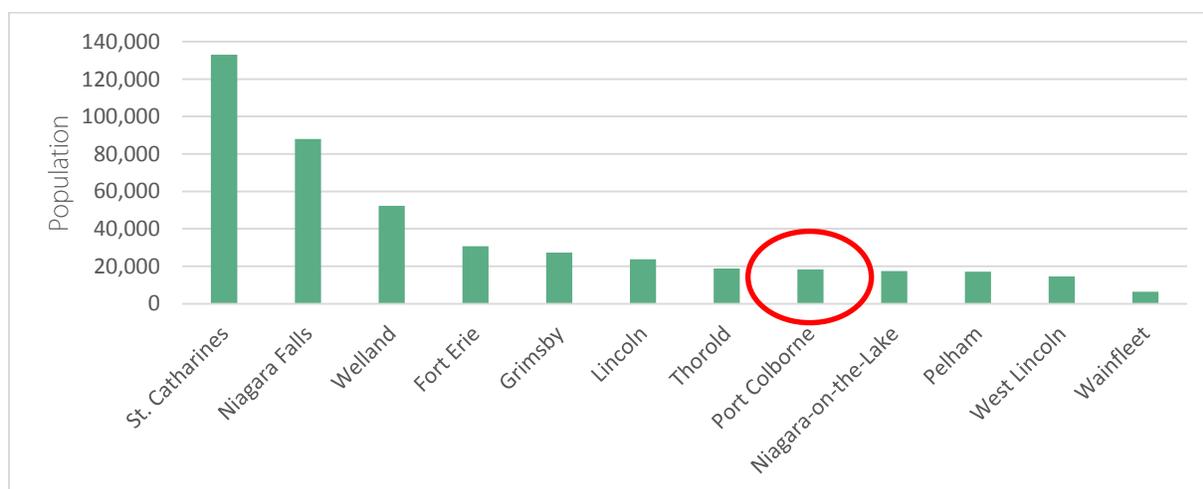


Today, Port Colborne offers a variety of recreational and cultural opportunities including waterfront access to Lake Erie, a variety of community events such as the farmers market and Canal Days, views and hiking, the Port Colborne Canal District, agri-tourism, and marinas. The City's service and industrial base is also diverse and includes transportation, manufacturing, construction and retail.

2.2 Demographics

With a population of 18,306 in 2016, the City of Port Colborne represents the 8th largest municipality in the Regional Municipality of Niagara. The Cities of St. Catharines (133,113), Niagara Falls (88,071) and Welland (52,293) are the three most populous municipalities in the Region. **Figure 3** below provides a visual representation of the Region's population in 2016.

Figure 3: Niagara Region Population - 2016



Port Colborne has experienced a modest decrease in their population since 2006 (0.9% decrease from 2006 to 2011; 0.6% decrease from 2011 to 2016). The rate of population change between Port Colborne and Niagara Region was significantly different between 2011 and 2016. The entire Region experienced growth (3.8%) over this period of time, while Port Colborne was the only municipality in the Region to experience a slight decline in their population as is illustrated in **Figure 4** below. Based on population forecast's found in Port Colborne's Official Plan, the City anticipates an additional 5000 residents by 2031. However, based on review of recent data compiled by Statistics Canada, it appears that the forecast may not be consistent with actual growth trends calculated for the City.

Figure 4: Population Change, Niagara Region 1996 – 2016

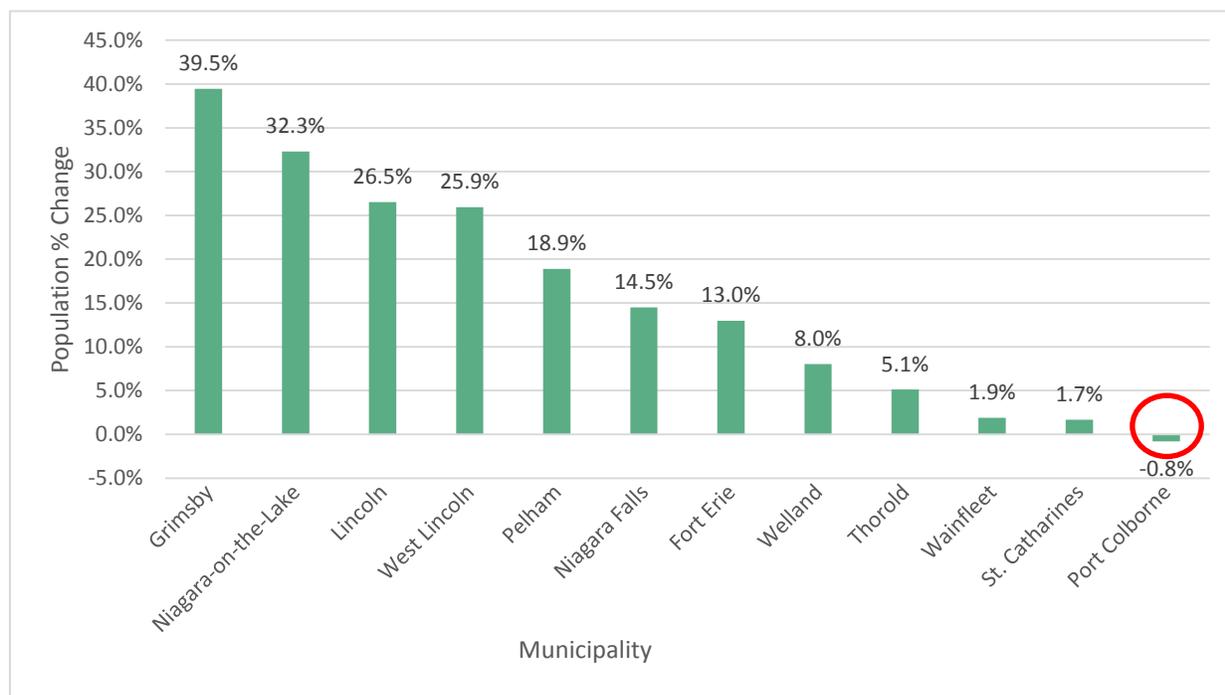


Figure 5 below illustrates the increase and decrease in the City of Port Colborne's population from 1996 to 2016. The City experienced the largest population in 2006 but has faced a decreasing population since.

Figure 5: Port Colborne Population Change 1996 – 2016

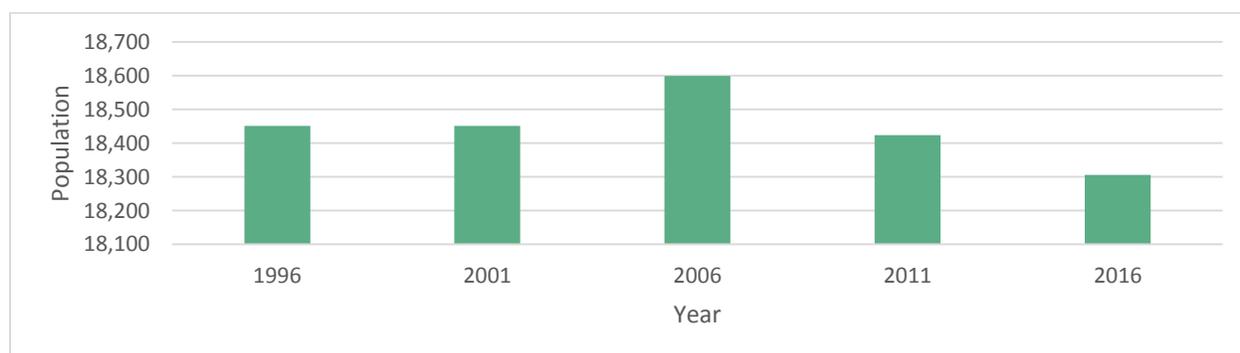
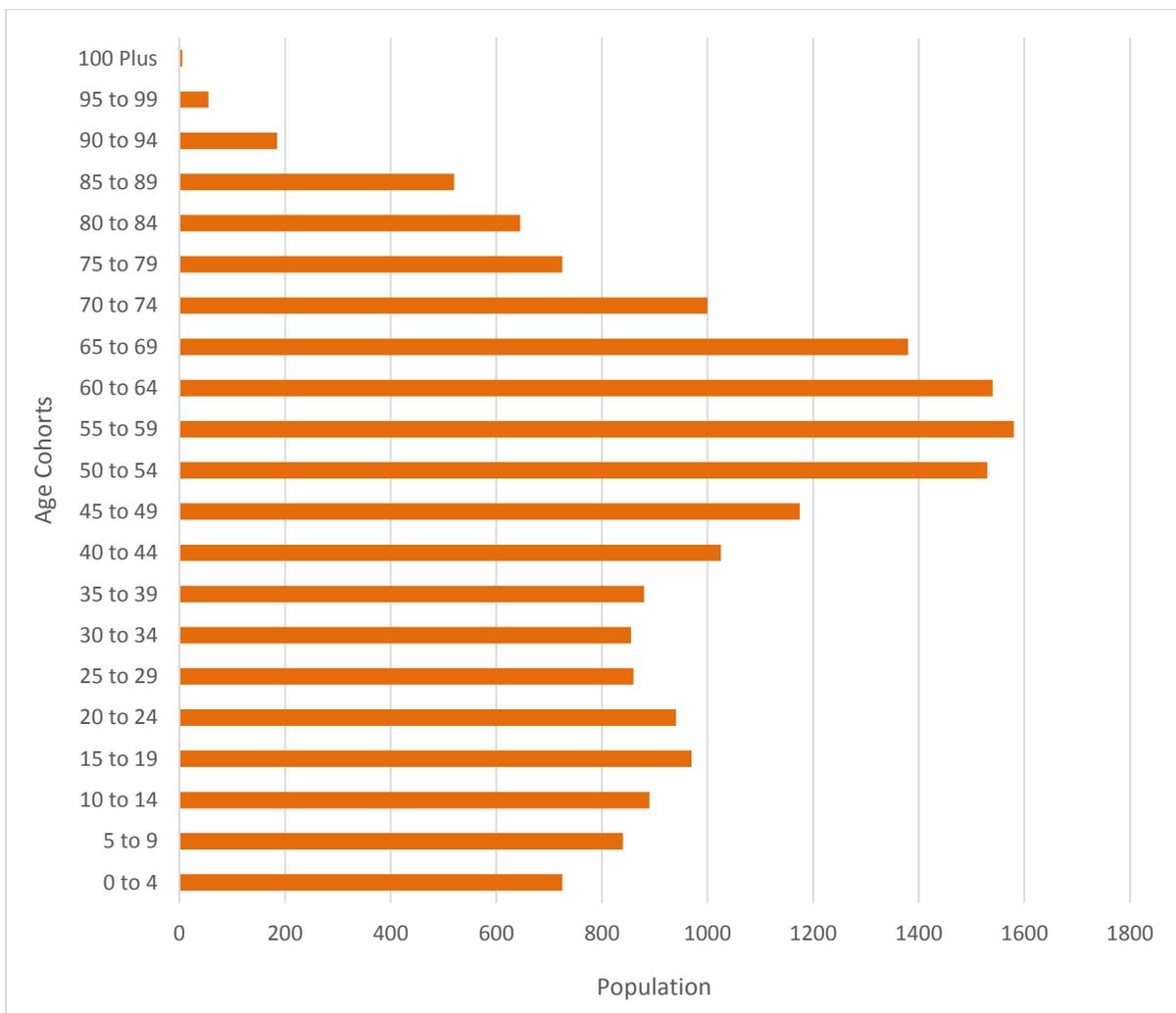


Figure 6 below illustrates the age cohort distribution of the City's population using data collected from the 2016 Census. **Figure 6** describes a population that is relatively "top" heavy, which is likely a result of high birth rates during the baby boom period following the end of the Second World War. Port Colborne has a smaller average household size of 2.2 people when compared to the provincial average of 2.6. This is likely due to the demographic trend toward an aging population who have already gone through a majority of the family life cycle and are at the "empty nest" stage of life. Based on our review of Port Colborne's age cohort distribution data, the greatest proportion of City residents fall between the ages of 50 to 65, meaning a quarter of Port Colborne's population and current labour force will be eligible for retirement or will be retired by 2031. This has implications in the short-term that includes an increased demand for programming that meets the accessibility, physical and mental activity needs and demands of an aging population.

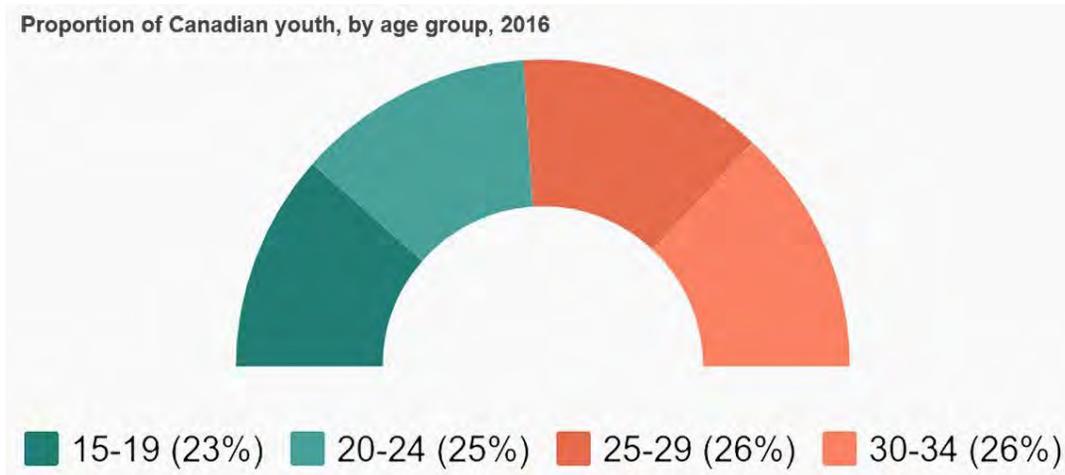
Figure 6: Port Colborne's Cohort Distribution



While the programming demands of an ageing population are evident, today's youth are unlike any generation before. They are more diverse, connected, socially engaged, and educated. However, while many

youth are reaping the benefits, others face challenges such as finding full time employment, social exclusion, cyberbullying, mental health challenges, addiction, and a higher risk of being obese. Given these new generational demands, programming for the youth population has never been more important. Statistics Canada defines the youth cohort as people between the ages of 15 to 34. In Canada, there are 9 million youth across the country, aged 15 to 34 (see **Figure 7** below).

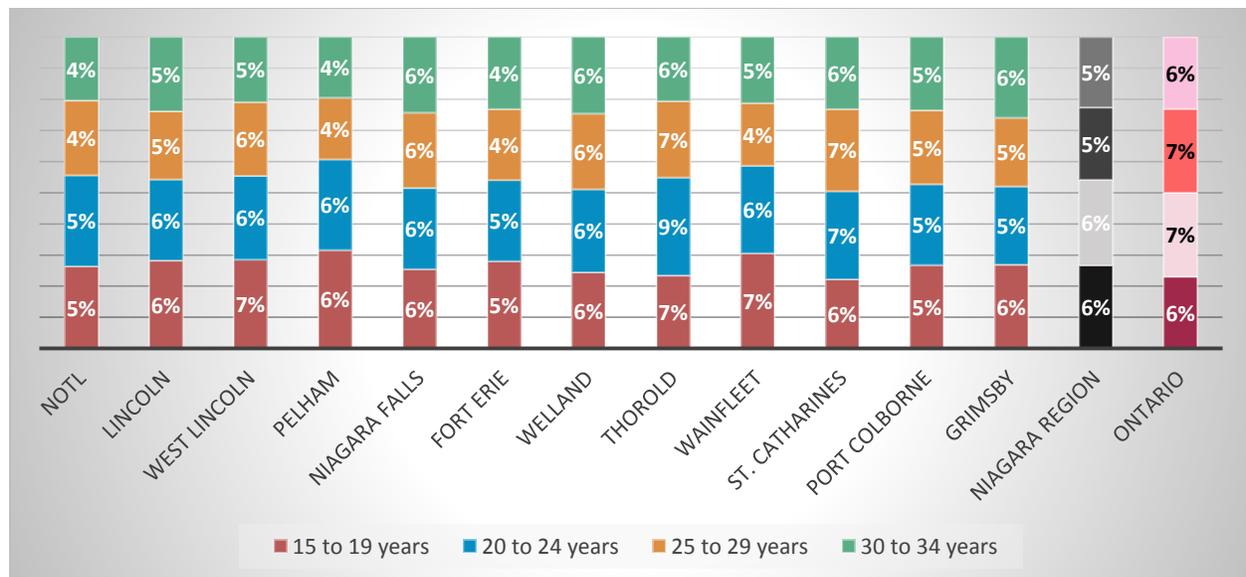
Figure 7 – Proportion of Canadian Youth (15 to 34 years of age) 2016



Source: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-631-x/11-631-x2018001-eng.htm#a1>

Figure 8 below illustrates the proportion of youth in the Niagara Region from total populations. In Port Colborne, the proportion of youth is generally lower than that of the Province, but is comparable to the youth proportions in the Niagara Region (shown below in grey shades labelled AVERAGE).

Figure 8 - Proportions of Niagara Region Youth (from Total Populations) 2016



Breaking down Port Colborne’s youth a little further, **Table 2** (below) demonstrates the proportions of youth (i.e. ages 15-34%) between Port Colborne, Niagara Region, Ontario, and Canada. As demonstrated, Port Colborne has a higher proportion of residents aged 15 to 19 years of age than that of Region, the Province and the County, but a slightly lower proportion of residents aged 25 to 29 years of age. The proportions of people in Port Colborne between the ages of 20 to 24 and 30 to 34 years are generally comparable to that of the Region, the Province, and County. This has potential implications for programming selection within the City, indicating some priority should be given to the teenage age cohort between 15 to 19 years of age.

Table 2 – Comparison of Proportions of Youth, by Age Group, 2016

Age Cohort	Port Colborne	Niagara Region	Ontario	Canada
15 to 19 years	27%	25%	24%	23%
20 to 24 years	26%	27%	26%	25%
25 to 29 years	24%	24%	25%	26%
30 to 34 years	24%	23%	25%	26%

Research indicates that there is a correlation between income and participation in recreational activities whereby participation in recreation activities is often higher among higher income families. Studies have also shown that wealth and family income increases with age. Based on the latest Census data, the average household income in Port Colborne is lower than the Canadian average.

The National Household Survey indicates that the median household income after tax for Port Colborne was \$57,244 compared to \$74,287 for Ontario. Port Colborne also has a lower participation rate (56 % compared to 64.7% in Ontario) and a larger proportion of the population works part year and/or part time (50.5% compared to 47.7% in Ontario). With just over half of those employed part time, there is a need to ensure recreation and cultural activities are accessible and affordable for all income levels.

The level of education one achieves also influences the likelihood of engaging in healthy physical and recreational activities. As the level of education one achieves increases, so does the probability that participation in physical and recreational activities will increase.

Approximately 46% of the City’s population over the age of 15 has a post-secondary certificate, diploma or degree, while the balance has either attained a high school diploma or equivalency certificate or reported no formalized education. Given these statistics and the links between educational attainment and physical activity levels, it can be inferred that residents of Port Colborne are more likely to actively participate in physical and recreational pursuits. This trend will likely continue for the next 20 to 25 years.

Demographic analysis shows that the majority of Port Colborne’s population speaks English as a first language. The second most spoken language in Port Colborne after English and French is Italian, with a number of residents in the community speaking a variety of Semitic, Italic and Slavic languages as well. Ethnicity can influence the community services provided by a municipality. The diversity of ethnic groups in the community can lead to demand for recreation pursuits that these ethnic groups enjoy. For example, there is a greater demand on facilities for, bocce ball in Port Colborne due to the presence of a significant Italian community. It is therefore important for the City to continue to monitor the changing demographics to ensure cultural, leisure and recreation services meet the socio-demographic demands.

Overall, the demographic trends suggest that Port Colborne is currently comprised of an aging population and the future demographic makeup will be increasingly skewed toward older adults and seniors. The updated Census data indicates that Port Colborne has experienced a decrease in population, which creates new demands for recreation and culture programs/services/facilities in the City to attract and retain the population to ensure growth in the future.

2.3 Background Review

Through a review of the City's relevant planning study and policy documents, recommendations for parks, recreation, facilities and culture have been incorporated to this plan. The following section provides a summary of the key recommendations of reviewed documents and studies.

City of Port Colborne Official Plan

The City of Port Colborne Official Plan was approved by the Ontario Municipal Board on November 23, 2013 and provides policies on a comprehensive 20-year vision for the future of the municipality. The Official Plan provides guiding policies for the implementation of concepts relating to good community buildings, including parks and open space requirements.

The Official Plan identifies a hierarchy of parks which include City Parks, Community Parks, Neighbourhood Parks, Parkettes, and Tot-Lots. These parks are to accommodate public landscaped open space, playgrounds and sports fields, cultural and recreational facilities, such as arenas, museums, halls, swimming pools, docks and publically owned golf courses, linear parks and trails and pathways as well as bicycle routes. All park spaces are to provide active and passive recreational opportunities at varying scales depending on the park size and resources.

The Official Plan states that linkages between all types of parks and open space are strongly encouraged to support opportunities for passive and active linear outdoor recreational activities. Park and open space design guidelines are provided and include provisions regarding the size, internal features, and landscaping elements which should be considered when creating park and open space areas. These policies are reviewed in further detail in Section 7.0 of this Master Plan.

City of Port Colborne Economic Development Strategic Plan: 2018-2028

The purpose of the City of Port Colborne Economic Development Strategic Plan: 2018-2028 is to provide a strategic approach to economic growth by developing a shared understanding among local community, business, and political leaders on the priorities of economic development and goals for future prosperity. The Strategic Plan acknowledges the importance of improving residential quality of life through community enhancement of recreational, cultural, and social opportunities as a way to attract and create additional economic activities. The report concludes that strong recreational assets, such as access to Lake Erie, provide an opportunity to increase the quality of recreation activities available and provide a differentiating factor between Port Colborne and its Regional counterparts. Port Colborne's waterfront access has been identified as a primary asset through the consultation process for this Master Plan as well.

East Waterfront Improvement Plan and Draft Secondary Plan

The City of Port Colborne East Waterfront Community Improvement Plan and Draft Secondary Plan was approved in March 2012 and provides direction on physical improvements to this area. The Plan acknowledges the high level policies from the Provincial Policy Statement and Growth Plan regarding the need for recreational settings that include parkland, trails, and water-based resources. The Regional Niagara Policy Plan is also referred to and emphasizes the support from the Region for the development of routes for the Greater Niagara Circle Route and the Trans Canada Trail through the city.

The Plan identifies that the creation of new open spaces and recreational opportunities was one of the key community goals to guide the long-term vision of the area. To implement these goals, the Plan proposed the designation of parkland and open space in previous industrial locations. These spaces would be designed to permit a range of community, cultural, and ancillary uses that could contain small-scale commercial facilities to support the intended functions of the parks.



Rendering of an Environmental Park from Draft Secondary Plan

The Plan provides several recommendations for the creation of and enhancement to parks along the waterfront. These include an Environmental Park, Welland Street Park South and North, upgraded Nickel Beach Amenities and a Bridge-to-Beach Trail which begins at Seaway Park, winds through a planned park and terminates at the lake.

It is our understanding that Council is interested in re-introducing employment and industrial uses in the East Waterfront Area. However, there are valuable insights from this Secondary Plan, including “placemaking” efforts and creating a safe trail connection to Nickel Beach that should be explored further.

City of Port Colborne Arts and Culture Master Plan

The City of Port Colborne Arts and Culture Master Plan was completed in May 2016 and emphasizes the importance of cultural planning as an essential economic and community development tool. The City of Port Colborne defines “recreation” as “all those things that a person or group chooses to do in order to make leisure time more interesting, enjoyable, and satisfying”. This broad definition allows for the inclusion of a range of activities, including festivals and events and arts and culture. Additionally, the plan provides several recommendations towards the optimization and enhancement of recreational assets. These include examining opportunities to strengthen linkages between local cultural and recreational activities and promote trails/routes including bicycle and walking trails as both cultural and recreational opportunities.

The Arts and Culture Master Plan highlights the opportunities associated with the Roselawn Centre. This Master Plan builds on this by providing recommendations on potential programming and partnership options for the Roselawn Centre.

Downtown Central Business District Urban Design Strategy

The Downtown Central Business District Urban Design Strategy was created in September, 2010 and focuses on enhancing and improving the viability and vitality of the downtown area. The strategy provides twelve (12) principle elements which include the creation of streetscapes that area visually interesting, accessible and clean. The creation of a park “square” within the downtown area is mentioned as one of the key opportunities to enhance the public realm.

Downtown Central Business District Community Improvement Plan

The Downtown Central Business District CIP was finalized in September, 2010 and provided direction on improving and revitalizing the Downtown Central Business District for the pedestrian environment and private sector investment. Several recommendations were made throughout the plan relating to parks and recreational space. Key areas of focus include the extension of the West Street Promenade to the north side of Clarence Street to capitalize on the waterfront’s heritage and recreational opportunities; the creation of wayfinding signage to enable people to move easily, safely and comfortably using all types of transit; and the creation of a civic square to serve as a community gathering and social space with passive recreational opportunities.

3.0 TRENDS IN RECREATION & PROGRAMMING

The following section provides an overview of key trends impacting recreation and programming for Parks and Recreation Departments. These trends are further supported through stakeholder consultation findings and have been considered in the development of recommendations for implementation. Monitoring trends will help the Community and Economic Development Department remain resilient and adaptable as the landscape of recreation and programming evolves over time with changing interests and demographics.

3.1 Value of Parks and Recreation

The overarching goal of Parks and Recreation is to improve all residents' quality of life. Community recreation, active (developed) and passive (environmentally sensitive) parks, natural outdoor spaces, arts, culture, and heritage contribute to the overall health, well-being, and quality of life of a community's residents. Extensive research demonstrates the physical, social, and mental wellbeing benefits of access to the types of programs and services provided by Port Colborne's Community and Economic Development Department.

Parks and recreation services positively influence community cohesiveness, strengthen family bonds, and mitigate social issues. A community with an abundance of parks and recreation services can encourage and help residents to be happy, healthy, and vibrant. Likewise, these services can assist in attracting and retaining residents and businesses in Port Colborne.

Frameworks for Parks and Recreation

There are two frameworks for considering the benefits of Parks and Recreation - the *Human Capital Model* and the *National Framework for Recreation in Canada*.

Human Capital Model: Connecting Health, Physical Activity, and the Environment

The Human Capital Model frames health and wellness as a type of "capital" - Something that can be invested in and which offers a return on investment⁵. It is based on research showing how physical activity can be considered a form of investment, producing value that is realized through a better quality of life, improved educational achievement, and even economic value through increased productivity. The Human Capital Model was developed through research showing that improving health through sport and other forms of

⁵ [Katmarzyk, P. The economic costs associated with physical inactivity and obesity in Ontario. *The Health and Fitness Journal of Canada*.](#)

physical activity could dramatically reduce health care costs. According to the Health and Fitness Journal of Canada, the annual economic burden in Ontario of physical inactivity is estimated to be \$2.6 billion.⁶

National Framework for Recreation in Canada

The National Framework for Recreation developed by the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association is the guiding document for public recreation providers in Canada, and the framework applied in this Master Plan. The framework was developed by parks and recreation experts in collaboration with academics, aboriginal leaders, young professionals and municipal volunteers, and shows that **recreation is a fundamental human need in all ages and stages of life**. It is the pursuit of physical, social, intellectual creative and spiritual experiences that enhance individual and community wellbeing.

Affordable facilities and programs can help to level the playing field for residents across all socioeconomic levels, supporting the development of healthy habits, improving self-esteem, social connections, and creating a sense of inclusion. High quality parks can protect the environment and provide the physical and psychological benefits of access to nature. Three key messages emerge from the framework⁷:

- High quality, accessible recreation opportunities are integral to a well-functioning society;
- The recreation sector can be a collaborative leader in addressing major social issues; and,
- All people and communities deserve equitable access to recreational experiences. Recreation must be accessible and welcoming to all.

This Framework is being implemented through parks and recreation master plans in municipalities across Canada.

The following is a summary of other trends and benefits associated with the provision of parks and recreation services and amenities. This section highlights the social, health, economic and environmental benefits of parks and recreation.

3.2 Pursuit & Activity Trends

Physical Activity Preferences

Participation levels and preferences for sporting activities continue to attract much attention given the impact on infrastructure development and overall service delivery in most municipalities. The Canadian Fitness & Lifestyle Research Institutes' 2016-2018 Physical Activity and Sport Monitoring Program Report identified a number of statistics and trends pertaining to sport participation in Canada⁸, including the following:

The highest proportion of Canadians prefer non-competitive sports or activities. Nearly half (44%) of Canadians preferred non-competitive sports while 40% like both non-competitive and competitive sports. Only 8% of Canadians prefer competitive sports or activities and 8% prefer neither competitive nor non-competitive sports.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ [Interprovincial Sports and Recreation Council: Framework for Recreation in Canada](#).

⁸ [Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute](#). 2016-2018 Sport Monitor.

Sport participation is directly related to age. Over three quarters (70%) of Canadians aged 15 – 17 participate in sports, with participation rates decreasing in each subsequent age group. The largest drop in sport participation occurs between the ages of 15 – 17 and 18 – 24 (~20%).

Substantially more men (45%) than women (24%) participate in sport.

Participation in sport is directly related to household income levels. Households with an annual income of >\$100,000 have the highest participation levels, nearly twice as high as households earning between \$20,000 - \$39,999 annually and over three times as high as households earning less than \$20,000 annually.

Women and Girls in Sport:

“Actively engaging and retaining women and girls in sports is the cornerstone of any healthy sport system. Understanding that there is a gender gap in participation rates and the barriers facing women and girls is a crucial first step.”

- Game ON – The Ontario Government’s Sport Plan

The highest proportion of sport participants continue to do so in “structured environments.”

Just under half (48%) of sport participants indicated that their participation occurs primarily in organized environments, while 20% participate in unstructured or casual environments and 32% do so in both structured and unstructured environments.

Community sport programs and venues remain important. The vast majority (82%) of Canadians that participate in sport do so in the community. Approximately one-fifth (21%) participate at school while 17% participate in sports at work. A significant proportion (43%) also indicated that they participate in sporting activities at home.

A trend over the past five years or so has been to embrace the concept of **“physical literacy”** in programs for children and youth. Physical Literacy has been defined and promoted by Canadian Sport for Life as critical for the development of children and youth so that they can participate in lifelong sports and recreation activities⁹. The private sector has become engaged in these efforts, offering grants in support of building physical literacy (e.g., Royal Bank of Canada [Learn to Play](#) program).

Many studies draw connections between improved brain function due to exercise in both growing children and adults with cognitive benefits lasting for decades. A 2014 research study by the Alzheimer Association found that people who are active in their middle years and even those who begin exercising after hitting midlife, have lower risk of developing dementia and Alzheimer’s disease in their old age than those who do not exercise¹⁰. The cognitive benefits of leisure time and physical activity in midlife were most prominent in overweight and obese persons who led sedentary lives until then.

A research paper entitled “Sport Participation 2010”, published by Canadian Heritage, also identified a number of trends pertaining to participation in specific sports¹¹. The following graph illustrates national

⁹ [Sport for Life: Physical Literacy](#)

¹⁰ [Baumgart, M., Snyder, H.M., Carrillo, M.C., Fazio, S., Kim, H. and H. Johns. Summary of the evidence on modifiable risk factors for cognitive decline and dementia: A population-based perspective. *Alzheimer’s Dementia*. 2015.](#)

¹¹ [Sport Participation 2010 \(Canadian Heritage\)](#)

trends in active sport participation from 1992 -2010. As reflected in **Figure 9** below, swimming (as a sport) has experienced the most significant decrease while soccer has had the highest rate of growth. Meanwhile, golf and hockey remain the two most played sports in Canada.

Highlights of Participation Trends from the “Sport Participation 2010” report include:

- National sport participation levels continue to decline
- The gender gap in sport participation has increased
- Sport participation decreases as Canadians age
- Education and income levels impact sport participation
- Established immigrants participate in sport less than recent immigrants and Canadian born
- Students (15 years and older) participate in sport in greater numbers than any labour force group
- Participation is highly concentrated in a few sports (golf, ice hockey, soccer)
- Women are more likely than men to have a coach (female sport participants tend to use the services of a coach/trainer more often than male sport participants and more so as they age)
- The most important benefit of sport participation is relaxation and fun (ranked as being important by 97% of sport participants)
- Lack of time and interest are the main reasons for not participating in sport

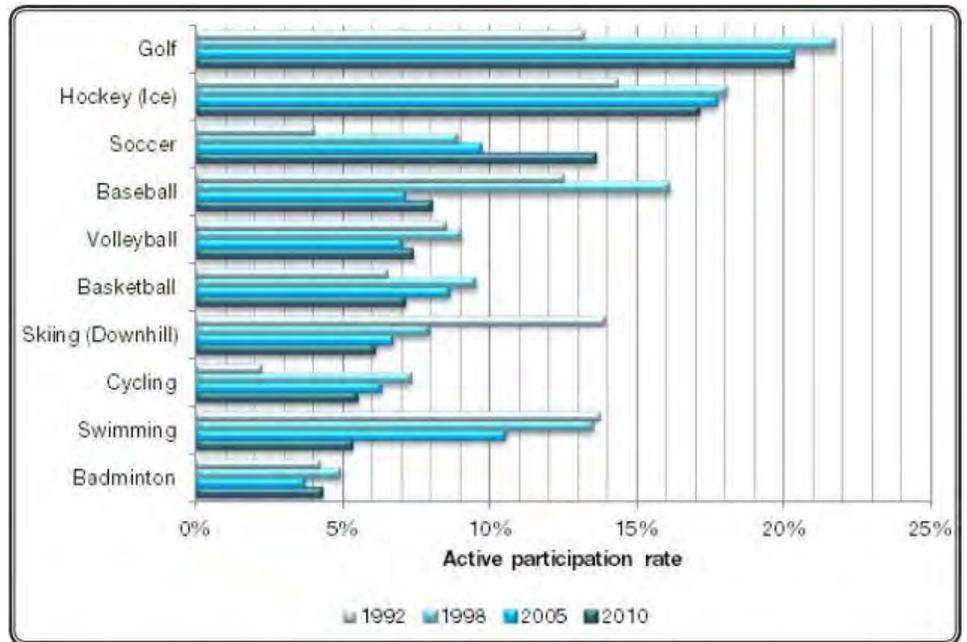


Figure 9: Participation Rate among Sport Participants, 1992, 1998, 2005, and 2010

Game ON – [The Ontario Government's Sport Plan](#) is a sport-focused, athlete-centred and results-oriented plan. The plan builds on a strong existing foundation of sport organizations, programs and investments. It recognizes the many ways in which organized sport can be good for people and communities, from the obvious health benefits of physical activity to the economic benefits of hosting major events.

The plan supports multi-sport organizations (MSO's) and is a resource to guide municipalities in improving participation rates and developing athletes along the sport development continuum.

Physical Activity Trends in Canadians

The Health Status of Canadians Report provides insight into physical activity trends of Canadians¹². **Just over 2 in 10 adults, and 1 in 10 children and youth meet the Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines¹³.**

However, the proportion of people who meet the Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines differs by age and sex. As a general trend, **a higher percentage of men/boys meet the physical activity guidelines than women/girls.**

In 2018, ParticipACTION and Mountain Equipment Co-op (MEC) produced a Report on the perceptions of physical activity through a survey of over 100,000 Canadian adults¹⁴. According to the report, only 18% of Canadian Adults are getting the recommended amount of physical activity. Out of those surveyed, 88% of Canadians believed that the problem is best solved at the individual level, while 25% believed the problem is best solved at the municipal government level. Additionally, 74% of Canadians enjoy being active and 61% said they would not need to change too much to be more active.



Moreover, ParticipACTION's 2018 Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth provides a comprehensive assessment of child and youth physical activity in Canada. The data included in the study identifies that only 35% of 5 to 17 year olds are reaching their recommended physical activity levels. The Report also suggests that physical activity is positively correlated with reduced stress and increased self-esteem. Physical activity is also correlated with improved cognitive, brain function and structure, as well as a reduction in depressive symptoms. Overall, the Report Card assigns a D+ Grade for youth participation in physical activity. Out of the 13 Report Card categories, the lowest grade (D-) was received for child and youth participation in active transportation, with only 21% of 5 to 19-year-olds using active modes (e.g. walking and cycling) while 63% use inactive modes, and the difference use a combination.

This Master Plan will respond to these trends through providing recommendations in the areas of parks, trails and active recreational programming.

¹² [Health Status of Canadians 2016: A Report of the Chief Public Health Officer.](#)

¹³ Canada's Physical Activity Guidelines are defined as follows: Children and youth (5 to 17 years) should do at least 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous activity every day. Adults (18 to 79) should do at least of 150 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous activity per week in periods of activity that are at least 10 minutes long.

¹⁴ [ParticipACTION Pulse Report, 2018.](#)

Programming Trends and Best Practices

Based on an environmental scan of current trends and best practices, the following programming trends are impacting the provision of parks and recreation services in Ontario and Canada and are particularly relevant to Port Colborne:

- There is increasing interest in unstructured, drop-in, and short-term programs;
- Pickleball has significantly grown in popularity, with badminton growing as well;
- Drop-in sports offer the greatest flexibility for busy people and are experiencing increased demand;
- Municipalities are prioritizing reconciliation, collaborating with First Nations, and considering of the unique needs of Indigenous residents in community recreation;
- Fitness classes are continuously evolving as participants look for new and innovative classes to keep them interested;
- Inclusion and accessibility are key priorities in Parks and Recreation planning;
- Seniors' spaces continue to be important; however, opportunities for seniors in all facilities and program types help to support accessibility, connection, and intergenerational learning;
- Many municipalities are finding that private fitness providers and their competitive rates are affecting the use of public fitness facilities; and,
- Housing and homelessness challenges are facing communities across the region and Province; outreach programs and spaces for youth are priorities.

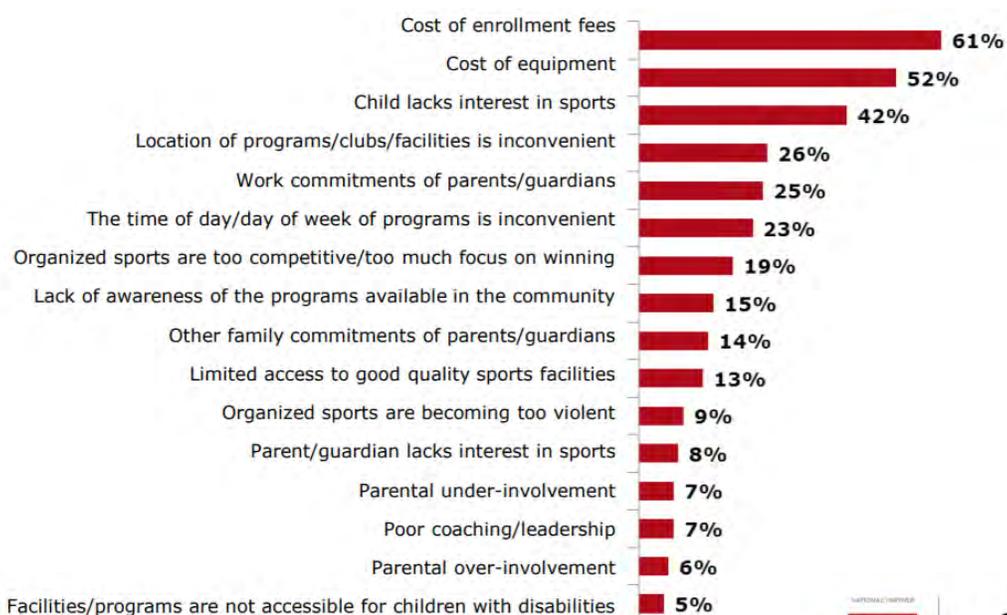


Barriers to Participation

Research and available data supports that many Canadians face barriers that impact their ability to gain from the numerous physical, social, and mental benefits that are accrued from participation in recreation and leisure pursuits. Understanding these barriers can help service providers identify strategies to mitigate issues and encourage participation. The graph below is reflective of the 2014 CIBC – KidSport Report identifying barriers to participation in sport for 3 to 17 year olds in Canada¹⁵. As shown in **Figure 10** below, the cost of enrollment, equipment and a lack of interest were identified as the top three barriers.

¹⁵ [CIBC – KidSport Report: Helping our kids get off the sidelines](#). July 2014.

Figure 10 - Barriers Preventing Children from Participating in Organized Sport



* Those surveyed could choose up to three responses.



Canada's Aging Population

Active Aging is the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age¹⁶. In 2013, only 1 in 5 older adults (60+) in Canada were achieving the recommended 150 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity per week. For the first time in history, people over the age of 65 outnumber those under the age of 15. Making communities “age friendly” can help seniors lead healthy and active lives, and stay involved in their communities. This is particularly relevant as Port Colborne’s population includes a significant group of those over 55.

An age-friendly community:

- Recognizes that seniors have a wide range of skills and abilities;
- Understands and meets the age-related needs of seniors;
- Respects the decisions and lifestyle choices of seniors;
- Protects those seniors who are vulnerable;
- Recognizes that seniors have a lot to offer their community; and,
- Recognizes how important it is to include seniors in all areas of community life.

Active Ageing is a term used to describe the maintenance of positive well-being, good physical, social and mental health, and continued involvement in one's family, peer group and community throughout the aging process.

Quality recreation has a significant role to play in keeping older adults healthy and active.

¹⁶ [Active Aging: A Policy Framework. World Health Organization, 2002.](#)

A closer look at Statistics Canada physical activity trends and health in both Canada and Niagara Region (ages 12 – 65+) indicates a growing need to improve seniors programming. The following table illustrates two health factors: the percentage of individuals who perceive their health to be considered very good or excellent; and the percentage of individuals who reach their physical activity goals each day or week.

Table 3: Comparison of Perceived Health and Physical Activity in Canada and Niagara Region

Age Group	Canada		Niagara Region	
	Perceived Health as very good or excellent	Physical Activity Guidelines Met*	Perceived Health as very good or excellent	Physical Activity Guidelines Met*
12- 17	74%	59.8%	80.2%	65.6%
18 – 34	70%	67.6%	75.7%	74.1%
34 – 49	64.7%	60.1%	60.3%	66.1%
50 – 64	56.8%	57.2%	58.5%	56.8%
65+	56.8%	57.2%	46%	36.8%

* For ages 12-17, 60 minutes per day; for ages 18+, 150 minutes per week

Source: Statistics Canada: [Table 13-10-0113-01. Health characteristics, two-year period estimates](#)

Based on Table 3 above, the following is noted:

- A large proportion of Niagara Region’s younger population (ages 12 – 34) perceive their health to be very good or excellent (higher than the national average)
- However, the data suggests that as residents in Niagara Region age, the percentage of residents who perceive their health to be very good or excellent drops below the Canadian percentage
 - Less than half of residents aged 65+ in Niagara Region perceive their health to be very good or excellent
- A large proportion of Niagara Region residents (ages 12 – 49) indicate that they meet or exceed the physical activity guidelines when compared to the Canadian levels
- However, only 36.8% of seniors (aged 65+) in Niagara Region indicated they are meeting or exceeding physical activity guidelines. **This suggests that there may be a gap in recreational programming for seniors, aged 65+, in Niagara Region.**

3.2 Service Delivery Trends

Flexibility & Adaptability

As a result of the vast choice of activity options for recreation and cultural consumers, service providers are increasingly being required to ensure that their approach to delivery is flexible and able to quickly adapt to meet community demand. Many municipalities have also had to make hard decisions on which activities they are able to directly offer or support, and those which are more appropriate to leave to the private sector to provide.

Ensuring that programming Staff and management are current on trends is important in the identification and planning of programming. Regular interaction and data collection (e.g. customer surveys) from members are methods which many service providers use to help identify programs that are popular and in-

demand. The development of multi-use spaces can also help ensure that municipalities have the flexibility to adapt to changing interests and activity preferences.

Partnerships

Partnerships in the provision of recreation, leisure and cultural opportunities are becoming more prevalent. These partnerships can take a number of forms, and include government, not for profit organizations, schools and the private sector. While the provision of recreation and cultural services has historically relied on municipal levels of the government, many municipalities are increasingly looking to form partnerships that can enhance service levels and more efficiently leverage public funds.

Partnerships can be as simple as facility naming and sponsorship arrangements and as complex as lease and contract agreements to operate spaces, entire facilities or deliver programs. According to one study over three-quarters (76%) of Canadian municipalities work with schools in their communities to encourage the participation of municipal residents in physical activities¹⁷. Just under half of municipalities work with local not-for profits (46%), health settings (40%), or workplaces (25%) to encourage participation in physical activities amongst their residents. Seventy-six percent (76%) of municipalities with a population of 1,000 to 9,999 to 80% of municipalities over 100,000 in population have formed agreements with school boards for shared use of facilities. In fact, since 2000 the proportion of municipalities that have reported working with schools, health, and local-not-for profit organizations has increased by 10% to 20%.

Public/Public and Public/Private Partnerships

Partnerships with the private sector and with not-for-profit organizations continue to grow as revenue from tax dollars often does not keep up with escalating expenses. While parks and recreation have typically fallen under the municipal umbrella, since the 1970s a larger portion of responsibility for all public infrastructure has shifted to municipalities. Provincial and federal budgets are increasingly being consumed by health care and education costs, reducing their contribution to services like parks and recreation. There are numerous examples of public/public and public/private partnerships in Ontario and across Canada. An example of a public/public partnership is between a municipal government and the local School District, or the Health Authority.

Government, Community Organizations, and Citizen Partnerships in Trail Development

There is an ongoing trend, which has become common practice in many communities, for the use of partnerships in the development of trails. This can include extensive trail networks as well as local community trails. Examples include the Trans Canada Trail Network, recently rebranded as "The Great Trail", which extends from coast to coast and is the result of participation by all levels of government as well as many local parks and trail associations.

There has been a trend in municipal partnerships extending to a variety of agencies in health, justice, education, community and social services. Municipal facilities such as heritage and/or arts and culture buildings are commonly managed by non-profit societies through leases or partnership arrangements.

¹⁷ [Municipal Opportunities for Physical Activity](#): Strategic partnerships. 2010, Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute

Municipally owned fitness and wellness centres can also be operated through a partnership with the public or private sector: the YMCA partnership in Port Colborne is a current example. These types of facilities usually generate a positive revenue stream and have become an important component of municipally-run multi-use facilities.

Partnerships are a key theme that this Master Plan explores further and should be considered by the Community and Economic Development Department.

Inter-Municipal Collaboration

According to the 2015 document entitled, *Inter-Municipal Collaboration in Recreation: A Guide for Municipalities in a Growing Province*¹⁸:

“More and more, citizens live and think regionally [...] and they expect collaboration among the various local governments that affect their lives. Rural and urban families are becoming a more homogenous population as they seek the lifestyle they desire and the opportunities they need.”

The Inter-Municipal Collaboration Guide also suggests that “there is opportunity for a greater recreation vision.” In many areas, a healthier environment for recreation is in the hands of municipalities. In fact, primary leadership in recreation occurs at the municipal level. For that reason, recreation should be built into a municipality’s strategic vision. Municipalities carry the responsibility to think as regionally and collaboratively about recreation as they do about many other areas of municipal service.

Collaboration requires a strong municipal vision, and a dedication to long-term relationships. Working together, municipalities can be more effective at building recreation into a strategic vision that best serves their residents.

According to the Inter-Municipal Collaboration in Recreation Guide, the key to collaboration is the pursuit of three components that work together in a dynamic, ongoing process:

1. **People**
2. **Process**
3. **Information**

If these three components can be employed consistently and collaboratively, they will help guide a municipality and its neighbours from

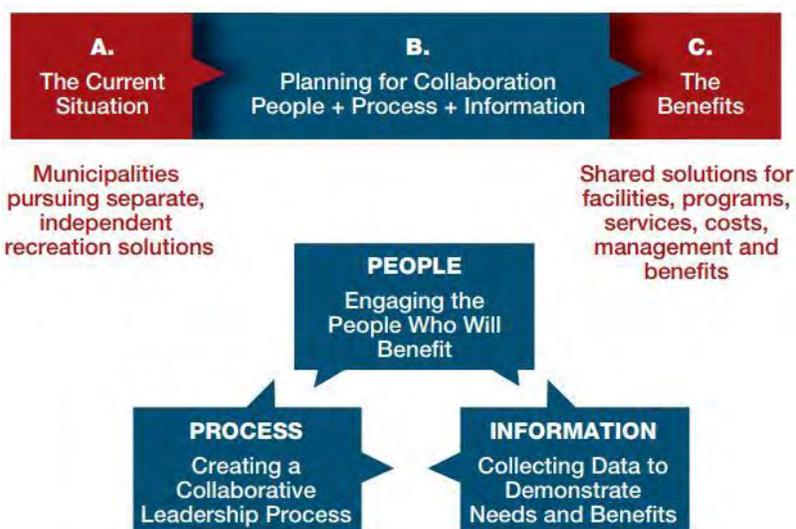


Figure 11: Model Process for Creating and Maintaining Collaboration

¹⁸ [HJ Linnen Associates. Inter-Municipal Collaboration in Recreation A Guide for Municipalities in a Growing Province.](#)

the current situation into one that creates benefits from collaboration.

When planning for collaboration, learning from the experience of other municipalities provides ideas for moving from where you are to where you want to be. **Figure 11**(above) summarizes this approach.

Technology and Customer Service

In recent years, the adoption of new technologies has provided many municipalities and community groups with a more advanced and streamlined process to track participation levels, improve scheduling and provide quick registration for participants when used effectively. City websites are well utilized resources for the promotion and coordination of recreation and parks opportunities through the use of online Leisure Guides, eNewsletters, and online registration resources such as Perfect Minds and Active Net.

Technology is also affecting how people enjoy parks and participate in recreation programs and events. More agencies are going online to reach patrons and purchase registration systems, perform automatic monitoring of buildings and the environment, monitor public safety and employ technology to complete missions. Technology supports many physical recreation activities including Geocaching, walking, running (through pedometers, accelerometers, and heart monitors, etc.), interactive physical video games and exercises. Port Colborne's programs and services will need to continue to adapt to keep current and to help residents become and remain active.

Social media and personal devices have revolutionized the way people communicate and socialize while using very few resources. However, the application of these innovative communication techniques require communities to understand and apply these methods in an effective manner to inform all age groups in the community. Social media tools such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter provide municipalities as well as stakeholder organizations with an outlet to market parks, events, programs, and services to a wide market.

Social media is also being used as a forum to collect valuable information using group discussions and surveys, providing effective and efficient opportunities to communicate feedback and requests and develop social connections with the community.

Volunteerism

Volunteers continue to be vitally important to the planning and delivery of numerous events and programs. Canadians state that the primary reason they volunteer is to contribute to their communities. The next two major reasons are to use skills and experience and because they have been personally affected by the cause¹⁹. The following summarizes the primary reasons for volunteering:

- To make a contribution to community (93%);
- To use skills and experience (78%);
- Personally affected by the organization's cause (59%);
- To explore one's own strengths (48%);
- Because their friends volunteer (48%);

¹⁹ [Research about Volunteering in Canada. Imagine Canada. Sector Source.](#)

- To network with others (46%);
- To improve job opportunities (22%); and
- To fulfill religious obligations or beliefs (21%).

Below are additional findings from the 2013 Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating:

- Ontarians volunteer at a rate (44.0%) which is equal to the national average
- The highest volunteer rate in Ontario is among youth and young adults aged 15 to 24 (58.1%) followed by middle aged adults aged 35 to 44 (55.3%) and adults aged 45 to 54 (48.5%).
- Although seniors age 65 and older had the lowest volunteer rate (38.6%), they had the highest average of annual volunteer hours (222 hours on average per year).

There are a number of pertinent trends in volunteerism that may impact or have relevancy to the delivery of programming or facility operations²⁰.

- **Much comes from the few:** 47% of Canadians volunteer. Over one-third (34%) of all volunteer hours were contributed by 5% of total volunteers.
- **The new volunteer:** Young people volunteer to gain work related skills (Canadians aged 15-24 volunteer more than any other age group). New Canadians also volunteer to develop work experience and to practice language skills. Persons with disabilities may volunteer as a way to more fully participate in community life.
- **Volunteer job design:** Volunteer job design can be the best defense for changing demographics and fluctuations in funding.
- **Mandatory volunteering:** There are mandatory volunteer programs through Community Service Order and school mandated community work.
- **Volunteering by contract:** The changing volunteer environment is redefining volunteer commitment as a negotiated and mutually beneficial arrangement rather than a one-way sacrifice of time by the volunteer.
- **Risk management:** Considered part of the process of job design for volunteers, risk management ensures the organization can place the right volunteer in the appropriate activity.
- **Borrowing best practices:** The voluntary sector has responded to the changing environment by adopting corporate and public sector management practices including: standards; codes of conduct; accountability and transparency measures around program administration; demand for evaluation; and outcome and import measurement.
- **Professional volunteer management:** Managers of volunteer resources are working toward establishing an equal footing with other professionals in the voluntary sector.
- **Board governance:** Volunteer boards must respond to the challenge of acting as both supervisors and strategic planners.

Community Development

²⁰ [Volunteerism in Alberta: Issues and Challenges](#). University of Alberta, 2004.

The combined factors of decreasing support from other levels of government, increasing demand for new and exciting recreation infrastructure and programs and the changing nature of the volunteer has led many municipalities to adopt a community development role in service delivery. This, in addition to the direct delivery of recreation and culture facilities and programs, includes the facilitation of empowering local non-profit groups to operate facilities and/or offer programs to residents thereby leveraging public resources and providing more value for public investment.

Community development is the process of creating change through a model of greater public participation—the engagement of the entire community from the individual up. The concept of community development has a broader reach than just the delivery of recreation and cultural programs and facilities; it is commonly understood to be the broader involvement of the general public in decision making and delivery. Community development in recreation delivery encompasses supporting and guiding volunteer groups to ultimately become self-sufficient while providing facilities and programs that further the recreation and cultural agenda in a community.

Social Inclusion

The concept of social inclusion is increasingly becoming an issue that communities are addressing. Social inclusion is about making sure that all children and adults are able to participate as valued, respected and contributing members of society. It involves the basic notions of a sense of belonging, acceptance and recognition. For immigrants or newcomers, social inclusion would be manifested in full and equal participation in all facets of a community including economic, social, cultural, and political circles. It goes beyond including “outsiders” or “newcomers.” In fact, social inclusion is about the elimination of the boundaries or barriers between “us” and “them.” There is recognition that diversity has worth unto itself and is not something that must be overcome.

Evidence suggests that there are positive associations among participation in arts and physical activities, including the growth of social capital, increased levels of education and crime reduction. Positive links between recreation and social inclusion suggest that recreational participation results in an improved capacity for cultural citizenship, which leads to more effective engagement with the community at large²¹.

Financial barriers to participation in recreation, sport and cultural activities continue to exist for many Ontarians and should also be considered when discussing social inclusion. Understanding the potential benefits that can result from engaging citizens in a broad range of activities and programs, municipalities have undertaken a number of initiatives aimed at removing financial

Happiness in cities is related to strong positive social relationships. *People who are socially connected are more productive at work, less likely to get sick, and more likely to recover from cancer; they live on average 15 years longer than people who do not have strong social connections.”*

Charles Montgomery, author
of *Happy City*

²¹ [Taylor, P., Davies, L., Wells, P., Gilbertson, J. and Tayleur, W. A Review of the Social Impacts of Culture and Sport. The Culture and Sport Evidence Programme.](#)

barriers. Current initiatives being led or supported by many municipalities include KidSport, Jumpstart, and the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association's "Everybody Gets to Play" program.

Economic Benefits of Recreation, Sport and Cultural Tourism

Parks and recreation programs and amenities generate revenue directly from fees and charges, while providing significant indirect revenues to local and regional economies. For example, parks and trails have the ability to improve the local tax base and increase property values.

Tournaments, festivals, major facilities, and nature-based tourism also draw significant dollars to the community, as they generate overnight stays, as well as patronage for restaurants, retail stores, gas stations, and other businesses. These attractions include special events, art showings, theatre productions, and sports tournaments. There are also major economic benefits increasingly being derived from tourism, particularly active, outdoor, nature-oriented tourism in Ontario. Parks Canada reports that in 2014, park visits alone generated 64,000 full-time jobs for Canadians, \$2.9 billion in labour income, and \$337 million in tax revenue for governments.

Sports tourism is a major contributor to local economies throughout Ontario, especially in the case of communities that have the infrastructure necessary to host major sporting events with non-local teams and competitors or performers that draw spectators from outside the community.

"Sport tourists" have been defined as participants and their families who travel more than 80km to attend, participate in, or are somehow involved in a sporting event²². According to the Canadian Sport Tourism Alliance, spending associated with the Canadian sport tourism industry reached \$3.6 billion in 2010, an increase of 8.8% from 2008²³. Sport tourism related to major provincial, national or international events can have longer lasting impacts in communities than just local spending during an event. In some cases, legacies are left including infrastructure, endowments and community brand recognition.

Cultural tourism is another important and growing segment of the tourism industry. Its participants are young, well-educated, spend more money on their trips, and seek unique personal experiences. Although not a new phenomenon, cultural tourism has consistently been characterized by the following points:

1. **Frequent short trips:** The cultural tourist, while small as a percentage of all tourists, makes numerous short trips to participate in cultural activities year-round.
2. **A Personal Experience:** Cultural tourists seek experiences that are meaningful to them and that will result in individual reminiscences and memories which refer more to the tourist's personal history than to that of the site.

Many Ontario municipalities are concentrating more on event hosting to generate broader economic impact, build community image and create sustainability in volunteer groups. In some cases, municipalities spearheaded these efforts by taking on a direct role in the recruitment and planning of events. In other cases municipalities are supporting community groups by providing facilities, Staff resources and/or financial

²² [Canadian Sport Tourism Alliance: Economic Impact](#), 2013.

²³ [Ibid.](#)

support. City of Port Colborne staff support a number of events, including the City's Signature Event, Canal Days Marine Heritage Festival.

Providing Quality Parks & Outdoor Spaces

Research supports that individuals continue to place a high value on the availability and quality of parks, trails and outdoor spaces. A 2013 Canadian study commissioned by the TD Friends of the Environment Foundation found that nearly two-thirds of respondents (64%) indicated that local parks were "very important" to them and their family²⁴. Additionally, 68% of Canadians are concerned about the loss of green space in their community. Another 2011 study of over 1,100 parents of 2 to 12 year olds in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom found that the more time a family spends together at a playground, the greater their overall sense of family well-being²⁵. Three-quarters also wished that their family had time to visit a playground more often.

"When children are outside, the move more, sit less and play longer – behaviours associated with improved cholesterol levels, blood pressure, body composition, bone density, cardiorespiratory and musculoskeletal fitness aspects of mental, social and environmental health."

- Position Statement on Active Outdoor Plan

Parks and outdoor spaces also play a key role in helping to combat "nature deficit disorder" amongst children and youth. This phrase, first coined by Richard Louv in his bestselling book "Last Child in the Woods"²⁶, suggests that children are becoming estranged from nature and natural play resulting in a number of cognitive, physical and developmental issues.

While all residents benefit from the availability of quality park spaces, a significant amount of research and attention has been given to the myriad of benefits that result from children and youth being able to play and interact in outdoor settings. Findings include:

- Children who play regularly in natural environments show more advanced motor fitness, including coordination, balance and agility, and they are sick less often²⁷.
- Exposure to natural environments improves children's cognitive development by improving their awareness, reasoning and observational skills²⁸.
- Children who play in nature have more positive feelings about each other²⁹.
- Outdoor environments are important to children's development of independence and autonomy³⁰.

²⁴ TD Friends of the Environment Foundation: [Loss of Green Spaces a Concern for Many Canadians](#), 2013.

²⁵ Harris Interactive (2011). [Playgrounds Increase Sense of Family Well-Being](#). Washington, District of Columbia. Foresters

²⁶ Louv, R. (2006). *Last child in the woods: Saving our children from nature-deficit disorder* (1st ed.). Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill.

²⁷ Grahm, P., Martensson, F., Lindblad, B., Nilsson, P., and Ekman, A., (1997). UTE pa DAGIS, Stad and Land nr. 93/1991 Sveriges lantbruksuniversitet, Alnarp.

²⁸ Pyle, Robert (1993). *The thunder trees: Lessons from an urban wildland*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin

²⁹ Moore, Robin (1996). *Compact Nature: The Role of Playing and Learning Gardens on Children's Lives*, *Journal of Therapeutic Horticulture*, 8, 72-82

- Children with views of and contact with nature score higher on tests of concentration and self-discipline. The greener, the better the scores³¹

Parks and recreation amenities such as parks and trails promote conservation and environmental sustainability. Parks conserve natural resources and wildlife habitat, protect air and water quality, and preserve open spaces for current and future generations.

Open space, parks, and recreation areas are ideal spaces for encouraging and developing stewardship of the practices, and can involve the public in conservation efforts to increase awareness of environmental needs. People who enjoy outdoor recreation become more familiar with natural resources and the environment. Furthermore, parks and open space conserve scenic vistas, maintain healthy ecosystems and provide carbon-reducing sustainable landscapes.



³¹ Bartlett, Sheridan (1996). Access to Outdoor Play and Its Implications for Healthy Attachments. Unpublished article, Putney, VT

4.0 TRENDS IN RECREATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Recreational infrastructure plays an important role in providing spaces to facilitate engaged, active and healthy lives. There are several trends that are changing how municipalities plan, design and operate recreational facilities. Creating flexible and adaptable spaces and updating aging facilities are among the most noted trends. The following section provides an overview of key trends that have been considered through the development of Port Colborne's Park and Recreation Master Plan.

Aging Recreation Facilities

The recently released Canadian Infrastructure Report Card³² includes an assessment and analysis of the state of sport and recreation facilities in Canada. The report revealed a number of concerns and issues that will impact the delivery of sport and recreation infrastructure in the foreseeable future. Key findings from the report include:



- Canada's infrastructure, including sport and recreation facilities, is at risk of rapid deterioration unless there is immediate investment.
- Approximately 30 – 35% of Canada's recreational facilities are considered to be in fair, poor or very poor condition.
- A large proportion of some facility types are more than 50 years old
- The asset classes in the worst condition include single pad ice arenas, outdoor pools and wading pools, indoor 25-metre pools, indoor curling rinks and tennis courts
- In comparison to other municipal infrastructure assessed in the Report Card, ice and arena facilities were in the worst state and require immediate attention.

³² [Canadian Infrastructure Report Card, 2019](#)

Stand-alone versus a multi-purpose approach

Economies of scale in facility and park operations, staffing, and administration, purchase of supplies, contracted services, utilities and marketing have proven effective in existing major multipurpose facilities and sites across Ontario and Canada.

Operationally, multipurpose facilities and sites have proven to be excellent in terms of staff efficiency. The large number of activities under one management system versus a separate management system for independent facilities provides cost reduction opportunities. Energy conservation with respect to the sharing of systems between the facilities and making use of cold and warm systems to develop energy transfers provides operational savings compared to stand alone facilities of a similar size.

Perhaps the most important aspect of multipurpose facility development is both customer/public satisfaction with the variety of activities available in the facility and how they enhance family cohesiveness, social connection, and quality of life. Users of multipurpose facilities have opportunities to partake in a variety of recreation and culture activities while other family members and friends are conceivably using other portions of the facility. Multi-purpose facility use is further extended by the opportunities to not only partake in the recreation or culture activity of choice but also share in other social activities such as food, retail and professional health services and common public/social gathering areas.

Creating spaces within a facility that are easily adaptable and re-configured is another growing trend observed in many newer and retrofitted facilities. Many performing arts venues are being designed in such a manner that staging, seating, and wall configurations can be easily changed and configured as required. Similarly, visual arts spaces such as studios and galleries are being designed in a manner that allows them to be used for a multitude of different art creation and display purposes. Similarly, gymnasium spaces and field house facilities are being designed with temporary barriers, walls, bleachers and other amenities that can be easily adjusted or removed depending on the type of activity or event.

The overall capital cost of multipurpose facilities and sites is also expected to be less than the comparative cost of building a number of stand-alone facilities. The efficiencies of scale and the attractiveness of the size of multiplex projects to construction industry stakeholders have resulted in excellent bidding and construction services related to these types of projects. Several millions of dollars are typically saved on the overall capital construction compared to a series of stand-alone facilities.

Capital cost is, however, incurred within a two to three year period as opposed to being phased out over a number of additional years if carried out as separate projects. The disadvantages of the multipurpose all-in-one concept relate to the scale of the facility, its cost to construct and the amount of land that it occupies.

The Vale Health and Wellness Centre is a prime example of a multi-purpose recreational facility. The City should consider how to maximize existing City-owned facilities in order to provide additional multi-use spaces in Port Colborne. The Roselawn Centre for the Arts, in particular, is a candidate for improvements to increase usage and variety of users.

Space for Fun and Wellness: Multi-Use Design Trends

According to leading architects who work in the recreation space, a variety of new trends in multipurpose recreation facility design are changing the look, feel and functionality of community recreation centres and YMCA's³³.

In many cases, these changes are aimed at creating spaces that address growing fitness trends, serve to make patrons more comfortable, and expand the appeal of these facilities to serve ever wider swaths of the community beyond the traditional fitness market. The following are twelve (12) of the most common trends influencing the designs of these multipurpose facilities:

1. More group exercise spaces
2. Room to stretch/warm-up
3. A growth in partnerships
4. A dominance of leisure swimming (E.g. more leisure pools rather than lap swimming)
5. Non-traditional running tracks (Shifting away from oval and flat tracks to provide opportunities to run varying grades)
6. Creating a sense of place by providing a variety of spaces for small and large gatherings (Feel more like "home" in the facility)
7. A priority on Pickleball
8. Greater acoustical sophistication
9. More design focus on entrances and exits
10. Creativity in creating destination facilities
11. A focus on sustainability over certification
12. Emphasis on inclusion and accessibility (Adoption of universal design to increase usability of spaces for everyone)

Arts and Culture - Performance Spaces

Port Colborne has an opportunity to grow its arts and culture programming by redesigning, repurposing and converting spaces within the existing Roselawn Theatre. The Roselawn art is large enough to accommodate many local uses and it can be converted for smaller productions. The Theatre is very popular and would benefit from increased collaboration and partnerships to expand programming and provide more diverse offerings. Through the Arts and Culture Master Plan, the City's arts and culture community has expressed a desire for an affordable, flexible performance space that can accommodate different types of productions. This is commonly referred to as a 'black box' theatre.



Figure 12: Example Black Box Theatre, similar to Roselawn's Showboat Theatre

³³ [Recreation Management: Ideas and Solutions for Recreation, Sports and Fitness Facilities.](#)

There is no one-ideal size for a theatre. The scale of performance spaces depends on the size of the staging required by the type of performance and the size of audience to be accommodated, with each variable in influencing the other as they change. A theatre is not simply a space for looking at or listening to a performance. A successful theatre for live performance supports the emotional exchange between the performer and the audience, and among members of the audience.

There is an opportunity for the City, through strategic partnerships, to enhance and grow performing arts learning in Port Colborne. Through the repurposing, conversion and enhancement of spaces at the Roselawn and other City facilities such as the Vale Health and Wellness Centre and neighbourhood Centres, dedicated performing arts learning spaces or multi-purpose spaces can be provided. Increasing opportunities in the performing arts can be provided through more learning facilities that will allow for more programs, which could be delivered by partners.

While traditional galleries and performing arts spaces continue to meet important needs, municipalities are experimenting with flexible and non-traditional exhibition and performance spaces. One example is the [Roundhouse Community Art and Recreation Centre](#) in Vancouver. Located in downtown Vancouver's Yaletown neighbourhood, the Roundhouse is a historic railway complex with arts, crafts, and leisure spaces. The facility includes: after-school child care; dance, pottery, and woodworking studios; a gymnasium; multi-purpose rooms; exhibition space; and a 200-seat theatre.

Investing in the sustainability of existing infrastructure

Considering that the City of Port Colborne currently has a wide variety of recreation, marina and cultural facilities in which significant investment has been made, it is important to plan for maintaining existing infrastructure and sustaining existing services prior to developing new facilities on new sites. Maintaining existing facilities will ensure that existing service levels are sustained and that programs currently subscribed to can continue to be offered. In considering the development of new facility components, if they can be added to existing facilities then significant costs savings in site acquisition, servicing and administrative and common-area development may be achieved.

This strategy is based upon maintaining and expanding/enhancing existing sites where possible, prior to developing new facilities. Rationalization for this approach includes both protecting and enhancing existing infrastructure investments and ensuring that existing service levels and programs are sustained prior to offering new ones.

Reinvestment, repurposing and decommissioning

Reinvesting is a way to protect past investment in facilities while sustaining existing service levels. However, not all facilities warrant reinvestment, and in some cases, replacement or decommissioning may be the best strategic approach. The repurposing of existing indoor and outdoor recreation and culture facilities has great potential for meeting the needs of expanding programs/activities as well as meeting the needs of newly introduced activities in the community. In order to effectively do so, facilities considered for repurposing must be analyzed in terms of existing usage levels, the costs associated with sustaining existing services and the adaptability of the facility and/or space in accommodating a different use(s).

As even the most underutilized spaces in the City are valued by some residents, appropriate justification will undoubtedly be required to repurpose or decommission any existing public recreational and/or cultural facility. If a facility or space has been identified for potential repurposed use, the City must engage the local community, users of the facility, and the expertise required to assess opportunities associated with sustained or repurposed uses (architectural and engineering assessment).

The concept of **Facility Condition Index (FCI)** is a common tool for governments in assessing the potential of reinvestment in, or replacement of, a public facility. FCI measures the facilities physical state by presenting the required upgrade costs as a portion of the facility replacement costs.

Facility Condition Index = Cost of required upgrades/Replacement value of facility

Although the FCI tool is widely accepted and helpful, it does not account for the functionality of the facility in question. For example, if a facility is sound structurally and mechanically but it does not meet demands for functional programming of potential users, the FCI may warrant reinvestment which functionally may not be warranted. This issue is accentuated for recreation and culture facilities as many have or could have unique and varied uses. In order to account for functionality, facility program modernization costs must be considered in combination with the cost to upgrade the structure and mechanical systems. Facility program modernization requirements should be determined by City departments (Engineering and Operations in partnership with Community and Economic Development) as well as users of the existing facility or similar facilities (groups and the general public). This would lead to an overall **Facility Quality Index (FQI)** and would be a better tool in decision making for future reinvestment of existing recreation and culture facilities. This tool would be especially pertinent where the average age of the major recreation and culture facilities is beyond 40 years.

Facility Quality Index = Cost of required upgrades plus the cost of necessary program upgrades/Replacement value of facility

Once information is collected and the FCI and FQI are identified, administration and Council must consider the costs and benefits associated with reinvesting, repurposing or decommissioning versus new construction and make a move forward decision (see FCI Framework in **Appendix C**).

In order to implement the approach and analyze projects, the questions posed need to be answered by either City administration, community members or a combination thereof. One way of engaging the public and community partners in decision making is for the City to administer an ad hoc task group every time the future decommissioning or repurposing of a major recreation and/or culture resource (replacement value of \$1M or beyond) is being contemplated.

This task group would have a holistic perspective of broad community need and, if it included members of the public, could include impacted residents or groups as well as those groups or residents that may not have their needs met if major reinvestment in an existing facility is to occur. The task group could utilize the decision making framework presented here (**Appendix F**) and would rely on City staff for assistance in providing necessary information.

Integrating Indoor & Outdoor Environments

A new concept in recreation infrastructure planning is to ensure that the indoor environment interacts seamlessly with the outdoor recreation environment. This can include such ideas as indoor/outdoor walking trails, indoor/outdoor child play areas and indoor/outdoor aquatics facilities.

Although there are a number of operational issues that need to be considered when planning indoor/outdoor environments (e.g. cleaning, controlled access, etc.) the concept of planning an indoor facility to complement the site it is located on (and associated outdoor amenities included) as well as the broader community parks and trail system is prudent and will ensure the optimization of public spending on both indoor and outdoor recreation infrastructure. Integrating indoor and outdoor environments can be as "simple" as ensuring interiors have good opportunities to view the outdoors.

Including Convenience Amenities

Increasingly, recreation facility users and patrons are demanding that their facility experience be convenient and tailored to their personal and family needs. Convenience amenities such as child minding (temporary child care), food services, medical services (e.g. physiotherapy, chiropractic) and retail are being included in many new and retrofitted recreation facilities. In addition to enhancing the user experience, the inclusion of these amenities can generate increased revenues for a facility.

Providing an array of social amenities can further enhance the facility experience and increase overall facility visitations. Examples of social amenities include attractive lobby areas, common spaces, restaurants and cafeterias, spectator viewing, areas, meeting facilities, wireless internet and adjacent outdoor parks or green space. Including these amenities can also help attract residents who might not normally use a recreation facility, and increase facility traffic during non-peak hours.

Spontaneous and Scheduled Activities

While schedule (structured) activities remain important, there is a growing demand for opportunities to participate in spontaneous (unstructured) activities. People are seeking individualized, informal pursuits that can be done alone or in small groups, at flexible times, often near or at home. Examples of spontaneous use activities include fitness / wellness, leisure swimming, walking, and open gymnasium time.

The public is placing greater demand on spontaneous, non-program forms of activity due to evolving households, schedules and lifestyles, prompting a transition of activities from organized to unorganized sports.

Research revealed that the top four physical activities with the highest participation rates among Ontarian's are 'spontaneous' in nature:

1. Walking for pleasure (81.4%);
2. Bicycling (41.9%);
3. Swimming in pools (40.5%); and
4. Aerobics / fitness / aqua-fit / yoga (37.7%)

The survey data collected through stakeholder consultation for this Master Plan supports these Ontario trends with the following activities being the top four indicated by respondents:

1. Special events, festivals and community gatherings (56.8%)
2. Adventure activities – E.g. hiking, camping, boating, skiing (44%)
3. Watersport activities – E.g. surfing, boating, wakeboarding, kayaking (43.8%)
4. Wellness activities – E.g. yoga, martial arts (42%)

This does not, however, eliminate the need for venues that accommodate structured activities and the stakeholder groups that utilize them. Instead, this trend suggests that planning for the general population is as important as planning for traditional structured use environments. **Table 4** below outlines the range of potential spontaneous use recreation amenities for both indoor and outdoor spaces.

Table 4 - Indoor and Outdoor Spontaneous Use Recreation Amenities

Indoor	Outdoor
Leisure Aquatics Spaces	Trails
Leisure Skating Pads (Non-Boarded)	Playgrounds
Indoor Child Playgrounds	Passive Green Spaces
Gymnasiums For Youth/Adult Drop-In	Splash/Spray Pads
Multipurpose Floor Spaces For Children’s Games, etc.	Blacktop Spaces For Basketball/Ballhockey, etc.
Seniors/Older Adult Walk-On, Drop-In Activities-Pickleball	Outdoor Fitness Equipment

Indoor Turf Facilities

Indoor turf facilities are becoming increasingly common throughout Ontario. Regionally, there are indoor turf facilities within Guelph (Guelph Community Sports Dome and the Gryphon Field House at the University of Guelph), Halton Hills (Dufferin Rural Heritage Community Centre), Milton (Milton Soccer Centre), Kitchener (Budd Park Indoor Field), Cambridge (Com Dev Soccer Park), Hamilton (Soccer World, Player’s Paradise, Wentworth Arena), Brantford (Brantford City Soccer Club Indoor Complex), and Guelph/Eramosa (The Royal Distributing Athletic Performance Centre). **While there is no set service level for the municipal provision of indoor turf, trends indicate that indoor turf facilities are typically built to serve a population of over 50,000.**

An indoor turf facility provides access to field sports, indoor walking and running year-round. Fields can typically be divided into two smaller fields which provide opportunities for multiple users and/or a variety of options for single user groups. For the purposes of this update, the indoor turf facility for Guelph-Eramosa has been used to provide additional background on the provision and construction of indoor turf facilities.

The Royal Distributing Athletic Performance Centre (Township of Guelph/Eramosa):

Size: 210' x 120' (can be subdivided into two smaller fields of 100' x 120'. Includes an indoor walking track.

Revenue: Nearly neutral overall, but very little usage from June to August (which is typical for these facilities).

User Groups: Include soccer leagues (from surrounding areas), intramural sports such as Frisbee and soccer, track and field clubs, football clubs, rugby.



Royal Distributing Athletic Performance Centre, Guelph/Eramosa Township

Bookings: Typically booked through most evenings. Very few bookings during daytime hours Monday through Friday.

Funding: Funding was secured for construction through Federal and Provincial Sources (Building Canada Fund Communities Component) and municipal contributions.

Some sports organizations in Port Colborne identified the need for additional indoor training space. This is discussed further below (Section 7.7).

Ensuring Accessibility

Recreation and cultural facilities are putting a significant focus on ensuring that user experiences are comfortable; including meeting accessibility requirements and incorporating designs that can accommodate various body types and abilities. Programming is made as accessible as possible via “layering” to provide the broadest appeal possible to intellectual preferences.

Meeting the needs of various user groups is also an important aspect of accessibility. Incorporating mobile technologies, rest spaces, child-friendly spaces, crafts areas, and educational multi-purpose rooms for classes and performances is an emerging trend. Accessibility guidelines set by governments, as well as an increased understanding of the needs of different types of visitors is fueling this trend. Technology is also being embraced as a modern communication tool useful for effectively sharing messages with younger, more technologically savvy audiences.

Revenue Generating Spaces

Increasingly, facility operators of community facilities are being required to find creative and innovative ways to generate the revenues needed to both sustain current operations and fund future expansion or renovation projects. By generating sustainable revenues outside of regular government contributions, many facilities are able to demonstrate increased financial sustainability and expand service levels.

Lease spaces provide one such opportunity. Many facilities are creating new spaces or redeveloping existing areas of their facility that can be leased to food and beverage providers and other retail businesses. Short term rental spaces are another major source of revenue for many facilities. Lobby areas, programs rooms, and event hosting spaces have the potential to be rented to the corporate sector for meetings, team building activities, special events and a host of other functions.

Additional Trends and Best Practices in Aquatic Facilities

The following are key trends, specific to the provision of aquatic facilities. Port Colborne's existing aquatic facilities were identified by stakeholders as a key asset in the City's recreational landscape.

- Universal Design Principles are guiding new facility development;
- Some communities are offering therapeutic aquatic facilities and programs;
- New aquatic fitness classes are blending dryland activities with an aquatic environment. E.g., stand-up paddleboard yoga and underwater spin class;
- Parents are seeking adult programming aligned with children's programs; and,
- Design for new pools, generally in multi-use facilities, is focused on creating a beautiful and welcoming environment with opportunities to socialize.

Additional Trends and Best Practices in Arena Facilities

Below are additional trends, specific to the provision of ice/arena facilities:

- Participation in hockey is declining due to factors such as cost, changing interests, and concerns over the level of competitiveness;
- More arenas are providing seating with adequate heating to include more spectator participation;
- Creating opportunities for tournament hosting is an increasing priority in some communities;
- Some communities are expanding ice offerings, particularly with increasing numbers of hockey academies, while others are investing in dry floor facilities to support year-round opportunities for lacrosse, soccer, ball hockey, and other sports;
- Many communities are facing challenges in meeting rising expectations for rental time and facility quality; and
- Many communities are dealing with aging facilities and seeking opportunities to upgrade or repurpose.

Additional Facility Trends

In addition to the trends discussed herein, below are some additional recreational facility trends:

- Indoor walking/running tracks are becoming more popular, especially in winter months, offering opportunities for people with mobility issues to stay active;
- Some municipalities are offering basic or introductory indoor climbing walls or indoor adventure playgrounds;
- Indoor artificial turf fields that offer year-round opportunities are becoming more common;
- New facilities are being designed as welcoming spaces for community gathering and use;

- New facilities are incorporating adaptable, “loose fit” components to allow modification and adaptation as needs change; and,
- Some communities are shifting away from providing dedicated youth and seniors’ spaces and working to accommodate specific needs within multi-use facilities; multi-purpose rooms may prioritize certain age groups at specific times, and then allow other groups to book them during other times.

5.0 TRENDS IN ARTS & CULTURE

Although arts and culture was not within the scope of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, the consulting team felt that due to the integrated community development approach to recreation service delivery and the alignment with culture, it is necessary to include the trends based on overarching cultural influences. Culture enriches people's day-to-day lives, supporting enjoyment and appreciation of creative endeavors, enabling the community to share its stories and history, and fostering community identity and pride.

Participation in arts and culture and creative activities is an essential component to overall community health and wellbeing. The notion is well expressed in the 2014 Report on Wellness in Ontario undertaken by the Ontario Trillium Foundation and the University of Waterloo:

“By participating in leisure and cultural activities, whether arts, culture, or recreation, we contribute to our wellbeing as individuals, to our communities, and to society as a whole. The myriad of activities and opportunities we pursue and enjoy benefit our overall life satisfaction and quality of life. As forms of human expression, they help to fully define our lives, the meaning we derive from them, and ultimately, our wellbeing.”³⁴

The recent Ontario Culture Strategy³⁵ *Telling Our Stories, Growing Our Economy* also espouses this philosophy.

Various trends in Ontarians' participation and involvement in arts, culture and historical activities are highlighted below. This is essential contextual information in which the various recommendations for in this Plan are made.

Increasing recognition that participation in arts and culture activities is essential to holistic well-being: As the quote above indicates, there is an increasing recognition across communities in Ontario as to the importance of arts and culture activities as being essential to overall happiness and well-being. This includes a growing consensus that everyone has the potential to be a creative individual and that an obligation of healthy communities is to provide opportunities and outlets for that creative impulse.

Particular needs for arts participation in younger and older age groups: While everybody needs opportunities and options for creative expression, this is particularly important for certain age groups. Several studies have noted that arts involvement and outlets for creative expression are particularly

³⁴ *How Are Ontarians Really Doing?* University of Waterloo and the Ontario Trillium Foundation, Canadian Index of Wellbeing, 2014.

³⁵ [The Ontario Culture Strategy: Telling our stories, growing our economy](#). Province of Ontario.

important for younger age cohorts, where they can contribute strongly to feelings of self-confidence and self-worth, as well as set life-long patterns in terms of participation in, and enjoyment of, the arts. Furthermore, involvement in cultural activities is important to older age cohorts (which now characterizes the baby boomer segment) as they can slow cognitive impairment as well as provide opportunities to socialize and build community.

Strong competition for arts and culture participation from other forms of entertainment: A significant competitive factor to participation in the arts is in-house entertainment activities. This trend was noticed over 20 years ago³⁶, but has likely been exacerbated over the last decade through the rise of streaming entertainment services such as Netflix. As well, to some extent, other forms of ‘entertainment’ such as on-line shopping, gaming and gambling are competing for the time available to engage in cultural activities outside the home. Finally, the rise of on-line communities through Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, etc. also encourages individuals to spend time at home rather than get out and engage with the community (obviously this affects sports and recreation activities as much as cultural ones). The average American spends 24 hours per week on-line³⁷ (Although an American statistic, similar trends are experienced in Canada) and this figure is even higher for ‘Generation X’, ‘Millennials’ and Post Millennials³⁸. Of course, these other forms of entertainment take time away from not only other arts and culture activities, but other forms of recreation as well. In particular, they compete with time spent on active and outdoor forms of recreation, and they can be detrimental to overall health and wellness - both physical and mental³⁹.

Increasing cultural diversity: The province of Ontario is rapidly becoming increasingly diverse with a wide variation of ethnocultural groups from across the globe now calling the province home. Each of these groups has its own cultural traditions, which embraces cuisine, events, visual and performing arts, history and heritage, costume, etc. Increasingly, arts and culture activities across the province will reflect and celebrate these diverse traditions (note, that this phenomenon also affects supply and demand for sports and recreational activities).

Port Colborne is not yet as diverse as the province overall, and may never be. The following table, taken from 2016 Census data, is indicative of this:

Table 5 - Percentage of Population that is First Generation Canadian

Geographical Area	% of Population that is First Generation Canadian*
Ontario	30.7 %
Niagara Region	17.8 %
Port Colborne	10.5 %

**i.e. persons who were born outside Canada. For the most part, these are people who are now, or once were, immigrants to Canada.*

³⁶ **Age and Arts Participation**, with a focus on the Baby Boom Cohort, National Endowment for the Arts, Research Division Report #34, 1996.

³⁷ MIT Technology Review: [The average American spends 24 hours a week online](#), 2018.

³⁸ There are not precise definitions for these terms, but ‘Generation X’ (Gen X) is typically thought to be the generation immediately following the Baby Boomers, born in the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s. ‘Millennials’ are the generation following Gen X, born in the mid-1980s and through to about the year 2000. The current crop, born in 2000 and later, is variously referred to as ‘Generation Z’, ‘Post Millennials’ or the ‘iGeneration’.

³⁹ See: Pandika, **How All That Screen Time Affects Your Health**, August 2016. <https://www.rallyhealth.com/health/screen-time-affects-health>

Nevertheless, as **Table 5** shows, 10.5 % of Port Colborne’s population was born outside Canada. Even though this is far less than the province as a whole, it is still a significant percentage of the population base of the municipality. However this percentage may increase in the future. The Parks and Recreation Master Plan must recognize this increase in diversity and ensure that the provision of cultural opportunities (as well as sports and recreation) recognizes this reality.

Increasing cultural fluidity and fusion: To an increasing extent, artists and creative individuals are exploring a variety of media and are not restricting themselves to just one form of artistic expression. Increasingly visual artists work in a number of media - not just ‘oils’, ‘acrylics’, ‘sculpture’, ceramic arts, or ‘cultural arts’. Performing artists too work in a number of expressions – music, dance, drama, etc. Digital arts cross all boundaries, and become increasingly expressive as technology develops. This appears to be especially a trend amongst ‘Gen X’ and ‘Millennials’ who are less bound by the traditional creative silos and traditions as previous generations.⁴⁰

Emphasis upon inclusion: As mentioned elsewhere in this Master Plan, communities are increasingly recognizing the importance of being inclusive in providing activities and services across all municipal departments and agencies. This acknowledges the special interests and needs of all groups within the community, especially those that in the past may have been marginalized or outright excluded such as those with physical or mental disabilities, the economically disadvantaged, the LGBTQ community, and recent immigrants. As well, arts and cultural activities should, where appropriate and necessary, recognize the rights of First Nations and Aboriginal Peoples. This will be particularly important in terms of the Truth and Reconciliation agreements, and the ways in which the arts and cultural offerings of the City recognize and reflect these principles.

Understanding that ‘culture’ is an economic engine: Increasingly communities are recognizing that the cultural sector can be a key component in the overall economic base of the area, and thus a contributor to the wealth of the region. This recognition can take many forms: at the most basic level it involves an appreciation of the private sector side of the cultural community, with working artisans, professional musicians, etc. (and this could expand into a perspective embracing the entire **creative economy** which would include architects, graphic designers, engineers, inventors, entrepreneurs, etc.⁴¹). Another perspective recognizes that some amateur artists and artisans are on the threshold of commercialization and that with appropriate support and resources, they may be able to become viable enterprises (i.e. an incubator role). Still another perspective (discussed separately in the next point) recognizes the tourism potential of the cultural sector in the community and the value that this may represent in terms of visitors spending time and money in the community.

Realizing opportunities for cultural tourism: Many communities are recognizing that their unique cultural assets are a basis for developing cultural tourism, where visitors and tourists are encouraged to come into the community to experience unique offerings. Often these events and activities are located in the downtown part of the community, where the history of the city is best represented (as well as a concentration of its unique historic buildings and places). Cultural tourism is a growing sector within the overall tourism industry and can bring significant economic benefits into a community. Many jurisdictions are actively promoting the development of cultural tourism within their areas⁴².

⁴⁰ L. Rochon. [Why the cities of the future belong to the millennial generation](#). Globe and Mail: 2018.

⁴¹ [The Creative Economy: Key Concepts and Literature Review Highlights](#). The Policy Research Group, Canadian Heritage, 2013.

⁴² See, for example: [Culture and Heritage Tourism Development Guide](#), Destination British Columbia.

Trends and Best Practices in Visual Arts

- There is increasing interest in showcasing visual art that reflects community diversity
- Similar to recreational programs, residents are interested in unstructured, drop-in, and short-term arts programs
- Some communities are seeing greater participation in children's arts education
- Production space for larger artworks is difficult to find and an ongoing issue in many areas
- Visual arts exhibits are moving beyond the four walls of the gallery and into unconventional public spaces
- Cultural development is extending beyond the city core and cultural districts/areas are being developed and formalize
- Cultural plans and projects occur through collaboration among arts and culture stakeholders, and municipalities are providing funding and other support for arts and culture entrepreneurs to invigorate communities
- Municipalities are enhancing communications on arts and culture activities and opportunities
- Permanent and temporary public art can regenerate ordinary or neglected outdoor spaces
- Public art can be functional, e.g., unique seating arrangements, play structures, and natural features, and it can beautify neighbourhoods.
- Public art can attract viewers from throughout the community and beyond, with major public art pieces in high traffic areas drawing the most attention.

Trends and Best Practices in Heritage

- Protecting Indigenous heritage and collaborating with local Indigenous communities is a growing priority for municipalities
- In some cases, keeping heritage alive is accomplished through repurposing to meet modern needs, such as artist-in-residence, restaurants or businesses in old houses
- Heritage artifacts are integrated into other civic facilities as part of sharing community history
- Mobile apps, interactive displays, online exhibits, and local history podcasts are some of the ways that technology can be used to share local history and capture intangible cultural assets
- Reaching a wide audience is accomplished through diverse opportunities, including special events, tours, and programming throughout the community
- Local history and heritage are shared on interpretive signs in public spaces
- Heritage goes beyond buildings and locations to include music, culinary traditions, textile arts, and stories.

Festivals and Events

- Community festivals and cultural events are popular with residents and an important part of tourism.
- Cultural events and festivals are a key component of community pride and quality of life.

- Pop-up events, concerts, and performances in temporary locations are popular and can enliven neighbourhoods and activate underused spaces.
- Fans expect more choices and more personalized experiences.
- Hybrid festivals attract bigger audiences and bring in more revenue.



6.0 SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION FINDINGS

The engagement of citizens in the planning of their communities is fundamental to informed planning. Community consultation and engagement takes diverse forms. The approach adopted for Port Colborne was threefold: facilitate participation, inclusion, and empowerment. To do this, the project team utilized an approach to consultation which included:

- A project initiation meeting with key Staff and personnel;
- Facilitated discussions with City department heads and senior management;
- Working sessions with Staff in the Community and Economic Development Department;
- Facilitated discussions with the Mayor and Council;
- Two (2) facilitated public open houses;
- Working session with community stakeholder groups;
- An online community/public input survey;
- A focus group meeting with the Canal Days Committee;
- A facilitated tour of Port Colborne's parks, recreation facilities, and cultural assets;
- A focused discussion with Port Colborne's Chief Administrative Officer; and
- A focused discussion with Port Colborne's Director of Community and Economic Development.

Throughout the engagement process, participants were often asked to identify the following as it pertained to Parks and Recreation:

- Port Colborne's strengths and challenges;
- What was missing and what was needed; and,
- The key opportunities to be considered.

Understanding how to leverage Port Colborne's unique recreational assets in order to meet the City's evolving recreational demands was explored through community consultation. With input from over 400 people, including community organizations, it was not possible to include all comments in this report. However, a **complete documentation of the online public survey was prepared and the results of the consultation are detailed in the separate Stakeholder Summary Report**. The Stakeholders Summary Report and online public survey results should be reviewed in conjunction with this Master Plan.

Online Public Survey – February 2019

An online survey was utilized to provide an additional opportunity and digital platform for community members to engage. The survey was posted on the City's website and shared through social media and local

media outlets. City staff are commended for their efforts to distribute the survey throughout the City. Staff used the following innovative methods for circulating the survey:

- Hand deliver hard copies to larger residential buildings (apartments);
- Attended community/recreation events at Vale Health and Wellness Centre with iPads available to complete the survey;
- Mailed hard copies/email digital copies to community groups and organizations;
- Provided the online survey link to all tax payers through tax bills;
- Distributed hard copies at key community hubs (e.g. City Hall, Vale Health and Wellness Centre, Roselawn Centre for the Arts, etc.);
- Invited residents to complete the online survey via local newspaper and radio.

The survey was open for the month of February, 2019, providing a significant window of time for receiving feedback.

The online public survey is indicative of views of the community comprising Port Colborne, but is not a statistical representation of the entire Port Colborne population.

During the four weeks the survey was active, 372 respondents had participated.

The survey results indicated that more than half (~ 56%) of all responses were from people representing their household. Proportions were provided in the survey that accounted for the number of people in each household represented by the survey. If approximately 56% of the survey participants were completing the survey on behalf of their household, then approximately 147 participants represent more than one individual.

If the number of people per household are included in the sample size, then 1,198 potential residents are being represented by the survey. This equates to 6.5% of Port Colborne's entire population being represented by the online public survey alone.

The following sections are a summary of the key findings from the consultation events and working sessions as well as the online survey. The results are shown below in aggregated form and key themes have been identified based on both qualitative and quantitative analysis. A more detailed summary of the survey findings is provided in the Stakeholder Summary Report.

6.1 Key Findings from Community Consultation

Why do Port Colborne residents participate in recreational activities?

Respondents of the online public survey clearly indicated that they value the benefits of recreational activities and services. The top five reasons to participate in recreational activities include:

- 1. Physical Health/Exercise**
- 2. Enjoy Nature**

- 3. Relaxation
- 4. Be With Family/Friends
- 5. Pleasure/Entertainment

Observation:

The broader health and wellbeing lens was highlighted throughout both the survey and consultation sessions. The benefits and importance of recreation as a foundation to achieve wellbeing was frequently suggested as a pathway to tackle issues such as sedentary lifestyles and obesity, decreased contact with nature, and social/economic inequities that limit opportunities for some groups.

What is interesting, is that Port Colborne seems to embrace the goals as identified in the 2015 Framework for Recreation in Canada: Pathways to Wellbeing. The Framework describes five goals and priorities for action under each goal. The goals are:

- **Goal 1: Active Living**
- **Goal 2: Inclusion and Access**
- **Goal 3: Connecting People and Nature**
- **Goal 4: Supportive Environments**
- **Goal 5: Recreation Capacity**

These reasons for participation demonstrate the benefits of recreational activities as they contribute to individual and community wellbeing, which is valued by Port Colborne users.

6.2 Port Colborne’s Parks and Recreation & Culture: Strengths & Assets

From the unique natural features such as the historic canal and access to Lake Erie along picturesque beaches, Port Colborne provides residents and visitors with a range of recreational opportunities. Through the online survey and community consultation, the project team has identified recreational strengths and assets that set Port Colborne apart from other communities.

The strengths and assets have been sorted using a modified version of the ‘Community Capital Framework’. Community capital is a number or collection of local assets, community resources that can produce other benefits through investment (Roseland, 2012⁴³). The community capital framework was designed to consider the effects of decision-making on each form of community capital – of which there are six (6) forms: Natural Capital, Physical Capital, Economic Capital, Human Capital, Social Capital, and Cultural Capital.



⁴³ Roseland, M. (2012) Toward Sustainable Communities & Solutions for Citizens & Their Governments

Capitalizing on these assets is one foundation for sustainable community development.

6.2.1 Natural Capital

Participants were clear in what they believed constitutes Port Colborne’s natural capital. In all examples of consultation, Port Colborne’s natural capital is a central City strength. The proximity to beaches, trails and conservation areas provide residents and visitors with a unique, outdoor lifestyle. These assets include an abundance of:

- The proximity to the waterfront and beaches which make Port Colborne a summer destination (Nickel Beach and Centennial Park Beach)
- The Welland Canal
- Conservation Areas/Woodlots (Mud lake, Morgan’s Point, Humberstone Marsh Conservation Area)
- Diversity of Wildlife (especially birds)

6.2.2 Physical Capital

Participants were well-voiced in what they believed constitutes Port Colborne’s physical capital. The physical (built) assets deemed most valuable to the City via consultation include:

- Vale Health and Wellness Centre – one of the most utilized YMCAs in Niagara Region
- Sugarloaf Marina
- Local and regional trail network
- Roselawn Centre for the Arts
- Large amount of parkland
- T.A. Lannan Sports Complex
- Algoport Skate and BMX Park
- H.H. Knoll (band shell, splash pad, accessible park features)
- Rural Community Centres (Bethel and Sherkston)

82% feel that Port Colborne recreational facilities are safe

61% feel they are satisfied with the aesthetic appearance and quality of Port Colborne’s public lands

The City’s Marina was highlighted as a major strength and unique amenity for the City to be leveraged further as an economic and tourism driver.

Understandably, the list is nearly comprehensive of the Community and Economic Development Department’s facility assets. However, the list also contributes to the understanding that Port Colborne’s recreational user base value clustered recreational facilities/amenities; again, a strength in Port Colborne.

In terms of the quality and maintenance of recreational assets and facilities, stakeholders indicated the Vale Health and Wellness Centre⁴⁴, Trails, H.H. Knoll Park, and Sugarloaf Marina as the most well maintained physical assets. These high levels of satisfaction indicate that residents/visitors enjoy these facilities.

In Port Colborne, trails stand out as a key asset, with respondents indicating that the Friendship Trail and the Welland Canal Parkway Trail were two of Port Colborne’s best

72% feel there are a sufficient number of trails in the community

⁴⁴ Survey respondents were asked to rank the maintenance of specific amenities within the Vale Centre. These were ranked as outstanding in the following order: (1) walking track; (2) arena; (3) aquatics facilities; (4) gymnasium; (5) fitness facility.

features. For example, the background review above and results of consultation suggest that trails help link recreational facilities and cultural facilities such as those found in the Downtown area. Trail connections with other communities or nearby conservation areas was also highlighted as a key asset. Creating improved trail connections through the use of consistent and comprehensive signage was suggested as an area for improvement. The results of consultation reaffirmed trails as one of the most requested and sought after features for the future of Port Colborne. Citizens value the existing trail system, and want better connected trails throughout the City.

6.2.3 Economic Capital

Economic Capital refers to the ways in which we allocate resources and make decisions about material aspects of the community and consists of two types of resources: financial and business. Individuals and organizations use financial resources, such as money and access to affordable loans, to achieve well-being and generate wealth. Business resources, such as locally owned and operated companies, are the suppliers and consumers within a community that generate employment and income. They transform community resources into products and services that encourage the circulation of money within the community.

In Port Colborne, the leadership of several department heads, including the Director of Community and Economic Development and the Community and Economic Development Department itself, was credited for efficiently maximizing a limited budget to provide parks and recreation throughout the City. It was discussed that the City and the Department is currently in a healthy fiscal position (budget-wise). These strengths will continue to be an asset moving forward.

The City also manages some unique revenue generating assets, such as Sugarloaf Marina. Identifying similar assets that the City can manage to provide a unique service is encouraged.

A recent re-organization of this Department which brought Community Services and Economic Development under the same Department is in keeping with recreational and municipal trends. This re-organization further recognizes that parks and recreation are in fact an economic driver for municipalities.

6.2.4 Human Capital

Again, the leadership of the Community and Economic Development Department was credited for excellent service in the provision of parks and recreation throughout the City. This will continue to be an asset moving forward. There was also strong recognition for the frontline workers who keep parks and facilities operating and maintained. Partnering service providers such as the YMCA were also highlighted as key assets for delivering high quality recreational programming.

Additionally, the City has a committed and dedicated base of volunteers for recreational and cultural activities such as Canal Days. These volunteers are an asset that needs to be continuously monitored, trained, recognized and valued.

6.2.5 Social Capital

Time and time again, participants stated that one of the greatest strengths of Port Colborne is its people. Most residents spoke to the small-town charm and the friendliness of City Staff, while City Staff spoke to their desire to deliver high quality parks and recreation services while working collaboratively with partners and residents to provide a friendly, efficient service.

Department heads and Council specified that the Community and Economic Development Department runs very efficiently, despite minimal Staffing. On several occasions, it was suggested that the City and Community and Economic Development Department have excellent working relationship with partnering organizations such as the YMCA, and that this is partly what contributes to the success of the Department. Maintaining these relationships will be vital to the continued success of the Department over time.

Through the project team's interviews with City staff and Council members, it is also evident that Port Colborne has welcomed innovative and creative recreational activities to the City. Activities such as sledge hockey and sport training opportunities are flourishing in Port Colborne which set the City apart from similar sized municipalities. The concentration of sporting events in Port Colborne provides an opportunity to explore sport tourism potential, particularly with the upcoming Niagara Region Canada Summer Games in 2021.

Community and Economic Development Department Staff recognized that their input is listened to and taken seriously by the Director of Community and Economic Development and that there is a serious level of commitment demonstrated by the Director.

Another strength recognized by the consulting team during the live engagement sessions was commitment. It was found that the entire Department both recognized the need for parks and recreation, and were happy to provide the level of service to do so. Their suggestions for improvements to the Department stemmed from a commitment to exceptional services to the City. This positive working relationship between managers and Staff is a strength of not only the Community and Economic Development Department, but the City as well.

Feedback from the community also pointed to several other community strengths, including:

- a sense of community connection;
- Port Colborne being an active community;
- The City's unique marine heritage; and,
- Network of willing volunteers.

6.2.6 Cultural Capital

Port Colborne is a waterfront community with a rich marine heritage. The Welland Canal and access to Lake Erie sets Port Colborne apart from other waterfront communities. This unique marine heritage has resulted in the growth of Port Colborne's flagship festival, Canal Days. The importance of this festival was evident throughout all stakeholder consultation, warranting a separate facilitated discussion with the Canal Days Committee.

The facilitated session with the Canal Days Committee made it clear to the project team that this festival is and should remain a Marine Heritage festival. Staff voiced concerns over the growth of this festival, and the limited resources (in terms of human capital and financial support) to keep up with the number of program offerings and events hosted through Canal Days. Based on this concern, this Master Plan has incorporated recommendations around how best to operate this festival in a way that honours the City's marine heritage while providing City staff with an evaluation criteria to assess how proposed events and activities can be (or should not be) operated by staff through Canal Days. This will ensure that activities are 'on-theme' and

contribute to increasing economic returns from this festival. The results of this facilitated event with Committee and recommendations is discussed in greater detail in Section 11 of this Plan.

Other examples of cultural capital suggested by participants include:

- Local artist talent
- Port Colborne Historical and Marine Museum
- Public Library
- City events (SportsFest, Christmas Parade, Easter Eggstravaganza)
- Unique events at Nickel Beach (e.g. bonfires)
- Showboat Festival Theatre, operated at Roselawn Centre for the Arts
- Art Crawl

6.3 What is missing & what is needed?

The input and data clearly indicates that the residents support the investment by the City in recreation, health, wellbeing, facility development, parks, trails, programming and events. This Plan further acknowledges the gaps in program offerings as well as the improvements needed to provide well maintained recreational spaces for residents to enjoy today and in the future.

The introduction of programs and services is not seen as primarily the role of the City but should involve partners from cross sectoral agencies, i.e. schools, non-profit, health, neighbouring municipalities etc.

Below is a summary of key gaps identified through consultation. These issues and additional feedback are discussed in further detail later in this report.

Parks & Outdoor Facilities

- Improved access to the waterfront for recreational use and trails;
- Improved parking and trail access to Nickel Beach;
- Better use of underutilized parks (e.g. smaller neighbourhood parks);
- Improved signage to invite trail users (e.g. cyclists) to visit other amenities/areas within the City (e.g. Downtown);
- Increased shade/tree plantings at City parks;
- Develop a needle debris program to ensure parks are safe;
- Clearly delineate City parks from private property;
- Update playground equipment;
- Opportunities for outdoor swimming (outdoor pool);
- Increased seating (benches/picnic tables) at City parks;
- Improved grass cutting within parks and general maintenance;
- Incorporate public-private partnerships to help with maintenance/offset costs;
- Improved safety of parks and trails/Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED);

62% feel that parks and trails are well signed and easy to locate

79% feel there are sufficient parks and open spaces in their neighbourhood

- General slip repair and increase number of slips available;
- Improved urban ecology (e.g. installing more trees, flowers, landscaping, etc.); and,
- Improved waste management (e.g. garbage clean-up).

Indoor Recreational Facilities

- Fix the roof at Vale Health and Wellness Centre;
- Improved cleanliness of washrooms/change rooms at Vale Health and Wellness Centre;
- Update the Roselawn Centre to ensure it is a physically accessible space for all;
- Update the rural community centres (Bethel and Sherkston) to ensure they are accessible and maintained in a manner consistent with other City-owned facilities;
- Provide new washrooms/change rooms at Nickel Beach;
- Maximize underutilized spaces at existing facilities (2nd floor of Vale Centre);
- Healthier food choices and vendors at Vale Health and Wellness Centre;
- Increase amount of indoor space available for dryland training/gymnasium use (so hallways and change rooms are not used at the arena); and,
- Consider an indoor playground for year-round use.

Trails

- Waterfront trails/access to waterfront;
- More trails/boardwalks throughout City;
- Year-round trail usage (combined with winter maintenance);
- Complete street connections/bike lanes to link trails;
- Raise awareness regarding trail etiquette and enforce a trail code of conduct; and,
- More naturalized hiking trails.

Events

- Need to host more, and larger events, festivals, and/or concerts;
- Need to improve data collection around large events (e.g. Canal Days) to identify improvements and changes to make for future events;
- Improve sustainability (e.g. waste diversion efforts or active transit options) for large events;
- Improved promotion and marketing of City-hosted events;
- When hosting larger community events, identify opportunities to cluster events at central location (E.g. Park, Vale Health and Wellness Centre, etc.);
- Identify alternative funding/sponsorship and partnership opportunities for City-run festivals;
- Refine standards of practice for staff to efficiently administer large events; and,
- Criteria to assess partnerships or event proposals to confirm City is the best organization to operate the event or if other organizations can play a role.

Programming

The online public survey indicated that 34% of respondents feel there are not enough programs for teenagers. Suggestions on how to engage teenagers included:

- Increased engagement with schools;
- Connecting with teenagers via social media;
- Year-round trails maintenance and activities;
- Invest in more waterfront activities/programming;
- Improving transit access (offer transit access on weekends);
- Provide Arts & Crafts/Makers Spaces; and,
- Music events that teens can access.

62% believe that in general, Port Colborne is a healthy place to live

53% of survey respondents indicated that they agree/strongly agree that the City of Port Colborne is responsive to the physical recreation needs of the community.

The online public survey also indicated that 31% of respondents feel there are not enough programs for adults aged 19 and over. Suggestions on how to engage adults included:

- Offer programs/courses after work/weekends;
- Provide more fitness options;
- Host social gathering events (such as nature walks);
- Provide more “learn to _____” events;
- Provide open swim and ice times;
- Organize and host Yoga classes;
- Provide more adventure activities; and,
- Implement City-subsidized programming to offset costs for lower income families.

In comparison to other communities similar in demographics and population size to Port Colborne, there appears to be a gap in programming that encourage healthy lifestyles. **73% of respondents indicated that “there is a need for greater access to recreational programs and services that encourage healthy lifestyles.”** However, participants weren’t readily willing to discredit the capability of their community. A majority of participants (62%) indicated that they feel Port Colborne is a healthy place to live, regardless of the desire for better access to recreation programs and services and that recreation and parks, can help bring a community some cohesiveness. However, **40% agree – strongly agree that “there is a problem with the quality of health and wellbeing in my community.”** This indicates that the City should consider focusing on programming that encourages healthy lifestyles and physical literacy.

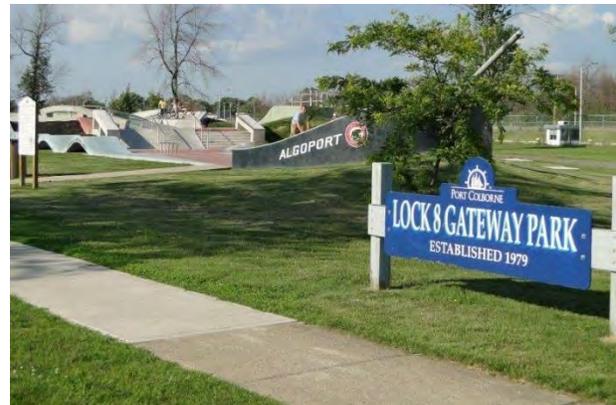


7.0 PARKS

7.1 Importance of Parkland

Parkland represents both natural and physical capital for a community. Parks are a valuable community asset that offers environmental, economic, and health benefits while beautifying the urban environment. Green spaces, such as parks, act as places of respite and provide venues for both passive and active activity, while preserving of natural landscapes. Parks provide a convenient option for urban residents to connect with their natural surroundings and play a vital role in communities and contribute to walkability, safety, and healthy child and youth development. Connecting with nature is also associated with improved cognitive, mental and physical health, enhanced creativity, and positive social behaviors according to the Framework for Recreation in Canada (2015).

Research suggests that children playing outdoors and establishing relationships with other children in their community can also have a positive effect on community cohesion. The more social networks children have in a neighbourhood, the greater the confidence parents have in the safety of that area. Parents also establish their own networks through their children, meaning that play also supports community cohesion amongst adults. In Finland, over 70% of parents saw their park to be somewhere where they can get support and help with issues concerning their children⁴⁵.



The primary aim of designing a play space must be to offer children a rich play environment where they can have a wide variety of play experiences and, where possible, learn about the natural environment.

Port Colborne's location along the Lake Erie Shoreline and the Welland Canal provides a unique opportunity to develop parks and trail connections along the waterfront that attract local residents and visitors. Additionally, leveraging the City's waterfront for public use (shorelines and beaches), has the potential to attract eco-tourists, those that value connection with nature through recreation. The City has already experienced success with their investment in parks such as H.H. Knoll Lakeview Park, which highlights the City's proximity to the waterfront and Canal and are capable of hosting large community events such as Canal Days.

⁴⁵ [Play England: Design for Play – A guide to creating successful play spaces.](#)

The following section provides an overview of Port Colborne's Parks System followed by specific recommendations.

7.2. City of Port Colborne Official Plan, 2013

The City of Port Colborne Official Plan (as approved by the Ontario Municipal Board, 2013) provides broad policy direction for the provision of parkland. The following summarizes some of the policy direction.

Section 2.1 of the City's Official Plan (OP) speaks to the City's vision. The following vision statements are particularly relevant to the development of a Parks and Recreation Master Plan:

"Continue to maintain and improve the overall quality of community life through the creation of a physical, economic and social environment that gives residents and employees within the City an ideal community in which to live, work and play."

"Provide policies which will support a high quality living environment that protects and enhances the natural environment and heritage features while minimizing the pollution of water, air, and land resources."

"Ensure the continued success in retaining and expanding community services and facilities through the supply of a balanced system of active and passive spaces that contribute to leisure time activities and provide adequate community services to meet the needs of the existing and future residents of the City."

"Ensure communities and neighbourhoods are properly connected to each other and employment centres, commercial areas and community facilities with a safe and efficient transportation network which provides opportunities for public transit, walking and cycling."

The City's Official Plan demonstrates the importance of the natural environment, community services and facilities that contribute to leisure time activities as well as a connected active transportation network.

Section 2.3.3 of the City's Official Plan further recognizes Port Colborne's natural, historical and cultural setting as an important asset, which enhances the quality of community life and supports tourism development. Section 2.3.4 focuses on the enhancement of public areas. This includes the strategic direction to *"continue to improve public access to the waterfront by acquisition and development of public spaces"* as well as *"continue to improve recreation and cultural facilities focusing on current and future community needs, while providing amenities for tourism."* Stakeholder consultation indicated these strategic directions are important and should continue to guide the City's decision making around parks and recreation.

The following sections relate specifically to the Official Plan's policies, including the City's parkland hierarchy and standards, followed by an analysis of the current parkland dedication and acquisition approach.

7.3 Parkland Inventory and Level of Service

As of 2016, the City's population was 18,306. Port Colborne has a total of 88.65 hectares (219.05 acres) of parkland comprised of 7 parkettes, 13 neighbourhood parks, 8 community parks and 4 large City parks, in addition to nearby conservation areas and woodlands. Together, Port Colborne's total parkland area of 88.65 hectares equates to **an overall parkland service level of 4.9 hectares for every 1,000 people**. Given the existing service level of 4.9 hectares for every 1,000 people, Port Colborne is comparable, if not exceeding, the best practices of other municipalities across Ontario. **Typical best practices from other similarly-sized municipalities recommend a parkland provision of 1.0 – 1.5 hectares for every 1,000 people.**



The following sections provide a more detailed review of the City's parkland hierarchy and standards. With the high level of parkland service in Port Colborne, it is generally recommended that the City maintain the current hierarchy and parkland standards. **Should the City require future parklands due to growth or development, it is recommended that attention be directed to increasing parkette/neighbourhood sized parks, as the City is well served by Community and City Parks.** Investment should also be directed to updating existing parks to improve accessibility and the amenities offered.

7.4 Parkland Standards

Section 3.13 of the Official Plan provides policy direction regarding parks and open space: *"The predominant uses for lands designated Parks and Open Space shall include, but not be limited to: public landscaped open space, playgrounds and sports fields not administered by a school boards; cultural and recreational facilities such as arenas, museums, halls, swimming pools, docks and publically operated golf courses; linear parks and public open spaces such as multi-use trails and pathways and on-road bicycle routes."*

Section 3.13.1 of the Official Plan provides parks and open space definitions, which inform the standards and design guidelines for the City and the general policies regarding the classification of parks and open space, specifically:

City Parks

- a) City Parks provide unique, specialized cultural and recreational activities oriented towards participate by all City residents and tourists;
- b) City Parks may include active and passive, indoor and outdoor, programming and non-programmed, casual use facilities of all scale (i.e. lights). Facility development should be integrated on each site so as to minimize conflicting uses;
- c) City parks shall serve all residents of all neighbourhoods throughout the City and also attract use from non-residents and tourists;

- d) City Parks can include major indoor culture, recreation and civic facilities and unique landscapes and should be located on major roads for greater accessibility.

Community Parks

- a) Community Parks provide active and passive recreational space for a variety of programmed and non-programmed cultural and recreational activities;
- b) Community Parks may include: intermediate and senior baseball and softball diamonds; senior sports fields/soccer fields, lit tennis courts; track and field facilities; indoor recreation facilities such as arenas, pools and community centres; children's play equipment; trails; horticulture areas; group picnicking; parking; and washrooms and/or change rooms.
- c) Community Parks are anticipated to serve all residents within a maximum 4.8 kilometre radius, but with some active Community Parks, this distance may be greater.
- d) Active and passive Community Parks can be developed separately but should, if possible, be components of the same Community Park.
- e) Community Parks can incorporate neighbourhood park components to serve local residents and should, if possible, be developed adjacent to secondary school sites and located on arterial roads for greater accessibility.

Neighbourhood Parks

- a) Neighbourhood Parks provide a mix of passive and active recreational opportunities for spontaneous, non-programmed use.
- b) Neighbourhood Parks may include; minor baseball and softball diamonds (unlit); unlit tennis courts; children's play equipment; shaded or treed areas for passive activities; open area for active play such as non-programmed sports field; multi-purpose hard courts (tennis, basketball, skating); and beaches and picnic tables.
- c) Neighbourhood Parks are anticipated to serve all residents within a maximum 0.8 kilometre radius.
- d) Neighbourhood Parks should, if possible, be developed adjacent to elementary school sites and or/collector roads.

Parkettes

- a) Parkettes provide for passive recreation or decorative purposes;
- b) Parkettes may include; horticultural displays, statues and historical notices; and benches and picnic tables;
- c) Parkettes are anticipated to serve all residents of all neighbourhoods throughout the City.

Tot-Lots

- a) Tot-Lots provide for passive and active recreation for pre-school children and generally form part of a Neighbourhood Park.
- b) A Tot-Lot should only be developed alone in areas not served by a neighbourhood Park.
- c) Tot-Lots may include children's play equipment and benches.
- d) Tot-Lots are anticipated to serve all residents within a maximum 0.4 kilometre radius.

While these definitions provide a high level of detail, it is recommended that the City consider simplifying these definitions and consolidating this section in a more succinct parkland standards and hierarchy section.

Section 3.13.2 of the Official Plan provides for the parks and open space hierarchy. Within the City's Urban Area Boundary, parks and open space shall be classified according to the following hierarchy:

- i. City Parks;
- ii. Community Parks;
- iii. Neighbourhood Parks;
- iv. Parkette; and,
- v. Tot Lot.

Outside the Urban Area Boundary, existing parks and open space shall be classified as follows:

- i. Community Parks; and,
- ii. Neighbourhood Parks.

Table 6 below, provides insight into current parkland service level provided by the City of Port Colborne and the distribution of parkland across the City. Please note, while the City's Official Plan includes a park hierarchy, parks have not been clearly designated at the time of writing this Master Plan. The consulting team designated each park based on the Official Plan's hierarchy and park definitions (see **Appendix D** for the updated parkland hierarchy inventory).

Table 6: Port Colborne Parkland Requirement Analysis

Park Classification	Radius Served	Standard	Required Area (based on current OP standards)	
			Required Area	Provided
City Park	Serve entire City	2.2 ha/1000 residents	40.26 ha	42.96 ha
Community Park	4.8 km radius	0.8 ha/1000 residents	14.65 ha	28.3 ha
Neighbourhood Park	0.8 km radius	1.0 ha/1000 residents	18.31 ha	10.81 ha
Parkette	Serve entire City	No standard	n/a	6.57 ha
Tot Lot	0.4 km radius	No standard	n/a	n/a
			Minimum 73.22 ha parkland required based on OP park standards	88.65 ha

Based on the City's current parkland standards, there is enough parkland to service Port Colborne's current population (approximately 18,306). While the current parkland service exceeds the requirements for City and Community Parks, the City is deficient in the amount of neighbourhood parkland. However, the excess Community Parks and parkettes provide additional lands, resulting in the very high amount of parkland found in Port Colborne.

Included as **Figure A** to this Master Plan report, the City of Port Colborne Parks, Facilities, & Trails Map illustrates the distribution and inventory of parkland and open space throughout Port Colborne. Additionally, the maps include the identification of public beaches, splash pads, and all playground facilities. **Figure B**

takes a closer look at the City's Urban Area and provides for a 400 metre and 800 metre walking radius extending from all existing parks. These radii are generally used to illustrate a five minute walking distance (400 metre) and 10 minute walking distance (800 metre) to parks and is typically applied to neighbourhood parks or parkettes.

This analysis indicates that parks are generally well distributed within the City's urban area. Essentially all residents are within a 10 minute walking distance of a park. This analysis illustrates gaps in two (2) areas of the City that require further assessment to explore opportunities to secure park/open space lands, where possible. They are labelled using red circles as "Areas for Further Assessment" and have been labeled based on their surrounding area. The two (2) areas for further assessment in Port Colborne are:

1. **Sugarloaf Street:** the area north of Sugarloaf Street, west of Clare Avenue, east of Rosemount Avenue, and south of Division Street.
2. **Durham Street and McRae Avenue:** the area north of Durham Street, west of Elizabeth Street, south of Cross Street and east of McRae Avenue.

Figure C herein includes a playground structure analysis. Further to the two areas identified as areas for further assessment, both of these areas are also identified as a gap in the playground structure analysis. The Sugarloaf Street area is larger in this case, and the addition of a play structure in this area should be considered in the future.

In keeping with best practices, the City of Port Colborne should maintain their current parkland standard ratio in their Official Plan. However, staff should continue to monitor population growth to ensure there continues to be sufficient parkland for all residents. Should land become available for future parkland development in the two areas identified above, the City should pursue the construction of neighbourhood parks, as this is the only category of park that the City is considered to be lacking.

7.5 Additional Open Space Lands

The existing operations and maintenance of City cemeteries is the responsibility of Parks and Recreation and parks crews respond to burials and other cemetery services when required. Based on the "enterprise model" of service delivery, the City should view cemeteries as both park space and a revenue generating business. A cemetery park is viewed as a gathering place that can provide a multi-functional space for both quiet reflection and outdoor ceremonies. Community and cemetery events could also be held within this space, as a way of further integrating the cemetery as an important open space within the City.

Cemeteries are generally located near other City landmarks such as churches, community centres and may be located in proximity to natural fixtures. Cemeteries are becoming destinations where residents, students and tourists visit to learn of their past and their community.

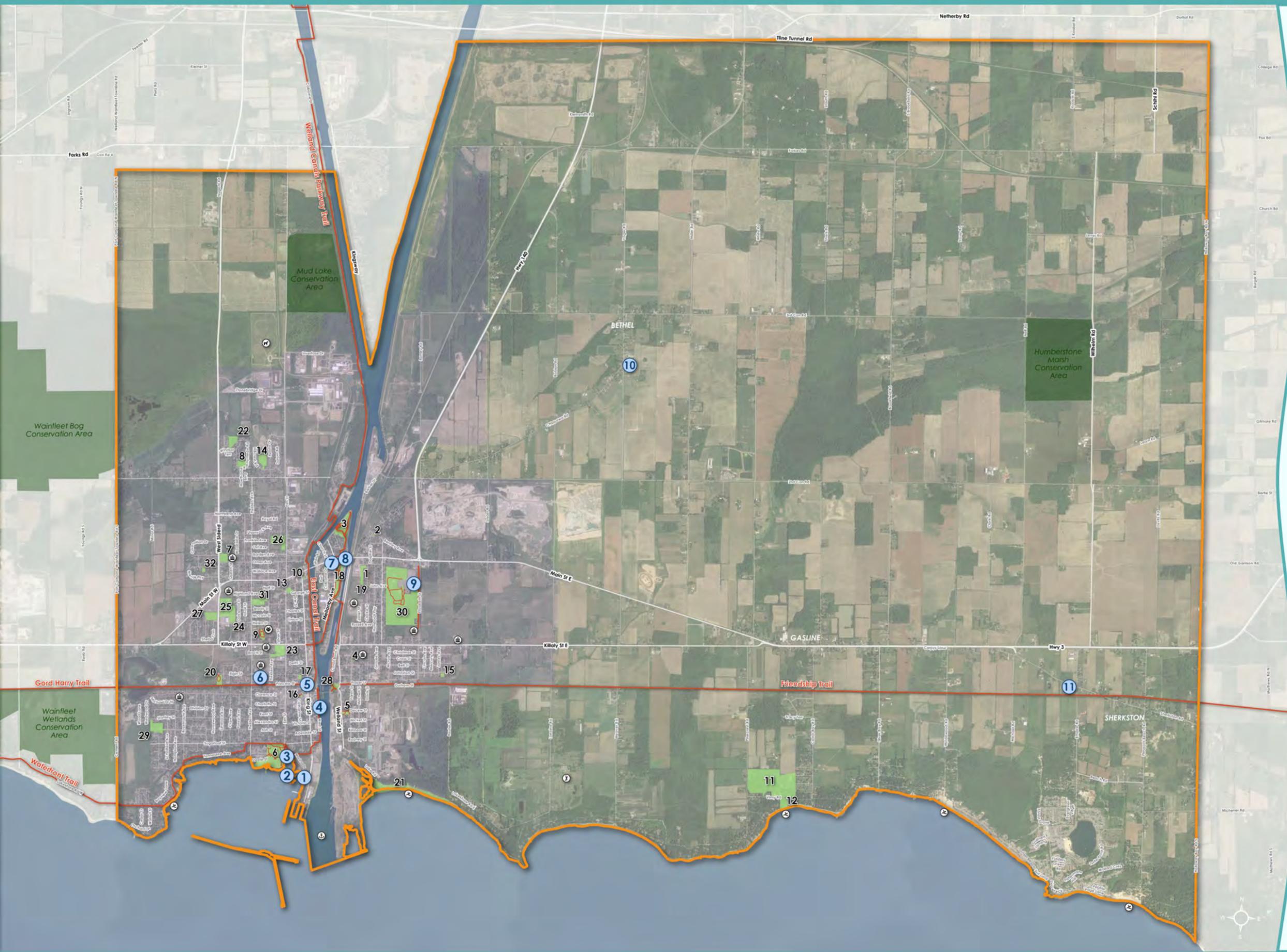
Trends and Best Practices

The following are some trends and best practices in municipal cemetery management:

- Some municipalities share individual and community histories at their cemeteries;
- Many cemeteries are designed to offer similar benefits to parks, with beautiful landscapes and walking;

FIGURE A - PARKS & RECREATION SYSTEM

CITY OF PORT COLBORNE PARKS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN



Legend

Basemap

- City of Port Colborne Boundary
- Urban Area Boundary
- Conservation Areas
- Parks
- Trails
- 🏠 Private Community Centre
- 🎓 School
- ⛳ Golf Course
- 🐕 Dog Park
- 🏖️ Public Beach
- ⚓ Major Port

Parks

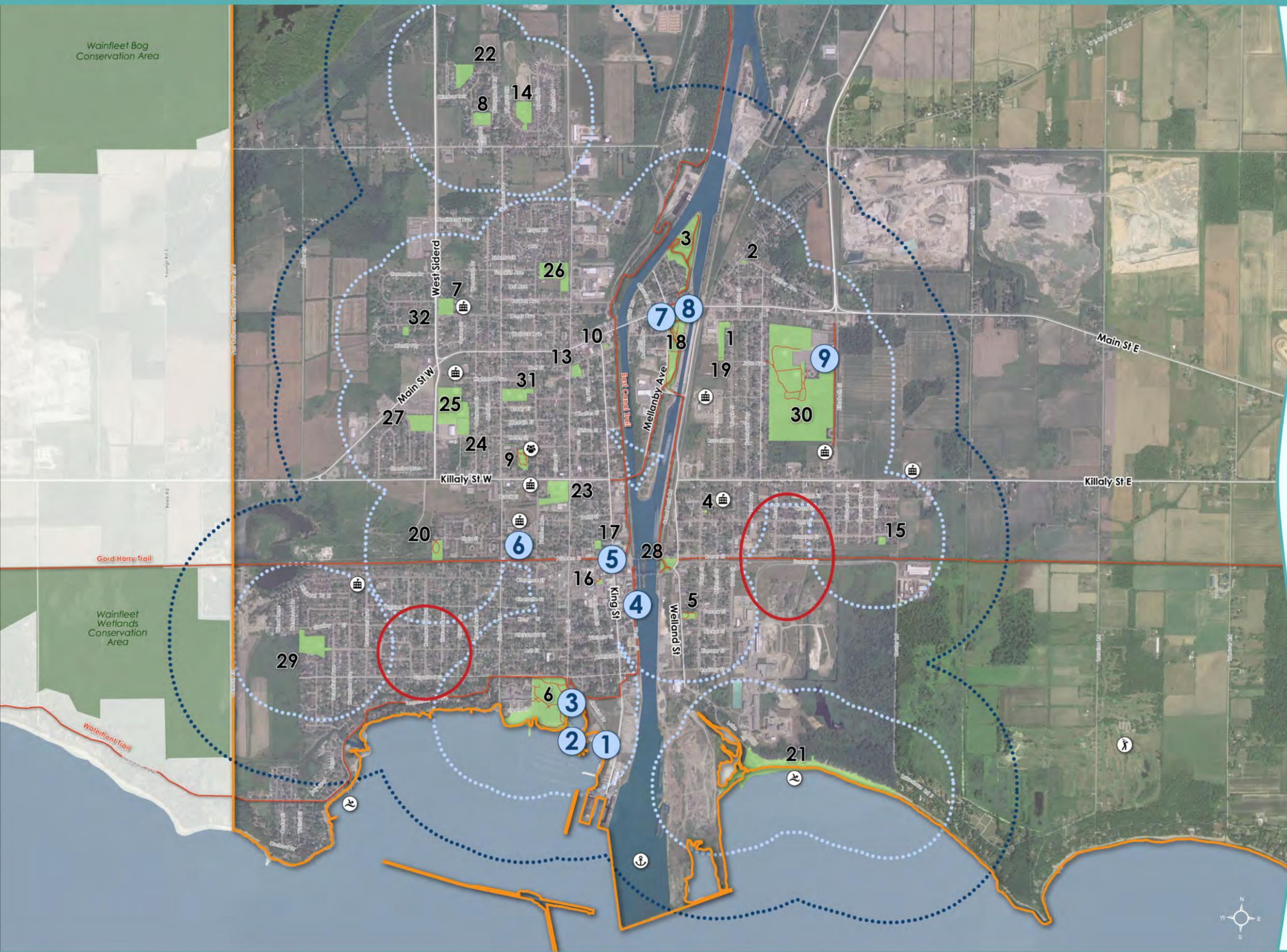
- 1 Chestnut Park
- 2 Chippawa Park
- 3 Derek Point Memorial Garden
- 4 Dewitt Carter Playground
- 5 East Village Community Park / Victoria Playground
- 6 H.H. Knoll Lakeview Park
- 7 Harry Dayboll / Oakwood Park
- 8 Hawthorne Heights Park
- 9 Helen Kinnear Memorial Park
- 10 Humberstone Cenotaph Park
- 11 Humberstone Centennial Park
- 12 Humberstone Centennial Park Beach
- 13 Humberstone Shoe Park
- 14 Jacob E. Barrick Park
- 15 Johnston Street Playground
- 16 King George Memorial Park
- 17 Library Park
- 18 Lock 8 Gateway Park
- 19 Lockview Park
- 20 Maple Park
- 21 Nickel Beach / Nickel Beach Playground
- 22 Oxford Boulevard Park
- 23 Port Colborne Lions Field
- 24 Port Colborne Tennis Club
- 25 Port Colborne Westside / Rotary Complex
- 26 Reservoir Park
- 27 Rose Shymansky Memorial Park
- 28 Seaway Park
- 29 Sunset Park
- 30 T.A. Lannan Sports Complex
- 31 Vimy Park / Melissa's & John Daly Playground
- 32 Westdale Park
- 33 Future Park (Westwood Park Secondary Plan)

Community Facilities

- ① Sugarloaf Marine Supply Store
- ② Sugarloaf Harbour Marina Building & Restaurant
- ③ H.H. Knoll Snack Bar & Miniputt
- ④ Harbourmaster House
- ⑤ Port Colborne Museum Complex
- ⑥ Roselawn Centre for the Arts
- ⑦ Visitor Centre (Humberstone Community Hall)
- ⑧ Lock 8 Lighthouse
- ⑨ Vale Health & Wellness Centre
- ⑩ Bethel Community Centre
- ⑪ Sherkston Community Centre

FIGURE B - PARKS, FACILITIES, & TRAILS MAP - URBAN AREA

CITY OF PORT COLBORNE PARKS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN



Legend

Basemap

- City of Port Colborne Boundary
- Urban Area Boundary
- Conservation Areas
- Parks
- Trails
- Private Community Centre
- School
- Golf Course
- Dog Park
- Public Beach
- Major Port
- 400 m Walking Distance to Parks
- 800 m Walking Distance to Parks
- Areas for Further Assessment

Parks

- 1 Chestnut Park
- 2 Chippawa Park
- 3 Derek Point Memorial Garden
- 4 Dewitt Carter Playground
- 5 East Village Community Park / Victoria Playground
- 6 H.H. Knoll Lakeview Park
- 7 Harry Dayboll / Oakwood Park
- 8 Hawthorne Heights Park
- 9 Helen Kinnear Memorial Park
- 10 Humberstone Cenotaph Park
- 11 Humberstone Centennial Park*
- 12 Humberstone Centennial Park Beach*
- 13 Humberstone Shoe Park
- 14 Jacob E. Barrick Park
- 15 Johnston Street Playground
- 16 King George Memorial Park
- 17 Library Park
- 18 Lock 8 Gateway Park
- 19 Lockview Park
- 20 Maple Park
- 21 Nickel Beach / Nickel Beach Playground
- 22 Oxford Boulevard Park
- 23 Port Colborne Lions Field
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- 25 Port Colborne Westside / Rotary Complex
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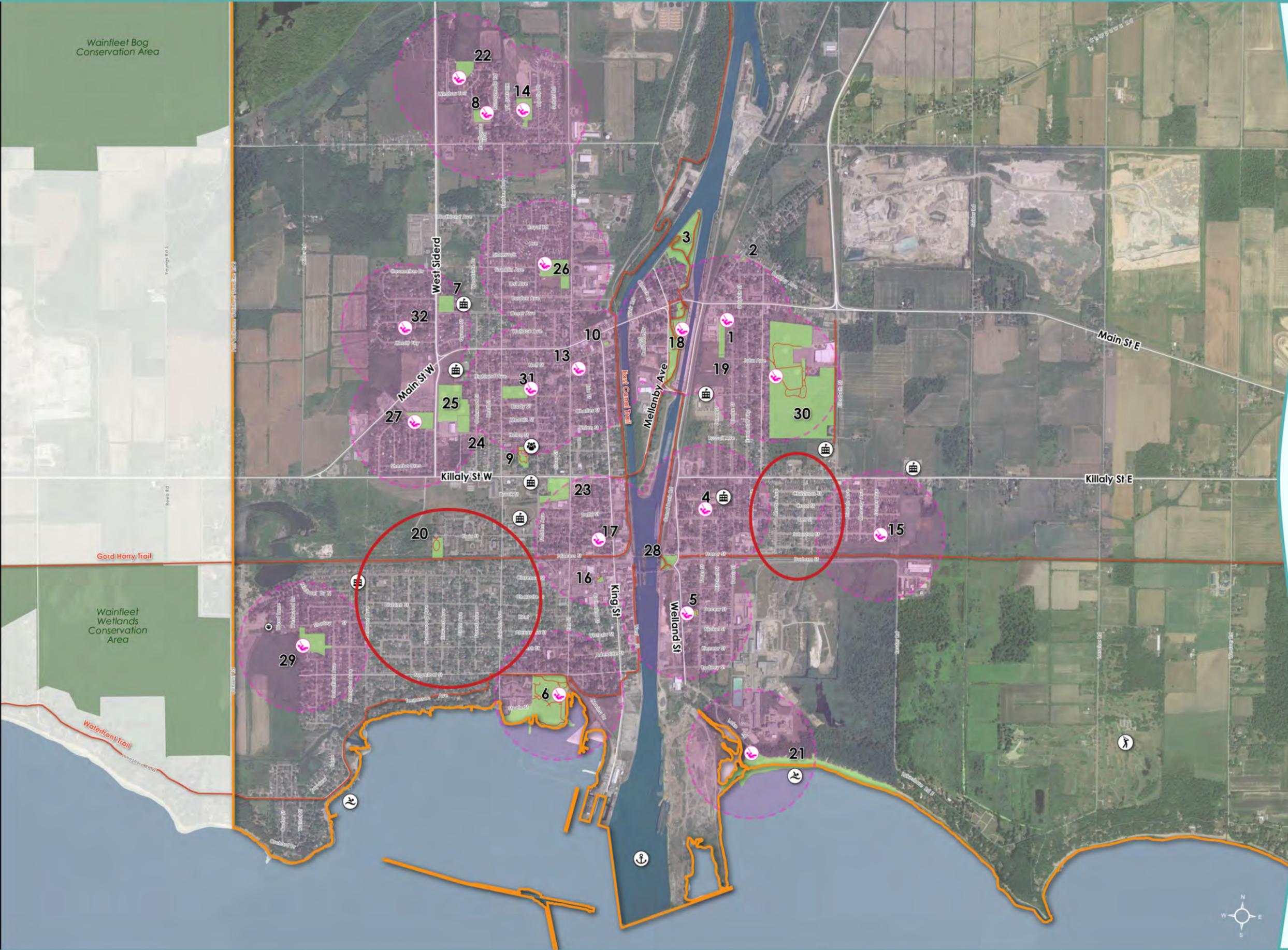
Community Facilities

- ① Sugarloaf Marine Supply Store
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 - ③ H.H. Knoll Snack Bar & Miniputt
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 - ⑤ Port Colborne Museum Complex
 - ⑥ Roselawn Centre for the Arts
 - ⑦ Visitor Centre (Humberstone Community Hall)
 - ⑧ Lock 8 Lighthouse
 - ⑨ Vale Health & Wellness Centre
 - ⑩ Bethel Community Centre*
 - ⑪ Sherkston Community Centre*
- *Not shown on map

Map to Scale
Imagery Source: Google Satellite Imagery
Data Sources: Land Information Ontario, City of Port Colborne

FIGURE C - PLAY STRUCTURE ANALYSIS

CITY OF PORT COLBORNE PARKS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN



Legend

Basemap

- City of Port Colborne Boundary
- Urban Area Boundary
- Conservation Areas
- Parks
- Trails
- Private Community Centre
- School
- Golf Course
- Dog Park
- Public Beach
- Major Port
- Playgrounds
- 400m Walking Distance to Playgrounds
- Areas for Further Assessment

Parks

- 1 Chestnut Park
- 2 Chippawa Park
- 3 Derek Point Memorial Garden
- 4 Dewitt Carter Playground
- 5 East Village Community Park / Victoria Playground
- 6 H.H. Knoll Lakeview Park
- 7 Harry Dayboll / Oakwood Park
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- 10 Humberstone Cenotaph Park
- 11 Humberstone Centennial Park
- 12 Humberstone Centennial Park Beach
- 13 Humberstone Shoe Park
- 14 Jacob E. Barrick Park
- 15 Johnston Street Playground
- 16 King George Memorial Park
- 17 Library Park
- 18 Lock 8 Gateway Park
- 19 Lockview Park
- 20 Maple Park
- 21 Nickel Beach / Nickel Beach Playground
- 22 Oxford Boulevard Park
- 23 Port Colborne Lions Field
- 24 Port Colborne Tennis Club
- 25 Port Colborne Westside / Rotary Complex
- 26 Reservoir Park
- 27 Rose Shymansky Memorial Park
- 28 Seaway Park
- 29 Sunset Park
- 30 T.A. Lannan Sports Complex
- 31 Vimy Park / Melissa's & John Daly Playground
- 32 Westdale Park
- 33 Future Park (Westwood Park Secondary Plan)



- Cemeteries are broadening services to meet demands, offering multiple types of interment of cremated remains and green (or natural) burial areas;
- Some communities are expanding cemetery features and services to include gathering spaces, additional memorialization options, and engraving;
- Municipalities are connecting cemeteries where possible to trail and cycling routes; and,
- Cemeteries are being integrated into larger open space and neighbourhood recreation spaces.

The City may want to consider the development of a nature walk that can include a path which links the Bethel Neighbourhood Recreation Centre to the Cemetery. The Nature Walk will provide an opportunity for families to commemorate or memorialize a loved one through sponsorship or purchase of a memorial stone, memorial tree or small customized family columbaria. The entry to the Nature Walk can be designed with landscape berms and strategically placed boulders/armor stone, benches and quiet areas for reflection.

There is an additional opportunity for families and visitors to utilize the Bethel Centre as a gathering place to celebrate a loved one or to host visitors following an interment ceremony.

Move Towards Financial Sustainability

It is recommended that the City undertake the preparation of a Cemetery Business Plan to review cemetery operations, staff needs and business policies, pricing practices and goals for financial performance. The City may want to consider the expansion of current Cemetery Fees & Charges to include pricing for all new interment and service offerings. The plan would also provide a marketing and promotions strategy for the continued attraction and sustainability of the community and region to various cemetery locations.

Marketing and Promotions

There is an opportunity to improve the City's cemetery market share by investing in marketing initiatives and community engagement programs. This would serve to increase awareness of the City's cemetery system, strengthen relationships with the community and partner organizations, and attract more families to choose City of Port Colborne cemeteries. There are a number of promotional tools available for consideration: Stone Orchard Software, GIS Mapping and iCemetery APP can provide digital wayfinding in the field, and have been used successfully at other Canadian cemeteries to advertise their presence. Similar tools could be employed by the City. These initiatives include:

- Promoting the Cemetery through appropriate media (enhanced website, brochures, and press releases);
- Developing programs to host community, religious, cultural and historic events at the Cemetery;
- Providing enhanced education and interpretation opportunities linked to school curriculums;
- Enhance the cemetery webpage to include more information about the cemeteries, as well as a listing of upcoming events, and links to hospice, bereavement and memorialization sites;
- Create a professional brochure, that includes information concerning the history of the cemeteries, and issue news releases, when for example, new services or products are instituted, new employees are brought on to the team and as new burial areas or feature areas are opened;
- Engage the community by hosting community, religious and historic events at City of Port Colborne cemeteries (I.e. Work with school children to decorate all Veterans graves in the week leading up to

Remembrance Day (November 11th). Father's and Mother's Day are also opportunities for regular events.);

- Establish and promote a guided and non-guided walking tour, with a self-guided cemetery map;
- A historical brochure about the history of the cemetery sites, their notable gravesites, natural and cultural histories;
- Enlist the aid of students/cooperative programs, and integrate student tours for history class field trips; and,
- Develop partnerships with genealogical societies, historical societies, schools and others to assist in the development and delivery of the materials and tours.

Several of these initiatives would provide the City a unique opportunity to work closely with the City's Museum and Archives staff.

7.6 Proposed Process for Transition of Use

The parkland analysis and consultation indicated that there is a large amount of parkland in the City of Port Colborne. Through a review of similarly sized municipalities, this was confirmed as well. Staff and Council suggested it would be helpful to have a process in place to consider the potential repurposing or disposition for parks that are considered to be underutilized.

If the City wishes to consider transition of use for parkland in Port Colborne, staff and Council should be cognizant of parkland provision and the impacts of removing land from the parks system. Direction from Council and staff shall be based on data such as bookings (sports fields), usage and public input.

Subject to Council direction, the City should consider ways to transition parks/portions of larger parks to other recreational purposes. For example, underutilized sports fields could expand use to host large outdoor events. Alternatively, large parks could be reduced in size to encourage better usage of space. Parcels could be sold and developed to leverage funds for other recreational improvements. The funds leveraged from selling off parcels of larger parks could help offset costs for improvements at highly used parks including H.H. Knoll Lakeview Park and the T.A. Lannan Sports Complex.

In order to determine if the provision of land for such parks can be re-purposed, transitioned to another use, or partially disposed of, the City should undertake one of the following two approaches depending on the intended outcome (repurposing vs. disposition of lands):

Recommended Approach for Repurposing Park Lands:

1. City staff identify and recommend park to consider for repurposing to new recreational use. Council consideration to confirm direction, including public input.
2. Assess current conditions of park and assess alternatives.
3. Survey residents within 500 metres of park to gather data on park usage.
4. Hold public meeting with surrounding residents and stakeholders to discuss alternatives.
5. Based on public feedback, select preferred alternative and present to committee/Council for consideration.
6. Develop a preliminary design and action plan.

7. Hold public meeting to discuss preliminary design and action plan.
8. Present final plan to Committee/Council for approval.

Recommended Approach for *Partial/Full Disposition of Park Lands*:

1. City staff identify and recommend park to consider for partial or full disposition. Council consideration to confirm direction, including public input.
2. Assess current parkland supply based on standards for park provision.
3. Survey residents and other stakeholders within 500 metres of park to gather data on park usage.
4. Hold public meeting with surrounding residents and stakeholders to discuss.
5. Based on public feedback and usage data, present options to committee/Council for consideration.
6. Develop an action plan.
7. Hold public meeting to discuss process and action plan.
8. Present final plan to Committee/Council for approval.
9. Comply with City by-law regarding disposition of land.

This approach will ensure that residents are consulted on proposed changes (repurposing, transition of uses or partial/whole disposition of lands) for parks in Port Colborne.

7.7 Parkland Dedication and Acquisition

There are several provincial and municipal regulations, policies, and guidelines governing the acquisition and location of parkland, notably Section 42(1) and 51.1 of the Planning Act. Section 42(1) and 51.1(1) of the Planning Act specify the required parkland dedication requirements based on the proposed development land uses.

It is timely to review and update parkland policies since the passing of Bill 73, *The Smart Growth of our Communities Act* in 2015. This bill resulted in changes to the Planning Act that impact parkland dedication.

Key changes include:

- The requirement to prepare a parks plan that is made available to the public; and
- The requirement to consult with every school board and any other persons or public body that the municipality considers appropriate.

These changes encourage municipalities to strategically plan for parks and be prepared for potential opportunities to acquire park lands to meet future community needs.

Bill 73 also resulted in changes to the payment in lieu requirements:

- The maximum alternative parkland rate changed from **one hectare per 300 units** to **one hectare per 500 units for cash-in-lieu**.

The intended outcome of this change is to help incentivize acquisition of land for parks and to help provide parkland more quickly.

The current Official Plan is consistent with Section 42 and 51.1 of the Planning Act, in the requirement for 2 per cent of commercial/industrial developments to be dedicated parkland; and 5 per cent for all other cases (E.g. residential). The Planning Act also permits municipalities to waive the land conveyance requirements and may require cash-in-lieu of parkland (or combination of land and cash). The City's Official Plan permits this as well.

In addition to the above changes to legislation, the recently enacted Bill 108 proposes to revise the *Planning Act* to eliminate the alternative rate for parkland conveyance and simply require parkland conveyance at a rate of 2% for commercial/industrial development and 5% for residential development. At the time of writing this report, this section of the *Planning Act* has not been proclaimed, and is therefore not in effect.

Section 11.5 of the City's Official Plan provides policies for parkland acquisition and dedication. However, the Official Plan still includes the older rate of 1 hectare for every 300 dwelling units:

- *For high or medium density residential development, parkland dedication of one hectare for every 300 dwelling units is required.*

During the next Official Plan review, this policy should be updated to reflect the updated alternative cash-in-lieu rate in the Planning Act of **one hectare for every 500 dwelling units** and the proposed land conveyance rate as enacted by Bill 108.

Cash-in-lieu for all or part of the required parkland dedication may be considered:

- *Where the required land dedication fails to provide an area of suitable shape, size or location for development as public parkland;*
- *Where the required dedication of land would render the remainder of the site unsuitable or impractical for development; or,*
- *Where, in the opinion of the municipality, existing parks and recreational facilities in the vicinity of the site are clearly adequate to serve the projected increase in population.*

It is our understanding that the City has historically waived the requirement for parkland dedication in order to incentivize development in Port Colborne. This is common for other Ontario municipalities who are trying to attract growth and development. However, the City is strongly encouraged to request and accept parkland or cash-in-lieu as part of the parkland requirements at all possible opportunities. As the City is currently exceeding their parkland area standards, accepting cash-in-lieu to reinvest in existing parks and recreational facilities is encouraged.

Through Bill 108, the Province has also allowed for the financing of 'soft services' like parks and recreation facilities that are required for growth and will need to be included in a new Community Benefits Charge. Although detailed regulations on how to implement the Community Benefits Plan have not been released by the Province yet, municipalities are required to have a Community Benefit Plan in place by January 2021. The City should continue to monitor the Province's process and will be required to implement these changes when the transition regulations are released.

Section 4.2 of the City's OP speaks to land use policies as they pertain to Environmental Protection Areas, including Natural Hazards (Section 4.2.4). Section 4.2.4 (h) states that:

"Where new development is proposed on a site, part of which is identified as Natural Hazards Area by Schedule B1, such lands shall not necessarily be acceptable as part of the dedication for park purposes as required under the Planning Act. All lands dedicated to the City shall be conveyed in a physical condition satisfactory to the City. Where an open watercourse is involved, adequate space shall be provided for maintenance and other similar operations.

Similarly, section 11.5.1 (g) states the following:

"The City will not count lands designated as an Environmental Area, or which meet the criteria for designation as an Environmental Area, for parkland dedication purposes."

While policy 4.2.4. (h) discourages Natural Hazard Areas from being accepted as parkland, it does not clearly prohibit this practice. Policy 11.5.1 (g) provides more clear direction, however clarity is needed to confirm if *natural hazards* and *environmental areas* are terms being used interchangeably. In all instances, **Natural Hazard Areas should not be accepted as parkland dedication**. The City should consider including this recommendation through future updates of the Official Plan moving forward.

Parkland Dedication By-law No. 4748/130/05

By-law No. 4748/130/05 was passed in 2005 to help the City deal with parkland as it pertains to residential, commercial and industrial development throughout the municipality. Specifically, it is a by-law to require the conveyance of land or cash-in-lieu as a condition of development or redevelopment for residential purposes in the City. The following policies detail parkland dedication requirements:

1. Land in the amount not exceeding in the case of land proposed for development or redevelopment for commercial or industrial purposes two percent (2%) and in all other cases five percent (5%) of the lands shall be conveyed to the Corporation of the City of Port Colborne for park or other public recreational purposes as a condition of development or redevelopment of such land.

2. The Council of the Corporation of the City of Port Colborne may by resolution, require the payment of money to the City of Port Colborne in lieu of the conveyance required under Section 1 of this By-law and the amount of such payment shall be to the value of the land otherwise required to be conveyed to the City and for the purpose of determining the amount of such payment, the value of the land shall be determined as the day before the building permit is issued in respect of the development or redevelopment or where more than one building permit is required for the development or redevelopment as the day before the day the first building permit is issued.

3. The provisions of this By-law do not apply where owners apply to the Corporation of the City of Port Colborne for a building permit related to development or redevelopment of lands by way of structural improvement, repair, replacement or enlargement of buildings or structures already located on lands if the effect of such structural improvement, repair, replacement or enlargement do not substantially increase the size or usability of one or more building on the

lands and for the purpose of this By-law, the words “substantially increase the size or usability” shall mean to provide more than the existing number of residential units in the case of residential land use or more than twenty-five percent (25%) the gross floor area of any structure on lands to be used for non-residential purposes.

The parkland by-law is consistent with the Planning Act and the City’s Official Plan in that it refers to the 2% and 5% land requirements. However, the by-law should be updated to reference the option to accept cash-in-lieu at a rate of 1 hectare for every 500 dwelling units. It is recommended that the City ensures their Official Plan and Parkland Dedication By-law are updated to conform to the recent changes to the Planning Act.

7.8 What We Heard

The results of the Online Survey, completed by participants in February 2019, provides insight into resident perceptions on City parkland and open space. It is evident in the results that the larger community and waterfront parks attract more visitors, are used more frequently, and therefore may act as a regional draw for other communities and visitors to Port Colborne. As anticipated, H.H. Knoll Lakeview Park was ranked as the most popular park in the City, followed by Lock 8 Gateway Park, Nickel Beach, T.A. Lannan Sports Complex and Humberstone Centennial Park and Beach. Given that four of the five top ranked parks are located along Lake Erie or the Welland Canal, it is clear that recreation users place significant value on waterfront parks. The T.A. Lannan Sports Complex was also noted as an important community park based on the provision of sportsfields to the City and broader community.

Based on feedback from stakeholders and survey respondents, there are several barriers that must be overcome if the City is to support a larger, regional draw for parks such as H.H. Knoll and the City’s beaches. These improvements include available and on-street parking, public facilities such as washrooms and changing rooms, accessibility and capacity, as well as general maintenance.

When asked to describe the most important improvements needed for City parks, the most common responses include:

- Garbage disposal
- Overall cleanliness and maintenance of parks and trails
- Update to playground equipment and sports equipment
- More opportunities for older kids/seniors (e.g. outdoor fitness equipment)
- Improved public washroom facilities
- Clearly delineate parks from private property (fencing)
- Plant trees/implement shade measures; Provide seating/picnic tables in shaded areas
- Needle pick-up needs to be addressed
- Provide lighting for evening play
- Water refill stations needed
- Preservation of natural areas
- More outdoor sport facilities (beach volleyball, basketball nets)
- More community events in parks
- Enforcement for dog owners (dogs to remain on leash and bins/bags provided for dog owners)
- Wayfinding signage

- Accessible park features (parking, access, playground structures and materials)
- Bike racks at all parks

Nickel Beach was specifically mentioned by many survey respondents and stakeholders. The following issues, specific to Nickel Beach improvements, were identified through consultation:

- Concession stand for food needed
- Change rooms/washroom upgrades
- Playground update needed
- Parking (on site, off site) and access
- Operating hours (extend into September)
- Trail connectivity



Based on the amount of feedback from stakeholders regarding improving access to the waterfront, and specific improvements to Nickel Beach, we recommend the City undertake a strategic planning exercise specific to the development of Port Colborne’s waterfront. As part of this strategy, staff should consider opportunities to implement the specific amenities identified as needed for Nickel Beach. By leveraging the City’s access to Lake Erie, staff can meet broader tourism and economic development initiatives.

When it comes to the amount of parkland and trails in Port Colborne, staff in the Community and Economic Development Department, Council and community stakeholders generally agree that Port Colborne’s existing parkland and trail network is sufficient in size and number. **Nearly 80% of survey respondents indicated that they agree-strongly agree there are sufficient parks and open space in Port Colborne.**

This supports the consulting teams overall findings that Port Colborne has a very large amount of parkland for its population size. It is worth noting that when working session participants were asked if they would support the repurposing or disposition of some underutilized parks (such as smaller neighbourhood parks with outdated equipment or no amenities, or parks that are in close proximity to a number of better equipped parks), they were generally supportive of this. As such, if the City should wish to assess specific parks for re-purposing/disposition, we recommend the steps previously described in Section 7.5.

Consultation results also suggest that respondents would like to see the City offer more diverse and specialized parks. H.H. Knoll Lakeview Park is an example of such a park, based on its proximity to the waterfront, event opportunities (Canal Days, Movie Nights), updated playground, spray pad, etc.

The consultation revealed a common theme among the Port Colborne community – **residents and visitors want more and better public access to the waterfront**. Moreover, it was found that residents and visitors want access to the waterfront using parks and a connected trail network.

Generally, community engagement identified common themes for improvement with regard to Port Colborne’s parks and open space. These common themes included:

- **There is room for improvement with the general maintenance and upkeep of Port Colborne parks/open spaces;**
- **Residents want increased and improved access to the waterfront;**
- **Nickel Beach holds great potential, but requires significant improvements;**
- **Resources/improvements should be directed to the City’s existing parks rather than creating new parks; and,**
- **Improved safety and lighting through CPTED (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design) is needed.**

These responses have been recorded and discussed in detail in the separate Stakeholder Summary Report and the supplementary City of Port Colborne Parks and Recreation Master Plan Existing Park Inventory and Assessment (**Appendix E**).

7.9 Best Practices

Section 3.13.5 of the City’s OP provides design guidelines for parks and open space. However, best practices suggest that park design standards are most comprehensively considered through the implementation of independent design guidelines; either, through the creation of Urban Design Guidelines or through the provision of a Parks Design Standards Manual. Proper parkland development takes time and research, and often, the outcome is a result of analytical study and available funding. Efficiently using park funding to provide the best parkland for a given neighbour or community, is a skill that stems from experience in design and knowledge surrounding best practices.

Based on the inventory of Port Colborne’s parks system and the feedback received through the public consultation, the following is an overview of best practices to consider integrating into the design of the City’s parks. A complete inventory and recommendations for Port Colborne’s Parks is included in **Appendix E** of this report. These recommendations will help the Community and Economic Development Department prioritize updates to parks over the next 10 years.

Safety Standards

- Playgrounds should maintain safety standards that comply with the Canadian Standards Association’s (CSA) latest codes and standards for children’s playspaces and equipment (currently CAN/CSA-Z614-14), and O. Reg. 137/15: GENERAL under the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, S.O. 2014, c. 11, Sched. 1, where applicable (e.g. Section 27 - Play materials, equipment and furnishings).
- Playgrounds built in 2015 or later should have safety surfacing that complies with standard safety regulations and therefore does not need to be changed but will require maintenance.

- Upgrade safety surfacing to either rubber or Engineered Wood Fiber (EWF) playground chips for safety surfacing in order to comply with current safety and accessibility standards.
- Ensure that at least one Staff member is trained as a Certified Playground Inspector through the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA) and the Canadian Playground Safety Institute (CPSI) so that they may conduct hands-on inspections/audits of City-owned playspaces.
- Playgrounds and parks should be designed using Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles that balance the protection and enhancement of habitats.

Environmental Sustainability

- Playground and parks should be designed with environmental sustainability principles that consider the protection and enhancement of environmental resources.
- Park areas should include rainwater and storm water infiltration areas where possible.
- When planning and designing new parks, consider life cycle cost analysis and water and energy consumption.
- For large parking lots, include trees, planting and rain gardens during upgrading projects or new construction.

Accessibility

- Many of Port Colborne's parks are lacking pathways, concrete pads, and accessible equipment that are needed to bring the parks up to current AODA standards.
 - Add pathways to park elements from points of entry in order to provide access to those with mobility limitations.
 - Add concrete pads to the base of site furnishings such as bike racks, tables, and benches in order to increase accessibility.
 - When replacing site furnishings upgrade to accessible furniture and equipment
- Provide seating in all parks and along multi-use trails.
- Use universal design principles to welcome all park visitors, including some pathway loops that are fully accessible in City-wide parks, and other parks where possible.

Playgrounds

- The large majority of the playgrounds in Port Colborne's parks are strongly focused on traditional play elements such as swings, slides, and towers.
 - Consider installing more natural playground, adventure play elements, or adult play structures in order to provide interesting places to place for a large variety of interests.
 - Consider implementing a combination of equipment types and styles to engage various ages and abilities.
 - Consider incorporating a marine theme at other parks, similar to the Algosport Skate Park.
 - Include where possible inclusive features that challenge children with sensory and or social/emotional disabilities, i.e. develop for the five senses through-colourful shapes, musical pieces, (piano/drum sounds) electronic innovation, variety of textures, and accessible pieces to activate motor skills.
- Most of Port Colborne's parks are relatively flat with simple land works.

- Consider installing more berms and swales where applicable, to provide a variety of vantage points, provide barriers to undesired views and noise, and multiple spaces within a small area for an increase sense of refuge and imaginative play opportunities by the users while still providing necessary sightlines for supervision.
- The following amenities in parks should be considered as they offer wide-ranging benefits:
 - Creative nature-based playgrounds;
 - Multi-use sports courts;
 - Urban/Community agriculture; and,
 - Off-leash dog areas.

10 principles for designing successful play spaces are as follows:

- Create play spaces that are ‘unique’
- Spaces should be well located
- Make use of natural elements
- Provide a wide range of play experiences
- Provide accessible play spaces to all children of all abilities
- Meet community needs (e.g. as identified through design charrettes with community members)
- Invite children of different ages to play together
- Build in opportunities to experience risk and challenge
- Consider sustainability of play spaces and ensure they are appropriately maintained
- Build spaces that allow for change and evolution

Adult Elements

- The programming for the majority of Port Colborne’s parks revolves around children and not many adult-oriented elements are provided.
 - Where demographics are appropriate, consider adding park elements made for an older user group, such as chess board tables or Outdoor Fitness Equipment (OFE), which can help bring exercise and healthy living to a community. Site these elements appropriately to avoid unnecessary interference with the activities of children and potentially combine so caregivers and parents can supervise while also engaging in use of equipment.
- Encourage parks to include gathering places, with seating and spaces appropriate for picnics and group activities according to the type and size of the park.

Microclimate and User Comfort

- Many of Port Colborne’s existing parks could use improvement in factors affecting microclimate and human comfort. Careful planning and design could potentially lead to increased and prolonged use of facilities due to comfortable conditions.
- Elements affecting comfort include shade, wind, hydration, materials and aesthetic cohesion, park and trail cohesion, as well as signage and wayfinding. These are discussed further below.
- Park and trail benches should be more prevalent throughout parks and along key points on trails.

Shade

- Many parks lack shading on playground structures and adult seating areas which could potentially decrease park use due to uncomfortable conditions for users. This was widely reported by stakeholders as well.
 - Increase the amount of shade available for park users; especially in areas frequently used during peak sunlight hours and hardscape areas that can affect the urban heat island.
 - Both playgrounds and supervisor or passive seating areas should be provided with shade using either trees, shade structures, or sun sails wherever possible.
- Plant trees in parks to the degree possible for shade and as a contribution to the urban forest.

Wind

- Some parks that are exposed to conditions producing high winds and could potentially benefit from increased vegetation or strategically placed playgrounds, gathering and rest areas in order to increase human comfort. Additionally, wind could be strategically reduced in areas that could affect snow accumulation and blowing in order to reduce hazardous conditions and snow removal maintenance both within and adjacent to parklands.
 - Whenever possible, consider implementing coniferous windbreaks, custom fencing, or other means of reducing wind to the north and west of playgrounds, rest areas, gathering areas, parking lots, and pathways.
 - Strategic placement of windbreaks can also be used to reduce snow accumulation and blowing in areas during winter months.

Hydration

- Parks should be connected via an extensive trail network which encourages active transportation and/or provides facilities for activities such as sports. However, all of these activities can result in dehydration of users if water is not available.
 - Consider installing public drinking fountains and/or water bottle fill stations in parks where moderate to high levels of activity often occur, as well as along well-used trail routes.
 - Provide signage for these facilities from nearby trails, informing users of their availability and location.

Materials & Aesthetic Cohesion

- Certain areas and elements of Port Colborne's parks require upgrades and various replacements. These are listed in **Appendix E**.
- Celebrate local artists in parks, with more public art such as murals, mosaics, and sculptures.
- It is recommended that the City develop an overall plan for materials, colours, and furnishings through the development of Urban Design Guidelines/Standards which might help guide the design of future parks, and increase the legibility of the landscape for users (especially those less familiar with the area). Having consistency of materials and colours could provide a certain amount of branding for Port Colborne parks as well as passively direct activity and provide a sense of place.

Park Cohesion and Trail Linkages

- Within a single park, materials, furnishings, and colours should be made consistent. This is especially important for well-used flagship parks such as H.H. Knoll Lakeview Park, Humberstone Centennial Beach Park and Lock 8 Gateway Park.
 - When implementing additional elements into an existing park a plan should be in place to unify materials or hard surfaces, and possibly direct the flow of certain kinds of traffic.

- Areas of gathering and nodes might be better suited to composition out of pavers or stamped concrete in order to show their different use and enhance the aesthetic of areas where many users spend time or gather.
- Edger should always be used to maintain clean lines on pathways composed of materials that tend to move and require maintenance, such as pavers and stonedust.
- Similarities in colours and materials between parks can potentially increase the legibility of the sites by users due to having elements and materials that are associated with certain uses or areas. For example, all off-road trails that are not waterfront could be distinguished uniquely via material composition, colour, or painted line work.

Signage & Wayfinding

- Improve signage of trail entrances and destinations:
 - Enhance trail entrances and provide way-finding signage of a consistent format for easy and quick reading by potential trail users;
 - Provide information about trail length and difficulty from one park to nearby parks;
 - Provide overall trail Master Plan mapping for ease of destination planning; and
 - Note water bottle filling stations and restroom locations.

Tech-Enabled Parks

- Design new parks and enhance existing parks to work in conjunction with mobile technology.
 - Parks should be designed with enough open space to accommodate location-based augmented reality games such as Pokémon Go. With Pokémon Go, players use their mobile device's GPS capability to locate, capture, battle and train virtual creatures called Pokémon. Pokémon Go has been downloaded more than 500 million times and, according to an article by Recreation Management⁴⁶, 58% of players are between 18 – 24; a demographic often hard to capture. The City can also play a part in encouraging the use of its parks for augmented reality games/apps. Examples on how this can be achieved can be found here: [Go! Tech-Enabled Parks - From Pokemon GO to Geocaching and Beyond](#).
 - City Staff can establish a network of hidden Geocaches within the parks and register them the [Ontario Geocaching Association](#) or on the [Geocaching®](#) app.
 - Additional tech-supportive park designs include the use of Quick Response codes (QR codes). Use of them in parks and along trails is an inexpensive way that parks can marry technology and nature. The codes can be placed on stickers and affixed to trees, posts, geologic features, kiosks or added to visitor brochures, printed maps or signs. Parks and refuges often place them at trailheads, where visitors can use their phones to link to online maps and trail guides, historical and nature information, video and audio clips.
 - Everyday there are new mobile apps entering the market. The City should encourage members of its community to utilize apps which may help get people outside and using parks and trails. Some examples of mobile applications that get people outside are:
 - [AllTrails](#): provides the largest collection of hand-curated trail guides, so you can explore the outdoors with confidence.

⁴⁶ Go! Tech-Enabled Parks: http://recmanagement.com/feature_print.php?fid=201701fe04

- [Topo Maps Canada](#): allows users to download maps for areas of interest to view them later without the requirement for Internet access or you don't want to use cellular data.
 - [TreeBook](#), [PlantSnap](#), and [Leafsnap](#): help users to identify trees, shrubs, perennials, ferns, vines and grasses.
 - [Chirp! Bird Songs Canada+](#), National Geographic Birds: feature information on hundreds of bird species, along with bird call recordings, drawings, maps and photos.
- Designs new parks and enhance existing parks with the goal of increasing creativity and interest. E.g., more interactive play environments and equipment, allow children to experience more nature in parks, and provide options for all ages of children, youth and adults.

7.10 Recommendations

Based on the forgoing discussion on Port Colborne's parks system, the following recommendations have been included in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Implementation Strategy (Section 13.0).

1. If deemed appropriate by City Council and staff, **consider the repurposing or disposition of some parkland that is underutilized/does not meet parkland standards**. Parks to consider for disposition should be considered based on usage and condition of existing amenities/ infrastructure.
2. **Create park and facility guidelines that exceed AODA standards and implement inclusive design standards**. Develop an accessible park that creates opportunities for all abilities and levels of enjoyment.
3. Based on the Parks Inventory and Recommendations included in **Appendix E, develop a strategy and establish a regular maintenance schedule/work plan to guide park/facility improvements** as recommended over next 10 years. Improving accessibility should be a primary goal. Regularly **audit existing equipment and facilities** and ensure fair and equal access to all facilities.
4. Ensure that at least **one Staff member is trained as a Certified Playground Inspector** through the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA) and the Canadian Playground Safety Institute (CPSI) so that they may conduct hands-on inspections/audits of City-owned playspaces.
5. **Prepare a Parks & Trails Wayfinding Strategy** (this could be an outcome of a future Trails and Bicycling Master Plan).
6. The Community & Economic Development Department, in cooperation with other City departments, should continuously look for opportunities to **protect and secure parkland or other open spaces areas** that have the potential to provide outdoor recreational program opportunities (both passive and active). (E.g. Trails, parks, cultural event spaces, nature programming, family activities, etc.) Emphasis should be placed on areas of the City where there are identified gaps in available parkland and open space areas as well as waterfront access.

The Community & Economic Development Department should work in **partnership with the Planning and Development Department** in any opportunity for the acquisition of parkland along Port Colborne's waterfront.

7. **Prepare Urban Design Guidelines, and provide input on park design standards.**

Through development of new spaces, **Urban Design Guidelines (Park Standards) should be incorporated** to ensure consistent use of building materials, colours, etc. Park design standards should include policies to promote/incorporate environmental stewardship (e.g. installation of green infrastructure, maintenance standards, Low-Impact Development (LID) energy conservation, renewable energy, etc.)

8. Update the City's Official Plan policies to **make public design charrettes a mandatory step in the design of new parks**. Involving the public is crucial in every park design, as charrettes can provide creative bursts of energy that helps build momentum for a project and sets it on a course to meet project goals. Charrettes give the community a chance to have a conversation that will impact how their community is being shaped. Allowing for public input on a park-by-park basis would help bring an understanding, at a very local level, to the features a park should include for their surrounding area (e.g. playsets vs gardens, or fountains vs. night lighting).

9. **Update the City's Parkland Dedication By-law** for consistency with the Planning Act and proposed changes through Bill 108 (i.e. payment in lieu, to the value of the land otherwise required to be conveyed). Update policies to reflect Community Benefits regulations once released (January 2021).

10. The Planning Department should consider conditions/process for plan of subdivision to allow for front-end construction of parks to **encourage the early development/provision of parks and trails** in the development of new communities.

11. **Revise the City's Development Charges By-law or Community Benefits Plan** at the next By-law Update to include the study and facility recommendations from this Master Plan.

12. The Official Plan should be updated to include a policy that requires **consultation with local school boards and public bodies** when there are changes to parkland requirements and/or changes to the parks plan (as per the Planning Act). City Staff to follow-up with school boards upon completion of Parks and Recreation Master Plan process.

13. The City should **revise Section 3.13.4 and 3.13.5 (Parkland Standards, Design Guidelines) of the Official Plan** to ensure the City's parks actually meet the current parkland standards (particularly in terms of the size standards). This provision can be monitored through the development of future parks, and assessed for update at the next Official Plan Review.

14. **Parkland dedication should be required instead of cash-in-lieu as much as possible** as part of any applicable development application. 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. Parkland dedication policies should be monitored and reviewed every 2 years.

15. **New parkland dedication should focus on creating more neighbourhood parks or parkettes.** Focus should also be given to park 'gaps' as identified in the Master Plan.
16. The Official Plan should be updated to state that **only** under special circumstances, **the City should accept woodlots and other natural areas both as a measure of protection of the natural amenity and for the potential use as a passive recreational and educational feature.**
17. **Continue to host or enable environmental events** such as tree planting partnerships, park/trail clean ups, neighbourhood garden projects. Registered charities such as [Tree Canada](#) who are dedicated to planting and nurturing trees is one example of potential partner.
18. **Partner/collaborate with health, education and policing/justice agencies to address the concerns associated with Needle Debris** to raise community awareness about needle safety.
19. **Identify new community partner to lead Community Garden initiative** to encourage the consumption of healthy, local food through urban agriculture.
 - a. Select new Community Garden location on City-owned lands.
20. Through the process of updating the Parks and Recreation Website tool, launch the **updating online parkland inventory** prepared as part of this Master Plan.
21. Consider the development of an **Urban Forest Management Plan** to guide the maintenance, protection and planting of Port Colborne's Urban Forest.
22. Encourage the Director of Engineering and Operations to **update the City's Tree By-law** in order to manage tree loss from disease such as Emerald Ash Boer.
 - a. The updated By-law should include a **tree compensation ratio** to ensure that any trees removed by the City is replaced by one or more trees.
23. Prepare a **Strategic Action Plan for the development of the Port Colborne waterfront of Lake Erie**, including the Welland Canal, Gravelly Bay, Sugarloaf Marina, H.H. Knoll Park and all City beaches to revitalize the area with land and water activities, including a high level of community engagement.
24. As part of Port Colborne's Beach Strategy, **develop and implement a Strategy for Nickel Beach Development** by considering establishing the following:
 - a. New concession stand
 - b. Updated change room and washroom facilities
 - c. Playground update
 - d. Parking (both on-site and off-site)
 - e. Review operating hours and length of season beach is open to public
 - f. Trail connectivity
 - g. Consideration of a waterfront boardwalk
 - h. Strategy for addressing Fowlers Toad
 - i. Alternative vehicular/trails access to beach
 - j. Explore sustainable solutions to address erosion of the beach

25. **Develop a Cemetery Business Plan that considers future growth and market options.**

26. As required, **assess future use of surplus public lands, such as school sites,** to maintain current levels of park space and cemetery space.



8.0 TRAILS

Port Colborne's trail system was indicated by survey respondents as one of the most important Parks and Recreation assets. Trails play a key role in Port Colborne's overall Parks and Recreation system as they provide connections between amenities such as parks, recreational facilities, arts and culture destinations, downtown food, entertainment and shops, active transportation routes throughout the City, and connections to nature.

Port Colborne's trails system is maintained by the Community & Economic Development Department under the direction of the Parks Manager. There are several existing trails throughout Port Colborne both paved, and naturalized, as well as larger regional trails that connect the City to Niagara Region.

This section is not intended to be a comprehensive Trails Master Plan; however, this chapter addresses some high level observations made through site visits and based on consultation with residents and stakeholders.



8.1 Importance of Trails

There are a number of benefits for communities that can be realized through trails and trail-related activities. Trails support active living and facilitate social benefits by connecting neighbourhoods and outlying community's together. Trails also support broader environmental objectives through the protection of greenspace corridors while providing spaces to educate resident's about local habitat and environmental stewardship.

Trails are an equalizer as they are accessible to all income levels, age groups and cultures, and with appropriate design, can be made physically accessible to a wide range of skills and abilities. With the growing interest in passive, spontaneous outdoor recreation, trails provide opportunities for unstructured recreation that can be enjoyed in solitude, by families or as groups. Trails also have economic benefits as they can promote a high quality of life for communities and make it a desirable place to live. A connected trail network can provide access to restaurants, shopping and lodging, thus meeting broader economic development objectives. Certain communities around the world even thrive on the existence of a comprehensive trail network through their use as commuter conduits.

In considering options for future trail networks, it is important to understand that not all trail types are equal in their benefits to a community. Paved multi-use trails contribute to the network of accessible, user-friendly connections to focal points within a community, whereas unpaved hiking trails contribute to the access to nature and enhanced health benefits (i.e. forest environments). According to a study⁴⁷, which assessed the biomechanics and energetics of walking on uneven terrain, it was found that walking/hiking on uneven terrain is superior to walking on flat surfaces when it comes to fitness. In fact, people burn 28% more energy when hiking on uneven terrain compared with walking on flat surfaces.



The City of Port Colborne Official Plan provides policies that guide the future development of trails. Section 3.13.5 (h) (Design Guidelines) states the following as a guideline for the provision of parkland and open space within the City: *"the parkland areas and major open space systems shall be connected wherever possible utilizing walkways, off-road trails, utility and/or open space corridors, sidewalk systems, on-road bicycle routes and roads"*. Section 3.13.5 (b) also provides additional design guidance for the creation of interconnected open spaces, which recommends the provision of links such as recreational off-road trails, on-road cycling routes or street networks. The design of new bike routes and trails in Port Colborne should accommodate all forms of recreation such as hiking, jogging and cross-country skiing, and should attempt to follow natural linear features and serve as connections, where possible, to other components of the Parks and Open Space

⁴⁷ Voloshina, Alexandra S., Kuo, Arthur D., Daley, Monica A., & Ferris, Daniel P. (2013). Biomechanics and energetics of walking on uneven terrain.(Report)(Author abstract). *Journal of Experimental Biology*, 216(21), 3963-70.

System. All bike routes and trails are directed to be designed such that a range of users and abilities can use them.

8.2 Port Colborne's Trail System

At the time of this Master Plan, there are five (5) main trails throughout the City of Port Colborne. The availability and diversity of trails give the City's residents access to passive recreation (walking/running/biking). However, improvement and/or additions to trails throughout the City could contribute to making the City of Port Colborne a destination in terms of passive recreation through examples such as hiking, biking, or walking. The five main existing trails are described below and are illustrated in red on **Figures A and B**.

8.2.1 Friendship Trail

The Friendship Trail is a popular trail for Port Colborne residents and visitors, with 61% of respondents identifying it within their top three trails. The trail begins at Seaway Park and extends 24 km to Historic Fort Erie, where it meets the Niagara River Recreation Trail. The trail is mainly along an abandoned rail line, and as such, the trail is relatively flat, creating a generally accessible trail experience for many users. During the winter months, the trail can be even be used for snowshoeing, cross-country skiing and hiking. Feedback from stakeholders indicates that this trail is also used by ATVs/dirt bikers and equestrian users, which has resulted in discussions with City staff regarding trail usage and conflicts. This is discussed further below.

8.2.2 Welland Canals Parkway Trail

The Welland Canals Parkway is a 45 km recreational trail which links Niagara's industrial heritage and recreational future. The second most popular trail among the survey respondents, the Welland Canals Parkway Trail was identified by 39% of the respondents as one of their top three trails. The trail runs parallel with the Welland Canal and follows its west bank from St. Catharines through Thorold, Welland and Port Colborne. The Welland Canals Parkway is a multi-use trail for non-motorized uses. Visitors are encouraged to engage in a number of activities, taking advantage of the unique and advanced trail system. Sightseeing is also a popular activity, as the trail allows users to experience the activities of the canal closer than any other trail.

8.2.3 Waterfront Trail

The Waterfront Trail in Port Colborne is an important trail for the City, with 38% of survey respondents identifying it within their top three trails. The Waterfront Trail runs east and west across the City of Port Colborne with the majority of it running along Lakeshore Road and Sugarloaf Street until hitting the Welland Canal. The trail then goes north along the canal to the Friendship Trail, which continues east towards Fort Erie. The trail represents a portion of the larger Great Lakes Waterfront Trail, which stretches over 3000km and connects 140 communities and First Nations along the Canadian shores of the Great Lakes region. The Great Lakes Waterfront Trail (GLWT) is regarded as the first step towards a regenerated waterfront, and has served as a catalyst for improvements in many of the communities it joins. The GLWT was and is a signature project of the Waterfront Regeneration Trust⁴⁸.

⁴⁸ For over two decades, the [Waterfront Regeneration Trust](#) has assisted communities along the shores of the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River revitalize their waterfronts by connecting them with a trail now enjoyed by bikers, hikers, and joggers of all ages.

The GLWT consists of both on-road and off-road facilities. About 30% of the Trail is off-road along Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River, about 14% is off-road on the Lake Erie, Detroit River and Lake St Clair section, and roughly 4% is off-road along the North Channel between Sault Ste. Marie and Sudbury. The route is primarily paved, with sections of unpaved path and gravel roads.

Section 9.1.1 (f) of the City's Official Plan states the following *"Investments in new off-street cycling trails and on-street bike lanes will be focused in the downtown and waterfront areas, although this should not deter investment in other cycling trails or on-road routes where appropriate."* As such, it can be expected that the City will seek to continue to prioritize continued investment into the Waterfront Trail as part of their investment into existing parks and recreation infrastructure.

Priority for improvements to Port Colborne's trail network should continue to be given to the multi-use waterfront trail. The full set of recommendations regarding trails can be found in Section 8.6, below.

8.2.4 Mud Lake

Located in Port Colborne beside the Old Welland Canal, Mud Lake is a conservation area dedicated to the preservation of vegetation and wildlife. Encompassing over 60 hectares of wetland and 54 hectares of field and woodland, Mud Lake offers 3.2 km of nature trails and superb bird watching. This artificial wetland is an important resting and feeding stop for migratory birds, claiming numerous rare bird sightings, and providing a unique setting for both novice and expert bird watchers. The trails within Mud Lake provide options ranging from twenty minutes to over one hour of nature hiking. This conservation area was identified as an excellent trail for mountain biking and hiking.

8.2.5 The Gord Harry Trail

The Gord Harry Trail extends east to west across the Township of Wainfleet along the former Grand Trunk Railway Corridor and runs parallel to the Lake Erie shoreline. Along the trail you will see picturesque views of wooded areas, open fields and quarry lakes. The trail's proximity to a number of wildlife areas means it acts as a travel corridor for area wildlife and you are likely to see an abundance of birds and small mammals. This 13 km trail has barrier free access with gated entries at each road crossing. The Gord Harry Trail connects directly to Wainfleet Wetlands Conservation Area, and passes near Long Beach, Morgan's Point and Wainfleet Bog Conservation Areas.

8.2.6 Greater Niagara Circle Route

The City of Port Colborne has access to several regional level trails, including the Greater Niagara Circle Route. The Greater Niagara Circle Route is a paved, multi-use regional trail that connects Port Colborne, Fort Erie, Niagara Falls, Niagara on the Lake, St. Catharines, Thorold, and Welland in a 140 km circuit. This route passes through urban centres, downtowns, the Niagara Escarpment, waterfronts, quiet rural and picturesque agricultural areas. The Greater Niagara Circle Route trails include: Welland Canals Parkway Trail, Friendship Trail, Niagara River Recreation Trail and the Waterfront Trail. A spur of the trail runs along the Port Promenade, parallel to Historic West Street, and terminates at scenic H.H. Knoll Lakeview Park.

8.3 Trail Etiquette and Code of Conduct

Port Colborne's trail system is enjoyed by a range of users including walkers, hikers, cyclists, equestrian users, ATVs/dirt bikes, snowmobiles and more. Through consultation, conflicts between trail users was identified as a challenge in Port Colborne. However, the mix of trail users can be viewed as an opportunity for meeting

tourism and economic development objectives. By attracting a range of users to Port Colborne, the City can invite visitors into the City to enjoy

A standard trail etiquette or code of conduct is needed in the City to help users understand how different trail users utilize the trail system, and how to do so safely. The Ontario Trail User Code of Ethics is designed to be easy to understand, and not overly restrictive:

- **Expect and respect other users**
- **Know and obey rules and laws**
- **Stay on the trail**
- **Do not disturb plants or animals**
- **Do not litter**
- **Respect private property and local residents**
- **Be prepared, to ensure your safety and the safety of others**
- **Stay on the right, pass on the left**
- **Slow when approaching other travelers, and yield to the faster traveler**
- **Be courteous and communicate with other trail users**

A similar code of ethics should be formally adopted and included on trail signage throughout the City. Collaboration and discussion with neighbouring municipalities is recommended due to the Regional nature of some trails through the City.

An example of a Plan prepared with various users in mind is the [Ottawa Valley Rail Trail Management Plan](#). At the time of this Master Plan, the Ottawa Valley Rail Trail Management Plan was still in draft form. However, it provides additional components for mixed-use trail systems, including equestrian and motorized trail users:

- Non-motorize uses have the right-of-way at all times.
- Respect the privacy of people living along the Trail.
- Respect neighbouring properties by staying on the trail at all times. Do not make new trails or traverse on unmarked or unauthorized trails.
- Alert slower moving users to your presence, slow down and proceed with caution as you pass them.
- Bike riders yield to both hikers and horseback riders; hikers yield to horseback riders; ATV/snowmobile users yield to all.
- Obey all barricades and closures.
- If you and/or your mode of transportation produces over 10 cm of track depth, do not use the trail. This will occur most frequently in the spring and fall, or after heavy rain.
- Motorized vehicles (other than snowmobiles with a valid Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs permit) are prohibited in the winter season, December 1 to March 31.
- Prohibited activities include camping or fires, hunting or carrying firearms.
- Please keep pets on leash at all times. Clean up after pets and horses.
- Do not block trail entrances or park on the trail at any time.
- Leave the trail cleaner than you found it – please carry out all litter.

- Obey all Federal, Provincial and Municipal regulations pertaining to the operation of your mode of transportation (including, but not limited to, licensing, insurance, age limits and vehicle conditions).

The City should consider the inclusion of similar regulations for trail users in Port Colborne. This will require engagement with user groups, including Quad Niagara and Upper Canada Equestrian Association, and may require an awareness campaign to promote trail etiquette and education.

8.4 What We Heard

As previously discussed, trails were highlighted by many stakeholders as among the most important recreational asset for Port Colborne. 45% of survey respondents indicated they use trails once a month or less, while 27% of respondents indicated that they use trail systems at least once a week. A review of the existing trails system was undertaken as part of the consultation for the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. An inventory has been included on the **Figure A**. This map illustrates the trail network throughout the City.

As part of the community working sessions and online survey, participants requested specific add-ons to the existing multi-use trail network throughout the City. Specifically, it was requested that trails in Port Colborne be designed with improved lighting to provide improved visibility and safety (particularly at night), as well as trail furniture to provide places to sit and rest. In addition, it was stated that the trails should be designed to provide additional connections to focal points within the City, by providing complete street connections where applicable (downtown, along the Canal and waterfront, etc.). Based on respondents' suggestions for parks/trails improvement, it would appear that there is also room for improvement for the general maintenance and upkeep of Port Colborne public lands.

Signage was also discussed at the community working sessions as a key issue that could be improved upon through the implementation of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Specifically, respondents indicated they wanted to know where in the City they were, (especially when at key focal points), and how far and in which direction they needed to go to get to another focal point within the City (e.g. waterfront to the downtown, etc.). Furthermore, in order to improve linkages between City and Regional trails it was suggested that the City should consider re-branding and improving signage across regional trails.

There are additional opportunities to coordinate with City departments such as Planning and Development, and Engineering and Operations in the review of development plans or infrastructure projects. Consideration should be given to improving existing and proposed walking and cycling opportunities to schools and other community facilities, along selected roadways and within and between parklands. In particular, the Department of Community and Economic Development in collaboration with Planning and Development, and Engineering and Operations should explore options to create safer crossings across busy intersections, and incorporate more wayfinding signage to help connect trail users with other Parks and Recreation destinations.

A key recommendation to the Community and Economic Development Department is to conduct a complete review of the trails system through the development of a **Trails and Bicycling Master Plan**. A Trails and Bicycling Master Plan (TBMP) will help the City to identify options and priorities for developing a comprehensive trails network. As part of a future TBMP, the City should consider:

- Utilizing un-opened road allowances for parks and recreational purposes;
- Providing additional trail connections, linkages, and crossings throughout the City;
- Providing on-road bike routes/lanes for improved connectivity throughout the City;
- Constructing paved trails through some naturalized areas;
- Implementing bike trails in public right-of-ways;
- Preparing and implementing trail design standards;
- Design interpretive signage that reflects the unique historical, cultural heritage and natural assets along trails;
- Integrating greater range of interpretive signage (AODA compliant) on existing and future trail networks;
- Including designated bike lanes and look for enhancements where appropriate through consultation with local trail groups;
- Providing secure and safe off-road bike access to Nickel Beach; and
- Review opportunities for designated multi-purpose/multi-use trails (e.g. equestrian, motorized, walking, hiking, cycling).

The development of some year-round trails could also be considered through a Trails Master Plan. A TBMP should take into consideration previous efforts in the City, including recommendations put forward by *Share the Road Cycling Coalition* through the Bike Friendly Communities Workshop. An outcome of the TBMP could also be a parks and trails wayfinding strategy, which would contribute towards a more walkable and welcoming community.

8.5 Best Practices

Based on our review of the current trails system, the following are some best practices to consider in the maintenance and development of Port Colborne's trail system.

General Trail Design

- Avoid creating trails that cross roadways; wherever possible off-road connections are preferred.
- If the route of a given trail is too convoluted to follow easily, then consider breaking the trail into more than one trail in a way that will more clearly define the route of the trail and avoid confusion and users getting lost.
- Consider adding more signage and wayfinding mechanisms at various key locations or minor nodes.

Mapping & Master Plan Design

- Delineate key Focal Points within the community. For example, treat West Street/Clarence Street and H.H. Knoll Lakeview Park as major trail nodes.
- Place each of the parks on the trail map in a way that demonstrates their connection to the trails and identifies park amenities relevant to trail users such as water stations and washrooms. This could be done in conjunction with the TBMP and through the promotion of the interactive 'Park and Recreation Locator' web-app that has been prepared as part of this Master Plan. This new web application will allow residents and visitors to easily plan their desired parks and trails experiences.

- Identify parks on the trails map: it is more important to identify facilities and names of trails and parks rather than interpretive signs, but if there is room to include a system to identify the location and theme of interpretive signs they would be beneficial as well for those interested in local history.
- Adjust legend, colours, and line types to more clearly articulate the information desired to be conveyed to trail users.

Outreach/Community Connectivity

- Trail maps should be posted in strategic locations throughout the City. If Port Colborne were to ever adopt a public transit strategy, these maps should also be available on public transit (i.e. buses trains).

Please note, these are preliminary findings and a thorough inventory and analysis of trail conditions should be undertaken as part of the preparation of a Trails and Bicycling Master Plan.

8.6 Recommendations

The implementation of recommendations in this Master Plan over the next 10 years will see Port Colborne begin to keep pace with the growing public demand for a high quality, connected system of multi-use pathways that connect neighbourhoods with places of recreation, shopping and employment. In addition, well developed multi-use pathways and trail systems provide a variety of other transportation, economic, environmental and community health benefits. The following recommendations provide strategic direction with regard to trails and trail services in Port Colborne, and form part of the larger primary recommendation to prepare a Trails and Bicycling Master Plan.

1. **Invest in trail enhancements/ connections through the preparation of a Trails and Bicycling Master Plan (TBMP)** to assist in identifying options and priorities for developing a comprehensive trails system. As part of the TBMP, consider:
 - a. And Utilizing un-opened road allowances for parks and recreational purposes
 - b. Providing additional trail connections, linkages, and crossings throughout the City
 - c. Providing on-road bike routes/lanes for improved connectivity throughout the City
 - d. Constructing paved trails through some naturalized areas;
 - e. Implementing bike trails in public right-of-ways;
 - f. Preparing and implementing trail design standards;
 - g. Design interpretive signage that reflects the unique historical, cultural heritage and natural assets along trails;
 - h. Integrating greater range of interpretive signage (AODA compliant) on existing and future trail networks;
 - i. Including designated bike lanes and look for enhancements where appropriate through consultation with local trail groups;
 - j. Providing secure and safe off-road bike access to Nickel Beach; and,
 - k. Review opportunities for designated multi-purpose/multi-use trails (e.g. equestrian, motorized, walking, hiking, cycling).

Consultation with trail user groups (including equestrian users, motorized vehicle organizations, cyclists, walkers, etc.) is essential in order to establish trail etiquette and build relationships between various users.

2. As part of the of the Trails and Bicycling Master Plan, develop and enforce a **Trails Code of Conduct for all trail users** in conjunction with neighbouring municipalities.
 - a. Trent University has compiled a list of Ontario Trail [Code of Conducts](#). This includes codes for equestrian, ATV, cycling and walking trails. The Welland Canal trail etiquette should be updated to reflect the actual use of this trail system.
 - b. An example of a Trail Management Plan that recognizes multiple users (e.g. walkers, cyclists, ATVs, equestrian) is the [Ottawa Valley Rail Trail Management Plan](#).
3. **Prepare a Parks & Trails Wayfinding Strategy** (this could be an outcome of a future Trails and Bicycling Master Plan). For example: the [Toronto 360 Wayfinding Strategy](#) is a great example of Toronto's ambition to make the City a more walkable, welcoming and understandable place for visitors and residents. Port Colborne could create a similar, albeit, smaller-scale version of the strategy. Particular focus should be placed at key assets, such as along Welland Canal, access to Nickel Beach, and the waterfront at H.H. Knoll and Sugarloaf Marina. An emphasis on the interpretation of human and cultural heritage, in addition to natural heritage, should be encouraged.
4. **Continue to improve active transportation throughout the City by implementing the recommendations identified in the *Bike Friendly Communities Workshop*** hosted by Share the Road Cycling Coalition. Key actions include:
 - a. Strengthen connections between trails and community amenities (such as parks, Multiuse facilities and downtown) through enhanced signage.
 - b. Educate the public at City-run events about sharing the road and trails with cyclists.
 - c. Promote cycling/walking to school, work and local businesses.
 - d. Place secure bike racks at all parks throughout City.
 - e. As City bridges are re-engineered, ensure pinch points are identified and signed appropriately.
 - f. Partner with the Port Colborne Active Transportation Advisory Committee (partner to host Bike Rodeos at schools)
 - g. Use 'Bike Valets' at City events, such as Canal Days, to encourage alternative modes of transportation and reduce congestion.
5. Prepare a **Strategic Action Plan for the development of the Port Colborne waterfront of Lake Erie**, including the Welland Canal, Gravelly Bay, Sugarloaf Marina, H.H. Knoll Park and all City beaches to revitalize the area with land and water activities, including a high level of community engagement.
 - a. Construct boat launches for non-motorized vehicles
 - b. Identify and designate Recreational Waterways
 - c. Upgrade access to all waterfront destinations including Nickel Beach, Sugarloaf Marina.
 - d. Upgrade public use amenities (washrooms, food and beverage services, watercraft rentals)
 - e. Create/design a waterfront brand. Prepare signs and enhance public information through social media, etc.

- f. **Link trails and improve signage** to encourage cyclist, walking and commuters to explore all the waterfront amenities available Consider re-naming streets to highlight the destination and placemaking theme of the waterfront (e.g. Nickel Beach Way, Welland Esplanade).
6. As part of Port Colborne’s Beach Strategy, **develop and implement a Strategy for Nickel Beach Development** by considering establishing the following:
- a. New concession stand
 - b. Updated change room and washroom facilities
 - c. Playground update
 - d. Parking (both on-site and off-site)
 - e. Review operating hours and length of season beach is open to public
 - f. **Trail connectivity**
 - g. Consideration of a waterfront boardwalk
 - h. Strategy for addressing Fowlers Toad
 - i. Alternative vehicular/trails access to beach
 - j. Explore sustainable solutions to address erosion of the beach
7. Review the City’s Official Plan policies to ensure they **promote and encourage a comprehensive trail network** and active transportation.

9.0 OUTDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES

Outdoor recreation involves both programmed and self-directed activities in natural spaces and focuses on the interactive relationship between the natural environment and people. Outdoor recreation is different from other forms of recreation because it relies on nature as a component of the activity. For example, snow is necessary for cross-country or downhill skiing; lakes, streams, and rivers provide places to fish, kayak or canoe; and mountains and forest lands, create opportunities for hiking, climbing, and mountain biking.

The City of Port Colborne can be viewed as an “Outdoor Recreation Destination” and residents and stakeholders place considerable value on outdoor recreation. This is evident through the findings that the second most popular reason for participating in recreation and cultural activities in Port Colborne is to enjoy nature (after physical health/exercise). The value for outdoor recreation facilities was further reflected by the interest in more programming in nature/outdoor education.

Outdoor recreational facilities, such as sports fields, are maintained by the Community and Economic Development Department under the supervision of the Parks Supervisor.

9.1 Importance of Outdoor Recreation Facilities

Recreational users place more value on outdoor recreational facilities because they provide an opportunity to participate in activities in an outdoor environment. There has been a shift in recent years in interest and activities in outdoor recreation from adventure and specialized activities to more easily accessed opportunities such as hiking, biking, and activity groups. In the development of new parks and with redevelopment of existing parks, consideration should be given to the provision of opportunities and services based on the identified high demand activities/amenities:

- Access to the waterfront;
- Outdoor swimming pools/splash pads; and
- Walking, cycling trail system.

The City of Port Colborne has an abundance of outdoor assets with parks, the waterfront, the marina, natural open spaces, trails, and its close proximity to neighboring outdoor recreational areas. These assets represent an excellent opportunity to continue to provide outdoor amenities and programming that meets the current and needs of the residents of Port Colborne.

9.2 Inventory of Outdoor Recreation Facilities

The following is a summary of Port Colborne’s current inventory of outdoor recreation facilities. This inventory includes sports facilities and play structures. This inventory is in addition to the parks and trails

system which has been described above. Please also note that, where applicable, amenities owned and operated by school boards have been included to reduce risk of duplicating existing amenities within the City. The inventory is followed by an analysis of the service level required by Port Colborne's population, both currently and up to 2031 (projected population of 20,080).

Sports Facilities

Soccer Fields (Rectangular Fields):

The City contains five (5) full-size soccer fields, all of them located at the Thomas A. Lannan Sports Complex. Two of these full size soccer fields have lighting. The City also owns and maintains three (3) smaller, more informal, soccer fields at Lockview Park, Reservoir Park, Sunset Park.

Some survey respondents noted that the soccer fields at T.A. Lannan are in good condition, and efforts should be made to attract more tournaments and events at these fields. A few commented that the City's soccer fields need to be improved to remove weeds and (more flat). Additional feedback included a demand for improved waste maintenance (i.e. ensuring garbage is regularly picked up).

Soccer has experienced enormous growth in participation and popularity over time and is the most popular organized sport among Canadian youth. Taking into consideration soccer's worldwide appeal and relatively low cost to participate, soccer fields remain in high demand in many municipalities. Maintaining Port Colborne's soccer fields to a higher standard could be an effective way to attract and grow the sport in the City, while facilitating affordable sport involvement for families.

In order to continue meeting current service levels, the City will require one (1) additional soccer field by 2031 (see summary of projected facility needs below, **Table 7**). However, the current service level for outdoor soccer fields is above the recommended service level as per the guidelines for developing public recreation facility standards. As a result, additional soccer fields are not recommended over the period of this Master Plan. Staff should continue to monitor population growth and sport trends and re-evaluate the need for additional soccer fields through the next Master Plan review.

Ball Diamonds:

There are three (3) baseball diamonds and nine (9) softball diamonds in Port Colborne. The Rotary Complex has three (3) baseball diamonds, with one of them being lit, and one (1), unlit softball diamond. The Thomas A. Lannan Sports Complex has three (3) softball diamonds, with one of them being lit. Vimy Park has two (2) unlit softball diamonds. The Lion's Field has one (1) lit softball diamond, and the West Side Courts and Centennial Park each have one (1) unlit softball diamond.

Stakeholders shared input on the quality of Port Colborne's baseball diamonds. While many are satisfied with the diamonds, feedback regarding new benches at the Lion's Field and Rotary Complex was given.

An analysis of projected demand suggests that Port Colborne will require one (1) additional baseball diamond by 2031 in order to maintain the current level of service. However, the current service level for baseball diamonds (both senior and junior) is above the recommended service level as per the guidelines for developing public recreation facility standards. As a result, additional ball diamonds are not recommended over the period of this Master Plan. Similar to soccer fields, staff are recommended to monitor growth and to re-evaluate the need for an additional baseball diamond in 2031.



Basketball Courts:

Port Colborne has a total of four (4) basketball courts. These courts are comprised of full-sized courts, and 3-on-3 courts. There are full-sized courts located at Hawthorne Heights Park and Sunset Park, and four (4) 3-on-3 courts at East Village Community Park, Vimy Park, Chestnut Park, and Johnston Street Playground. Comments from the parks inventory and assessment indicated that outdoor basketball facilities are in need of general maintenance, stating new nets are required as well as updated line painting at Chestnut Park. Maintenance of outdoor basketball facilities should occur frequently with specific attention given to ensuring basketball nets are maintained to a high standard.

Table 7 below indicates that the City will not require additional basketball courts by 2031, at current service levels. However, several stakeholders requested that basketball courts with painted lines and lighting should be considered for underutilized parks. At this time, the current service level for outdoor basketball courts is in line with the recommended service level as per the guidelines for developing public recreation facility standards. As a result, the installation of new basketball courts is not recommended at this time.

Beach Volleyball Courts:

There are two (2) beach volleyball courts available in Port Colborne. The courts are located at Centennial Park, and are unlit, sand surface beach volleyball courts.

The current service level for beach volleyball courts is below the recommended service level as per the guidelines for developing public recreation facility standards. It should be noted that service level achievements for beach volleyball and indoor volleyball can be shared, so having only 2 outdoor beach volleyball courts may suffice. As a result, it is recommended that Port Colborne staff monitor the need for outdoor volleyball courts, and consider installing two (2) additional beach volleyball courts over the period of this Master Plan. This could be further considered as part of the recommended Waterfront and Beach Strategy.

Tennis courts:

There are six (6) outdoor tennis courts in Port Colborne, located at the West Side Courts (Port Colborne Tennis Club) and Centennial Park. The West Side Courts contain four (4) lit courts, and are located on Helen Street, just south of the Minor Baseball Rotary Complex. The West Side Courts offers 4 fully lit courts that are fenced and locked during the evening. In 2017, the City took over the operation of the facility and tennis programming. Due to budget constraints, the clubhouse with washrooms, shower facilities and canteen is no longer open to the public. It was noted at the site visit that the signage for these courts is confusing. Centennial Park contains two (2) unlit tennis courts.

In keeping with best practices and trends, the City re-painted the lines at the West Side courts in order to accommodate outdoor pickleball. Staff confirmed that Pickleball is a fast growing sport in Port Colborne due to its accessibility for a range of demographics.

In order to maintain the current service level and meet projected demand, there is a need for one (1) additional tennis court in Port Colborne by 2031. However, the current service level for outdoor tennis courts is above the recommended service level as per the guidelines for developing public recreation facility standards. As a result, additional tennis courts are not recommended over the period of this Master Plan, but should be considered through the next Master Plan update.



Outdoor Track:

Port Colborne offers two (2) outdoor running tracks. Both tracks are on school-owned land, where one track is located at Port Colborne High School, and the other is located at the Lakeshore Catholic High School.

The current service level for outdoor tracks is above the recommended service level as per the guidelines for developing public recreation facility standards. Through consultation, additional outdoor tracks were not identified as a requested outdoor facility.

Lawnbowling Greens:

Port Colborne has a total of eight (8) outdoor lawnbowling greens/bocce ball courts: six (6) located at the Port Colborne Bocce Club at the VHCW and two (2) located at Helen Kinnear Park. The Port Colborne Bocce Club has five leagues that run from May to September each year.

The current service level for lawnbowling greens is above the recommended service level as per the guidelines for developing public recreation facility standards. However, to continue meeting the current service level, an additional green may be required by 2031. As a result, additional lawnbowling greens are not recommended over the period of this Master Plan but should be monitored by staff.

Outdoor Community Pools:

While Port Colborne does not currently have any outdoor pool facilities, an outdoor swimming pool was one of the top three specific outdoor recreation facilities requested by participants in the community engagement sessions and online surveys.

The current service level for outdoor community pools in Port Colborne is below the recommended service level as per the guidelines for developing public recreation facility standards. While one (1) outdoor community pool is recommended to meet future demands from population growth, consultation has further confirmed that residents would like to see increased indoor aquatic programming. An outdoor pool may help offset the high demand for indoor aquatic facilities at the Port Colborne YMCA, in the VHWC.

Passive Recreation Facilities

Skateparks:

Port Colborne offers one (1) skateboard park, located at the Lock 8 Gateway Park. The park is located and accessed at Main Street West and the Welland Canal, and provides free parking and night/evening lighting.

The current service level for skateparks in Port Colborne is on par with the recommended service level as per the guidelines for developing public recreation facility standards.

Waterplay Facilities (Splash Pads):

There is one (1) Waterplay Facility (Splash Pads) in Port Colborne. This facility (the City's 'Spray Pad') is located at H. H. Knoll Lakeview Park, close to the intersection of Sugarloaf Street and Elm Street. This facility is well used and enjoyed by the community, as evidenced in the feedback received from respondents in the online public survey.

The current service level for Waterplay Facilities (Splash Pads) is below the recommended service level as per the guidelines for developing public recreation facility standards. In order to meet the recommended service levels, Port Colborne would need to install three (3) to four (4) Waterplay Facilities at locations throughout the City by 2031 to meet projected population demands.



Leash-Free Dog Parks:

Port Colborne offers one leash-free dog park during winter months at Vimy Park. There is also a popular regional park located at the Elm Street Naturalization Site and Leash-Free Dog Park that has been included in the inventory analysis below. While the Elm Street Park was noted by stakeholders as an ideal dog walking area, feedback was provided requesting an off-leash dog park within walking distance of the City.



Additional feedback indicates that doggy-bag stations are needed at parks and along the City's trails to encourage dog owners to pick-up their dog feces. In particular, feedback indicates that a leash-free beach area is desired. This may address feedback from landowners adjacent/fronting Lake Erie who have reported undesirable dog behaviour/clean up.

The guidelines for developing public recreation facility standards do not provide a recommended service level for leash-free dog parks. However, using data taken from a 2017 document published by the Trust for Public Land's "[City Park Facts](#)", a recommended service level of 1 leash-free dog park for every 50,000 residents has been applied. Based on this calculated average, the current service level for leash-free dog parks in Port Colborne is above the recommended service level as per 2017 City Park Facts. However, based on feedback the City may want to consider an off-leash dog park within the urban area or a dog beach.

Play Structures:

In total, there are 18 parks within Port Colborne that contain play structures, comprised of both swing sets and/or playgrounds. Under the City of Port Colborne Official Plan, parks are typically categorized into one of five categories. One of these five categories is called a "tot-lot", which is intended to provide for passive and active recreation for pre-school children and will generally form part of a Neighbourhood Park.

Parks which contain playgrounds serve as neighbourhood-level amenities that benefit early childhood development and fosters cognitive and social skills, and physical activity. Playgrounds are typically located within a reasonable walking distance of residential areas, without having to cross major barriers such as arterial roads and waterbodies. For mapping which illustrates the locations of the parks within Port Colborne containing play structures please refer to the Existing Park Inventory and Assessment in **Appendix E** of this Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

These parks should target a 400 metre service radius within major residential areas. Based on a review of walking distance to play structures (Play Structure Analysis - **Figure C**), it is recommended that the City continue to look for opportunities to implement play structures at parks within the identified gap areas labelled as "Areas Requiring Further Assessment." These areas have also been identified in Section 7.4 of the report.

Based on growth projections and in order to maintain Port Colborne's current service levels, the City will require an additional two (2) play structures by 2031. However, the current service level for play structures is above the recommended service level as per the guidelines for developing public recreation facility standards. The City should continue to monitor population changes, and consider the construction of new play structures in the medium-term.



Design Standards

Further, it is recommended that the City develop park guidelines which creates consistent design standards for future parks and play structures within Port Colborne. Accessibility should also be considered in future playground updates and new playground development. Below are some definitions related to accessible playground development:

Accessible: Accessibility is a general term used to describe the degree to which a product, device, service or environment is accessible by as many as possible. An accessible playground is one that can be physically accessed and used by everyone.

Inclusive: Inclusion is the practice of ensuring that people feel they belong, are engaged, and connected. Inclusive playgrounds are ones designed specifically to ensure that children of multiple abilities can play together – not just alongside each other.

Universal design: Universal design produces buildings, products, and environments that are usable and effective for everyone, not just people with disabilities, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.

A playground based on universal design means:

- All people can use the majority of features and spaces, instead of having separate “accessible features” for people with disabilities. Features like play equipment, planter boxes, or benches are of different heights and sizes to meet the needs of more people.

*The Rick Hansen Foundations [“Let’s Play Toolkit”](#) uses the term **“universal design”** to describe all the features making a playground accessible and inclusive. Universal design focuses on creating a space to meet the needs of the greatest number of people. Diversity is built directly into the design. A truly accessible play space can be used by more than one child at a time in more than one way, with a selection of approaches to moving through the space, and a variety of different activities to try.*

- Circulating around and using the play space is simple and easy. Smooth, even surfacing allows access to play equipment with minimal effort. The design provides adequate space for all people to access and maneuver around play equipment and features, regardless of mobility.
- The play space offers physical or learning opportunities to challenge all users, but minimizes hazards. For example, the surface is smooth, level, and shock absorbent.

When planning and designing all features of a playground, consideration should be given to both its natural features and equipment, and how these relate to each other. A play space is more than a structure – it encompasses the total environment in which play occurs. From vegetation to signage, all the elements of a site can become objects of play and learning.

Rick Hansen’s “Let’s Play” toolkit is a useful resource, as it describes how to apply accessible, inclusive design to many aspects of a play space including entrances; pathways; signage and displays; enclosures; manufactured equipment; game areas; ground covers and safety surfaces; land forms, trees, and vegetation; gardens; water, sand, and dirt; play props; and gathering spaces.

Table 7 below is a summary of Port Colborne’s outdoor recreational facilities, including current and future service provision levels.

Table 7 - Summary of Outdoor Recreation Facilities

Facility	Municipal Supply	Current Service Level (2019) ⁴⁹	Future Service Level Requirements 2031 ⁵⁰	Recommended Service Level ⁵¹	Current Alignment with Recommended Service Level
Soccer Fields	2 large, lit 3 large, unlit 3 small, unlit 8 Total	1 : 2,288	9 soccer fields	1 field : 5,000 Combined with community park or secondary school playfield. Combined with other outdoor sport facilities can create ability to host larger events.	Above recommended service level, but should monitor at next Master Plan.
Ball diamonds	1 Senior, lit 2 Senior, unlit 2 Junior, lit 7 Junior, unlit 12 Total	1 : 1,526	13 total	1 senior diamond : 20,000 (Lit) 1 junior/softball diamond : 5000	Above recommended service level, but should monitor at next Master Plan.
Basketball Courts	2 full courts 4 half/3-on-3 courts 4 Total	1 : 4,568	4 Basketball Courts	1 court : 5000	In-line with recommended service level.
Beach Volleyball Courts	2 Total	1 : 9,153	2 Beach Volleyball Courts NOTE: Will require 4 beach volleyball courts to meet recommended service level by 2031. However, this can be shared with indoor volleyball courts to reach service level.	1 court : 5000	Below recommended service level.

⁴⁹ Based on 2016 Population of 18,306

⁵⁰ Service level required to continue meeting current service levels based on current service level and forecasted population of 20,080 by 2031

⁵¹ Based on the [Guidelines for Developing Public Recreation Facility Standards](#)

Facility	Municipal Supply	Current Service Level (2019) ⁴⁹	Future Service Level Requirements 2031 ⁵⁰	Recommended Service Level ⁵¹	Current Alignment with Recommended Service Level
Tennis Courts	4, lit 2, unlit 6 Total	1 : 3,051	7 Tennis Courts	1 tennis court : 5000 Should be lit; At least three courts per location	Above recommended service level, but should monitor at next Master Plan.
Outdoor Tracks (NOTE: school-owned, not managed by the City)	2 Total	1 : 9,153	1 Outdoor Track	1 : 20,000	Above recommended service level.
Lawn bowling Greens/Bocce Ball Courts	8 Total	1 : 2,288	9 Lawn bowling Greens	1 : 25,000	Above recommended service level, but should monitor at next Master Plan.
Outdoor Community Pools	0 Total	N/A	1 Outdoor Community Pool	1 : 20,000 While 1 is recommended, 1 Outdoor Community Pool or appropriately sized indoor community pool with adequate facility hours would be sufficient for Port Colborne.	Below recommended service level.
Skateboard Parks/Skate Spots	1 Total	1 : 18,306	1 Skatepark	1 skateboard park : 20,000 One large skatepark complimented by neighbourhood small skateboard spots	In-line with recommended service level, but may want to consider providing at smaller neighbourhood parks.

Facility	Municipal Supply	Current Service Level (2019) ⁴⁹	Future Service Level Requirements 2031 ⁵⁰	Recommended Service Level ⁵¹	Current Alignment with Recommended Service Level
Waterplay Facilities (Splash Pads)	1 Total	1 : 18,306	Will require total of 3 to 4 Waterplay Facilities (Splash Pads) to meet recommended service level by 2031.	1 : 5,500 – 1 : 7,500 recommended. Can vary based on availability of an outdoor pool space.	Below recommended service level.
Leash-Free Dog Park	1 (seasonal use – Vimy Park) 1 leash free park ⁵² 2 Total	1 : 9,153	2 Dog Parks	1 : 50,000 ⁵³	Above recommended service level.
Playground Apparatus/Play Structures (NOTE: includes both play structures and swing sets).	18 Total	1 : 1,000	20 Play Structures	1 playground apparatus : 5000 Should consider creating playground structures at neighbourhood and community parks	Above recommended service level, but should monitor at next Master Plan.

⁵² Niagara Region Park – Elm Street Naturalization Site and Leash-free Dog Park

⁵³ Based on the average numbers as specified in the Trust for Public Land’s “[City Park Facts](#)”, 2017.

9.3 Sugarloaf Marina

The City of Port Colborne is unique in that it owns and successfully operates its own marina. Sugarloaf Marina provides users with over 700 slips for short day visits, overnight stays or seasonal rental, and provides access to Lake Erie's fishing, historic ship wrecks and sailing.



The Marina includes a number of amenities, including a fuel dock, hydro, a licenced restaurant on site, laundry and shower facilities, dockside electric BBQ's and picnic areas, fish cleaning stations, a cable wakeboard park and more. The marina is conveniently located adjacent to H. H. Knoll Lakeview Park, and in proximity to a number of retail stores. A large pavilion is also available for rent.

The Marina is an important asset for the City and has potential to be leveraged further to generate additional revenue. During a staff consultation event, Marina staff noted that they see a high level of returning customers, indicating that users are pleased with the amenities and services provided. However, there is increased demand for additional slips and the Marina will need to be dredged in the near future⁵⁴. Furthermore, the need to increase boat storage was noted.

The consulting team discussed the potential use of City-owned lands for additional boat storage. For example, the previous public works site along King Street (now vacant), is a possible location.

Should the City undertake the recommended Strategic Action Plan for Port Colborne's Waterfront, Sugarloaf Marina should be incorporated as a major component. Additionally, **a long-term growth strategy for the Sugarloaf Marina is recommended to identify future opportunities for marina related programming**

⁵⁴ Dredging is the process of excavating material from a water environment in order to improve drainage, navigability and commercial use.

and expansion of the commercial business element including a business case for increased boat storage and slip capacity.

9.4 What We Heard

Overall, stakeholders are relatively satisfied with outdoor recreational facilities in Port Colborne. As discussed above, the City of Port Colborne should consider opportunities to improve the general maintenance of outdoor facilities such as basketball courts, baseball diamonds and rectangular sports fields (soccer fields) in order to satisfy current demand. Consultation with the community found that the top 5 outdoor recreation facilities or spaces that should be more readily available in Port Colborne are: **1) access to the waterfront, 2) outdoor swimming pools/splash pads, 3) walking/cycling trail systems, 4) boardwalks, and 5) campgrounds.**

Aspects of all five of these outdoor recreation facilities would require investment in physical/built components (e.g. installation of walkways for boardwalks). Additionally, respondents indicated that they had other specific outdoor facility requests, which included a desire for additional splash pads and community gardens. The full list of most requested Outdoor Recreation Facilities/Spaces is included within Figure 13 of the Consultation Report.

The current availability of outdoor play/sports fields is an immense advantage to the City of Port Colborne and provides a high service level that is in many cases above recommended service levels. As discussed in Section 7.0 (Parks) of this report, the City has a vast amount of parkland available, which creates opportunities for outdoor recreational facilities such as frisbee golf or other activities.

A major takeaway from consultation is the demand for increased access to Port Colborne's waterfront. The value of access to Lake Erie is illustrated through the high usage of parks near Lake Erie and the Canal, including H. H. Knoll, Lock 8 Park and Nickel Beach. This provides a unique opportunity to incorporate diverse or specialized outdoor amenities at waterfront parks. Again, this is in keeping with consultation findings as nearly 90% of survey respondents agreed-strongly agreed that "offering diverse and specialized parks (skate park, splash pad, dog park and/or bike park) is a good investment in the community." Opportunities to update existing parks to include specialized facilities is recommended.



Many stakeholders highlighted the importance of Sugarloaf Marina, and felt that the City should make an effort to increase beautification efforts and amenity improvements in order to improve this facility. Major

entrances (e.g. restaurant entrance) were noted as needed general “cleaning up” by survey respondents. Comments were also received requesting improvements to accessibility at the Marina, including parking and access to the docks. Opportunities to provide access for waterfront activities (paddle boating, stand-up paddle boarding, kayaking) were suggested by stakeholders, as some indicated the Marina is accessible (from an affordability perspective) for higher income levels.

Based on the summary of facilities above and the analysis of current and future outdoor facility needs, it is evident that the City will need to plan for creating more outdoor recreational infrastructure, particularly for the provision of the following:

- **Volleyball courts**
- **Outdoor pool**
- **Splash pad**

Population growth, trends and resident demand for the following outdoor recreation facilities should be closely monitored as they are approaching or anticipated to exceed the current service level by 2031:

- **Soccer fields**
- **Ball diamonds**
- **Tennis courts**
- **Lawn bowling greens**
- **Playground structures**

The Community and Economic Development Department should continue to monitor outdoor recreational service levels as new parks are developed.

9.5 Recommendations

Based on our review, the following actions are recommended:

1. The City should **monitor population growth/decline and facility provision** to ensure facilities and infrastructure (playfields, ball diamonds, etc.) meet the Guidelines for Developing Public Recreation Facility Standards.
2. **Create park and facility guidelines that exceed AODA standards and implement inclusive design standards.** Develop an accessible park that creates opportunities for all abilities and levels of enjoyment.
3. Prepare a **Strategic Action Plan for the development of the Port Colborne waterfront of Lake Erie**, including the Welland Canal, Gravelly Bay, Sugarloaf Marina, H.H. Knoll Park and all City beaches to revitalize the area with land and water activities, including a high level of community engagement.
 - a. Construct boat launches for non-motorized vehicles
 - b. Identify and designate Recreational Waterways
 - c. Upgrade access to all waterfront destinations including Nickel Beach, Sugarloaf Marina.
 - d. Upgrade public use amenities (washrooms, food and beverage services, watercraft rentals)
 - e. Create/design a waterfront brand. Prepare signs and enhance public information through social media, etc.
 - f. Link trails and improve signage to encourage cyclist, walking and commuters to explore all the waterfront amenities available Consider re-naming streets to highlight the destination and placemaking theme of the waterfront (e.g. Nickel Beach Way, Welland Esplanade).

4. As part of Port Colborne's Beach Strategy, **develop and implement a Strategy for Nickel Beach Development** by considering establishing the following:
 - a. New concession stand
 - b. Updated change room and washroom facilities
 - c. Playground update
 - d. Parking (both on-site and off-site)
 - e. Review operating hours and length of season beach is open to public
 - f. Trail connectivity
 - g. Consideration of a waterfront boardwalk
 - h. Strategy for addressing Fowlers Toad
 - i. Alternative vehicular/trails access to beach
 - j. Explore sustainable solutions to address erosion of the beach
5. Develop a **long-Term growth strategy for the Sugarloaf Marina** – and adjacent Park and City lands.
 - a. Marina related programming i.e. small craft rentals, paddle boarding, sailing lessons etc.
 - b. Potential to expand commercial business through partnerships and contractual relationships.
 - c. Prepare a Business Case for boat dock/storage expansion.
6. Ensure that at least **one Staff member is trained as a Certified Playground Inspector** through the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA) and the Canadian Playground Safety Institute (CPSI) so that they may conduct hands-on inspections/audits of City-owned playspaces.
7. Based on the Parks Inventory and Recommendations included in **Appendix E, develop a strategy and establish a regular maintenance schedule/work plan to guide park/facility improvements** as recommended over next 10 years. Improving accessibility and Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) should be primary goals. Regularly **audit existing equipment and facilities** and ensure fair and equal access to all facilities.
8. Develop a **Lifecycle Reserve Policy** for indoor and outdoor recreation infrastructure. An example policy can be found in **Section 10.4.2**.
9. Utilize the **Facility Condition Index (FCI)** framework to determine whether or not significant reinvestment in existing facilities should be pursued. (See **Appendix C**).
10. Adopt a **project feasibility framework/scoring metric** for all potential major infrastructure projects. See **Appendix F** for a Project Scoring Metric with feasibility planning triggers to consider. This recommendation is cross referenced with indoor recreation facilities.
11. Develop and maintain an **integrated Parks and Recreation website tool** that would consist of the following components:
 - a. Expanded **online community calendar**;
 - b. **Mobile access to Port Colborne's Leisure Guide**;
An example of an online Recreational Guide in which users can apply filters: City of Calgary, [My Rec Guide](#).
 - c. **Updated online parkland inventory**;
 - d. **interactive web-app called a 'Park and Recreation Locator'**;

- e. **Improved access to information about recreation and cultural facilities;** and,
 - f. Updated software for **improved customer experience and automation.**
12. Continue to **monitor outdoor recreation trends** and support expansion of such opportunities in all areas of the City.
13. **Plan for the installation of three (3) or four (4) new splash pads by the next Master Plan update** in order to meet recommended service levels.

10.0 INDOOR RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Indoor recreational facilities provide valuable space for year-round activities and events for Port Colborne. Both the City and community organizations use these spaces to help keep residents of all ages active, healthy and engaged. Major indoor facilities in Port Colborne include the Vale Health and Wellness Centre, Roselawn Centre for the Arts, Bethel and Sherkston Community Centres, the Humberstone Community Hall and Visitor Centre, and the Port Colborne Historical and Marine Museum. While the Public Library is an important indoor facility in the City, it has not been reviewed as part of this Master Plan.



Port Colborne's indoor facilities are currently managed by the Manager of Engineering Services and Facility Maintenance. However, the Community and Economic Development Department plays a central role in the programming that takes place in City-owned facilities, particularly the Vale Health and Wellness Centre (in partnership with the YMCA) and the Roselawn Centre for the Arts.

The Port Colborne Historical and Marine Museum is managed by the Museum Director/Curator. The Museum Board is comprised of six individuals who are appointed by Council to manage the affairs of the Museum on Council's behalf. The Museum Curator reports to this Committee, and the Committee minutes go to Council.

The City also provides facility booking opportunities for events, parties, etc. The Events Coordinator and Manager of Parks and Recreation are responsible for booking facilities and coordinating program registration.

10.1 Importance of Indoor Recreation Facilities

Indoor recreational facilities play an important role in facilitating year-round recreational opportunities for residents and visitors. In addition to providing space for competitive and non-competitive sports and events, indoor facilities create opportunities for social interaction in passive spaces such as lobbies. Port Colborne makes efficient use of their indoor spaces through family events such as SportsFest and Canal Days by utilizing a number of indoor and outdoor venues to provide visitors with a unique recreational experience.

Indoor recreation facilities are often centerpieces of community spirit and wellness, and destinations for active and passive recreation opportunities. Indoor recreation facilities can function as a means to support meaningful and accessible recreation experiences that foster individual health and wellbeing, community wellbeing, opportunities for life-long participation and economic diversification. These facilities, which are enjoyed by residents and visitors alike, help position communities as a major 'quality of life' destination.

Port Colborne's indoor recreational facilities are crucial venues for the Community and Economic Development Department and other community organizations. Port Colborne's indoor facilities are illustrated on **Figure A: Parks and Recreation Inventory**.

10.2 Inventory of Indoor Recreation Facilities

The following inventory focuses on indoor facilities used for recreation purposes, but does not include all City-owned facilities (e.g. Library and Museum).

Vale Health and Wellness Centre:

The Vale Health and Wellness Centre is one of Port Colborne's community focal points. Nestled within the T.A. Lannan Sports Complex at 550 Elizabeth Street and constructed in 2012, this multi-use recreational facility is owned by the City and includes a number of amenities, including two NHL-sized ice pads, an indoor walking track, six outdoor bocce courts, an aquatic centre with a five lane lap pool and leisure pools and a gymnasium and fitness area. In terms of outdoor amenities, the sports complex includes five full size soccer fields, three baseball fields, a playground and recreational trails that connect with the Welland Canal Multi-use Trails.

This facility is operated under a Joint Operating Agreement between the City and the Niagara Region YMCA. The City owns the facility and a portion of the building is leased to the YMCA. Through this partnership, Niagara Region YMCA delivers recreation programs for residents and the surrounding community. This multi-purpose recreation destination has altered the culture of fitness and recreation for the City of Port Colborne, and stands out as an excellent multi-use recreational facility.

This type of agreement is becoming more common for the provision of recreational services across Ontario, with municipalities managing the arena (or "cold" side) and YMCAs managing the aquatics and fitness programming (or "warm" side).



Some staff members of the Community and Economic Development staff work out of the VHWC, including the Seasonal Sports Coordinator and the Recreation Program Coordinator.

The YMCA is an independent charity and operates its Health, Fitness and Aquatic programming based on the fees it receives from members. In the case of Port Colborne, the YMCA does receive funding from the City in order to subsidize its operations. At the time this Master Plan was prepared, the Port Colborne YMCA had 2,395 members, 59% of which are families. In 2018, 4,452 non-members accessed the aquatic facilities through swim passes that are available for non-members. Swimming lessons are among the most popular programs for the YMCA, with over 400 children in lessons and a waiting list. In addition, the Port Colborne YMCA programming and services include:

- Gym and fitness centre with cardio, free weights and strength training equipment;
- Fitness coaching and personal/small group training;
- Group fitness classes;
- Gymnasium space for recreational sports (Basketball, volleyball, pickleball);
- Child minding;
- Child and youth recreation programs; and,
- Private and group swimming lessons.

The following programming is offered by the City:

- Pay as you play pick-up hockey (PAYP);
- Stick and Puck;
- Senior and adult skate;
- Public skating;



- Parent & tot skating;
- Figure skating drop-in; and
- Pickleball

In terms of sports leagues, the Niagara Whalers Tier II Junior A Hockey Club, Southern Tier Admirals AAA Regional Team, Port Colborne Minor Hockey and Port Colborne Girls Hockey Association play out of the VHWC. Sledge hockey is also played at introductory and competitive levels at the VHWC, with the City offering “Learn to Sledge” programming. The City has also hosted Team Ontario and Team Canada games for both men and women’s Sledge Hockey.

In addition to providing arenas, the VHWC offers a variety of recreational amenities including:

- 2 Indoor Ice Pads with seating:
 - Rink 1 fixed seating: 973; Standing room: 440
 - Rink 2 fixed seating: 200; Standing room: 100
- Several Facility Operations Rooms
- 12 dressing rooms (one designated for girls)
- Large lobby area, with seating/viewing area of pools
- Indoor track
- Port Colborne’s Bocce Ball Club
- Golden Puck Room (available for rent)
 - 10 tables, 50 chairs, public Wi-Fi
- Skate sharpening services
- Mixed-use gymnasium space with dividing wall (lined for multiple sports)
- Snack Bar/Canteen/Concession Stand (currently operated by Subway)

Roselawn Centre for the Arts:

The Roselawn Centre was originally built in 1860 as a stately three story home, illustrative of Upper Canada Victorian Architecture. The City of Port Colborne assumed the operations of this facility to expand special events and encourage public access to the Centre. This facility is hosts the Canadian Author Series as well as Showboat Festival Theatre. The Roselawn Centre acts as the hub for arts and culture in Port Colborne, and consists of several amenities, including:

- Black box theatre
- Box office
- 267 person seating capacity
- Office space (previously used by City staff)
- Bar/Canteen/Concession Stand
- Rentable meeting room area
- Kitchen
- Activity rooms (use for arts programming)
- Change Rooms
- Storage Rooms

This facility can be rented for a range of functions including conference, business meetings, training sessions and wedding receptions. This facility is supported by The Friends of Roselawn Centre: a not-for-profit corporation that has two established mandate: to help facilitate the offerings of arts and culture in the community at large and at the Roselawn Centre and, through partnership with the City, to help restore and maintain the Roselawn Centre.



During the staff-led site visit, accessibility issues to the Centre, and specifically to the Theatre, were emphasized. While some improvements to the exterior of the building have been made in recent years, the inside of the facility is in need of revitalization. Efforts to create indoor spaces that can be utilized for multiple purposes is needed. While further discussion on programming opportunities for this facility are included further below (Section 11.0), there is an opportunity to maximize the utilization of this space.

Rural Community Centres:

The City owns two rural community centres in Bethel and Sherkston. While located within the City's municipal boundaries, these community centres serve the surrounding rural areas.

The **Bethel Community Centre (Julia Yager Educational and Recreational Centre)** is located near the intersection of Chippawa and Carl Road, in the Hamlet of Bethel. The building is an old school and the City offers recreational programs for children, youth, adults and seniors. The Port Colborne Arts Club runs out of this facility, which offers classes and workshops from September to April. The hall can be rented by contacting a community member who manages the booking of this facility.

The **Sherkston Community Centre** is located in the Hamlet of Sherkston along Sherkston Road. This facility was previously a public school, and can be rented by community members for family gatherings, meetings, baby/bridal showers, etc. Similar to the Bethel Community Centre, bookings are coordinated by a local community member. The City does not run specific programming out of this facility.

It is noted that there is very little information available on renting these facilities through both the City's website and Leisure Guide. It is recommended that the City promote these facilities to the greater community.

Friends Over 55 Recreation Centre

As one of the oldest, independently owned Senior Recreation Centres in Niagara Region, Friends Over 55 Recreation Centre provides recreational programming to seniors in Port Colborne. Program offerings include: tai chi, cribbage, line dancing, bocce, yoga, darts, woodshop, shuffleboard and more. Membership

is very affordable (\$20.00 per year), and open to residents and non-residents outside of Port Colborne. The City of Port Colborne and Province provides some funding to this Centre.



Senior centers serve as a gateway to the City's aging adults. They serve as a space designed to connect older adults to vital community services that can help them stay healthy, independent and active. Often, senior centres are designated focal points in municipalities allowing older adults to access multiple services in one place. For example, services offered at senior centres often include: meal and nutrition programs; information and assistance; health, fitness, and wellness programs; transportation services; public benefits counseling; employment assistance; volunteer and civic engagement opportunities; social and recreational activities; educational and arts programs; intergenerational programs.

It is important to note that not all senior centres are stand alone buildings. Often, and beneficially, senior centres are integrated into larger community centres, such as Multi-Use Recreation Facilities, where participants are more fully integrated with the rest of the community and intergenerational mixing can occur organically.

Table 8 below provides an inventory and assessment of the future service level requirements for indoor recreation facilities in Port Colborne.



Table 8 - Summary of Indoor Recreation Facilities

Recreation Facility	Municipal Supply	Current Service Level (2018) ⁵⁵	Future Service Level Requirements (2031) ⁵⁶	Recommended Service Level ⁵⁷	Current Alignment with Recommended Service Level
Arena, Artificial Indoor Ice Area (Indoor Ice Pads)	2	1 : 9,150	1 Indoor Ice Pads	1: 20,000 One in each community should have spectator seating; the rest should be for recreation purposes with limited seating.	Above recommended service level. <u>NOTE:</u> There is demand among some sports organizations for additional dry land training space
Community Centre / Multi-Use Recreational Facility (MURF)	1	1 : 18,300	1 MURF	1: 25,000 (Often include indoor pool or arena)	Above recommended service level. <u>NOTE:</u> There are opportunities to maximize existing space in the VHWC.
Indoor Pool	1	1: 18,300	1 indoor pool	1 : 20,000	Above recommended service level. <u>NOTE:</u> Significant demand for aquatic programming. May need to consider maximizing scheduling/ accessibility.
Seniors Day Centre	1	1: 18,300	1 Seniors Centre (Friends Over 55 Recreation Centre)	1 : 20,000	Above recommended service level.

⁵⁵ Based on 2016 Population of 18,300

⁵⁶ Service level required to continue meeting current service levels based on current service level and forecasted population of 20,080 ([Niagara 2041](#))

⁵⁷ Based on the [Guidelines for Developing Public Recreation Facility Standards](#)

Based on the City's current facility supplies, Port Colborne is considered to be well-served from an indoor facilities perspective. With a future projected growth of 20,800 in 2031, the City would still be within the recommended service level for indoor facilities.

10.3 What We heard

In terms of usage, **the most commonly used indoor recreation facility is the Vale Health and Wellness Centre**. More specifically, the walking track was reported as the most used component of the VHWC (36% of survey respondents use the walking track once a week or more). This is followed by the arena, of which 31% of respondents indicated they use once a week or more.

44% of survey respondents indicated that they use the Roselawn Centre for the Arts once a month or less. While the Centre stands out as an important arts and culture hub, community engagement reveals that there is relatively low awareness and usage of this space. Similarly, a large majority of respondents' indicated they have never been to the Bethel or Sherkston Community Centre (89% and 83% respectively). This indicates that these facilities can be promoted and marketed more effectively by the City in order to maximize existing space. As noted above, there is no mention of these facilities on the City's website or in the Leisure Guide. Providing booking details may help to generate revenue, as the City does provide financial support to both of these facilities.

Well-built and well-maintained recreation facilities are essential to future success, as they help create a vibrant community. Strengthening the infrastructure for recreation, sport and physical activity is critical to strengthening the health, vitality and economies of local communities (2015 'Framework'). During the public open houses, the Staff engagement sessions, and on the online public survey, participants were asked to rate Port Colborne's existing facilities for their current state of quality and maintenance.

Survey respondents indicated that the Vale Health and Wellness Centre requires the greatest need of improvement. This finding was surprising given that the facility was opened in November 2012. However, additional responses and discussions with Parks and Recreation staff indicate there have been issues with the roof. Additional issues identified include the need for a warm-up area associated with the arena; accessible seating in the arena and cleaner washrooms and facilities throughout (change rooms, etc.).

Feedback was also received about the Vale Health and Wellness Centre's concession stand, which is currently managed by Subway. Complaints about the general service and restrictions on bringing in outside food was discussed at the stakeholder working session as a key issue.

Feedback on the quality and maintenance of these facilities was varied, and a majority of comments provided useful suggestions for future improvements. It is noted that several of the facilities were selected as both the best and worst in terms of quality and maintenance such as the Vale Health and Wellness Centre. This again reflects the high usage of this facility, but also the suggestions for improvements as noted above.

Security of facilities, particularly for the Vale Health and Wellness Centre was raised as an issue in the online survey, staff working session and stakeholder working sessions.

The live engagement sessions provided additional input on other facilities, such as the Roselawn Centre for the Arts and the smaller community centres. Overall, there seems to be a shared consensus that these

facilities play an important role, but need to be physically improved in order to be maximized and utilized by the City.

According to the 2015 Framework, the delivery of quality recreational experiences in communities requires a system that is sustainable, in terms of human resources, economics and the environment.

“Recreation values and stewards indoor and outdoor places and spaces in the built and natural environments. This requires balancing the needs of natural ecosystems with those of users, and providing sustainable facilities and services that minimize negative effects on the social and natural environments.”

In keeping with this principle of operation, Staff, department heads, stakeholder groups, and the public were asked to provide their opinion on facility needs for the future of Port Colborne. Above all else, the consensus was that:

“Opportunities and facilities to participate in physical activity, sport, recreation, and play should be equally accessible and available to all.”

Specific facilities were identified based on demand and future needs in the City of Port Colborne. The top indoor recreation spaces that should be more available in Port Colborne. The following indoor facilities were suggested as the top three facilities that should be more readily available in Port Colborne:

- **Indoor child playground**
- **Indoor pool**
- **Fitness/wellness facilities**

At this time, the City of Port Colborne does not provide any indoor child playgrounds. This would provide families/children with access to a playground year-round, and may improve accessibility for families. The online survey also confirmed participant’s desires to improve upon the availability of pools within the City, with 24% of respondents specifying indoor pools as among the most requested indoor recreation facility. This is also illustrative of the feedback around affordability for the pool located at the VHWC, and may suggest that Port Colborne residents would like affordable access to the existing aquatic facility.

Again, fitness/wellness facilities do exist in Port Colborne (both at the VHWC and private businesses), but responses suggest that residents would like access to more affordable facilities or an increased number of fitness/wellness facilities. This may also include spaces for yoga/Pilates studios or other multi-use space that can be used for a range of wellness activities.

An indoor climbing wall was also suggested through the survey and at stakeholder events. There are no indoor rock climbing facilities in Port Colborne.

Port Colborne’s Multi-use Recreational Facility (VHWC) has several important amenities but appears to not be accessible for all community members based on the associated membership costs. Opportunities to improve affordability and access to the Vale Health and Wellness Centre should be explored by the Community and Economic Development Department, in partnership with YMCA staff.

In terms of physical accessibility to Port Colborne's facilities and outdoor recreational amenities, 78% of respondents indicated that recreational facilities are physically accessible for all abilities, while 22% indicated they are not.

When probed further, feedback regarding accessibility included:

- Roselawn requires significant updates in order to make it a physically accessible space
- Improving lighting in facilities would help those with visual impairments
- Seating at VHWC (Rink 2 was noted in particular – no accessible seating)
- Art Club at Bethel Community Centre – held on second floor which is not physically accessible
- Improving surface treatments at parks and playgrounds
- Washroom improvements needed (ramps, etc.)
- VHWC main entrance requires improvements
- Potential to make beaches wheelchair accessible with boardwalks, improved parking, etc.
- Provide linkages between paved, multi-use trail system and parks that are accessible
- Aspects of Sugarloaf Harbour Marina could be improved to enhance accessibility

Additional Dryland Training (Field House Discussion)

A group of sports organizations, including minor hockey, basketball, soccer and baseball approached City staff in October 2019 to discuss a gap in dryland training facilities for Port Colborne youth and athletes. A meeting, chaired by Mayor Bill Steele, was held on October 30th 2019. The purpose of the meeting was to identify the gap in services, and to understand what the vision for an additional training space would be.

It should be noted that an indoor training facility was not identified by the project team as a facility gap through other stakeholder consultation (online survey), but it was mentioned at the stakeholder working session by some sports organizations. When asked to rank indoor recreation facilities to be more readily available in Port Colborne, indoor field facilities were ranked as sixth by 14.1% of online survey respondents. As stated above, indoor child playground, indoor pools and fitness/wellness facilities were ranked as the top three facilities requested to be more readily available.

At the time of finalizing the Master Plan, no further details were received from the stakeholder group in terms of desired size, amenities or financial support for an additional training space. It is also unclear if stakeholders are envisioning a larger scale field house (indoor turf, field size, etc.) or a smaller gymnasium space for additional indoor training. Equipment specifically requested include a skating treadmill, training aids for shooting (hockey), off-ice hockey development equipment, and batting cages. A space to provide primarily for Port Colborne sports teams where specialized coaching could be taught was highlighted as a desire. For example, Girls Hockey noted that it is challenging to book ice time when outside leagues are competing for ice at VHWC.

While the current service level for indoor recreational spaces is both currently and forecasted to meet the City's needs, stakeholders indicated that there is high demand for key timeslots at the VHWC. This creates scheduling challenges, as high demand times are wanted by several sports and recreation groups.

Stakeholders were asked to provide information on the number of registered participants, as well as projected hours in use (while in season). Additional information on financial contributions to such a facility was also requested. Information was received from the following organizations:

- Port Colborne Basketball
- Minor boys baseball
- Southern Tier Admirals – AAA Regional Team
- Sir John Colborne Youth Soccer Club
- YMCA
- Port Colborne Girls Hockey Association

Based on the information provided by stakeholders, further analysis and a business case for constructing such a facility is needed if the City is to consider financially supporting this initiative. At this time, each of the commenting organizations are unable to financially contribute to a new facility⁵⁸. It is acknowledged that there may be a gap in terms of space availability for Port Colborne athletes, but this must be balanced with the broader needs of the community.

In order to make an informed decision on any new facilities in Port Colborne, staff are recommended to undertake a facility feasibility study, which should utilize the **Facility Decision Making Process** (provided in **Figure 14** below). The City should also utilize the **Facility Condition Index** (FCI, as discussed earlier in Section 4.0) approach to determine whether or not significant reinvestment in existing facilities should be pursued. Those facilities or spaces that have repair or replacement ratios of over 50% (FCI) are candidates for repurpose or decommissioning. Those with a FCI of under 50% are more likely candidates for reinvestment (see **Appendix C** for FCI model).

Design of any future facilities should also reflect on the most commonly requested features identified in the Consultation Report such as: an indoor playground, indoor pool and wellbeing/fitness facilities.

This facility feasibility study could be done in conjunction with neighbouring municipalities if there was additional interest. The completion of this facility feasibility study will ensure that City is best positioned should one or more of the following occur:

- Major new sources of funding become available;
- The population of the region experiences rapid growth;
- Replacement of a major community facility is required. See FCI model, **Appendix C**.

It is worth noting that through the online survey, participants were asked to select criteria for considering future Parks and Recreation projects and facility developments. The following was suggested:

- Respond to demands/requests of the Community;
- Provide greater benefit to the Community; and
- Provide a facility/amenities that are not readily available in the Community.

⁵⁸ Port Colborne minor hockey did not formally submit information, as requested. However, they did note at the October 30th meeting that Minor Hockey can collect increased registration fees to contribute to a new training facility.

Based on the criteria suggested by stakeholders, the City should consider utilizing a Project Scoring Metric. An example of a Project Feasibility Framework/Scoring Metric has been included in **Appendix F**. If the City were to consider supporting the development of an additional indoor training facility, the Project Feasibility Framework/Scoring Metric would be an appropriate starting point as it provides a tool to assess how new facilities may respond to community needs.

10.4 Best practices

The following best practices should be considered in conjunction with earlier trends described above or in this report, including: inclusivity, social interaction, multi-purpose spaces and expandability.

10.4.1 Facility Decision Making Processes

The planning and design of future recreation infrastructure needs to balance a number of considerations including: growth and utilization in the City and catchment region; the life span of current facilities; desired service levels; and expected trends in recreation participation. As such, planning for public recreation facilities and spaces should include a project-specific feasibility analysis whenever major project development is considered. The following chart outlines the steps associated with major regional recreation facility and space development. The same steps and framework can be applied to local recreation facility and space development as well.

Figure 14 - Facility Decision Making Process - Strategic Planning for Parks and Recreation Departments



Since a feasibility analysis is required to provide decision-makers with the information necessary to make informed judgments, it is recommended that **significant public investments in recreation facilities and**

spaces should not occur without undertaking a market feasibility analysis and business planning.

This applies not only to initiatives championed by the City, but also to those projects led by not-for-profit groups and associations where public funds are required for the capital and/or ongoing operations of facilities. The entire process, including needs assessment, feasibility analysis, design and construction can take between 18 and 30 months (or longer) and requires the input of a variety of internal and external stakeholders.

Further to this approach, the following planning triggers are proposed to help municipalities determine when, and if, feasibility analysis related to future facility and space development is warranted. Undertaking a feasibility analysis requires investment and resources, and sets public expectations. Since this is the case, the following **feasibility planning “triggers”** outline when a municipality(ies) could/should initiate (or facilitate in the case of a non-profit-based project) feasibility analysis and business planning.

Market feasibility analysis and business planning could occur when one or more of the following criteria are met.

1. Facility spaces currently being offered approach **80% to 90% utilization levels** on a sustained basis.
2. Facility or facility spaces currently being used have **less than 25% remaining lifecycle or require investment of over 50% of replacement costs** (Facility Condition Index) as a functional and modern resource (as determined by ongoing lifecycle planning).
3. **Current and future demands**, as impacted through expression of needs, as a function of public input, trends and majority impact, and/or market growth, can be proven.
4. The facility in question and program services proposed provide **equitable access** for all residents as a public service.
5. Facility type and function **conform to the core recreation service functions** of local municipalities or new functional areas as contained within the broader strategic planning.
6. Facility type and function are **not currently and/ or adequately provided** through other agencies or private sector services in the City and broader region.
7. Potential and/or confirmed **operational or capital partners are committed and established** as registered societies, institutions, or municipal governments and collectively represent sufficient membership or market segments to sustain use of the development for the life of the development.
8. The external partner (institution, neighbouring municipality, volunteer and/or non-profit group) leading a facility development initiative has, or **has access to, significant capital and/or operating resources**.

The previously noted process and associated planning triggers will help the City of Port Colborne formalize and prioritize potential recreation projects in the future. If a combination of these criteria are met, further feasibility analysis may be warranted. A feasibility analysis requires public investment, the following **general guidelines for feasibility exploration** should be achieved:

- There must be **public engagement** in the planning process, preferably through the use of statistically reliable surveys.
- A **market assessment** for component service delivery functions must be completed.
- A thorough and transparent **site/location analysis** must be completed.
- There must be a **biophysical/environmental** impact statement.
- There must be a **concept development plan** including infrastructure planning, costs and impacts of ongoing operations.
- The project must demonstrate **conformity to broader municipal strategic planning, such as the Official Plan and any Secondary Plans.**
- **Business planning** outlining capital partners, operating partners, sources of capital, capital amortization, and projection of operating costs must be completed.
- **Opportunity cost analysis** must be undertaken, which demonstrates that the project represents the best way of achieving the intended goal.

Should a feasibility analysis be warranted, these guidelines will ensure that decision-makers have undertaken the due diligence they need to make informed decisions in the best interests of the community and public good.

10.4.2 Lifecycle Reserve Policy

Recreation facilities are some of the most heavily utilized, costly (both operational and capital), and complex assets in a municipal asset inventory. Not only do they require high capital investments, they are also costly to maintain and require specialized, extensive human resources to program, operate, and repair. Lifecycle budgeting is the practice of including annual budget allotments for the reinvestment and ultimate replacement of existing facilities and spaces.

The concept of lifecycle budgeting is becoming more commonplace in Canada. Municipalities plan for lifecycle replacement and repair of recreation infrastructure in a variety of ways. Although there is no standard approach to lifecycle budgeting, those municipalities who practice it do so by budgeting between 1% and 2% of facility or space replacement value annually, building capital reserves that can ultimately be used to offset the cost of major repair and replacement.

A concept related to facility and site lifecycle replacement budgeting is **facility amenity refreshment planning**. Amenity refreshment suggests that the program elements, such as leisure amenities in a swimming pool, have a functional shelf life shorter than the life spans of the facility envelope and mechanical systems. Some facilities require periodic reinvestment to ensure functional use and relevance, and to ensure that users receive the experience they would get in similar modern facilities. Amenity refreshment is a concept more commonly found in cultural facilities such as art galleries and museums, but is an important consideration for all new or existing recreation and parks facilities and spaces.

As the life span of recreation facilities and spaces is typically between 40 – 60 years, annual replacement planning would theoretically put smaller amounts away each year. When a facility is decommissioned and needs to be replaced, a substantial portion of the capital replacement value is already in reserves.

For its recreation facilities and spaces, the City of Port Colborne should consider adopting annual contributions to lifecycle reserves to better represent the true costs of lifecycle repair and maintenance, and to account for facility amenity refreshment.

10.4.3 Spontaneous Recreation

As mentioned in the trends review, multi-use recreational facilities provides space for spontaneous and unstructured activities. Multi-use facilities result in clustering which enhances cross-programming. The provision of spontaneous, unstructured recreation and parks opportunities should continually be considered by the City of Port Colborne in the planning and programming of existing and new spaces.

The supply/demand relationship for spontaneous use areas is not as straightforward as is the case with programmable/rentable spaces. This is primarily due to the fact that capacities cannot be clearly identified for spontaneous use areas, as the point at which a facility is “too busy” and thereby prohibitive for participant use is subjective and based on individual perception.

Spontaneous use of facilities occurs in two ways. A spontaneous user may visit a facility for the purpose of participating in a desired activity or a user may participate in an activity because it is convenient to do so, yet it was not the intended purpose for the facility visit. Recognizing that spontaneous users are comprised of both user types, planning for spontaneous use facilities should consider the following:

- Spontaneous use areas provide users the opportunity to participate at irregular times, thereby enabling users to partake in physical activity or creative/social endeavors even if they cannot commit to signing up for a scheduled team or program. Therefore, spontaneous use areas must provide optimal flexibility during hours of operation.
- Spontaneous use activities are best offered in clusters depending on the type of activity and the adjacent facility amenities. Therefore, spontaneous use opportunities must be provided in clusters that work well together, including change rooms for both wet and dry uses.
- Spontaneous use activity-clusters must consider cross-programming and convenience of potential users. Clusters that seem to work well include:
 - Fitness/wellness and child minding
 - Leisure/ lap swimming and fitness/wellness
 - Leisure/lap swimming and child minding
 - Fitness/wellness and major scheduled use activity (e.g. arenas, field houses, etc.)
 - Fitness/wellness and therapeutic/ program aquatics
 - Leisure skating and ice arenas

Considering these points, it is apparent that many future spontaneous use spaces should piggyback on major programmable/rentable spaces. It is important to note that rental spaces such as traditional ice arenas and gymnasiums/multipurpose spaces can also be spontaneous if they are not rented out for exclusive use.

The Vale Health and Wellness Centre in Port Colborne is an excellent example of a multi-use recreational facility. Efforts should be made to maximize the existing space within the City of Port Colborne prior to

expanding space. Should the City or other organizations wish to pursue additional space, the decision-making tools herein are strongly encouraged.

10.5 Recommendations

Given the consultation findings, best practices and trends in indoor recreational facilities, the following recommendations should be considered by the Community and Economic Development Department:

1. **Review all hours of operation for recreational facilities** to optimize use of existing space and reduce barriers and gaps to access and inclusion.
 - a) Focus on multi-use spaces at Vale Health and Wellness Centre.
 - b) Continue to identify opportunities to optimize before considering an expansion of operating hours.
2. **Identify opportunities to maximize multi-use recreational space at Vale Health and Wellness Centre** to increase the supply of multi-use and multi-functional rooms (e.g. use of dividing curtains, portable boards, temporary bleachers, bocce club expansion, etc.)
3. **Ensure physical accessibility measures are incorporated into existing and new facilities** and considered for all parks and recreation programming where possible.
4. **Review and update operating agreements of the Rural Community Centres** (Bethel and Sherkston) to ensure facility bookings, rental rates, operational policies, etc. are consistent with other City-owned facilities.
 - a. Ensure spaces are available to the public and are maintained in a manner consistent with other City facilities.
 - b. Collect annual data on the number of bookings.
 - c. Promote facility rentals on the City's website and through the leisure guide.
5. All organizations renting/utilizing Port Colborne facilities should be required to **report annually on the number of registered participants**. Use this data to enhance the understanding of parks and recreation participation in the community including program registration, facility usage, capital and operation expense, revenue tracking, cost recovery and other data critical to informed planning and management.
6. City and community service partners should **explore new ways to encourage and build awareness of Port Colborne's spontaneous and drop-in recreation activities** (E.g. through improved marketing of the City's Leisure Guide and other promotion mediums, and realignment with or investment in new technologies). **Focus on providing low cost/no cost unstructured, spontaneous opportunities for various skill levels** to create a degree of universality and inclusiveness for all in Port Colborne.
7. Ensure **physical accessibility measures are incorporated into existing and new facilities** and considered for all Parks and Recreation programming where possible. Specific facilities/amenities to update include:
 - a. Vale Health and Wellness Centre (entrance and seating)
 - b. Bethel Community Centre
 - c. Roselawn Centre for the Arts (access, seating, lighting)
 - d. Surfacing treatments at play structures
 - e. Beach access (wheelchair accessible parking and boardwalk access at Nickel Beach)

- f. Trail connections between paved, multi-use trails and parks
8. **Establish and maintain an inventory of available spaces** throughout the City where recreational activities can occur.
 - a. Examine availability of space at rural community centres in Bethel and Sherkston and promote to community groups seeking affordable space.
 9. **Create park and facility guidelines that exceed AODA standards and implement inclusive design standards.**
 10. Develop and maintain a **Parks and Recreation Partnership Framework.**
 - a. Work with partners to **negotiate and develop partnership agreements to access sponsorship revenues.** See **Appendix B** for an example sponsorship policy and **Sections 3.2 and 12.3.4** of the report for a discussion on Inter-municipal collaboration.
 - b. Proactively **pursue new cost share partnerships** that will enable the City to address eligible parks, recreation and facility gaps identified in the plan and optimize use of current and future City assets. Continuously **explore partnership options** to provide multipurpose space/services including in-depth evaluation of capital reinvestment/repurposing/expansion needs. Initiate and create Public-Private Partnerships (P3s) between government and private-sector entities for the purpose of providing public infrastructure, community facilities and related services.
 - c. Evaluate operating agreements with partners to ensure coordination of programming **and identify service areas that may be best suited to be delivered by the private sector** (i.e. concessionaire/retail services, commercial hockey, and facility rental for profit).
 11. Adopt a **Department-wide Signage Advertising Policy** that permits access by potential partners, sponsors, businesses and community groups to advertising space in facilities, where possible.

Design and locate Port Colborne Community & Economic Development Department banners in key facilities and at special events. E.g. festivals, tournaments, registration periods etc. **Develop innovative and collaborative facility and operational models** to strengthen partnerships between sport and stakeholder organizations. (E.g. City of Mississauga Sport Plan 2013). Ties into the need for a Sports Council/Alliance.

12. Ensure all **activity rooms or facilities do not have specific 'label'** (e.g. Youth or Senior's room) to maximize flexibility of available rooms and provide for cross-programming of existing space.
13. **Engage in discussion with interested private and not for profit organizations to facilitate programming and services at Roselawn Centre for the Arts.** Prepare a facility management partnership agreement and identify prospective programming partners to deliver dramatic, performing and visual arts programming. (Showboat Theatre, schools and businesses).
14. **Develop a Business Plan for the Roselawn Centre** to maximize the usage of this historical and cultural hub in the City. The Business Plan should identify service delivery partners (i.e. Showboat Theatre) that can facilitate arts programming to a range of recreational participants across the City and broader region.

15. **Engage in discussion with the YMCA to address internal processes, policies and procedures** in response to current and future needs and recommendations based on this Master Plan (such as the need to enhance programming and available rental space within the gymnasium and fitness/health related spaces at the Vale Health and Wellness Centre) or the needs of both partners.
16. Develop **collaborative facility and operational strategies** to strengthen partnerships between sport and stakeholder organizations. (E.g. [City of Mississauga Sport Plan 2013](#)). This ties well into the need for a Sports Council/Alliance.
17. Develop a **Lifecycle Reserve Policy** for indoor and outdoor recreation infrastructure. A discussion can be found in **Section 10.4.2**.
18. Utilize the **Facility Condition Index (FCI)** approach to determine whether or not significant reinvestment in existing facilities should be pursued (see **Appendix C**).
19. Adopt a **project feasibility framework/scoring metric** for all potential major infrastructure projects. See **Appendix F** for a Project Scoring Metric with feasibility planning triggers.
20. The City should **monitor population growth and facility provision** to ensure facilities and parks/recreation infrastructure (playfields, ball diamonds, etc.) meet the Guidelines for Developing Public Recreation Facility Standards.

11.0 CULTURE, EVENTS & TOURISM

While the Parks and Recreation Master Plan was not to consider the ‘culture sector’, it became evident early on in the process that the community had a natural alignment between “culture” in the broadest sense and “Events and Tourism” as a deliverable within the community. While this section focuses mainly on events and tourism, the consulting team felt that an overview of arts and culture was necessary in order to assist City leaders and staff to navigate the future implementation of the Master Plan.

11.1 Importance of Arts & Culture

‘Culture’ is critically important as a fundamental human activity. Every human being is creative and engages in arts and cultural activities of some type. Indeed, there is a wide body of evidence to support the contention that to be truly happy and healthy, human beings require creative and artistic outlets. From a municipal standpoint, it is important to pay attention to the culture sector in order to provide a full set of programs and activities to residents, as well as to nurture the local economic base.

Accordingly, ‘arts and culture’ is an important area of focus for any municipality, to ensure that it is providing a full range of recreational and educational activities to its residents (in addition to sports and parks facilities) and thus providing them with healthy opportunities for involvement that engage both the mind and the body. It is thus integral to overall quality of life in a community. Municipalities should be prepared to invest appropriately in these activities, just as they provide parks and sports facilities, which often means some level of subsidy.

However, arts and culture is also a large and important industry in Ontario overall. Recent (2016) work by the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport has shown that it is an industry worth over \$20 billion dollars annually in GDP in the province and is responsible for 222,000 jobs (just over 4% of the total workforce). Collectively ‘culture’ is responsible for 3.7% of the entire provincial economy. So clearly, the sector is worth paying attention to as an economic force and job creation engine⁵⁹.

For Regional context, in 2014 the Region of Niagara undertook an assessment of the value of the culture sector (based upon 2012 data). This analysis demonstrated that the sector is responsible for just over 13,000 jobs throughout the Region, which is associated with approximately \$396 million in labour income and over

⁵⁹ *Environmental Scan of the Culture Sector*, Ontario Culture Strategy Background Document, Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Sport and Culture, April 2016.

\$592 million in Gross Regional Product⁶⁰. Clearly the sector is extremely significant within the Region as well as at the provincial level.

Recognizing the importance of culture both as integral to a high quality of life, as well as a potential economic generator, Port Colborne is demonstrating its progressive and innovative nature through the preparation of a fulsome Parks and Recreation Master Plan. This demonstrates Port Colborne's commitment to becoming a leader in recreation, community well-being and event tourism in Ontario and Canada.

11.2 Key Culture Terminology

Some of the terms used in this plan may be ambiguous or obscure without a more precise definition, and in this section of the PRMP we provide further meaning and context for these key concepts.

Culture: The definition of culture has long been a controversy and the term is used in a variety of ways. One commonly used definition is provided by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO):

"[Culture] is that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, laws, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by [a human] as a member of society⁶¹."

In its broadest sense, everything that humans do could be considered 'culture'. 'Culture' could reflect the customs and traditions of certain ethno cultural or national groups. In another example, the term 'the culture of sport' is often used: however, this could be quite misleading within the context of this PR Master Plan, as other sections of the plan talk about facilities and programs for sport. Accordingly, 'culture' is used here in its usual broad vernacular sense to mean the visual arts, performing arts, literary arts, digital/media arts, cuisine, and special events and traditions (which themselves may incorporate visual arts, performing arts and cuisine elements). Culture may be professional or amateur, and people involved in culture may be performers/creators, or spectators. Similarly, they may engage in cultural activities as a hobby or pastime, or as a revenue-generating enterprise. All of this is embraced and referenced by the relatively broad term 'culture'.

Arts: Typically, the term 'the arts' refers to the process of creating or consuming/viewing visual, performing, literary or digital/media arts. The term 'art form' usually refers to one of these forms of expression, or even a narrower branch within an art form (for example, 'acrylics' being a style of painting within the 'visual art' form). All forms and expressions of the arts would be contained within the broad definition of culture above.

Multicultural: When the term 'multicultural' is used, it refers to the customs and traditions of ethnocultural or national groups and how these may be expressed in various art forms. Again, this would be considered within the broad definition of culture above.

Heritage: In this plan, the use of the term 'heritage' refers to the history of the community as expressed through a variety of formats: the museum and archives of the City; its roster of heritage buildings; its physical development over time (and how the evolution of its businesses and residential areas has responded to the

⁶⁰ See *Living in Niagara*: <http://www.livinginniagarareport.com/arts-culture-heritage-2014/contribution-of-cultural-sector-to-the-economy-in-niagara/>

⁶¹ Source: [UNESCO - Cultural Diversity](#)

site and situation of the City); and the more intangible memories and reflections of residents. While somewhat distinct from the definition of 'culture' in the foregoing, the ways in which history is interpreted and reflected to the community is a form of cultural expression (e.g. through the Museum). Accordingly, while 'heritage' is not a direct focus of this plan, heritage activities undertaken by the City are addressed to some extent within the context of this PRMP.

Creativity: For the purposes of this plan, 'creativity' is the act of creating art (i.e. engaging in an art form), as defined above. A philosophical position adopted throughout this plan is that **everyone** has the potential to be a creative individual – not just those who have special training in a certain art form, or those who have a particular talent. It follows from this that the cultural alignment with this Master Plan is oriented towards ensuring that **all residents** have an opportunity to participate in cultural activities regardless of age, gender, economic position, or physical ability. This is fundamental to the notion that a truly healthy society provides opportunities for physical and mental stimulation to all, which is essential to full and complete wellbeing. Elsewhere in the full PR Master Plan there is a discussion of 'inclusiveness', 'universality' and 'fair and equal access', and the concept of creativity very much reflects these ideals.

Cultural Innovation: Another concept that is important to define contextually is that of 'cultural innovation'. This refers to the process of creating new cultural product or expression (which may be live music, new works of art, new festivals and events, etc.). The end result of the creative process is cultural innovation, so a key aspect of any culture strategy is to identify ways and means through which cultural innovation can be encouraged and stimulated (thus engaging more people in the creative process). A side benefit of this is that often elements of cultural innovation that are highly visible and public in nature become of interest to visitors and tourists, whose expenditure of time and money in the City can create economic benefit.

Sponsorships and Partnerships: The overall PR Master Plan, and certainly the culture component, relies heavily upon the concept of creating partnerships and using sponsorships in the development and delivery of programs. There are several different forms of partnerships and sponsorships, but all share one fundamental requirement: there must be an advantage to both parties in the arrangement. In other words, the benefit to each party exceeds the cost of the partnership. This 'win/win' nature is critical for any such arrangement to sustain itself and have any sort of longevity.

Three types of partnership can typically be identified: the most common is probably a **financial partnership**, where one party provides financial support and the other provides (typically) recognition and acknowledgement. This is also frequently called a **sponsorship**. A second type is the **in-kind partnership**, where one party contributes in-kind support (which may be the use of facilities or equipment, Staff, product manufactured by the company, services provided, etc.) and the other, again, recognition. A third type is a **marketing partnership** where one party uses its special access to a particular community or constituency to promote a product, service or event, in return for (yet again) recognition. Often a partnership arrangement between two parties may involve elements of all three forms of association. What is critical to bear in mind here is that when the plan suggests that the City of Port Colborne engage in the formation of partnerships or sponsorships, this should not be seen as a cost to the municipality but rather an **investment** that yields a greater return than would otherwise be the case.

Signature Events: At various points in this plan reference is made to ‘signature’ events. By this we mean events where the primary purpose is to draw visitors and tourists into the community, who then will spend time and money in Port Colborne. Signature events are thus primarily **economic development** activities. While they can (and probably should) reflect the history and culture of the City of Port Colborne to be credible and effective, and thus are part of the cultural life of the community, it should be clear that their primary rationale is to create positive economic impact in the community. The cost of sponsoring the event should be more than offset by the economic benefit generated. As well, given that they are economic generators, there should be a variety of partners who contribute to the cost of mounting the event (such as business organizations, individual enterprises, even surrounding municipalities). Signature event thus differ from **local and community** events, whose purpose is primarily to provide opportunities for local residents rather than economic development. While they still may involve (or require) partnerships and sponsorships, these events naturally tend to be smaller-scale and less elaborate and costly than signature events.

11.3 Guiding Principles for Recreation and Culture Infrastructure

Regardless of whether the City is contemplating new recreation and culture facilities, or deliberating on the repurposing or refurbishment of existing facilities, there are a number of guiding principles that should be considered in strategic decision making. It cannot be ignored that recreation, culture and social service facilities and spaces, in their traditional senses, share a number of common characteristics:

- Each allow participants to differentiate and express themselves;
- Each are products of participant choice in how to spend leisure time;
- Each have been proven to have positive benefits to personal and social development for all ages;
- Each have been proven to promote community pride and cohesiveness; and
- Each promotes and improves overall quality of life.

As this is the case, the separation of recreation, culture and social facilities (including public libraries) and spaces should be avoided, especially when planning, designing and operating environments in which these activities can occur. This is not to suggest that cross-programming of recreation, culture, and social service activities should, or would, occur. It does, however, suggest that if the use of already limited public funds for recreation, culture, and social service infrastructure is to be optimized, the provision of environments that support and integrate these three vital components of municipal service provision as much as possible is necessary. This will further promote multi-purpose development and lead to cross pollination and inclusion amongst traditionally separate user markets.

The concept of including elements for recreation, culture, and related social service activities in facility and space development and operations does not only hold true for the development of future new public facilities spaces, but it can also be applied to existing facilities and spaces. Opportunities to showcase local artists should be explored at existing traditional recreation and social service facilities in the City. Exposure to recreational pursuits, perhaps in themed performances or exhibits, should be hosted at existing traditional culture venues.

11.4 Programming: Roselawn Centre for the Arts

The Roselawn Centre has served Port Colborne as a cultural centre for over a decade and has significant historical importance to the City. Today, the facility provides diverse cultural offerings including the Canadian Author Series and the Showboat Festival Theatre. Despite the City's efforts to maintain and reinvest in this facility, it continues to be in a state of disrepair that requires attention. From a parks and recreation perspective, it will be essential to bring the building into conformity with accessibility requirements, as the building is currently inaccessible.

Through consultation with City staff, Council and community members, the Roselawn Centre was identified as a key asset and opportunity for the City. This facility would benefit from a public-private partnership in order to maximize usage of the space, and management of the day-to-day arts and culture programming. While the City should continue to own the property, we recommend that the City enter into a partnership in order to provide arts and culture programming to Port Colborne, and Niagara Region.



Facility Partnerships

Through partnership support, the Roselawn Centre can serve as a cultural hub for community and instructional space for public, not-for profit and private schools in various markets within the community

and region. This aligns with the recommendations in the City's Arts & Culture Master Plan. The opportunity exists for both a facility management partnership (ex. Showboat Theatre) as well as programming partnerships and/or collaborations involving specialized programs focused on Visual and Performing Arts and related community recreation uses.

While developing a business plan, the City may want to review other operational partnerships within the future Roselawn floor plan configuration. This could include creating a heritage House space, enhanced kitchen, an updated bar/lounge space, variety of multi-purpose rooms of various dimensions, and a multi-purpose/black-box theatre which would involve a conversion of the existing traditional permanent seating structure to multi-purpose theatre layouts and seating that could include all or a selection of the layouts below:

Black-box Theatre layout options:

- Arena (In the Round)
- Thrust (Seating on 3 sides)
- Alley (Seating on 2 Sides)
- Banquets (Complete Flat Floor) with Round or Rectangular Tables
- Portable Platform Risers can be used to form a raised stage.

The long term sustainability of a Roselawn Multi-Purpose facility business strategy will be dependent on commitments from many community partners with leadership and overall management and direction from the City. Future partnerships will need to be developed in accordance with the recommended Partnership Framework (discussed in section 12.0, below).

Community & School Programming - Theatre & Multi-purpose Spaces

While school-based academies (public, not-for-profit, private) are certainly one way to build a program, integrating the schools and community opens up programming to many unique possibilities. The following list are potential options to be considered by the City, should they wish to expand programming options at the Roselawn Centre, or in the City more generally:

- **Performance Theatre** - A variety of regularly scheduled theatre performances by youth and adults and seniors performances would emerge from community and/or school groups.
- **Musical Theatre** - Be a part of a community that regularly performs and hosts musical theatre with occasional catered evening events.
- **Acting Classes** - Learn the Do's and Don'ts of audition, movement for actors, improvisation, stage acting and more; participants would finish with an understanding of Theatre and Performance.
- **Choral** – Roselawn's brand can be used to create or promote the Centre as one of the finest community choral programs in the region, it could feature a combination of individual and group programming.

- **Adult Hip Hop Dance** - Hip hop is an urban dance form that marked its beginning as part of the hip hop culture in the early 1900s when youth in an around Bronx, New York started dancing on the streets. It has evolved to a global dance for all ages.
- **Dance** - Learn to dance though ballet, tap, jazz, hip hop, and competitive.
- **Try-it Combination Classes** - A series of classes (10 or more) in musical theatre performance. Develop and learn skills and build confidence in dance, drama and voice.
- **Older Teens/Adult Community Concert Band** - An opportunity to play in a band or with your kids in band or get back at what older teens or adults once participated in as youth. Perform on wind, brass and percussion instruments, an opportunity to develop those musical skills again.
- **Keyboarding & Theory** - Offering lessons from pre-school in a Piano Lab.
- **Saxophone Lessons** - Lessons can be offered in seasonal segments from September – December and January to April for Alto, Tenor, Baritone, and Soprano saxophone instruments.
- **Strings** - Learn how to master the violin, viola, cello or bass.
- **Guitar Lessons** - Learn how to play and fine tune your entertainer skills.
- **Art Classes** - Learn how to draw or paint. Engage a professional artist to take participants through a step by step basic class in drawing, composition, and painting helping them find their artistic style.
- **Art Gallery** - Showcasing various regional and school artists, the Roselawn Art Gallery could be home to both travelling and local exhibits.
- **Digital Photography** - Learn basic camera functions, composition and editing covering a range of photographic styles including nature, portrait, black & white, location, HDR, and many more.
- **Culinary Arts** - Seasonal cooking including Christmas baking, bread making, and adult hosting parties (such as food, wine and beer tasting).
- **Summer Classes/Academies** – A variety of short term summer dances into Jazz, Contemporary, Yoga, Musical Theatre and Modern. These intensive classes will teach a dancer to pick up technique and choreograph faster; which will be extremely helpful when they attend Dance Conventions and/or Auditions. One week sessions for school age children.

11.5 Port Colborne's Events

The City runs a number of events throughout the year. Below is a summary of the larger, key events hosted by the City of Port Colborne:

Canada Day

The City hosts the annual Canada Day celebration in H. H. Knoll Lakeview Park. Residents can enjoy live music, kids events (e.g. puppet show, face painting), food, dancing, hay rides, petting zoos and pony rides, photo booths, vendor fairs and birds of prey displays. Fireworks take place along the canal wall on West Street as dusk.

SportsFest

From a parks and recreation perspective, this festival is very important as it is a family friendly festival centred around sports. A number of sporting events are held, including the Mayor's Cup Invitation Hockey Tournament, indoor volleyball tournament, free family skating and swimming as well as music trivia, sno-pitch and outdoor ball hockey. This event attracts participants from across Niagara Region and the proceeds are donated to various charities.

This event aligns well with the recommendations of this Master Plan, as it promotes healthy lifestyles and physical literacy for all ages.



Christmas in Port Colborne

The City hosts and supports a number of events during the holiday season. This includes kicking off the Santa Claus parade by welcoming Santa's arrival by tugboat. The City's Historical and Marine Museum also hosts the Grand Old Christmas Festival, which welcomes all residents and visitors to rediscover the spirit and traditions of the season. Holiday events are supported by a number of Port Colborne organizations and businesses, including the Business Improvement Areas (BIAs).

Canal Days Marine Heritage Festival

Port Colborne's rich nautical history and welcoming hospitality are highlighted at the annual Canal Days Marine Heritage Festival. This festival celebrates the City's marine heritage and the connection to the St. Lawrence Seaway. This festival is run on the Civic holiday weekend, and encompasses a four-day celebration of history and heritage along the Welland Canal, with programming and events for all ages.

Canal Days includes a number of activities, located across various venues in the City including:

- Tall ships and boat tours along the Canal
- International Kite Festival

- Classic Car Show at the Vale Health and Wellness Centre
- Tim Horton's Kid Zone
- Port Colborne Historical and Marine Museum
- Jazz on the Lawn at the Roselawn Centre
- Indoor craft show
- Food and shopping kiosks along West Street
- Canal Days Concert Series at H.H. Knoll Lakeview Park features nightly entertainment
- Fireworks

More than 400,000 people visit Port Colborne for this festival, thus requiring the need for hundreds of volunteers and staff resources. Canal Days is Port Colborne's signature event, and has been identified by staff and Council as a central tourism attraction. Based on the large attendance of this festival, coordinated efforts should be made to create a Business Plan for Canal Days. This will ensure that the event becomes a sustainable, economic driver for the City and remains relevant in the future.

While acknowledged as widely successful, Canal Days has grown significantly and demands a massive amount of resources and time from City staff. As such, a separate facilitated session was held with the Canal Days Committee, which is made up of City Council, to hold a discussion on this specific event. A summary of the facilitated session is included below.



11.6 Summary of Facilitated Canal Days Session

Staff support

Staff voiced concerns with the level of preparation and staff time that goes into hosting Canal Days. When asked to rate their workload around Canal Days out of ten, responses ranged from 8 to 12. Council members (the Canal Days committee) agreed with these ratings. Some felt there was area to improve efficiencies, while several did not feel comfortable commenting on staff workload.

This session did not provide the time needed to explore staffing and resources in greater depth, but it is clear that staff feel "stretched thin" and need some direction from Council on the purpose and future vision of Canal Days. At this time, staff feel there is no criteria for assessing proposed activities, and the marine heritage theme is not carried throughout the entire festival (examples include: the car show, kite flying, live concert, etc.). This results in staff saying 'yes' to most proposed ideas, which may have further impacts on the quality of services delivered through Canal Days.

The amount of overtime utilized by staff through Canal Days causes a ripple effect through the remainder of summer as many staff will take a significant amount of time off after the event.

Canal Days Business Plan

A fulsome business planning and visioning exercise would benefit the Canal Days Committee and City staff by providing an opportunity for more fully identify what the City delivers well and should continue to offer. Understanding these core activities provides the foundation needed to develop a Canal Day's event 'criteria' which is discussed further below.

As mentioned by the Committee during the facilitated session, a strategic planning process would incorporate feedback from the general public in addition to Council/Canal Days Committee, City staff and Canal Days partners such as vendors and sponsors. Gathering input through interviews, focus groups and surveys would create opportunities for the public to engage and comment on what could be improved for Canal Days. Strategic planning sessions with staff should focus on the following:

- Developing a Vision and Mission Statement for Canal Days
- Determine the purpose of Canal Days (e.g. economic driver, tourism attraction, Port Colborne 'homecoming', etc.)
- Identifying core events for the City to offer
- Discuss resources (budget, staffing, revenue)
- Confirm indicators of success to consistently measure
- Build consensus on the future operations of the festival – Status quo, Scale Back or Grow

It would be beneficial to consider some of these items looking towards Canal Days 2020. Upon the completion of a Business Plan for Canal Days and adoption by Council, the Plan could inform future decision-making for staff and provide the direction (and work plan) that has been requested through the Canal Days facilitated session.

Canal Days Criteria

An established set of criteria to assess the "fit" of proposed Canal Days ideas and programming was mentioned several times by staff as something that is currently missing and would be helpful for future events. Criteria that outlines what Canal Days is, and its key themes would create a lens for reviewing future opportunities and assessing whether they fall under Canal Day's broader vision as a marine heritage festival. The Canal Days Committee expressed support for the development of an events criteria. The consulting team prepared a **Tourism Festival and Event Assessment Criteria**, which is included herein as **Appendix A**.

Committee members and staff were asked to brainstorm future events for Canal Days that leverage Port Colborne's canal and waterfront. Examples (also outlined above) include: water skiing and wakeboarding competitions; dragon boat racing; stand-up paddle board racing; fishing derby; sandcastle contest at Nickel Beach; strength competitions linked to maritime theme (moving anchors and heavy rope, etc.). It was also noted the Museum and their staff's knowledge of Port Colborne's unique history should be leveraged further through Canal Days programming.

Data Collection

The Committee also expressed the need for improved data collection. While the City has retained an organization to survey attendees (since 2011), the data focusses on attendee profiles and economic impact of the festival. The Committee indicated more data should be collected on what attendees enjoy/would like to see changed and how satisfied they are with changes as they are implemented. Developing indicators of

success ahead of distributing the 2019 survey at Canal Days may be helpful as questions can be designed ahead of time to collect attendee feedback on selected indicators. Success can include other measures such as revenue generated or waste diversion efforts to improve the event's overall sustainability.

Clustering Events

Clustering Canal Days events strategically to highlight certain parts of the City, such as the Canal, may help to reconcile feedback staff and Committee members have heard regarding the 'scattering' of Canal Days. Events can also be clustered based on the demographics they may be serving. For example, the Town of Collingwood's Sidelaunch Festival is laid out to meet a range of demographics, such as their Dockside Bar which attracts diverse age groups, including millennials.

Review of Other Marine/Harbour Festivals

There is an opportunity to learn from similarly themed festivals in Canada and abroad. This may help Port Colborne consider their identity as a "Seaway City" and how events can be shaped around this. The following list are some examples of festivals to be considered:

- Sidelaunch Days, Collingwood ON
- Victoria Harbour Festival, Victoria BC
- Richmond Maritime Festival, BC
- Bristol Harbour Fest, United Kingdom
- Cork Harbour Festival, Ireland

Conducting some general research on similarly themed festivals may help provide perspective on how to respectfully narrow the focus of Canal Days to marine heritage, while offering events that welcome all ages, demographics and interests.

Canal Days Recommendations

Based on the brainstorming session with Council and senior management staff, the following six recommendations should be explored in order to work towards the future success and sustainability of the Canal Days festival.

1. **Consider restructuring of Committee to include other Canal Days partners:** We understand the Committee previously included members outside of Council. Council members should still participate, but invite other community stakeholders and partners to join the Committee. This would invite input from outside of Council and staff into the planning of the festival and would allow Council to review Canal Days (e.g. budget requests, resources, etc.) in an approval/review capacity.
2. **Undertake Strategic Planning Process:** While this facilitation session provided an opportunity to brainstorm different approaches for Canal Days, a guiding document to provide a future terms of reference for the event is needed. The Strategic Planning process should undertake a broad consultation with Council/Committee, staff, festival vendors, partners and attendees. This will help staff and Council gather feedback on what Canal Days means to Port Colborne and how it should operate for the next 40 years and beyond. This process should begin after the 2019 Canal Days festival in be completed prior to the planning for the 2020 event.

3. **Develop a Canal Days events/activities criteria:** As discussed above, the current Canal Days offers something for everyone: car shows, kite flying, fireworks, live music, tall ship tours, amusement for kids, etc. A criteria for future programming should be developed in order to tighten the festival's focus on what makes Port Colborne unique: marine heritage. This criteria should be developed through the strategic planning process.
4. **Strengthen data collection from Canal Days attendees:** In order to measure the future success of Canal Days, a strong foundation of data is needed to develop clear benchmarks and indicators. This would help understand how attendees interpret changes to the festival. While the City has collected attendee profile data and economic impact data, surveys should include questions regarding satisfaction with programming/events, and any new changes to the festival.
5. **Host Post-Canal Days Focus Groups:** Gathering input from festival-goers after the event should be considered. This provides an opportunity to hear from attendees what worked and what did not, which may in turn let staff know how improvements can be made. This could be a focus-group or roundtable discussion hosted by the City, or the distribution of a short survey after the event focused on the attendee's experience.
6. **Consider clustering of events for Canal Day:** Clustering of uses and facilities is a common trend in recreation and leisure that also applies to events and festivals. As a marine heritage festival, the City's frontage along the Welland Canal should be highlighted through the entirety of the festival. Consider clustering events near other recreational amenities, such as Lock 8 Park. If expanding the festival is considered, extending programming out to Nickel Beach (e.g. sandcastle building contests), ensure there is consistency in marketing materials that clearly brand all spaces as Canal Days.

Based on the forgoing, it is obvious that the City plays an important role in coordinating and hosting special events, tournaments and performances. The City also provides financial assistance to support groups hosting sporting competitions and liaises with groups as they plan and deliver events, tournaments and performances.

Community events build community spirit, provide a mechanism for community connectedness and social inclusion and generate tourism and economic activity. There is resounding support from City residents in regards to the current level of effort the City places on staging different types of events.

The Department should continue to support the offering of special events in the City/Region. As other community-wide strategies related to tourism emerge, the City may have a more active role in event attraction and hosting. However, it is critical that the Community and Economic Development Department applies a framework and criteria when assessing their role in event/tourism initiatives. The following section discusses the role of 'host organizations' and provides a criteria recommended to support the City moving forward.

11.7 Event Delivery: Host Organization Model

Citizens actively participate in festivals and events that build community spirit and highlight the City's unique community identity. They are a catalyst for economic development by attracting visitors to the community and providing a vehicle to display local artists and performers. The City provides a variety of events directly and indirectly through community organizations each year. The greatest challenge for any community in

the delivery of festival and events is sustainable capacity. Festival and events have been identified through various public, staff and Council engagement processes and is seen as a major future investment for the development and sustainability of Port Colborne in the Region and Province.

An investment in building capacity to deliver festivals and events can be achieved through increased volunteer management and support, strategic staff deployment, incentive funding, access to external grant and sponsorship funding, collaboration and partnerships and marketing of the unique Port Colborne brand. The City will need to consider other strategies and build an organization that is focused on delivering “Festivals and Events for Port Colborne” and may consider a new organizational model.

Through this Master Plan process, the City was identified as the most suitable organization to take on the role of “Host Organization” and to develop an events and sport strategy going forward. The role of the Host Organization is that of facilitator, trainer, organization and champion, but not the producer. The functions of Host Organization should be housed in the Community and Economic Development Department (reporting to the City’s Economic Development Officer) as tourism is primarily an economic development function. In the future, the City may consider other potential delivery options for the role of Host Organization. When considering alternative host organizations for events in Port Colborne, the City can use **Table 9** below, which describes a criteria to assist in selecting future host organizations.

Table 9: Criteria for selecting host organization

Criteria	Description
Goal Alignment	The extent to which the goals of the organization align with those of the strategy.
Organizational Capacity	The extent to which the organization has the capacity to add value. Do they have the business infrastructure, experience, management capacity and financial resources to be an active leader in the strategy?
Knowledge	The extent to which the organization understands festival and event management.
Entrepreneurial Mindset	The extent to which the organization has the ability to be innovative and entrepreneurial in order to generate revenue to be reinvested in the strategy.
Complementary Skills	The extent to which the organization will bring to the arrangement a complementary skill set and/or other resources that will add value to the strategy.
Past Success	The extent to which the organization has been successful elsewhere in similar projects.

11.7.1 Events and Sports Tourism Strategy

As identified through the trends section of this report, and highlighted by stakeholders, sports tourism is a key opportunity for the City of Port Colborne. However, a comprehensive strategy will be needed to attract tourism opportunities. An Event and Sport Tourism Strategy would outline specific steps that need to be taken in order to grow all sport organizations in the City and region. A small investment in City sport organizations will result in a big impact by way of Sport Tourism.

The importance of a strong, collaborative voice for sport in Port Colborne continues to be one of the number one needs among all sport organizations.

A strong voice, more specifically the creation of a Sports Council, could help boost the ability to increase sport tourism and maximize its benefits. The old motto, “if you build it, they will come” proves to be true when looking at the strength of organizations through partnership and collaboration. Strong, well-coordinated sport organizations will result in increased participation in sport. A strong base of sport participants will produce the need to host more local events, tournaments and games. The success of these small events will produce opportunities to host provincial, national and international championships. Although national and international championships and games are important and do produce a high economic burst to the community, the City needs to be mindful of the smaller events, which can be just as beneficial. The City will need to focus on producing high quality events that are sustainable.

In order to grow event and sport tourism product in Port Colborne, it will be very important to diversify the workload to those that have the most to gain by building the tourism product. New tourism events need to be supported by experiences developed by business owners, non-profit organizations and third-party producers. This will not occur without adequate support and development by the Host Organization. As previously noted, the role of the Host Organization is that of facilitator, funder, trainer, organizer and champion, and not the primary producer. This may be difficult to achieve in the short term, but it is the most sustainable approach in the medium to long term.

11.7.2 Organizational Structure

Identifying an appropriate organizational structure is critical to the success of the strategy. This section describes a proposed organizational structure and outlines the roles each organization will play (see **Figure 15** Organizational Chart and the subsequent descriptions). The operating structure will require more detailed analysis and input from current and potential stakeholders, business community, and engagement with residents and visitors. It is important to invite the input of all potential contributors and the public in the decision making process to develop a comprehensive view of the path forward.

The proposed structure chart below may be considered based on potential for enhanced collaboration and efficiencies amongst key stakeholders and broader input and ongoing sustainable best practices:

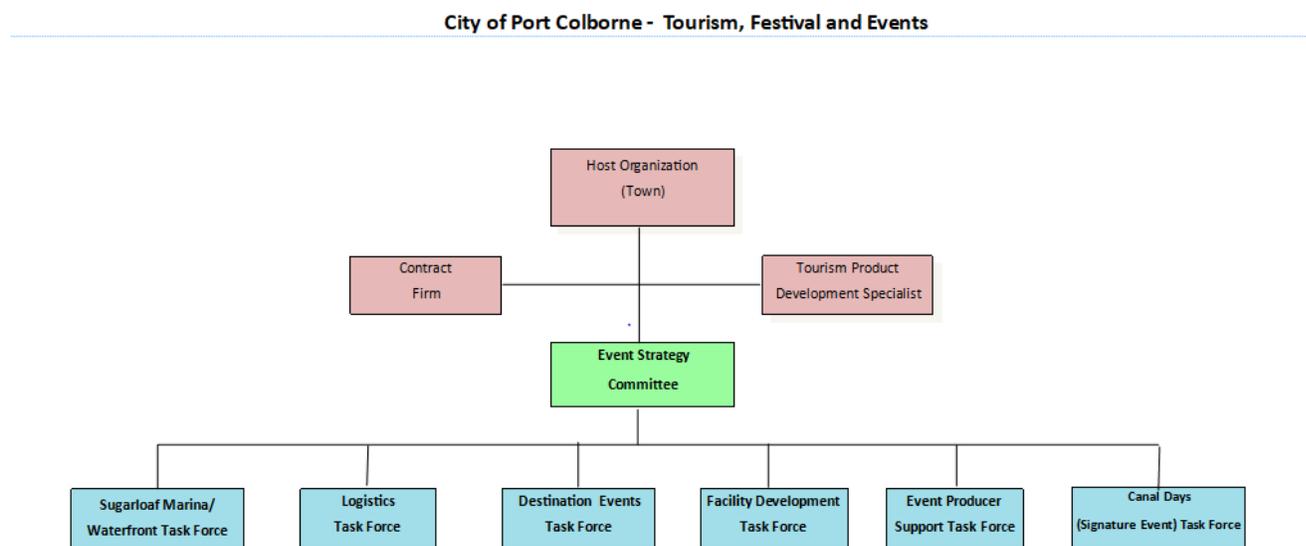


Figure 15: Tourism, Festival and Events Organizational Chart

The role of the Host Organization is as follows:

- Facilitator, funder, trainer, organizer and champion;
- Oversees the “big picture” to ensure the strategy’s action items are moving forward in the most effective and cohesive manner in the next 3-5 year period;
- Supervise Tourism Product Development Specialist and/or Contract Firm; and,
- Apply for project grants to support activities.

The role of the Event Strategy Committee is as follows:

- The main forum for Task Forces to report on progress; and,
- A forum for collaboration on the promotion and development of tourism event development initiatives.

The Event Strategy Committee should be made up of representatives from the business community and key stakeholder groups including the Chamber of Commerce/BIA’s and City Staff/Council members.

The role of Task Forces is as follows:

Task Forces implement key action items in each of the six (6) areas of focus. Ideally, at least one member of the Event Strategy Committee will sit on each of the Task Forces. Task Force representatives will report back on their initiatives at identified at Event Strategy Committee meetings.

Each Task Force should include one (1) representative from the Event Strategy Committee as well as and representatives from organizations affected by the area of focus.

Contract Firm:

In the first two years of implementation, the City may want to consider the hiring of a contract firm to set the Host Organization up for success. This is most important early in the implementation phase when the majority of the organizational development work will be completed. A firm with experience in tourism product development, strategic planning and organizational development can provide the expertise required to build the foundation that will ensure success. This will also make the job of recruiting staff in the future easier as the infrastructure will be in place for their commencement. In addition, it may also be easier to receive grant funding for a firm to complete specific deliverables identified in the strategy.

The key role of any Contract Firm is to build organizational capacity, execute key development initiatives and ensure the plan is implemented in a timely manner.

Tourism Product Development Specialist:

The Tourism Product Development Specialist is an employee of the Host Organization (new) and has the role of facilitating high quality experiences during events. Activities will include: attracting new events to the community; liaising with event producers; assisting businesses in setting up activities that would complement signature events; driving product development initiatives; training organizations to provide high quality product; recruiting organizations to provide product; managing the annual event planning

process; measuring return on investment (ROI); and managing the sponsorship program. The position is about “expanding the service delivery web” and enabling more businesses and organizations to produce more products and higher service levels for visitors. This should in turn make each business more profitable as they are driving business to their establishment.

The key role of the Tourism Product Development Specialist is to facilitate the attraction and development of high quality experiences during events.

11.7.3 Tourism Festival and Event Assessment Criteria

The City of Port Colborne is recommended to apply the following criteria (**Table 10**) as a tool to assist in determining which festivals and events have the highest potential for tourism. The criteria is not listed in a suggested order of priority as it is expected that the community will prioritize and weight each criterion in order to reflect its priorities.

Scoring Chart

0 = clearly does not meet the description

1 = somewhat meets the description

2 = clearly meets the description

3 = exceeds the description (new and innovative thinking is demonstrated)

Table 10: Tourism Festival and Event Assessment Criteria

Criteria	Score
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of the festival/event idea aligns with the strategic intent and organizational strategy of stakeholders 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of the festival/event idea will not put un-due stress on existing human resources. The producer of the festival/event has a strong organizational structure that can support growth (e.g. leadership, business infrastructure, experience, management capacity). The festival/event idea will attract and retain new human resources to support growth. The festival/event idea has the potential to “repackage” some of what is currently being done, thereby reducing stress on existing human resources. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The community is open to hosting the festival/event idea. The community is willing to promote the festival/event idea as a tourism product. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The festival/event idea fosters the culture, health and development of the community by enhancing community spirit. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The festival/event idea provides strong opportunities for partnerships (public and/or private). 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The festival/event idea has clear product development opportunities that will lead to increases in new and complementary product on an annual basis. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The festival/event idea has a reasonable expectation to achieve year over year growth in revenue, product and visitation. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The festival/event idea reaches identified target markets. The festival/event idea demonstrates market demand through relevant indicators (e.g. visitation statistics, gap analysis, expressed demand, survey data, population projections, trends, etc.). Limited competition exists relative to market demand (by geography, season, product offering, etc.). 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The festival/event idea should have the potential to be promoted year round to leverage the brand of Port Colborne. The festival/event idea should have the potential to attract the attention of the media. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides an authentic, experience-based product that highlights what is unique and valuable about Port Colborne. Product differentiates itself from the competition. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The festival/event idea has minimal environmental impacts (risks are mitigated). 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The community has the physical infrastructure in place to support development of the festival/event idea (e.g. roads, public facilities, parking, accommodations, etc.). 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The festival/event idea is logistically sound and will not require a large amount of addition resources or planning in the execution of high quality experiences for visitors. The festival/event idea can be executed safely with minimal risk to visitors, staff and residents. 	
TOTAL SCORE	

There are many economic and community benefits to be gained by investing in events, festivals and sport tourism. Tourism is successful when there is a positive ‘balance of trade’, whereby the tourism industry essentially subsidizes the community by spending money within the community. The primary goal of any event or sport tourism strategy should be to bring more money into the local economy, while leveraging the brand of Port Colborne. With a coordinated and strategic approach through the development of an Event and Sport Tourism Strategy (ESTS), the City can create the ground work for a successful tourism industry.

11.8 Recommendations

The recommendations presented below are those that specifically relate to the provision of culture and events in Port Colborne. However, they need to be seen within the context of the full set of recommendations, many of which relate equally to arts and culture programming as they do to sports and recreation.

1. **Review all hours of operation for recreational facilities** to optimize use of existing space and reduce barriers and gaps to access and inclusion.
2. City and community service partners should **explore new ways to encourage and build awareness of Port Colborne’s spontaneous and drop-in recreation and cultural activities** (E.g. through improved marketing of the City’s Leisure Guide and other promotion mediums). **Focus on**

providing low cost/no cost unstructured, spontaneous opportunities for various skill levels to create a degree of universality and inclusiveness for all in Port Colborne.

3. **Consider preparing an Events and Sports Tourism Strategy (ESTS)** by exploring a wide range of opportunities for the municipality to act as a host to **sponsor and showcase live sporting events.**
4. Prepare and continually update a **comprehensive database of key stakeholders for recreation organizations** and designate a Staff person with the responsibility of keeping database current.
5. **Develop and maintain an integrated Parks and Recreation website tool** that would include an expanded online community calendar; interactive access to Port Colborne's Leisure Guide; updated online parkland inventory; improved access to information about recreation and cultural facilities; and updated software for improved customer experience and automation.
6. **Play a leadership role in the delivery of major "signature" events** that draws attention to the cultural life and cultural resources of the City and area and creates positive economic benefits; work in collaboration with interested cultural groups, business and community leaders in the City and surrounding areas.
7. Develop a **Youth Strategy** that involves youth in their program planning and the future delivery of activities that engages them in various roles, E.g. volunteers, coaches, leaders, trainers and participants.
8. Develop a **'recreational innovation initiative'** for individuals, groups and organizations to develop new and innovative activities and events to engage citizens in recreational activities in Port Colborne. For example, establish a prize each year to be awarded to whichever applicant suggests the most unique, interesting and comprehensive idea. Establish a jury of municipal Staff and appointed citizens to evaluate proposals and recommend award.
9. **Prepare a Canal Days Business Plan** with primary focus on identifying the Host Organization for the City's flagship event.

12.0 PROGRAMMING & STAFFING

The City of Port Colborne's Department of Community and Economic Development is a frontline service provider for the immediate resident population of over 18,000. The Department of Community and Economic Development plays an essential role in facilitating the direct and indirect delivery of recreational programs and events. The Department currently operates from a community development model framework.

The Department must be nimble and respond to the ongoing strategic and operational requirements while freeing up limited resources to address emerging issues. Community and Economic Development Staff stand out as a key asset and provide a range of services from property maintenance, program delivery, event management, and strategic planning.

Community and Economic Development services, and more specifically Parks and Recreation, are an operational department of the municipal structure for the City of Port Colborne and is separate from other municipal functions related to the provision of recreation opportunities such as planning services, public works, economic development, treasury, communications, and clerk's services. The department is viewed as a major contributor to inter-departmental planning and development across all City services.

City Council is the overarching decision making authority for parks and recreation service delivery, including the delivery of large events such as Canal Days. The Department of Community and Economic Development is dedicated to implementing the decisions of Council and is responsible for advising them on current research, leading trends and best practices, and the current state of parks and recreation needs in the community.

12.1 Importance of Programming & Staffing

The parks and recreation field is recognized as a vital element in overall community health, including improving health and fitness behaviours of residents and addressing social issues at the community level. Indeed, the largest impact in people's health, well-being and happiness comes from improving where we live, work and play.

The current model used by the Department of Community and Economic Development has led to the growth of and demand for new programs and services, enhanced cultural festivals and events. Community and Economic Development has played a leading role in the enhancements in outdoor and indoor facilities and an overall improvement to community life in Port Colborne. The Community and Economic Development Department has been, and continues to be, a key contributor to a sustainable Port Colborne, with its main focus being on the delivery of programs and services that are complementary to those offered by community groups, schools, not-for-profits, and the private sector.

Generally, Parks and Recreation Departments play a role in improving quality of life within the broader community that includes people living on lower incomes or with disabilities as well as members of visible minorities. As noted in the public engagement process for this Plan, the following barriers to participation were identified: cost; program or event times; lack of variety in program offerings; lack of information and marketing. Importantly, health constraints, language and cultural barriers are other barriers to keep in mind. Programs and services with continued emphasis on inclusion and access will be important as will a priority of creating safe and engaging public places, in order to build community.

12.2 What We heard

Municipal recreation departments are increasingly challenged to provide and maintain top quality facilities, services and programs with defined budget envelopes. This has resulted in departments examining new and creative service provision models including alternative delivery approaches such as partnerships. Port Colborne's Community and Economic Development Department already works collaboratively with many community partners and organizations (e.g. Sport organizations, festival and event organizers, YMCA) and seeks to build capacity within the community before offering services and programs directly. Departmental Staff confirmed that this trend is impacting how they approach program and service delivery.

The Community and Economic Development Department should continue to identify beneficial partnerships in order to meet the evolving demands of Port Colborne residents. Through consultation, participants identified the following recreational programs and activities as new programming they would like to see offered in Port Colborne. Some of the responses blend the line between recreational programming and cultural programming, but the top three included:

1. More and larger **special events, concerts**, community gatherings.
2. Programs that capitalize on natural capital (e.g. **adventure activities** and hiking/walking trails).
3. Increased emphasis on **watersport activities** (e.g. boating, kayaking, stand-up paddle boarding).

Overall, there is also demand for *more* recreational programming in Port Colborne as summarized below:

- 68% of survey respondents believe there is a need for more recreational opportunities in Port Colborne; and
- 73% of survey respondents believe there is a need for greater access to recreation programs and services that encourage healthy lifestyles.

With the Department of Community and Economic Development's limited role in program delivery, community partnerships remain important in the delivery of recreation (and related) services in Port Colborne.

Optimize the Use of Public Amenities

Many stakeholders highlighted the need to maximize the City's existing resources in order to meet recreational needs. Given the challenges of funding new facilities, optimizing and maximizing the level of use of City facilities is a fundamental obligation of the City as well as all the partnering sports and recreation organizations, (e.g. YMCA, neighbourhood groups, event organizers) and cultural groups that provide these

benefits to the community. This fundamental objective must be achieved if the highest efficiencies in services are to be reached, and if all areas of service are to be addressed/sustained and properly delivered in the longer term. The impacts of not optimizing existing facilities may include the following:

- The City does not maximize indoor facilities that have fixed overheads and unused program capacity;
- Sport teams book quality turf fields for usage and the allocation is not used by anyone;
- Facility spaces sit empty because they are designed for single purpose;
- Programs are priced beyond the participants ability to pay;
- Spatial layout lacks multipurpose focus.

All of these factors must be examined to ensure the optimal use of Port Colborne's resources.

YMCA-Port Colborne Partnership

The YMCA and the City play an evolving role in community recreation. They share a common vision, and both recognize the benefits of a partnership that delivers quality health and recreation services that enhance overall community health, improve fitness behaviours of residents, and address social issues at the community level.

Through the public and stakeholder process, a number of concerns and needs were identified. Some of these concerns can be addressed by simply having the YMCA of Niagara and the City's Department of Community and Economic Development engage in open and strategic dialogue to reorganize/restructure the current Agreement as it relates to the delivery of programs and optimization of spaces at the Vale Health & Wellness Centre. The following are identified concerns from the public engagement process:

- A significant economic challenge highlighted by stakeholders is the cost to access recreational programming at the YMCA. Many voiced concern over the use of tax dollars to construct and maintain the Vale Health and Wellness Centre as a community facility, but feel that programming is not accessible to everyone in Port Colborne based on the membership fees. YMCA staff confirmed that their assistance programs helps approximately 17% of their membership base (which is up from the previous year), however, the general public do not seem aware of these opportunities.
- In particular, single-use fees to access the YMCA pool were referenced as expensive or unaffordable for residents. YMCA staff confirmed that they had 4,452 non-members access their aquatic facilities, but again, several stakeholders were not aware that non-members could access the pools. This indicates that efforts should be made to promote non-member access to the Vale Health and Wellness Centre by both the City and YMCA.
- Increasing program opportunities for teenagers and adults in Port Colborne were both identified through consultation. Staff should review adult program offerings with the YMCA to understand how scheduling/options can be tweaked or provide more convenient times for adults to participate in recreational programming.

Consultation feedback regarding increased recreation programming is supported by research indicating that Canadians' leisure time is increasingly important for personal development and quality of life. This equates to increased demand for high quality activities and facilities, and value-added service from providing

the ability to recreate at any time throughout the day or providing the availability to have simultaneous health and recreation opportunities for the entire family. It is becoming increasingly important for partnerships and collaborations to be flexible and open to continuous change for the benefit of the community, residents and visitors that their programs and services target.

It is important to note that Community and Economic Development Staff were identified as a key asset in Port Colborne's recreational capital. Staff were noted as being courteous and helpful, and the Department's ability to engage with service providers and recreational partners was highlighted. The Department was also recognized for being responsive to community needs. It will be important to continue the Department's role as a creative and innovative leader that works with the community to deliver a broad programming mix that enhances well-being and community inclusion.

Engagement sessions with City Staff indicated a strong desire for improvements to recreational programming tools or software. This point was reiterated in discussions with several Staff members. Specifically, it was indicated that improvements and/or enhancements to existing recreation management software be improved upon or enhanced so as to utilize the programs to their fullest potential.

One method of providing automation to parks and recreation programming and services is to have an effective parks and recreation management software solution. Good management software can provide automation. Recreation management software exists today and can be used to help improve recreational opportunities and services currently offered in Port Colborne. Examples of recreation management software include:

- **ACTIVE Network®**, or
- **PerfectMind**

Well-executed automation can allow supervisors and their Staff to create an exceptional customer experience by freeing up time for work on tasks that need human input and cannot be automated. At the time of this Master Plan, the City of Port Colborne was currently using **ACTIVE Network®** but not to the program's fullest extent.

The following is a summary of additional issues that were identified by staff through the City staff working session:

Facility Concerns

- Consultation with staff and Council indicated there are significant concerns around the long term maintenance and vision for several of the City-owned facilities, particularly the Roselawn Centre for the Arts and the Rural Community Centres in Bethel and Sherkston. Overall there are serious exterior and interior updates required, but a lack of financial support to undertake the changes needed. These facilities require significant updates to provide accessible programming space to Port Colborne. Staff emphasized the need for a long-term vision for these facilities in order to improve the maintenance and usage.

Human Capital Challenges

- With a new organizational structure comes new challenges to update standard operating procedures and overall transition needed for staff to settle into new roles. While the organizational shift for the Community and Economic Development Department have been considered to be very positive, City staff cited some general transition issues such as differing perspectives between newer and longer-term staff members.
- Some challenges identified through the facilitated staff stakeholder sessions include a need to manage staff by creating detailed work plans. Staff indicated that unexpected events frequently arise that require staff resources which in turn prevent scheduled work from being completed. Some staff members also expressed that the Department lacks an overall vision and mission. A Departmental vision and mission is crucial in order to guide all staff on the Department's shared values as well as the quality of services being provided.
- In order to build upon the Department's resilience and ability to adapt to changing parks and recreation needs, staff expressed a desire to provide more flexibility between department staffing through potential "cross training" opportunities.
- The development of Standards of Practices (SOPs) will streamline City processes and improve access to information/data. The City is currently updating their SOPs around record management and experiencing positive outcomes.
- In order to create further efficiencies, the Department should invest in work order software to implement standardized scheduling for work crews.
- To ensure staff are up to date on recreational trends, the City will need to support staff training and encourage creativity and innovation as well as the adoption of best practices in delivering parks and recreation services.
- Staff reported shortages after summer when usage of recreational amenities is still high, but summer hires are back at school.
- Canal Days was frequently mentioned as an event that absorbs the entire Department's human resources, causing a ripple effect throughout the year as staff will accumulate large amounts of overtime. Staff described the 'burnout' that results from this event as a serious issue. The size and scope of the event pulls staff away from their regular tasks, and causes a backlog of issues such as reduced ability to respond to by-law enforcement issues. While Canal Days is the City's signature event, action is needed to ensure that day-to-day tasks continue and the Department can deliver high quality services to its residents.
- City staff would like to develop measurement tools to assess economic impact of City-run events in order to provide Council with consistent data on how certain events perform from an economic perspective.
- Discussions with City staff indicate they actively pursue funding opportunities, with some success. However, it was noted that "chasing funding" creates resource challenges, as large amounts of staff time can be spent pursuing funding, that may not result in success.

12.3 Best practices

In order for this Master Plan to be successful, the Department of Community and Economic Development will need to find a balance between its "Community Development Model" while introducing and adopting an "Enterprise Model". The Enterprise Model would apply to all applicable user fee-related recreation

amenities throughout the community and apply resource efficiencies to reinvest in the municipality. The implementation of an Enterprise Model will lead to improved financial growth and performance of major recreational facilities, but can also be applied to recreational programming, parks and trails. This model should be considered across the Department where it may be applicable.

In addition, the Department should build on the Master Plan by adopting a “Business Plan/Case” approach to grow programs, services, operation and optimization of current facilities, and for identification and construction of new multi-purpose facilities. A Business Plan will help guide the reorganization and re-focusing of existing partnerships as well as the development of new strategic collaborative partnerships within the City and the region. It will also encourage and recommend, where possible, the use of research and data based decision making and adoption of new technologies, digital and innovative approaches to facility and service delivery.

Continuing to align with the framework outlined in *A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Wellbeing* and utilizing other resources such as the *National Benefits Hub*, *Canada Sport for Life*, *Leisure Information Network*, and *Parks Recreation Ontario* (PRO) will position Port Colborne for continued success.

In addition to these best practices, Community and Economic Development should consider the following:

- Identifying core services;
- A refined programming focus;
- Governance and structure;
- Human resources and departmental organization;
- Partnerships;
- Building service delivery capacity; and,
- Social media use and technology.

12.3.1 Identifying Core Services

In recent years, leisure service delivery in Port Colborne has been guided by certain societal influences (e.g. active living, health and fitness, community pride) and, at the same time, responding to public demand for programs and services that are justified by the willingness of the community to pay for them. However, since the public system functions under a broad mandate to enrich life and promote the well-being of the entire community, there is significant resource allocation to programs and services that deliver benefits to all residents in the community. In addition, the “public” nature of leisure requires that services and programs be available to all. Port Colborne has been a leader in low cost and no cost programming to ensure the highest participation rates can be achieved by all residents, regardless of their ability to pay. The City also has a long history of working with community partners to provide service as well as partnering with groups to provide enhanced amenities. The City’s partnerships should serve the greatest community value and access, not just focused interest groups.

There is a need to develop a recreation programming policy to guide the delivery of community parks, recreation and events programming that is aimed at enhancing the personal, social, environmental and

economic well-being of the community. This policy will provide a framework for the provision of facilities and programs that deliver the City's "core services" and incorporate the principles of exceptional service, operational sustainability and community development. The policy will be applicable to programs delivered directly by the City and those delivered through partnerships. It will be based on the following general principles and focus areas:

- **Recreational services and programs for Port Colborne residents**, with priority being assigned generally to those programs and services that serve the largest number of residents and with secondary priority being given to the following target groups: children and youth, seniors, inactive adults and vulnerable or special needs groups;
- **Introductory level** sport, recreation, arts and culture opportunities through a variety of delivery models;
- **Low- to no-cost opportunities** while supporting third-party partnerships to provide enhanced and elite opportunities;
- **Supply and maintenance of buildings and structures** that focus on flexibility and multi-use;
- **Supply and maintenance of trails, appropriate areas of open space/parkland** for passive and active pursuits across the City as well as the protection of important environmental features;
- **Protection and enhancement of the urban forest**, including regular maintenance activities related to all publicly-owned City trees; and
- **Staff to coordinate and program core services**, including planning, policy development, facility allocation and volunteer management.

In addition, the City may become involved when:

- There is no other available and/or appropriate provider of a service for an identified "target" market;
- For reasons of legislation or public safety, the services are best provided by the City;
- When a program is seen as a priority by the public and operation by an alternative provider will not be possible; or
- When revenue-generating opportunities are significant to the overall operation of Community and Economic Development.

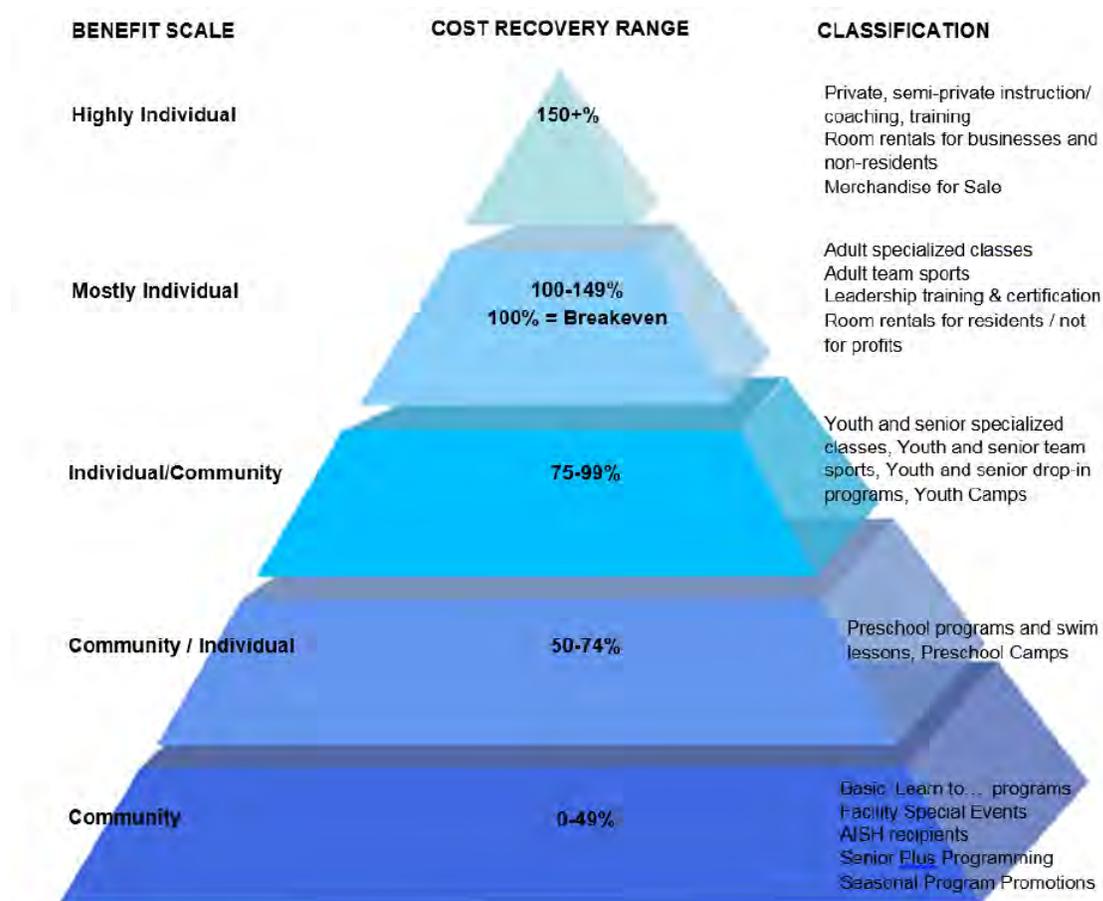


Figure 16: Cost Recovery Period

When considering future programming opportunities for Port Colborne, **Figure 16** (above) provides staff with the visualization of the benefit of different services as well as the cost recovery level expectation in order to offset the direct operating costs.

Confirming this complement of core services will guide Community and Economic Development in determining future service-delivery models, programming, resource allocation and governance for its service areas. As a resource, please find a Recreational Service User Fee and Rental Rate policy for consideration in **Appendix G**.

12.3.2 Programming Focus

Trends in recreation programming suggests the following areas of focus based on a variety of data sources:

- Providing opportunities for (and increasing awareness of the importance of) unstructured play in encouraging both mental (cognitive) and physical (physical literacy) development at all ages.
- Providing opportunities for all ages and abilities to participate in physical activity; getting more people, more active, more often.
- Providing opportunities that focus on healthy competition, recognizing that a certain point competition detracts from the physical and mental benefits associated with participation.
- Providing opportunities and reducing barriers to spontaneous open space and street play.
- Provide and promote recreation and leisure for all.

- Providing opportunities that enable spontaneous drop-in recreation and parks activity.
- Providing opportunities for residents to embrace winter and participate in outdoor winter activities and events.
- Providing opportunities for children and youth to participate in unstructured play.
- Enabling all community members to take part in nature interpretation.
- Programs that focus on using recreation, culture and parks to facilitate social inclusion and a sense of connectedness and belonging (including Indigenous peoples and newcomers).
- Developing broader public programs focused on nutrition and health lifestyle choices.
- Programs that ensure the promotion of active and positive aging.
- Programs offered to school-aged children during the critical after-school period (3 p.m. – 6 p.m.).
- Integrating into existing and new programs, where possible, pertinent stages of the Canadian Sport for Life Strategy and the principles of physical literacy.

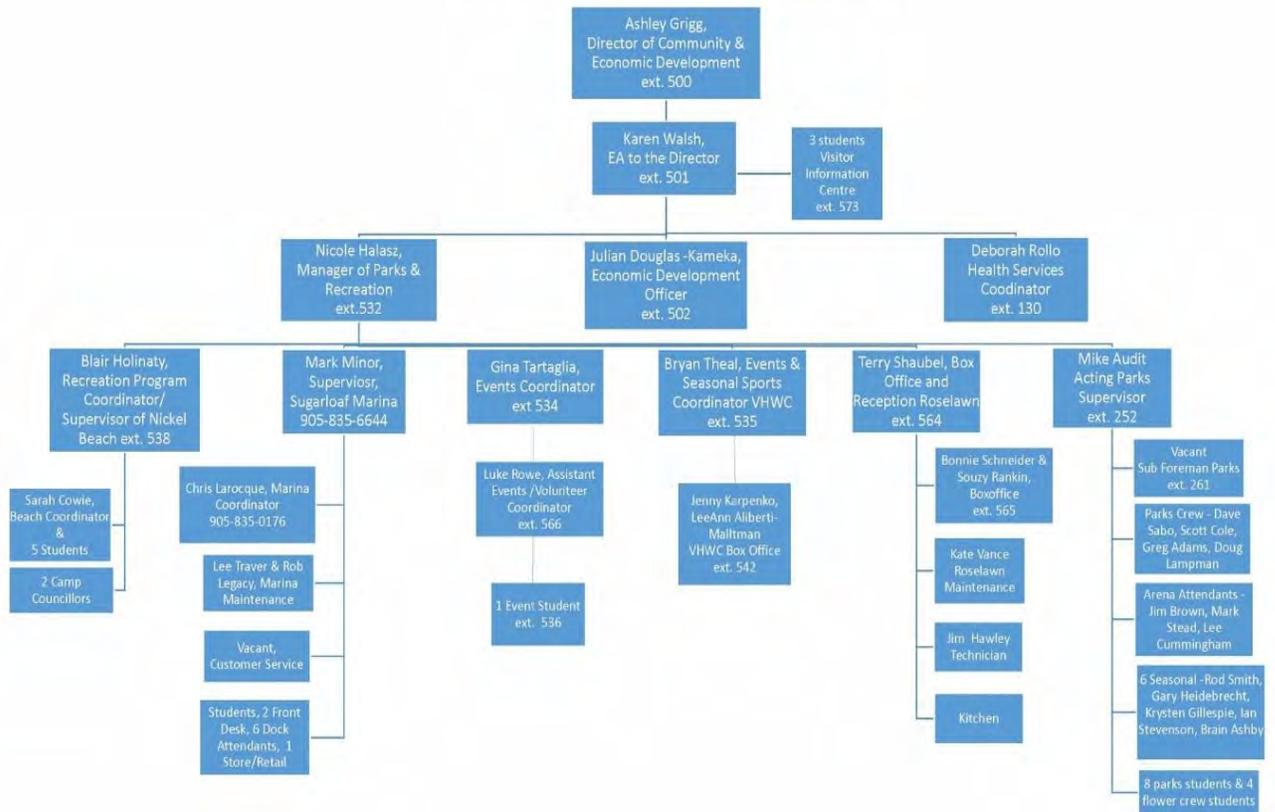
12.3.3 Governance and Structure

The Organizational Chart below (**Figure 17**) illustrates the reporting structure and broad divisional function of the Department of Community and Economic Development Department. The Department staffing model has recently changed. The Department is reprioritizing roles and responsibilities, practicing transformational leadership, and focusing on the City's strategic priorities. The Department leadership and all staff are committed to continuous learning, talent recruitment and retention. The Department is challenged with strategizing on the focus of time, energy and resources on high value work, to eliminate waste, and to create capacity through better processes, partnerships and employee culture. Based on the Master Plan process and recommendations herein, the Department will need to be open to revisiting its structure on a regular basis to continuously align with a changing recreation delivery environment, service capacity and community needs.

The Community and Economic Development Department is responsible for the day to day operation and programming of public recreation facilities either directly or indirectly through strategic partnerships and collaborations. The Department is also responsible for coordinating the scheduled use of rooms, fields, ball diamonds and cultural spaces. With the growing concern around public inactivity, the Department continues to invest in promoting and providing opportunities for active lifestyles. The Department of Community and Economic Development also recognizes the important role that festivals and events, volunteer opportunities, and neighbourhoods play in overall community health and wellbeing.

Figure 17 - Overview of Community and Economic Development Structure

Department of Community & Economic Development



While a detailed organizational review was not part of this Master Plan, the need for one additional staff position was identified by both staff and Council. As discussed in Section 11.7.2, it is recommended that the City consider **hiring a Tourism Product Development Specialist** to facilitate the attraction and development of high quality experiences during City of Port Colborne events. This position would work closely with the Director and the Events Coordinator to meet tourism and economic development objectives for the City.

12.3.4 Partnerships

As discussed throughout this Master Plan, partnerships are becoming increasingly prevalent as alternative service delivery models for municipalities. The most successful governance models to have emerged are those that recognize the power of collaboration, particularly when community partners and agencies work together to address community issues and needs. Working in isolation can lead to duplication and ineffective approaches to community issues.

Due to the broad scope of recreation services and the benefits that accrue, partnerships can materialize in a variety of ways for services and programs, as well as for physical infrastructure. The following summarizes two types of partnerships: service and infrastructural partnerships.

Service Partnerships

The benefits of recreation and parks services is not isolated to the recreation sector. For example, playing sports can aid in the integration of newcomers into the community and into society; connected communities are safer and thus crime prevention efforts are reduced. The results of a collaborative system for delivering recreation is ideal for optimizing investments and creating the greatest benefits. Collaboration includes continued partnerships with traditional organized interest groups and community associations as well as broadening partnerships beyond recreation and sport circles.

Today's recreation practitioners throughout Ontario and Canada are making cross-sectoral connections in the delivery of programs, marketing and promotion efforts, and through the development of policy and infrastructure. The Framework for Recreation in Canada and the Canadian Sport for Life discussions involved a broad cross-section of stakeholders from many like-minded quality of life sectors. These discussions helped define strategic directions for recreation and sport across Canada. Port Colborne municipal staff have reached out and connected with other agencies such as health and education in tackling community issues collectively, and have engaged others in this Master Plan process.

Creating and nurturing partnerships and collaborative relationships is important in furthering the recreation agenda and enhancing the benefits and Service Outcomes. These relationships can lead to the optimization of public resources, leveraging different sources of program funding, generating key messages that explain the impacts and benefits of these essential services throughout the region and enhancing community and political support for recreation.

Partnerships in recreation programming and marketing and promotions enable common key messages to be developed and increase the impact of programming and marketing. Coordination of efforts across sectors such as active living, healthy eating, and physical literacy optimizes the use of public funding.

Infrastructure Partnerships

Just as the benefits of recreation and parks are not limited to the recreation sector, so too do they also cross regional municipal boundaries. Residents from Port Colborne and surrounding municipalities use facilities outside of their respective municipal boundaries. A key theme to the stakeholder discussions throughout the development of the Plan was, where possible, recreation parks, services and facilities should be planned and delivered considering Port Colborne and its neighbouring municipalities.

Many local groups and residents indicated that they have an appetite to work together with the City and with each other in a more meaningful way. One area of potential collaboration and partnership is through the development of joint use facilities, both within Port Colborne and through inter-municipal partnerships with their neighbours. This approach has been utilized in the VHWC through the City's partnership with the YMCA.

While the provision of recreation services has historically relied on municipal levels of government, many municipalities are increasingly looking to form partnerships that can enhance service levels and more efficiently leverage public funds. When new facilities are being considered that may have a regional impact,

it should be anticipated that potential partnerships between local governments, as well as non-profit and private sector groups, may emerge.

When partnership opportunities arise, it is important for local municipalities to answer the following key questions:

- Will the relationship achieve socially worthwhile outcomes? If so, which identified Service Outcomes are achieved? How can the indirect benefit to general public be articulated, clarified and measured? If an indirect benefit cannot be clarified and measured, the municipality should not pursue the relationship.
- Are the outcomes achieved by the arrangement current areas of focus for the municipality? The municipality will not be involved in relationships which simply add to outcomes that are already adequately being realized.
- Can outcomes be achieved without municipal involvement or support? Is the public involvement necessary to the achievement of the outcomes? Does it add significant value that cannot be added by any other agency?
- Could the outcomes identified be achieved more cost-effectively through another approach? The municipality will invest its limited available public resources where it can get the best return on that investment. Does the partnership lead to cost savings or financial benefits to the municipality that allow public funds to be leveraged?

When its realized that these criteria are being met and will be met to varying levels, the municipality can get involved in the planning, development and operations of major recreation facilities and spaces in a variety of ways driven by the most efficient and effective use of public funds in service provision.

The different levels at which the municipality can get involved in recreation infrastructure provision (development and operations) are presented below in **Table 11** as follows:

Table 11: City Involvement in Recreation Infrastructure Development

LEVEL 1	The City owns, operates and is directly responsible for recreation resources.
LEVEL 2	The City is a major owner and operating partner in resource development. The partnership model is based on the municipality having a significant and/or equal share in ownership and operating responsibility with other partners (i.e. other municipal partners, non-profit and private sector stakeholders, etc.)
LEVEL 3	Although the City does not directly control the resource, municipal administration representatives are involved in resource delivery during the needs assessment, feasibility, business planning, design, and operating stages. Level three includes facilities and sites that are owned by the municipality and operated through lease agreements or fee-for-service arrangements by delivery agencies. This also assumes the inclusion of local residents in public consultation programs and engagement strategies.
LEVEL 4	The municipality may provide funding for capital and/or operations of resources with delivery agencies with no municipal administrative representation in resource delivery during the needs assessment, feasibility, business planning, design, or operating stages. Although there is no involvement by municipal administration representatives, a pre-requisite to collaboration at this level is that residents are included in public consultation programs and engagement

	strategies (e.g. Gaps are demonstrated from a resident perspective). These arrangements could include formal agreements with delivery agents but would consider provision opportunities to residents that the City would likely not provide if no partnership existed.
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Further to the organization of existing and potential new partnerships within the framework presented, consideration should be given to including performance measurement into agreements that meet the agreed intent of a partnership. This would involve each partner, including regional municipalities, to be accountable for the roles and responsibilities it has and would demonstrate accountability to all regional residents. Performance measurements should be developed collaboratively amongst all parties involved. Performance measurements will help municipalities attain accountability for public investment by ensuring that the Service Outcomes are achieved through partnerships and will create a mechanism for quality control. One such mechanism could include the Canadian Sport for Life-Long Term Athlete Development Plan and the commitment by all parties that they embrace the plan.

These performance measurements tactics can be used for all major infrastructure partnership as well as partnerships with organized interest groups that access public facilities at subsidized rates or community groups that access any annual operating grants.

The City is recommended to prepare and implement a **Parks and Recreation Partnership Framework**, and should encourage City staff take steps to implement the following:

1. Work with partners to negotiate and develop partnership agreements to access sponsorship revenues. See **Appendix B** for an example sponsorship policy and Sections 3.2 and of this report for a discussion on Inter-municipal collaboration.
2. Proactively pursue new cost share partnerships that will enable the City to address eligible parks, recreation and facility gaps identified in the plan and optimize use of current and future City assets. Continuously explore partnership options to provide multipurpose space/services including in-depth evaluation of capital reinvestment/ repurposing/expansion needs. Initiate and create Public-Private Partnerships (P3s) between government and private-sector entities for the purpose of providing public infrastructure, community facilities and related services.
3. Evaluate operating agreements with partners to ensure coordination of programming and identify service areas that may be best suited to be delivered by the private sector (E.g. concessionaire/retail services, commercial hockey, and facility rental for profit).

12.3.5 Building Service Delivery Capacity

While the role of the City in the provision of parks and recreational services should continue as a shared service model with respect to both facilities and service delivery, it is recommended that the Municipality continue to serve as a core provider of space for parks and recreation opportunities by offering the community access to indoor and outdoor facilities (through rentals, reciprocal use or other agreements). However, the success of Port Colborne’s parks and recreation structure will depend on its ability to work in collaboration with the community, regional partners and all levels of government to provide local and regional residents and visitors with high quality facilities, programs and events.

It is essential that parks and recreation programs be accessible to residents across the entire City and be available to neighbouring municipalities by way of inter-municipal collaboration or other agreements that create economies and access to all involved. It is also important to continue to consolidate programming to fewer physical locations to realize efficiencies and to create economies of scale for program and facility provision. This has proven to be a successful approach with the Vale Health and Wellness Centre. As previously discussed, facilities designed based on a multipurpose model that triggers cross-programming, staff efficiencies and effectiveness will create opportunities for new programs and innovative approaches to services for the broader community that encourages participation cross-sectorally as well as opportunities for collaboration and partnerships.

It has been suggested throughout the Master Plan process and within this document that Community and Economic Development will need to understand local trends, demographic profiles, issues, and opportunities; as well as the alignment of parks, recreation and cultural services with the *Canada Framework for Recreation 2015*. The following provides a short list opportunities for Staff's consideration:

- Initiating and fostering partnerships with key service providers and stakeholders in the delivery of services by assuming a supporting role to community groups, partners and volunteers;
- Engaging the community in meaningful participation through planning, decision-making and service delivery;
- Promoting municipal and inter-municipal services and opportunities for community participation and engagement within neighbourhoods and community wide;
- Providing facilities in response to demonstrated needs, in keeping with the Municipality's mandate, utilizing decision making processes has provided within the appendices;
- Supporting or facilitating community events and social activities that promote community and neighbourhood celebration, interaction, vibrancy and cohesion;
- Working to include all residents and advocating for the vulnerable and marginalized individuals and groups;
- Educating about and promoting the benefits of recreation services (e.g. physical activity and environmental initiatives, etc.);
- Advancing opportunities for arts, culture, and heritage (as directed by broader corporate initiatives);
- Developing effective and meaningful policies and procedures that enhance accountability and transparency;

An overarching theme that requires attention in future parks and recreation programming is the creation of a stronger recreation program delivery system that addresses resident and visitor barriers to participation. The top barriers that prevent individuals/households from participating in recreational and leisure activities are:

- 1. Registration fees are too high**
- 2. Not enough time**
- 3. Not sure what is offered**
- 4. Inconvenient hours**
- 5. Preferred activity/program is not available in Port Colborne**

To improve recreation and leisure programming, results indicate that the top changes for the City to consider are:

1. Implement a subsidized recreation accessibility program (similar to the [Recreation Access Program](#) used in the City of Edmonton)
2. More frequent offerings
3. Improved marketing
4. More convenient schedules
5. Increase access to and variety of recreational programs

When it comes to the types of programs to be considered adding/improving, survey results indicate that the City could consider the following:

1. Special Events
2. Environmental Programming (e.g. nature walks, organized hikes, plant identification sessions, etc.)
3. Sports & Athletics
4. Indoor Fitness
5. Adventure Activities (e.g. rock climbing, kayaking, etc.)

Overall, there seems to be significant interest in outdoor activities in Port Colborne, with a particular focus on waterfront activities. Opportunities to further engage residents and visitors with the natural environment should be evaluated further.

12.3.6 Social Media Use & Technology

The City will also need to consider its current and future use of social media marketing in order to connect and deliver services to existing and potential target markets. Technology is permeating the Parks and Recreation marketplace, and there is a major shift in how industries and products are marketed. There are an estimated 100,000 health and fitness apps for mobile devices and more and more people are choosing to use them. This includes residents and visitors to Port Colborne and regional parks, recreation and culture facilities, and program participants.

Some participants indicated that social media applications such as *SnapChat* are examples of applications the City should consider utilizing more for promoting Parks and Recreation events and programming. While the City does actively post Parks and Recreation programs/events through the City's Instagram page, opportunities to increase the number of followers should be pursued as many survey respondents appear to lack awareness of these efforts. Strengthening engagement with Port Colborne's youth and organizations were also encouraged by stakeholders. Developing a Youth Advisory Council or preparing a Youth Strategy are both ways to improve youth engagement in Port Colborne. Social media should also be utilized to promote the use of the Park Locator Web Application developed as part of this Master Plan.

While social media can be used for marketing to all segments of the population, it can also be used to gather data on users. The need for pertinent and reliable facility and space usage information and participation data is key in furthering the recreation and culture agenda. Relevant and accurate user statistics at facilities and parks, participation counts from service providers (interest groups or partners), and registration information regarding programs are essential in understanding current community impact, supply and

demand for facilities, and analysis regarding target markets reached. User satisfaction surveys/opportunities can also provide valuable insight into best practices and areas of improvement.

Usage and user information helps position the impact of the recreation and culture services amongst the entire population, can build the case for sustained and continued investment in recreation, parks and culture, and enables Staff and administrators to benchmark performance on an ongoing basis.

Technology is intimately aligned with data collection and analysis and can be used to enhance the Staff role in the delivery of programs and services. Data and research will also help populate key promotions and marketing messages and will create enhanced internal and external clout for parks and recreation services.

12.4 Recommendations

Based on these best practices discussed above and consultation engagement results, the following recommendations should be reviewed and implemented over the next ten years by the Department of Community and Economic Development.

1. **Introduce intergenerational programming** which would involve special events, physical and creative activities that grandparent and grandchild can participate in together.
2. **Continue to review rates and fees policies** on annual basis to ensure that they continue to respond to community needs and promote access for all regardless of age, income level, gender, and abilities. Please refer to **Appendix G** for an example of a Recreation Services User Fee & Rental Rate Policy.
3. **Explore approaches to enhance affordability of recreational programs/services** (e.g. enhance support and promotion of recreation fee assistance programs by implementing a Recreation Access Program (RAP) such as Edmonton's [Leisure Access Program](#)).
4. **Facilitate annual workshop/meeting and hold a Port Colborne Parks and Recreation Roundtable** with community organizations to identify programming needs and ensure facilities, parks, trails and program offerings remain relevant. Distribute invitation and summary of meeting to all applicable service providers.
5. **Review all hours of operation for recreational facilities** to optimize use of existing space and reduce barriers and gaps to access and inclusion.
6. City and community service partners should **explore new ways to encourage and build awareness of Port Colborne's spontaneous and drop-in recreation and cultural activities** (E.g. through improved marketing of the City's Leisure Guide and other promotion mediums). **Focus on providing low cost/no cost unstructured, spontaneous opportunities for various skill levels** to create a degree of universality and inclusiveness for all in Port Colborne.
7. **Offer and enhance healthy food options** and healthy eating choices in all City-run programming and events, especially events involving children/youth.
8. **Develop an "Active Aging" strategy** that focuses on getting older adults into programs and facilities as they age. Components of this strategy would be:

- a. Staff training on best/leading practices in Active Aging;
 - b. Planning and hosting events/initiatives for active agers;
 - c. Review of the recently released [Shape Niagara](#) community engagement initiative and consider implementation of recommendations into Port Colborne-specific strategy;
 - d. Review of the [Niagara Aging Strategy and Action Plan](#); and,
 - e. Ensure that cultural programming considers an ‘Active Aging’ component wherever practical.
9. Continue to **support organizations that provide assistance to residents facing barriers to participation**, and where possible enhance efforts (e.g. financial, in-kind support, capacity building).
10. **Develop and maintain a Parks and Recreation Partnership Framework:**
- a. Work with partners to **negotiate and develop partnership agreements to access sponsorship revenues**. See **Appendix B** for example sponsorship policy and Sections 3.2 and 12.3.4 for a discussion on Inter-municipal collaboration.
 - b. Proactively **pursue new cost share partnerships** that will enable the City to address eligible parks, recreation and cultural facility gaps identified in the plan and optimize use of current and future City assets. Continuously **explore partnership options** to provide multipurpose space/services including in-depth evaluation of capital reinvestment/repurposing/expansion needs. Initiate and create Public-Private Partnerships (P3s) between government and private-sector entities for the purpose of providing public infrastructure, community facilities and related services.
 - c. Evaluate operating agreements with partners to ensure coordination of programming and **identify service areas that may be best suited to be delivered by the private sector** (i.e. concessionaire/retail services, commercial hockey, facility rental for profit).
11. The Community and Economic Development Department should continue to help **facilitate the development of a community-wide Volunteer Strategy** with other sectors that rely on volunteers. Additionally, develop, in partnership with applicable stakeholders and other City departments, a Port Colborne Volunteer Strategy.
- a. **Study the integration of volunteers and understand how they impact the Community and Economic Development Department’s operations**. Partners such as [211 Ontario](#) should be expanded upon. Identifying opportunities to access and engage with volunteers over the long-term is a key outcome.
 - b. Continue to maintain a **database of volunteers** interested in recreation, and culture-based volunteer opportunities. Ensure the database is maintained and marketed to local recreation groups seeking volunteer involvement.
12. **Increase opportunities for sponsorship, corporate volunteerism and shared expertise** by providing a list of all potential sponsorship opportunities within recreation/culture and develop a menu that potential sponsors can select from to support healthy and creative lifestyles. (E.g. facility

naming, program sponsorship etc.). An example of a naming rights policy is included herein as **Appendix B.**

13. **Establish a Departmental vision and mission.** The mission should be integrated into the Department's existing branding and future signage/marketing efforts. The Department's mission and collaborative approach should be promoted through all community engagement.
 - a. Coordinate a department-wide strategic session to define the department's "core services" to help define planning, policy development, facility allocation and volunteer management.
14. Coordinate an **information session with all City departments and divisions to share the outcomes and recommendations** of this Parks and Recreation Master Plan and educate City Staff on the Department's vision and mission as it works in partnership and collaborates with the community on recreation initiatives.
15. **Continue to share information on a regular basis with the community** in order to build capacity and ownership of parks and recreation services. Utilize social media, E-newsletters, website connections, recreational/cultural organization newsletters (e.g. [Bang the Table Engagement HQ](#) and Engagement IQ community engagement software: helps to give people a voice on issues that are important to them).
16. Prepare and continually update a **comprehensive database of key stakeholders for recreation organizations** and designate a Staff person with the responsibility of keeping database current.
17. Align where appropriate with the **"Canadian Sport for Life" model** in the delivery of programs and services in order to close existing and potential gaps in basic skill development. Address physical literacy challenges and deliver Physical Literacy Training to Staff and other program providers.
18. Continue to foster a **customer-centered culture amongst Staff** that focuses on core values and expectations of the organization.
 - a. Implement **customer service excellence award system** and adopt a training program for Staff and volunteers in the delivery of recreation and cultural programs/services.
 - b. Through preparation of the Departmental Vision/Mission, establish customer focus.
19. Adopt a **Department-wide Signage Advertising Policy** that permits access by potential partners, sponsors, businesses and community groups to advertising space in facilities, where possible.
 - a. **Design and locate Port Colborne Community and Economic Development Department banners in key facilities and at special events.** E.g. festivals, tournaments, registration periods etc.
20. Continue production of **Port Colborne's Leisure Guide and OnlinePORT.** Identify additional avenues of distribution including updated website with options to filter activities and create more interactive opportunities with potential participants, etc.
21. Develop and maintain an **integrated Parks and Recreation website tool** that would consist of the following components:
 - a. Expanded online community calendar;

- b. Mobile access to Port Colborne’s Leisure Guide;
 - c. Updated online parkland inventory;
 - d. interactive web-app called a ‘Park and Recreation Locator’;
 - e. Improved access to information about recreation and cultural facilities; and,
 - f. Updated software for improved customer experience and automation.
22. **Introduce an access pass system** that creates opportunities for lower income families to access fee based Parks and Recreation programs. This system could play into the Recreation Access Program (RAP) discussed above (other examples include: [Vancouver’s Leisure Access Program](#), or [Saskatoon’s Leisure Access Program](#)).
23. Continue to monitor and manage the department’s online reputation and promotion of Parks and Recreation events/services by **applying modern communication tools and approaches** (E.g. social media, YouTube channel, blogs, *Facebook* groups, *SnapChat*, *Instagram*, recreation apps, etc.) to create a “connected community” of parks, recreation and culture residents.
- a. The Manager of Parks and Recreation should delegate this duty to a Staff member with IT skills. This individual would have the responsibility of controlling and disseminating information including coordinating social media/promotions.
24. Develop **collaborative facility and operational strategies** to strengthen partnerships between sport and stakeholder organizations. (E.g. [City of Mississauga Sport Plan 2013](#)). Ties into the need for a Sports Council/Alliance.
- Incorporate the operational strategies thought the recommended **Events, Culture, and Sports Tourism Strategy (ECSTS)** to help advance the City of Port Colborne as a leader in the Sport Tourism industry, maximizing both economic benefits and sport development opportunities.
25. In the longer-term, build on and **incorporate emerging sport and activities into program offerings** (e.g. pre-school mix it up sports, Family Pickleball, Late Night Drop-in for Teens, Open Playtime, Bounce Basketball, Stick and Puck).
- a. In particular, consider increasing waterfront programming (e.g. Open water lifeguard services, kayak rentals, stand-up paddle boarding) and integrate the marina and waterfront into programming.
 - b. Increase indoor aquatic program offerings (synchronized swimming, water polo, underwater hockey, swimathons, etc.)
26. Continue to **monitor outdoor recreation trends** and support expansion of such opportunities in all areas of the City.
27. **Develop an ‘Enterprise Format’ approach** to use in assessing the feasibility and desirability of all new parks and recreation programs and activities. Such an approach should consider costs (including for Staff time), revenues, subsidies, etc.
28. Adopt and incorporate the Goals and Service outcomes into a **measurement reporting system** based on the benefits approach to recreation that is the foundation for all Recreation Services communications and accountability systems. See **Appendix F**.

29. Develop a **Youth Strategy** that involves youth in their program planning and the future delivery of activities that engages them in various roles, E.g. volunteers, coaches, leaders, trainers and participants.
 - a. Establish a **Youth Advisory Action Council** to engage youth in City decision making. Support this group to discuss recreational services and programming to identify gaps in recreational offerings. Note: This could include revitalizing the Mayor's Youth Advisory Council.
30. Develop/Continue to provide **"Learn to _____" events** that provide recreational users with an opportunity to develop a new skill or learn a new activity.
 - a. Consider "Open Doors Port Colborne" or continuing events such as "Touch-a-truck".
 - b. Consider opportunities to utilize facilities such as the Roselawn and rural community centres.
31. **Consider hiring a Tourism Product Development Specialist** to facilitate the attraction and development of high quality experiences during City of Port Colborne events.
32. **Engage in discussion with interested private and not for profit organizations to facilitate programming and services at Roselawn Centre for the Arts.** Prepare a facility management partnership agreement and identify prospective programming partners to deliver dramatic, performing and visual arts programming.
 - a. This may include adjusting procedures to align budgets that better address efficiencies.
 - b. Relocate City staff to front desk in order to highlight partnership at central entrance to Vale Health and Wellness Centre to enhance efficiencies in service delivery of both partners.
33. **Engage in discussion with the YMCA to address internal processes, policies and procedures** in response to current and future needs and recommendations based on this Master Plan (such as the need to enhance programming and available rental space within the gymnasium and fitness/health related spaces at the Vale Health and Wellness Centre) or the needs of both partners.
34. **Continue to host or enable environmental events** such as tree planting partnerships, park/trail clean ups, neighbourhood garden projects.
35. The Community and Economic Development Department Staff should **facilitate information sessions to present the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, and discuss opportunities** where Library programming could be aligned with Parks and Recreation initiatives for mutual benefit. The **Port Colborne Library** is obviously a key element of the cultural life of the community and should be 'brought into' this Master Plan to the extent appropriate.
36. Work with Planning, Public Works and Transit Staff in the **review of development plans or infrastructure projects to improve existing and proposed walking and cycling opportunities to schools and other community facilities,** along selected roadways and within and between parklands.

37. Continuously **monitor all departmental policies** to ensure that they are relevant and consistent with changing trends that address the barriers to access and participation and engagement with non-users.
38. **Continue to support on-going training of Staff to continually build capacity.** E.g. trends, best practices, comparative community successes.
39. Create a defined **events provision framework** that categorizes events supported (in whole or in part) as either: a) community events, or b) tourism events. The rationale for community events is that they should provide affordable and accessible events for the resident community. Financial payback, while desirable, should not be the primary consideration. Tourism events should create positive economic impact for the entire community and should involve other partners who are beneficiaries of the overall event. Canal Days is considered a Tourism Event.
40. The Community and Economic Development Department should provide **regular input into the land use planning and development approval process** to ensure long-term needs facility and programming needs are met. This input can help guide the future location and size of parks/recreational facilities as well as the development of future trails (recreational and active transportation routes).
41. All organizations renting/utilizing Port Colborne facilities should be required to **report annually on the number of registered participants.** Use this data to enhance the understanding of parks, recreation and culture participation in the community including program registration, facility usage, capital and operation expense and revenue tracking and other data critical to informed planning and management.
42. Ensure the **Parks and Recreation Master Plan is reflected in the City's Economic Development Strategic Plan, Official Plan and other vision documents.**
43. Undertake an **annual review of the recommendations in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan** as part of the municipal budgeting process, including a description of recent achievements and future objectives.
44. Undertake a **comprehensive update of the Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan prior to the end of the 10 year timeframe** of the Plan (2030).

13.0 STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS & IMPLEMENTATION

13.1 Strategic Themes

The following five themes emerged throughout the process of undertaking the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. These five themes inform the implementation strategy and the key objectives for Port Colborne’s Community and Economic Development Department as it moves forward.

- 6. Accessible & Inclusive
- 7. Partnerships & Collaboration
- 8. Communication & Engagement
- 9. Innovation and Building Capacity
- 10. Optimization of Infrastructure

These five themes haven been incorporated into the Park and Recreation Master Plan’s Strategic Directions and Implementation Plan as the Master Plan Goal Areas. Below is a brief description of each goal area.

#1: Accessible & Inclusive

Ensuring parks and recreation programs, facilities and services are accessible to all is something to continually keep in mind when considering current and future recreational programming and services. Inclusive design of indoor and outdoor amenities and facilitating accessible programming and services were key themes highlighted through stakeholder consultation as well as an inventory of Port Colborne’s parks system and recreational facilities. The term *accessibility* is being used interchangeably to refer to both inclusive design of recreational facilities and programs, as well as affordable programming for all socio-economic levels in Port Colborne.

“Recreation, in its many forms, is acknowledged as one of the central values of human existence. We have a fundamental need to rejuvenate our minds and our bodies. Recreation is more than just fun and games; it has the power to change lives through the individual and societal benefits that it provides. Recreation is essential to sustaining a high quality of life.”

Ontario Recreation Framework (2012)

The recommended action items will guide the City in considering innovative ways to improve accessibility and affordability for Port Colborne residents.

#2: Partnerships & Collaboration

The City of Port Colborne is actively involved in several partnerships and collaborations that support the delivery of Parks, Recreation and Event services and programming. Municipalities and departments such as the Department of Community and Economic Development are increasingly looking to form partnerships that enhance service levels and leverage funding. As discussed above, partnerships can take a variety of forms. It is recommended that the City continue to cultivate existing and new partnerships that benefit all parties involved. Partnerships and sponsorships should be considered in the development of new parks, trails and facilities as well as the preservation of existing facilities.

Partnerships and collaboration create opportunities for great participation, higher standards of quality as well as unique perspectives and solutions.

#3: Communication & Engagement

A key barrier to participation in recreational programming in Port Colborne is the lack of knowledge/awareness of recreational opportunities. Enhancing communication tactics is an area for the Community and Economic Development Department to explore further. Overall, there is demand for a more “connected community” across the Department’s multiple platforms, including the Leisure Guide, Social Media, the City’s website and more. Overall, there may be opportunities to consider the use of more engaging technology for easier access by residents and visitors, including a range in age groups. In particular, stakeholders indicated they would like to see better promotion of events through an improved website and a community calendar, while Department Staff and department heads suggested the use of improved/advanced automation software for recreation programming.

Further, educating the public about recreation opportunities will also enhance the benefits achieved by the Community and Economic Development Department. For example, the positive outcomes associated with education in recreation are evident a variety of instances, such as the [30x30 Nature Challenge](#). Further, coordinating marketing efforts with recreational service providers such as the YMCA may help promote existing programs that target accessibility and affordability for recreation users. Continuing engagement and advancing the Department’s successful programs through positive networking is also an area to take action in.

#4: Innovation and Building Capacity

In order to be a leader in recreational and cultural services and programming, the Community and Economic Development Department continues to look for ways to engage with the community, residents, stakeholders, visitors and other service providers in the region. The City will need to continue to explore innovative ways to create a connected community of parks and recreation champions in the region and to share the importance and benefits of parks and recreation.

Through continuous monitoring of recreational and cultural trends as well as increased partnerships and engagement, the City of Port Colborne can continue to update program offerings that adapt to recreational user needs. The recommended actions below provide the Community and Economic Development Department with ideas on how Port Colborne can stand out as a leader in parks and recreation across Ontario and Canada.

#5: Optimization of Infrastructure

Based on changing trends, aging facilities, growth forecasts and demand from recreational users, the City of Port Colborne will need to be more strategic and tactical to optimize future infrastructure investment. Consideration should be given to:

- Sustaining and/or improving existing facilities and spaces;
- Adopting a Project Development Process; and,

- Prioritization of amenities.

Maximizing use of existing facilities should continue to be a priority for the City of Port Colborne. Ensuring facilities and spaces that are seen as community hubs should be encouraged in all updates or any future facility design. Optimization should also include the regular review of policies to strengthen the planning and delivery of parks and recreation programming and services.

Recommended Mandate:

Through the preparation of this Master Plan, it is evident that the Community and Economic Development Department plays an important role in leading and providing parks and recreation programming, facilities development, and facilitating partnerships to deliver and create healthy and active lifestyles for Port Colborne’s residents. Accordingly, it is recommended that the Department adopt the following mandate to guide the development in implementing the 2030 strategy:

“The Parks, Recreation and Culture mandate is to promote and facilitate healthy and active lifestyles in Port Colborne. This is achieved by taking a leadership role through programming, facility development and creative partnerships with public and private sector groups who share our passion for a dynamic, inclusive, innovative, and fun community.”

13.2 Recommended Action Items

Planning for the future of Port Colborne’s Parks and Recreation requires a deeper look at the priorities in each Master Plan Goal Area. Parks and Recreation is interrelated and we recognize the need to identify strategies and actions that go beyond the City’s parks and recreation programs. As the Community and Economic Development Department strives to provide the best in leisure services to the residents and visitors of Port Colborne, it is important to find efficiencies where possible and to provide benefits across parks and recreation. Many items have to be viewed across the entire leisure system, as there are overlaps among goal and objective areas.

The following implementation table is a summary of the Master Plan goals and objectives and includes **over 100 recommended action items** with associated timelines, responsibilities, outcomes for each goal and objective area and how each goal aligns with the Canadian national framework, “A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Wellbeing”.

Master Plan Goals Objectives

1. Accessible & Inclusive: <i>To ensure community facilities, services and programs are accessible and inclusive of all.</i>	Create opportunities that increase healthy, active living for all ages and abilities in Port Colborne’s facilities and programs.
	Reduce barriers to access for Parks and Recreation programs and facilities.
2. Partnership & Collaboration: <i>Build capacity and promote healthy lifestyles through partnerships and collaboration.</i>	Leverage existing partnerships to improve service delivery and explore opportunities for new partnerships.
	Develop effective and strategic working policies.
3. Communication & Engagement: <i>Increase Parks and Recreation user retention and growth through the implementation of strategic communication efforts.</i>	Improve communications and coordination among Parks and Recreation groups, stakeholders and the public.
	Enhance marketing methods that strengthen customer service, improve retention and create growth.
	Enhance the use of technology to deliver programs and services; encourage participation and improve data collection.
4. Innovation and Building Capacity: <i>Be an innovative leader in developing and providing recreational services that promote healthy lifestyles and wellbeing.</i>	Deliver and design programs, services and facilities that are responsive to evolving community needs.
	Create enabling and engaging policies that support an active and vibrant community.
	Promote opportunities for skill development and community engagement.
	Facilitate neighbourhood engagement and ownership for recreation and culture within the neighbourhood setting.
5. Optimization of Infrastructure, Programming & Service Delivery <i>To efficiently deliver Parks and Recreation Services.</i>	Create facilities that are seen as ‘Community Hubs’.
	Integrate specific recreational facilities into this Parks and Recreation Master Plan
	Maximize use of and explore opportunities for existing facilities and Parks and Recreation infrastructure.
	Leverage Staff resources to improve service delivery.
	Improve policies and procedures to strengthen the planning and delivery of Parks and Recreation services.

PRMP = Parks and Recreation Master Plan

How to read the Implementation Strategy:

Below provides an overview of how the following implementation plan has been developed:

Goal Area Goal Statement: <i>High level goal statement that meets the objectives and mandate of the Parks and Recreation Division, within the Community and Economic Development Services Department</i>					
Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
<i>Key objective to be met by relevant action items.</i>	<i>Action to be implemented by Parks and Recreation Division.</i>	<i>E.g. Community Services and Economic Development Department, Council, Partner organizations.</i>	<i>Immediate/Ongoing Short-term – within 2 years Medium-term – 3-5 years Long-term – 6-10 years</i>	<i>The specific deliverable or measurable sign of success that the action has achieved.</i>	<i>How the recommendation aligns with the National document: A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015 - Pathways to Wellbeing</i>



1.0 Accessible and Inclusive

GOAL: To ensure community facilities, services and procedures enhance accessibility and inclusion for all.

Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
A. Create opportunities that increase healthy, active living for all ages and abilities in Port Colborne's facilities and programs.	1. Introduce intergenerational programming which would involve special events, physical and creative activities that grandparent and grandchild can participate in together.	Community & Economic Development, community organizations	Immediate	Consider relevant programs and introduce programming immediately.	Inclusion & Access Supportive Environments Recreation Capacity
	2. Continue to review rates and fees policies on annual basis to ensure that they continue to respond to community needs and promote access for all regardless of age, income level, gender, and abilities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Consider implementation of a cost recovery and pricing policy in order to employ equitable user fees for Parks and Recreation activities. User fees should be based on a value received by the participant for the services with a personal benefit. Parks and Recreation should consider implementing a cost recovery policy (such as the Cost Recovery Pyramid Methodology) to determine a consistent method of pricing parks 	Community & Economic Development, consultation with User groups and public	Ongoing/ Annually	Conduct annual review	Inclusion & Access Recreation Capacity



1.0 Accessible and Inclusive

GOAL: To ensure community facilities, services and procedures enhance accessibility and inclusion for all.

Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
	<p>and recreation activities throughout the Department (see Appendix G).</p> <p>b) Review existing user group agreements</p>				
	<p>3. Explore approaches to enhance affordability of recreational programs/ services (e.g. enhance support and promotion of recreation fee assistance programs by implementing a Recreation Access Program (RAP) such as Edmonton’s Leisure Access Program).</p> <p>a) Organize a meeting with YMCA staff to understand what support they provide or facilitate and work with City staff to promote these programs to the broader community.</p> <p>b) In particular, consider improving accessibility to aquatic programming.</p>	<p>Community & Economic Development and other partners, such as the YMCA (e.g. Non-profits such as Canadian Tire’s Jumpstart Charity).</p>	<p>Medium-term</p>	<p>Develop a Recreation Access Program by 2021 for qualified individuals offering: low to no cost admission to participating facilities directly by City resources as well as through partnership opportunities where appropriate;</p>	<p>Inclusion & Access Supportive Environments Recreation Capacity</p>
	<p>4. Establish an online Community Recreation Access Centre/Portal to help eligible participants process applications for</p>	<p>Community & Economic Development &</p>	<p>Medium – Long term (Co-</p>	<p>Establish an online application portal with live chat function by</p>	<p>Inclusion & Access Supportive Environments Recreation Capacity</p>



1.0 Accessible and Inclusive

GOAL: To ensure community facilities, services and procedures enhance accessibility and inclusion for all.

Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
	subsidized recreation (i.e. Recreation Access Program (RAP)).	Clerks Department IT Division	ordinate with City website update)	2022 to help applicants apply for the RAP.	
	5. Facilitate annual workshop/meeting and hold a Port Colborne Parks and Recreation Roundtable with community organizations to identify programming needs and ensure facilities, parks, trails and program offerings remain relevant. Distribute invitation and summary of meeting to all applicable service providers. Alternatively, provide an online platform for user groups/residents to regularly provide feedback on recreational amenities and programming. Bang the Table is an example of an online tool to help municipalities engage with its Citizens.	Community & Economic Development	Annually	Hold the meeting annually. Hold first Roundtable in 2020. Implement online engagement tools by 2022.	Inclusion & Access Supportive Environments
	6. Support the development of a 'Sports Council/Alliance' to facilitate collaboration and innovation amongst Port Colborne recreational providers (e.g. minor sports	Community & Economic Development; User groups and	Short Term	Develop Sports Council/Alliance within next 2 years.	Inclusion & Access Supportive Environments Recreation Capacity



1.0 Accessible and Inclusive

GOAL: To ensure community facilities, services and procedures enhance accessibility and inclusion for all.

Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
	leagues, coaching programs for multiple groups).	recreational providers			
	<p>7. Review all hours of operation for recreational facilities to optimize use of existing space and reduce barriers and gaps to access and inclusion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Focus on multi-use spaces at Vale Health and Wellness Centre. b) Continue to identify opportunities to optimize before considering an expansion of operating hours. 	Community & Economic Development, YMCA and partner groups	Short-term	Immediate	Recreation Capacity
	<p>8. City and community service partners should explore new ways to encourage and build awareness of Port Colborne's spontaneous and drop-in recreation activities (E.g. through improved marketing of the City's Leisure Guide and other promotion mediums, and realignment with or investment in new technologies). Focus on providing low cost/no cost unstructured, spontaneous opportunities for various skill levels to create a degree of universality and inclusiveness for all in Port Colborne.</p>	Community & Economic Development, Communications Officer & likeminded organizations	Short to Medium-term	<p>Update the Leisure Guide to include Section on drop-in recreation opportunities.</p> <p>Discuss programs to consider offering at annual Parks and Recreation workshop/meeting (see below)</p>	Inclusion & Access Supportive Environments Recreation Capacity



1.0 Accessible and Inclusive

GOAL: To ensure community facilities, services and procedures enhance accessibility and inclusion for all.

Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
	9. Offer and enhance healthy food options and healthy eating choices in all City-run programming and events, especially events involving children/youth.	Community & Economic Development, Community Partners (e.g. local chefs or restaurants), Niagara Region Public Health	Ongoing	Promote healthy food options at recreation events and within City owned facilities (E.g. Vale Health and Wellness Centre – vendors and/or healthy Food choice vending machines).	Supportive Environments
	10. Promote healthy behaviours at City-run events. Incorporate activities that encourage physical activity and healthy lifestyles through City's ongoing #PORTicipate campaign. Activities should focus on children, but can also incorporate adult health.	Community & Economic Development, Niagara Region Public Health Community Partners (e.g. local chefs or restaurants), Corporate Communications	Short to Medium-term	At all City-run events, promote healthy eating, physical activity and healthy behaviours for children and adults.	Active Living Recreation Capacity Supporting Environments
		Community & Economic Development,	Medium to Long-term	Feasibility study for facility utilization and rates by 2024.	Supporting Environments Recreation Capacity



1.0 Accessible and Inclusive

GOAL: To ensure community facilities, services and procedures enhance accessibility and inclusion for all.

Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
	<p>11. Establish and maintain an inventory of available spaces throughout the City where recreational activities can occur.</p> <p>a) Examine availability of space at rural community centres in Bethel and Sherkston and promote to community groups seeking affordable space.</p>	community partners			
	<p>12. Prepare and implement an Accessibility Mandate/Terms of Reference to inform all decisions. This will ensure accessibility and inclusivity at parks and recreation facilities, parks, trails and events. The City of Barrie has implemented a number of programs and initiatives that support accessibility and inclusion through recreation. A copy of their Accessibility Plan (which includes the City's Terms of Reference and Customer Service expectations) can be found here.</p>	Community & Economic Development, Clerk's Department, Accessibility Advisory Committee	Medium to Long-term	Mandate is prepared and presented to Council by 2023 for adoption	Inclusion & Access Supportive Environments
	<p>13. Ensure physical accessibility measures are incorporated into existing and new facilities and considered for all Parks and</p>	Community & Economic Development, clerk's	Medium to Long-term	Universal, accessible and inclusive opportunities for marginalized and vulnerable populations.	Inclusion & Access Supportive Environments



1.0 Accessible and Inclusive

GOAL: To ensure community facilities, services and procedures enhance accessibility and inclusion for all.

Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
	Recreation programming where possible. Specific facilities/amenities to update include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Vale Health and Wellness Centre (entrance and seating) b) Bethel Community Centre c) Roselawn Centre for the Arts (access, seating, lighting) d) Surfacing treatments at play structures e) Beach access (wheelchair accessible parking and boardwalk access at Nickel Beach) f) Trail connections between paved, multi-use trails and parks 	Department, Accessibility Advisory Committee		Elimination of barriers to participation	
B. Reduce barriers to access for Parks and Recreation programs and facilities.	14. Develop an “Active Aging” strategy that focuses on getting older adults into programs and facilities as they age. Components of this strategy would be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Staff training on best/leading practices in Active Aging; b) Planning and hosting events/initiatives for active agers; 	Community & Economic Development, YMCA, Facilities and Participating Partners	Short to Medium-term	Increase in participation and community education of Benefits of Recreation and positive messaging.	Active Living Inclusion & Access Connecting People & Nature Supportive Environments Recreation Capacity



1.0 Accessible and Inclusive

GOAL: To ensure community facilities, services and procedures enhance accessibility and inclusion for all.

Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c) Review of the recently released Shape Niagara community engagement initiative and consider implementation of recommendations into Port Colborne-specific strategy; d) Review of the Niagara Aging Strategy and Action Plan; and, e) Ensure that programming considers an 'Active Aging' component wherever practical. 				
	<p>15. Create park and facility guidelines that exceed AODA standards and implement inclusive design standards.</p>	Community & Economic Development, Parks staff, Clerk's Office, Accessibility Advisory Committee	Short-term	Prepare revised guidelines by 2021	Inclusion & Access Supportive Environments
	<p>16. Develop an accessible park that creates opportunities for all abilities and levels of enjoyment.</p>	Community & Economic Development, Parks staff, Planning	Medium to long-term	Open a fully accessible (or updated) park by 2023	Inclusion & Access Supportive Environments



1.0 Accessible and Inclusive

GOAL: To ensure community facilities, services and procedures enhance accessibility and inclusion for all.

Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
		Department, Clerk's Office and Accessibility Advisory Committee			
	17. Based on the Parks Inventory and Recommendations included in Appendix E, develop a strategy and establish a regular maintenance schedule/work plan to guide park/facility improvements as recommended over next 10 years. Improving accessibility and Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) should be primary goals. Regularly audit existing equipment and facilities and ensure fair and equal access to all facilities.	Community & Economic Development, Parks and Facilities divisions	Short to Medium-term	Develop work plan for park improvements by 2021-2022 Conduct audits annually	Supportive Environments
	18. Continue to support organizations that provide assistance to residents facing barriers to participation , and where possible enhance efforts (e.g. financial, in-kind support, capacity building).	Community & Economic Development, participating partners, not for profits etc.	Ongoing	Meet with community organizations to discuss support needed and how to collaborate in the future.	Inclusion & Access Supportive Environments



1.0 Accessible and Inclusive

GOAL: To ensure community facilities, services and procedures enhance accessibility and inclusion for all.

Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
	<p>19. Continue to improve active transportation throughout the City by implementing the recommendations identified in the <i>Bike Friendly Communities Workshop</i> hosted by Share the Road Cycling Coalition. Key actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Strengthen connections between trails and community amenities (such as parks, Multiuse facilities and downtown) through enhanced signage. b) Educate the public at City-run events about sharing the road and trails with cyclists. c) Promote cycling/walking to school, work and local businesses. d) Place secure bike racks at all parks throughout City. e) As City bridges are re-engineered, ensure pinch points are identified and signed appropriately. f) Partner with the Port Colborne Active Transportation Advisory Committee 	<p>Community & Economic Development, Engineering Department, Planning Department, Port Colborne Active Transportation Advisory Committee</p>	<p>Medium Term</p>	<p>Recommendations are implemented through Trails and Bicycling Master Plan or other guiding document by 2022-2023</p>	<p>Supportive Environments Recreation Capacity Inclusion & Access Active Living</p>



1.0 Accessible and Inclusive

GOAL: To ensure community facilities, services and procedures enhance accessibility and inclusion for all.

Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
	<p>(partner to host Bike Rodeos at schools)</p> <p>g) Use 'Bike Valets' at City events, such as Canal Days, to encourage alternative modes of transportation and reduce congestion.</p>				
	<p>20. Align where appropriate with the "Canadian Sport for Life" model in the delivery of programs and services in order to close existing and potential gaps in basic skill development. Address physical literacy challenges and deliver Physical Literacy⁶² Training to Staff and other program providers.</p>	<p>Community & Economic Development, recreation organizations, YMCA</p>	<p>Medium to Long-term</p>	<p>Physical literacy resources are integrated into Parks and Recreation events.</p>	<p>Supportive Environments</p>

⁶² *Physical literacy* is the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding to value and take responsibility for engagement in physical activities for life. (The International Physical Literacy Association, 2014).



2.0 Partnership & Collaboration

GOAL: Build capacity and promote healthy lifestyles through partnerships and collaboration.

Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
<p>A. Leverage existing partnerships to improve service delivery and explore opportunities for new collaborations.</p>	<p>21. Develop and maintain a Parks and Recreation Partnership Framework. Components of this framework are discussed further in Sections 3.2 and 12.3.4 of this report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Work with partners to negotiate and develop partnership agreements to access sponsorship revenues. See Appendix B for an example sponsorship policy and Sections 3.2 and 12.3.4 of the report for a discussion on Inter-municipal collaboration. b) Proactively pursue new cost share partnerships that will enable the City to address eligible parks, recreation and facility gaps identified in the Plan and optimize use of current and future City assets. Continuously explore partnership options to provide multipurpose space/services including in-depth evaluation of capital reinvestment/repurposing/expansion needs. 	<p>Community & Economic Development Director and Managers, Municipal and regional partners, CAO with Council engagement, and service delivery partners</p>	<p>Medium-term</p>	<p>Develop collaborative partnership framework that will be the guiding process for all future partnership processes. Supports a sustainable community and future development of major infrastructure initiatives that will provide ongoing program growth.</p> <p>&</p> <p>Some service areas are identified to be delivered by the private sector.</p> <p>Have strategy developed by end of 1st quarter of 2022</p>	<p>Supportive Environments Recreation Capacity</p>



2.0 Partnership & Collaboration

GOAL: Build capacity and promote healthy lifestyles through partnerships and collaboration.

Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c) Initiate and support Public-Private Partnerships (P3s) between government and private-sector entities for the purpose of providing public infrastructure, community facilities and related services. d) Evaluate operating agreements with partners to ensure coordination of programming and identify service areas that may be best suited to be delivered by the private sector (i.e. concessionaire/retail services, commercial hockey, facility rental for profit). 				
	<p>22. Engage in discussion with interested private and not for profit organizations to facilitate programming and services at Roselawn Centre for the Arts. Prepare a facility management partnership agreement and identify prospective programming partners to deliver dramatic, performing and visual arts programming. (Showboat Theatre, Schools and businesses).</p>	<p>Community & Economic Development Director and Managers, private service providers (E.g. Showboat Theatre), schools</p>	<p>Short Term</p>	<p>Identify servicing partner by end of 2020</p>	<p>Supportive Environments Recreation Capacity</p>



2.0 Partnership & Collaboration

GOAL: Build capacity and promote healthy lifestyles through partnerships and collaboration.

Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
	<p>23. Engage in discussion with the YMCA to address internal processes, policies and procedures in response to current and future needs and recommendations based on this Master Plan (such as the need to enhance programming and available rental space within the gymnasium and fitness/health related spaces at the Vale Health and Wellness Centre) or the needs of both partners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) This may include adjusting procedures to align budgets that better address efficiencies. b) Relocate City staff to front desk in order to highlight partnership at central entrance to Vale Health and Wellness Centre to enhance efficiencies in service delivery of both partners. 	<p>Community & Economic Development Director and Managers, Mayor, YMCA</p>	<p>Short – medium term</p>	<p>Reassess and realign the existing City and YMCA agreement by 2021</p>	<p>Supportive Environments Recreation Capacity</p>
	<p>24. The Community & Economic Development Department should continue to help facilitate the development of a community-wide Volunteer Strategy with other sectors that rely on volunteers.</p>	<p>Community & Economic Development, inter-departmental input (e.g. IT</p>	<p>Medium-term</p>	<p>Volunteer strategy developed by 2022 & Enhanced Volunteer involvement and sustainability</p>	<p>Supportive Environments Recreation Capacity</p>



2.0 Partnership & Collaboration

GOAL: Build capacity and promote healthy lifestyles through partnerships and collaboration.

Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
	<p>a) Study the integration of volunteers and understand how they impact the Community & Economic Development Department's operations. Partners such as 211 Ontario should be expanded upon. Identifying opportunities to access and engage with volunteers over the long-term is a key outcome.</p> <p>b) Continue to maintain a database of volunteers interested in recreation, and culture-based volunteer opportunities. Ensure the database is maintained and marketed to local recreation groups seeking volunteer involvement.</p>	<p>Division), local resident and stakeholders, regional resident, neighbouring municipal and target organizations</p>		<p>& Database of volunteers developed by 2021</p>	
	<p>25. Increase opportunities for sponsorship, corporate volunteerism and shared expertise by providing a list of all potential sponsorship opportunities within recreation and develop a menu that potential sponsors can select from to support healthy and creative lifestyles. (E.g. facility naming, program sponsorship, lease/contract agreements, etc.).</p>	<p>Community & Economic Development Director and Managers, Corporate Communications and involve other</p>	<p>Medium-term</p>	<p>Have list of opportunities developed before end of 2024. Present naming right policy to Council by 2021 for implementation.</p>	<p>Inclusion & Access Supportive Environments Recreation Capacity</p>



2.0 Partnership & Collaboration

GOAL: Build capacity and promote healthy lifestyles through partnerships and collaboration.

Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
	a) An example of a naming rights policy is included herein as Appendix B.	community partners			
	26. Work collaboratively with community organizations and special event operators to integrate tourism considerations and assessments within all Parks and Recreation planning, communications, initiatives and investments. Incorporate special event flexibility and functionality in parks and facilities.	Community & Economic Development Director and Managers, Corporate Communications and involve other community partners	Ongoing	Regularly meet with Economic Development Officer to deliver City-wide tourism events in City parks/facilities.	Inclusion & Access Supportive Environments
	27. Partner/collaborate with health, education and policing/justice agencies to address the concerns associated with Needle Debris to raise community awareness about needle safety. a) Provide options for safe disposal of needles at public facilities/parks. b) Increase awareness to reduce risk and prevent injury to the public who find discarded needles. c) Work with Public Health to prepare resources that can be posted about	Community & Economic Development, Social Determinants of Health Advisory Committee, Public Health, Niagara Region Police Services, and other community partners	Short – Medium Term	Incorporate needle drop-off locations at larger, community parks by 2021.	Inclusion & Access Supportive Environments



2.0 Partnership & Collaboration

GOAL: Build capacity and promote healthy lifestyles through partnerships and collaboration.

Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
	needle disposal at parks and City facilities.				
	28. As part of the broader Port Colborne Beach Strategy (discussed further below – Action no. 61), consider applying for the Niagara Waterfront Investment Program to support recommended improvements (parking, amenities, improving public experience at the waterfront, etc.).	Community & Economic Development, Niagara Region, Conservation Authorities, MNRF, Vale and other community partners	Medium – Long Term	Confirm eligibility and prepare application to obtain funding for Nickel Beach improvements.	Active Living Inclusion & Access Connecting People and Nature Recreation Capacity
	29. Identify private partner to offer watersport activities on seasonal basis at Sugarloaf Marina. Implement as a pilot project and assess upon completion of first year.	Community & Economic Development, Sugarloaf Marina, Private service providers, neighbouring communities (E.g. Rowing Club in Welland)	Medium Term	Initiate pilot project by 2021, and prepare assessment to Council by end of 2021.	Connecting People and Nature Recreation Capacity Supportive Environments
	30. Continue to host or enable environmental events such as tree planting partnerships, park/trail clean ups, neighbourhood garden projects. Registered charities such as Tree	Community & Economic Development, Parks and Facilities	Short-term	Consider a tree planting partnership to plant shade trees in parks	Supportive Environments Recreation Capacity



2.0 Partnership & Collaboration

GOAL: Build capacity and promote healthy lifestyles through partnerships and collaboration.

Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
	<p>Canada who are dedicated to planting and nurturing trees is one example of potential partner.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Utilize the Green Initiatives Grant Application to hire students for tree planting. b) Collaborate with local environmental groups to leverage existing and engaged volunteers. 	<p>divisions, Environmental Advisory Committee, other Community Groups (e.g. Scouts Canada)</p>		<p>identified in the Parks Inventory.</p>	<p>Inclusion & Access Connecting People and Nature</p>
	<p>31. Identify new community partner to lead Community Garden initiative to encourage the consumption of healthy, local food through urban agriculture.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Select new Community Garden location on City-owned lands. 	<p>Community & Economic Development, Social Determinants of Health Committee, Council, Environmental Advisory Committee, other community groups (Farming Organizations)</p>	<p>Medium Term</p>	<p>Identify a new partner and location for garden by 2023</p>	<p>Supportive Environments Recreation Capacity Inclusion & Access Connecting People and Nature</p>



3.0 Communication & Engagement

GOAL: Be a leader in Parks and Recreation user retention and growth through the implementation of strategic communication efforts.

Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
<p>A. Improve communications and coordination among Parks and Recreation groups, stakeholders and the public</p>	<p>32. Prepare a Parks & Trails Wayfinding Strategy (this could be an outcome of a future Trails and Bicycling Master Plan). For example: the Toronto 360 Wayfinding Strategy is a great example of Toronto’s ambition to make the City a more walkable, welcoming and understandable place for visitors and residents. Port Colborne could create a similar, albeit, smaller-scale version of the strategy. Particular focus should be placed at key assets, such as along Welland Canal, access to Nickel Beach, and the waterfront at H.H. Knoll and Sugarloaf Marina. An emphasis on the interpretation of human and cultural heritage, in addition to natural heritage, should be encouraged.</p>	<p>Community & Economic Development, City Council, Planning and Development, Communications staff, Downtown BIAs</p>	<p>Immediate</p>	<p>Create an integrated wayfinding system to: enhance the image of Port Colborne as a trails/cycling destination; Increase confidence in walking and reduce walk times; promote multiple modes of transportation (active transportation vs. driving); increase visitors at key attractions and boost the local economy; improve the public realm; and improve health due to increased walking. Initiate through ongoing Corporate Communications Strategy. Have signage installed by 2020.</p>	<p>Active Living Inclusion & Access Connecting People & Nature Supportive Environments Recreation Capacity</p>
	<p>33. Establish a Departmental vision and mission. The mission should be integrated into the Department’s existing branding and future signage/marketing efforts. The</p>	<p>Community & Economic Development,</p>	<p>Short-term</p>	<p>Coordinate and facilitate meeting by early 2020 The Department’s vision and mission is updated</p>	<p>Supportive Environments</p>



3.0 Communication & Engagement

GOAL: Be a leader in Parks and Recreation user retention and growth through the implementation of strategic communication efforts.

Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
	<p>Department's mission and collaborative approach should be promoted through all community engagement.</p> <p>a) Coordinate a department-wide strategic session to define the department's "core services" to help define planning, policy development, facility allocation and volunteer management.</p>	Corporate Communications		by end of first quarter 2021	
	<p>34. Continue to work with regional partners to provide integrated/shared communication tools that promote and provide residents with information they need to take part in Parks and Recreation programs and utilize parks and recreation facilities. This can be done by improving website connectivity between the Community and Economic Development Department and other service providers and partners such as Niagara Region, the YMCA and neighbouring municipalities.</p>	Community & Economic Development, Corporate Communications Staff, Information Technology	Ongoing	Stakeholders indicate there is improved access to Parks and Recreation information through user satisfaction survey.	Inclusion & Access Supportive Environments Recreation Capacity
	<p>35. Coordinate an information session with all City departments and divisions to share the outcomes and recommendations of this Parks and Recreation Master Plan and educate City Staff on the Department's vision and mission as it works in partnership and</p>	Community & Economic Development Director and Managers, Corporate	Ongoing	Information session is organized and facilitated by Community and Economic Development Department	Inclusion & Access Supportive Environments Recreation Capacity



3.0 Communication & Engagement

GOAL: Be a leader in Parks and Recreation user retention and growth through the implementation of strategic communication efforts.

Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
	collaborates with the community on recreation initiatives.	Communications. All Departments.		Awareness and understanding of Parks and Recreation activities increased across other City departments	
	<p>36. Continue to share information on a regular basis with the community in order to build capacity and ownership of parks and recreation services. Utilize social media, E-newsletters, website connections, recreational/cultural organization newsletters (e.g. Bang the Table Engagement HQ community engagement software: helps to give citizens a voice on issues that are important to them). The City of Guelph uses Bang the Table for several engagement issues through their "Have Your Say" website.</p>	Community & Economic Development Staff, Corporate Communications, IT	Ongoing	Stakeholders indicate there is improved communication between the Community & Economic Development Department and general public (knowledge of programming/events)	Inclusion & Access Supportive Environments Recreation Capacity
	<p>37. Continue production of Port Colborne's Leisure Guide and OnlinePORT. Identify additional avenues of distribution including updated website with options to filter activities and create more interactive opportunities with potential participants, etc.</p> <p>a) E.g. City of Calgary My Rec Guide.</p>	Community & Economic Development	Ongoing	Meet to discuss distribution opportunities	Inclusion & Access Supportive Environments



3.0 Communication & Engagement

GOAL: Be a leader in Parks and Recreation user retention and growth through the implementation of strategic communication efforts.

Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
	<p>38. Continue to monitor and manage the department’s online reputation and promotion of Parks and Recreation events/services, including mobile access, by applying modern communication tools and approaches (E.g. social media, YouTube channel, blogs, Facebook groups, SnapChat, Instagram) to create a “connected community” of parks, recreation and culture residents.</p> <p>a) Work towards engaging a younger demographic through alternative social media targeting.</p> <p>The Community & Economic Development department’s Manager of Parks and Recreation should delegate this duty to a Staff member with IT skills. This individual would have the responsibility of controlling and disseminating information including coordinating social media/promotions.</p>	<p>Community & Economic Development, Corporate Communications, IT Division</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Designate City of Port Colborne Staff person with responsibility and monitor success of increased online presence</p>	<p>Inclusion & Access Supportive Environments</p>
	<p>39. Introduce an access pass system for all fee based Parks and Recreation programs. (Ability to incorporate a variety of activities under one PASS CARD, i.e. choice of aquafit, skating, rec</p>	<p>Community & Economic Development, YMCA, IT Division</p>	<p>Medium-term</p>	<p>Have in place by end of first period 2023</p>	<p>Active Living Inclusion & Access Supportive Environments Recreation Capacity</p>



3.0 Communication & Engagement

GOAL: Be a leader in Parks and Recreation user retention and growth through the implementation of strategic communication efforts.

Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
	swims etc.) This system could integrate into the Recreation Access Program (RAP) discussed above (e.g. Vancouver's Leisure Access Program , or Saskatoon's Leisure Access Program).				
	40. Prepare and continually update a comprehensive database of key stakeholders for recreation organizations and designate a Staff person with the responsibility of keeping database current.	Community & Economic Development, IT Division	Ongoing	Target 2020 for creation of database	Inclusion & Access Supportive Environments
	41. Continue to foster a customer-centered culture amongst Staff that focuses on core values and expectations of the organization. a) Implement customer service excellence award system and adopt a training program for Staff and volunteers in the delivery of recreation and cultural programs/services. b) Through preparation of Departmental Vision/Mission, establish customer focus.	Community & Economic Development	Ongoing	Continuously promote customer-centered culture amongst Staff. Implement award system by 2020	Inclusion & Access Supportive Environments
	42. The Community & Economic Development Department should develop a consolidated Recreation Promotions and Marketing Plan that focuses on educating the public about opportunities, motivating participation, and reducing barriers.	Community & Economic Development Director and applicable Managers,	Medium to Long-term	Marketing plan developed and supported by Council by 2024	Supportive Environments



3.0 Communication & Engagement

GOAL: Be a leader in Parks and Recreation user retention and growth through the implementation of strategic communication efforts.

Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
		Corporate Communications, Economic Dev and Tourism, potential users/ stakeholders and public.			
	<p>43. Adopt a Department-wide Signage Advertising Policy that permits access by potential partners, sponsors, businesses and community groups to advertising space in facilities, where possible.</p> <p>Design and locate Port Colborne Community & Economic Development Department banners in key facilities and at special events. E.g. festivals, tournaments, registration periods etc.</p>	Community & Economic Development, Corporate Communications and Stakeholder Relations Staff	Short to Medium-term	Signage policy developed and banner installed between 2020 - 2023	Supportive Environments



3.0 Communication & Engagement

GOAL: Be a leader in Parks and Recreation user retention and growth through the implementation of strategic communication efforts.

Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
<p>B. Enhance the use of technology to deliver programs and services; encourage participation and improve data collection.</p>	<p>44. Develop and maintain an integrated Parks and Recreation website tool that would consist of the following components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Expanded online community calendar; b) Mobile access to Port Colborne’s Leisure Guide; An example of an online Recreational Guide in which users can apply filters: City of Calgary, My Rec Guide. c) Updated online parkland inventory; d) interactive web-app called a ‘Park and Recreation Locator’; e) Improved access to information about recreation and cultural facilities; and, f) Updated software for improved customer experience and automation. 	<p>Community & Economic Development, Corporate Communications, IT Division</p>	<p>Short to Medium-term</p>	<p>Have in place by 2021 – 2022 (implement through ongoing City website updates)</p>	<p>Inclusion & Access Supportive Environments Recreation Capacity</p>



4.0 Innovation and Building Capacity

GOAL: Be a leader in developing and providing recreational services that promote healthy lifestyles and wellbeing.

Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
A. Deliver and design programs, services and facilities that are responsive to evolving community needs.	45. Develop collaborative facility and operational strategies to strengthen partnerships between sport and stakeholder organizations. (E.g. City of Mississauga Sport Plan 2013). This ties well into the need for a Sports Council/Alliance. Incorporate the operational strategies through the recommended Events and Sports Tourism Strategy (ECSTS) to advance the City of Port Colborne as a leader in the Sport Tourism industry, maximizing both economic benefits and sport development opportunities.	Community & Economic Development, Communications Staff, Sport organizations, schools	Medium-term	Facility and operational models in place by 2022. Initiate development of Events and Sports Tourism Strategy (ESTS) by 2025.	Active Living Inclusion & Access Supportive Environments
	46. Consider hosting additional cultural events , such as festivals, concerts or shows at time other than during the 'prime summer season.'	Community & Economic Development, Corporate Communications	Short-term	Identify comprehensive list of potential larger events to be hosted by end of 2021	Inclusion & Access Recreation Capacity
	47. Improve and increase programming offerings for adults that are offered at convenient times (e.g. same time as other youth activities to improve adult activity levels) through increased availability of spontaneous/drop-in programming (Action no. 9).	Community & Economic Development, recreation providers/partners (e.g. YMCA)	Medium Term	Provide additional recreational programs for adults offered at strategic times (during youth programming) by 2022	Inclusion & Access Recreation Capacity



4.0 Innovation and Building Capacity

GOAL: Be a leader in developing and providing recreational services that promote healthy lifestyles and wellbeing.

Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
	<p>48. Prepare a Canal Days Business Plan with the primary focus of identifying a Host Organization for the City's flagship event.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Identify an appropriate organizational structure for Host Organization. b) Conduct public consultation with attendees (residents and visitors) to collect data on level of satisfaction with Canal Days (as currently offered). c) Conduct one-on-one interviews with City staff and Council members to gather input on the long-term vision for this marine heritage festival. d) Consider opportunities to contract an events firm to coordinate/lead Canal Days (with input provided from City staff and host organization/committee). e) Develop and implement the Tourism and Festival Event Assessment Criteria (see Appendix A) to determine which festivals and 	<p>Community & Economic Development, outside consultant</p>	<p>Short – Medium Term</p>	<p>Undertake Business Plan exercise in 2020 and conduct stakeholder consultation during 2020 and 2021 Canal Days festival. Incrementally implement proposed recommendations from 2021 to 2025 and evaluate success of changes to festival over 4 year period.</p>	<p>Supportive Environments Recreation Capacity</p>



4.0 Innovation and Building Capacity

GOAL: Be a leader in developing and providing recreational services that promote healthy lifestyles and wellbeing.

Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
	<p>events have the highest potential for tourism.</p> <p>f) Incorporate event clustering into Canal Days to centralize events into recommended clusters (see section 11.6 of the Master Plan report).</p>				
	<p>49. Consider hiring a Tourism Product Development Specialist to facilitate the attraction and development of high quality experiences during City of Port Colborne events.</p>	<p>Community & Economic Development, Council, Niagara South Coast Tourism Association</p>	<p>Medium Term</p>	<p>Hire a Tourism Product Development Specialist by 2022</p>	<p>Supportive Environments Recreation Capacity</p>
	<p>50. Play a leadership role in the delivery of major “signature” events that draws attention to the cultural life and cultural resources of the City and area and creates positive economic benefits; work in collaboration with interested cultural groups, business and community leaders in the City and surrounding areas.</p>	<p>in partnership with: Visit Niagara Canada; The Niagara Gateway Information Centre; Tourism Partnership of Niagara; Niagara South Coast Tourism Association; or the Niagara Guide</p>	<p>Short-term</p>	<p>Identify Port Colborne Signature Events (including Canal Days and other events) and promote</p>	<p>Inclusion & Access Supportive Environments</p>



4.0 Innovation and Building Capacity

GOAL: Be a leader in developing and providing recreational services that promote healthy lifestyles and wellbeing.

Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
	<p>51. In the longer-term, build on and incorporate emerging sport and recreational activities into program offerings (e.g. pre-school mix it up sports, Family Pickleball, Late Night Drop-in for Teens, Open Playtime, Bounce Basketball, Stick and Puck and water sports).</p> <p>a) In particular, consider increasing waterfront programming (e.g. Open water lifeguard services, kayak rentals, stand-up paddle boarding) and integrate the marina and waterfront into programming.</p> <p>b) Increase indoor aquatic program offerings (synchronized swimming, water polo, underwater hockey, swimathons, etc.)</p>	Community & Economic Development, recreational providers and community partners	Long-term	Monitor emerging sport trends and feature in Port Colborne's Activity Guide	Active Living Inclusion & Access Recreation Capacity
	52. Continue to monitor outdoor recreation trends and support expansion of such opportunities in all areas of the City.	Community & Economic Development	Ongoing	Annual brief prepared that outlines outdoor recreation trends and implications for service provision	Active Living Recreation Capacity
	53. Develop an 'Enterprise Format' approach to assess the feasibility and desirability of all new Parks and Recreation programs and activities whether programs are in-house or	Community & Economic Development	Medium-term	Community & Economic Development Department implements Enterprise Format	Recreation Capacity



4.0 Innovation and Building Capacity

GOAL: Be a leader in developing and providing recreational services that promote healthy lifestyles and wellbeing.

Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
	provided by partnerships or business in City Facilities. Such an approach should consider costs (including for Staff time, facility time), revenues, subsidies, etc.			approach between 2022 - 2024	
	54. Adopt and incorporate the Goals and Service outcomes of the Department into a measurement reporting system (Metric) based on the benefits approach to recreation that is the foundation for all Recreation Services communications and accountability systems. (See Appendix F)	Community & Economic Development	Short to Medium-term	Goals and service outcomes are reported regularly (annually) by 2022	Recreation Capacity
B. Create enabling and engaging policies that support an active and vibrant community.	55. Develop a Youth Strategy that involves youth in their program planning and the future delivery of activities that engages them in various roles, E.g. volunteers, coaches, leaders, trainers and participants. a) Establish a Youth Advisory Action Council to engage youth in City decision making. Support this group to discuss recreational services and programming to identify gaps in recreational offerings. Note: this could include revitalizing the Mayor's Youth Advisory Council.	Community & Economic Development, Social Determinants of Health Committee and partnering organizations (e.g. Youth Centre, schools, YMCA), Mayor's office and partner organizations (local high schools)	Medium-term	Consult with Port Colborne youth to gather feedback on strategic goals and how best to engage Establish a Youth Advisory Action Council by 2022.	Supportive Environments Inclusion & Access Recreation Capacity



4.0 Innovation and Building Capacity

GOAL: Be a leader in developing and providing recreational services that promote healthy lifestyles and wellbeing.

Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
	<p>56. Consider preparing an Events and Sports Tourism Strategy (ESTS) by exploring a wide range of opportunities for the City to act as a host to sponsor and showcase live sporting events. See Appendix B for an example of a proposed Sponsorship Policy and Procedures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Opportunities to promote the Niagara 2021 Canada Summer Games should be explored through this strategy. b) Opportunities to leverage Port Colborne’s existing cycling infrastructure should be incorporated into the strategy. 	<p>City of Port Colborne (Managed by Community & Economic Development); Partnership with Niagara Region, Parks and Recreation partners (e.g. Niagara IceDogs, Sledge Hockey)</p>	<p>Medium-term</p>	<p>ESTS prepared by 2025.</p>	<p>Inclusion & Access Supportive Environments Recreation Capacity</p>
	<p>57. Develop/Continue to provide “Learn to _____” events that provide recreational users with an opportunity to develop a new skill or learn a new activity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Consider “Open Doors Port Colborne” or continuing events such as “Touch-a-Truck.” b) Consider opportunities to utilize facilities such as the Roselawn and rural community centres. 	<p>Community & Economic Development, community partners and service delivery agencies</p>	<p>Short-term</p>	<p>Have first event(s) undertaken in 2021</p>	<p>Active Living Inclusion & Access Supportive Environments</p>



4.0 Innovation and Building Capacity

GOAL: Be a leader in developing and providing recreational services that promote healthy lifestyles and wellbeing.

Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
	<p>58. Consider the development of an Urban Forest Management Plan to guide the maintenance, protection and planting of Port Colborne’s Urban Forest.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) A Tree Inventory will need to be prepared to document all City trees and rate their health. This evaluation helps to identify priorities for tree management efforts. This could be prepared by summer student(s). b) This Strategy can include a Tree Planting Pilot Program. c) Examples of Urban Forest Strategies: City of Kitchener; Town of Collingwood 	<p>Engineering and Operations Department with input from Community Services and Economic Development (Parks Division)</p>	<p>Medium term</p>	<p>Tree Inventory prepared by 2021; Urban Forest Management Plan implemented by 2022</p>	<p>Supportive Environments Connecting People & Nature</p>
<p>D. Encourage recreational innovation</p>	<p>59. Develop a ‘recreational innovation initiative’ for individuals, groups and organizations to develop new and innovative activities and events to engage citizens in recreational activities in Port Colborne.</p> <p>For example, establish a prize each year to be awarded to whichever applicant suggests the most unique, interesting and comprehensive idea. Establish a jury of</p>	<p>Community & Economic Development, community partners and service delivery agencies</p>	<p>Medium-term</p>	<p>Have first event(s) undertaken in 2022</p>	<p>Supportive Environments</p>



4.0 Innovation and Building Capacity

GOAL: Be a leader in developing and providing recreational services that promote healthy lifestyles and wellbeing.

Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
	<p>municipal Staff and appointed citizens to evaluate proposals and recommend award. This could be similar (but on a smaller scale) to the Innovative Initiative – Sport Support Program offered by Sport Canada.</p>				
	<p>60. Prepare a Strategic Action Plan for the development of the Port Colborne waterfront of Lake Erie, including the Welland Canal, Gravelly Bay, Sugarloaf Marina, H.H. Knoll Park and all City beaches to revitalize the area with land and water activities, including a high level of community engagement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Construct boat launches for non-motorized vehicles b) Identify and designate Recreational Waterways c) Upgrade access to all waterfront destinations including Nickel Beach, Sugarloaf Marina. d) Upgrade public use amenities (washrooms, food and beverage services, watercraft rentals) e) Create/design a waterfront brand. Prepare signs and enhance public 	<p>CAO, Mayor and Council with cross departmental initiatives with input from Community & Economic Development, partner with Niagara Region, Conservation Authorities, Seaway, Transport Canada</p>	<p>Medium – Long Term</p>	<p>Prepare Action Plan for Port Colborne’s waterfront by 2024</p>	<p>Recreation Capacity Connecting People with Nature Supportive environments</p>



4.0 Innovation and Building Capacity

GOAL: Be a leader in developing and providing recreational services that promote healthy lifestyles and wellbeing.

Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
	<p>information through social media, etc.</p> <p>f) Link trails and improve signage to encourage cyclist, walking and commuters to explore all the waterfront amenities available. Consider re-naming streets to highlight the destination and placemaking theme of the waterfront (e.g. Nickel Beach Way, Welland Esplanade).</p>				
	<p>61. As part of Port Colborne's Beach Strategy, develop and implement a Strategy for Nickel Beach Development by considering establishing the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) New concession stand b) Updated change room and washroom facilities c) Playground update d) Parking (both on-site and off-site) e) Review operating hours and length of season beach is open to public f) Trail connectivity g) Consideration of a waterfront boardwalk h) Strategy for addressing Fowlers Toad 	<p>Community & Economic Development, partner with Niagara Region, Conservation Authorities, MNRF</p>	<p>Short – medium term</p>	<p>Negotiate and finalize lease agreement with Vale by 2020 and prepare work plan to implement recommended improvements by 2025.</p>	<p>Recreation capacity</p> <p>Reconnecting with nature</p>



4.0 Innovation and Building Capacity

GOAL: Be a leader in developing and providing recreational services that promote healthy lifestyles and wellbeing.

Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Alternative vehicular/trails access to beach j) Explore sustainable solutions to address erosion of the beach 				
	<p>62. Invest in trail enhancements/connections through the preparation of a Trails and Bicycling Master Plan (TBMP) to assist in identifying options and priorities for developing a comprehensive trails system. As part of the TBMP, consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Utilizing un-opened road allowances for parks and recreational purposes b) Providing additional trail connections, linkages, and crossings throughout the City c) Providing on-road bike routes/lanes for improved connectivity throughout the City d) Constructing paved trails through some naturalized areas; e) Implementing bike trails in public right-of-ways; f) Preparing and implementing trail design standards; 	<p>Community & Economic Development, Planning and Development, Active Transportation Advisory Committee, and community partners</p>	<p>Immediate</p>	<p>Plan for TBMP by end of short-term (2021)</p>	<p>Active Living Inclusion & Access Connecting People & Nature Supportive Environments Recreation Capacity</p>



4.0 Innovation and Building Capacity

GOAL: Be a leader in developing and providing recreational services that promote healthy lifestyles and wellbeing.

Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> g) Design interpretive signage that reflects the unique historical, cultural heritage and natural assets along trails; h) Integrating greater range of interpretive signage (AODA compliant) on existing and future trail networks; i) Including designated bike lanes and look for enhancements where appropriate through consultation with local trail groups; j) Providing secure and safe off-road bike access to Nickel Beach; and, k) Review opportunities for designated multi-purpose/multi-use trails (e.g. equestrian, motorized, walking, hiking, cycling). <p>Consultation with trail user groups (including equestrian users, motorized vehicle organizations, cyclists, walkers, etc.) is essential in order to establish trail etiquette and build relationships between various users.</p>				



4.0 Innovation and Building Capacity

GOAL: Be a leader in developing and providing recreational services that promote healthy lifestyles and wellbeing.

Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
	An expanded discussion and recommended components of the TBMP are included in Section 8.4 of this report.				
	<p>63. As part of the of the Trails and Bicycling Master Plan, develop and enforce a Trails Code of Conduct for all trail users in conjunction with neighbouring municipalities.</p> <p>a) Trent University has compiled a list of Ontario Trail Code of Conducts. This includes codes for equestrian, ATV, cycling and walking trails. The Welland Canal trail etiquette should be updated to reflect the actual use of this trail system.</p> <p>b) An example of a Trail Management Plan that recognizes multiple users (e.g. walkers, cyclists, ATVs, equestrian) is the Ottawa Valley Rail Trail Management Plan.</p>	Community & Economic Development, partner with Niagara Region, Conservation Authorities, User groups (Quad Niagara, Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs), Niagara Regional Police, Neighbouring municipalities	Medium Term	Prepare and promote updated City of Port Colborne Trail Code of Conduct, and post at all major trail heads/ intersections by 2023	<p>Recreation capacity</p> <p>Reconnecting with nature</p> <p>Supportive Environments</p>
	64. Develop partnerships and relationships with neighbourhoods and create opportunities to deliver sustainable facilities and programming within Rural Community Centres .	Community & Economic Development, partner with existing rural	Ongoing	Continue to support the Rural Community Centres and promote their use to new user groups across the City	<p>Recreation capacity</p> <p>Supportive Environments</p>



4.0 Innovation and Building Capacity

GOAL: Be a leader in developing and providing recreational services that promote healthy lifestyles and wellbeing.

Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Maintain spaces and programs for people to connect within their neighbourhoods and community b) Where feasible develop trail connectivity to all Community Centres c) Recreation facilities and amenities should continue to reflect changing health and wellness needs of the Port Colborne community. 	community centre volunteers			
	<p>65. Develop a Cemetery Business Plan that considers future growth and market options.</p>	Community & Economic Development	Short Term	Prepare and present Cemetery Business Plan to Council by 2021. Obtain additional lands to expand Cemeteries by 2022.	Supportive Environments
	<p>66. Develop a long-Term growth strategy for the Sugarloaf Marina – and adjacent Park and City lands.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Marina related programming i.e. small craft rentals, paddle boarding, sailing lessons etc. b) Potential to expand commercial business through partnerships and contractual relationships. 	Community & Economic Development, Engineering and Operations Department	Medium Term	Prepare long-term strategy and present to Council for adoption by 2023	Recreation Capacity Supportive Environments



4.0 Innovation and Building Capacity

GOAL: Be a leader in developing and providing recreational services that promote healthy lifestyles and wellbeing.

Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
	c) Prepare a Business Case for boat dock/storage expansion.				
	67. Explore options to include an indoor child playground in the Vale Health and Wellness Centre and where repurposing of indoor facilities is being contemplated. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Consider design trends in indoor child play spaces b) Engage the community, existing and potential partners, and staff. 	Community & Economic Development, service providers (YMCA)	Long Term	Conduct feasibility review for constructing indoor child playground and request funding through future municipal budgets should interest in indoor playgrounds continue	Recreation Capacity Active Living Inclusion & Access
	68. Review the role of Parks and Facility staff and particularly how positions align with the roles of Engineering and Operations Department staff in an effort to maximize efficiencies of the various Departments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Prioritize staffing and services in alignment with the directions and strategies of this Master Plan b) Continue to intensify efforts at formulating, managing and evaluating partnerships, joint ventures and other collaborative approaches to service delivery within the City, and on a broader geographic market basis as appropriate. 	Community Services and Economic Development, Engineering and Operations Department	Short Term	Conduct review by 2020-2021 and tweak existing organizational model as needed	Recreation Capacity Supportive Environments



4.0 Innovation and Building Capacity

GOAL: Be a leader in developing and providing recreational services that promote healthy lifestyles and wellbeing.

Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">c) Establish an organization model based on consultation, best practices and other inputs that support the multi-dimensional service approach necessary to effectively develop and implement a community development and capacity building priority.d) Pursue periodic discussions and assessment with community service providers to assist them in their ongoing service delivery capacities and viability, to ensure the continuity of service to residents so that services are not diminished or lost.				



5.0 Optimization of Infrastructure, Programming & Service Delivery

GOAL: To efficiently deliver Parks, Recreation and Cultural services.

Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
A. Create facilities that are seen as 'Community Hubs'	69. Ensure all activity rooms or facilities do not have specific 'label' (e.g. Youth or Senior's room) to maximize flexibility of available rooms and provide for cross-programming of existing space.	Community & Economic Development, facilities staff and partners	Ongoing	Implement as needed	Inclusion & Access Recreation Capacity
	70. Develop a Business Plan for the Roselawn Centre to maximize the usage of this historical and cultural hub in the City. The Business Plan should identify service delivery partners (i.e. Showboat Theatre) that can facilitate arts programming to a range of recreational participants across the City and broader region.	Community & Economic Development, possibly with other partners	Medium-term	Identify servicing partner by end of 2020. Private organization to be delivering arts programming through a partnership with the City by 2021	Inclusion & Access Supportive Environments Recreation Capacity
B. Integrate specific recreational facilities into this Parks and Recreation Master Plan	71. The Community & Economic Development Staff should facilitate information sessions to present the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, and discuss opportunities where Library programming could be aligned with Parks and Recreation initiatives for mutual benefit. The Port Colborne Library is obviously a key element of the cultural life of the community and should be 'brought into' this Master Plan to the extent appropriate.	Community & Economic Development, Library staff	Immediate	Hold meeting by end of 2020	Inclusion & Access Supportive Environments



5.0 Optimization of Infrastructure, Programming & Service Delivery

GOAL: To efficiently deliver Parks, Recreation and Cultural services.

Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
	72. Develop a Lifecycle Reserve Policy for indoor and outdoor recreation infrastructure. A discussion can be found in Section 10.4.2 .	Community & Economic Development (Director and Managers), Corporate Services	Short to Medium-term	Develop and implement between 2021 - 2022	Recreation Capacity
	73. Utilize the Facility Condition Index (FCI) approach to determine whether or not significant reinvestment in existing facilities should be pursued. (See Appendix C) a) This should be utilized immediately on the City's aging facilities (e.g. Rural Community Centres).	Community & Economic Development (Director and Managers), Facility staff	Short to Medium-term	Develop and implement by 2021 - 2022	Recreation Capacity
C. Maximize use of and explore opportunities for existing facilities and Parks and Recreation infrastructure.	74. Adopt a project feasibility framework for all potential major infrastructure projects. See Appendix F for a Project Scoring Metric with feasibility planning triggers.	Community & Economic Development (Director and Managers), Facilities staff	Short to Medium-term	Adopt between 2021 - 2022	Recreation Capacity
	75. Ensure that at least one Staff member is trained as a Certified Playground Inspector through the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA) and the Canadian Playground Safety Institute (CPSI) so that they may conduct hands-on	Community & Economic Development (Director and Managers), Facilities staff	Immediate	Identify responsible staff person by 2019 year end	Recreation Capacity



5.0 Optimization of Infrastructure, Programming & Service Delivery

GOAL: To efficiently deliver Parks, Recreation and Cultural services.

Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
	inspections/audits of City-owned playspaces.				
	76. Identify opportunities to maximize multi-use recreational space at Vale Health and Wellness Centre to increase the supply of multi-use and multi-functional rooms (e.g. use of dividing curtains, portable boards, temporary bleachers, bocce club expansion, etc.)	Community & Economic Development, service partners (YMCA)	Short Tem	Measures to increase multi-purpose rooms usage are implemented; Increased bookings for multi-use spaces;	Recreation Capacity Supportive environments
	77. Review and update operating agreements of the Rural Community Centres (Bethel and Sherkston) to ensure facility bookings, rental rates, operational policies, etc. are consistent with other City-owned facilities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Ensure spaces are available to the public and are maintained in a manner consistent with other City facilities. b) Collect annual data on the number of bookings. c) Promote facility rentals on the City's website and through the leisure guide. 	Community & Economic Development	Begin immediately; Review agreements annually	Operating agreements are updated by 2020	Inclusion & Access Recreational Capacity
	78. Work with Planning, Public Works and Transit Staff in the review of development	Community & Economic	Ongoing	Should be adopted as a best practice in all	Active Living Inclusion & Access



5.0 Optimization of Infrastructure, Programming & Service Delivery

GOAL: To efficiently deliver Parks, Recreation and Cultural services.

Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
	plans or infrastructure projects to improve existing and proposed walking and cycling opportunities to schools and other community facilities , along selected roadways and within and between parklands.	Development, Engineering and Operations, Planning and Development		relevant development applications	
	79. Review the City's Official Plan policies to ensure they promote and encourage a comprehensive trail network and active transportation.	Planning and Development with input from Community & Economic Development	Medium-term	Policies are reviewed and updated through next Official Plan review if needed (Official Plan Review Process).	Active Living Inclusion & Access Connecting People & Nature
	80. Continuously monitor all departmental policies to ensure that they are relevant and consistent with changing trends that address the barriers to access and participation and engagement with non-users.	Community & Economic Development	Ongoing	Monitor policies as needed	Supportive Environments
D. Leverage Staff resources to improve service delivery.	81. Continue to support on-going training of Staff to continually build capacity. E.g. trends, best practices, comparative community successes.	Community & Economic Development	Ongoing	Staff attend and participate in relevant training (approved by Director of Community & Economic Development)	Supportive Environments
	82. Create a defined events provision framework that categorizes events supported (in whole or in part) as either:	Community & Economic Development,	Short-term	Have in place by 2021	Supportive Environments Inclusion & Access



5.0 Optimization of Infrastructure, Programming & Service Delivery

GOAL: To efficiently deliver Parks, Recreation and Cultural services.

Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
	<p>a) Community events, or b) Tourism events.</p> <p>See Appendix A for example criteria to be considered.</p> <p>The rationale for community events is that they should provide affordable and accessible events for the resident community. Financial payback, while desirable, should not be the primary consideration. Tourism events should create positive economic impact for the entire community and should involve other partners who are beneficiaries of the overall event. Canal Days is considered a Tourism Event.</p>	possibly with other partners			
	83. The Community & Economic Development Department should provide regular input into the land use planning and development approval process to ensure long-term needs facility and programming needs are met. This input can help guide the future location and size of parks/recreational facilities as well as the development of	Planning and Development to seek input from Community & Economic Development	Ongoing	Should be adopted as a best practice in all relevant development applications	Inclusion & Access Recreation Capacity



5.0 Optimization of Infrastructure, Programming & Service Delivery

GOAL: To efficiently deliver Parks, Recreation and Cultural services.

Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
	future trails (recreational and active transportation routes).				
	84. Provide more and enhanced aquatics programming.	Community & Economic Development, YMCA	Short-term	Additional aquatics programming secured over time.	Recreation Capacity
E. Improve policies and procedures to strengthen the planning and delivery of Parks and Recreation services.	85. All organizations renting/utilizing Port Colborne facilities should be required to report annually on the number of registered participants. Use this data to enhance the understanding of parks and recreation participation in the community including program registration, facility usage, capital and operation expense, revenue tracking, cost recovery and other data critical to informed planning and management.	Community & Economic Development, supported by Facilities staff and recreational providers (YMCA)	Medium-term	Registered/participation reports are submitted to Community & Economic Development Department annually	Recreation Capacity
	86. The Community & Economic Development Department, in cooperation with other City departments, should continuously look for opportunities to protect and secure parkland or other open spaces areas that have the potential to provide outdoor recreational program opportunities (both passive and active). (E.g. Trails, parks, cultural event spaces, nature programming, family	Community & Economic Development, Planning and Development	Ongoing & As potential lands become available	Additional parkland is secured over time & Stronger working relationship reported by both Community & Economic Development	Connecting People & Nature Recreation Capacity



5.0 Optimization of Infrastructure, Programming & Service Delivery

GOAL: To efficiently deliver Parks, Recreation and Cultural services.

Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
	<p>activities, etc.) Emphasis should be placed on areas of the City where there are identified gaps in available parkland and open space areas as well as waterfront access.</p> <p>The Community & Economic Development Department should work in partnership with the Planning and Development Department in any opportunity for the acquisition of parkland along Port Colborne's waterfront.</p>			and Planning and Development	
	<p>87. Prepare Urban Design Guidelines, provide input on park design standards. Examples include: Niagara on the Lake's Village of St. Davids Urban Design Guidelines, North Oakville's Urban Design and Open Space Guidelines, or Waterloo's Northdale Urban Design and Built Form Guidelines.</p> <p>Through development of new spaces, Urban Design Guidelines (Park Standards) should be incorporated to ensure consistent use of building materials, colours, etc.</p>	Planning and Development with input from Community & Economic Development	Medium-term	Provide input into preparation of City Urban Design Guidelines	Inclusion & Access Supportive Environments



5.0 Optimization of Infrastructure, Programming & Service Delivery

GOAL: To efficiently deliver Parks, Recreation and Cultural services.

Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
	<p>Park design standards should include policies to promote/incorporate environmental stewardship (e.g. installation of green infrastructure, maintenance standards, Low-Impact Development (LID) energy conservation, renewable energy, etc.)</p>				
	<p>88. Update the City's Official Plan policies to make public design charrettes a mandatory step in the design of new parks. Involving the public is crucial in every park design, as charrettes can provide creative bursts of energy that helps build momentum for a project and sets it on a course to meet project goals. Charrettes give the community a chance to have a conversation that will impact how their community is being shaped. Allowing for public input on a park-by-park basis would help bring an understanding, at a very local level, to the features a park should include for their surrounding area (e.g. playsets vs gardens, or fountains vs. night lighting).</p>	<p>Planning and Development with input from Community & Economic Development</p>	<p>Medium-Long term</p>	<p>Update Official Plan Policies on Parks at next Comprehensive Official Plan review</p>	<p>Recreation Capacity Supportive Environments</p>
	<p>89. If deemed appropriate by City Council and staff, consider the repurposing or</p>	<p>Community & Economic</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Underutilized parkland repurposed for</p>	<p>Supportive Environments</p>



5.0 Optimization of Infrastructure, Programming & Service Delivery

GOAL: To efficiently deliver Parks, Recreation and Cultural services.

Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
	<p>disposition of some parkland that is underutilized/does not meet parkland standards. Parks to consider for disposition should be considered based on usage and condition of existing amenities/ infrastructure. Should repurposing or disposition of lands be deemed appropriate, City staff will undertake a detailed review and consultation with residents to prepare an action plan. See section 7.6 of the report for recommended approaches. Any funds derived from the sale of City-owned parkland should be re-directed to future park/trail/facility enhancements.</p>	Development, Planning and Development, Council		improved usage, or disposed of to reduce maintenance burden on City staff.	Recreation Capacity
	<p>90. Update the City's Parkland Dedication By-law for consistency with the Planning Act and proposed changes through Bill 108 (i.e. payment in lieu, to the value of the land otherwise required to be conveyed).</p> <p>a) Update policies to reflect Community Benefits regulations once released (January, 2021).</p>	Planning and Development with input from Community & Economic Development	Medium-term	Updated by 2022	Recreational Capacity
	<p>91. The Planning Department should consider conditions/process for plan of subdivision to allow for front-end construction of parks to encourage the early development/</p>	Planning and Development	Medium term	Updated at next Official Plan review	Recreational Capacity



5.0 Optimization of Infrastructure, Programming & Service Delivery

GOAL: To efficiently deliver Parks, Recreation and Cultural services.

Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
	provision of parks and trails in the development of new communities.				
	92. Revise the City's Development Charges By-law or Community Benefits Plan at the next By-law Update to include the study and facility recommendations from this Master Plan.	Community & Economic Development, Planning and Development	Medium-term	Development Charges by-law revised after Official Plan update	Supportive Environments
	93. The Official Plan should be updated to include a policy that requires consultation with local school boards and public bodies when there are changes to parkland requirements and/or changes to the parks plan (as per the Planning Act). City Staff to follow-up with school boards upon completion of Parks and Recreation Master Plan process.	Planning and Development with input from Community & Economic Development	Short to Medium-term, (Official Plan Review process)	Official Plan updated to include policy through next review	Inclusion & Access Supportive Environments
	94. The City should revise Section 3.13.4 and 3.13.5 (Parkland Standards, Design Guidelines) of the Official Plan to ensure the City's parks actually meet the current parkland standards (particularly in terms of the size standards). This provision can be monitored through the development of future parks, and assessed for update at the next Official Plan Review.	Planning and Development with input from Community & Economic Development	Short to Medium-term, (Official Plan Review process).	Official Plan updated to include policy through next review	Supportive Environments



5.0 Optimization of Infrastructure, Programming & Service Delivery

GOAL: To efficiently deliver Parks, Recreation and Cultural services.

Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
	<p>95. Encourage the Director of Engineering and Operations to update the City's Tree By-law in order to manage tree loss from disease such as Emerald Ash Boer.</p> <p>a) The updated By-law should include a tree compensation ratio to ensure that any trees removed by the City is replaced by one or more trees.</p>	Engineering and Operations Department with input from Community Services and Economic Development (Parks Division)	Medium term	Tree By-law updated and implemented by 2022	Supportive Environments Connecting People & Nature
	<p>96. Parkland dedication should be required instead of cash-in-lieu as much as possible as part of any applicable development application. 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.</p> <p>Parkland dedication policies should be monitored and reviewed every 2 years.</p>	Planning and Development with input from Community & Economic Development	Short to Medium-term, (Official Plan Review process); and reviewed every two years	Official Plan updated to include policy through next review and reviewed every two years	Connecting People & Nature Supportive Environments
	<p>97. The Official Plan should be updated to state that only under special circumstances, the City should accept woodlots and other natural areas both as a measure of protection of the natural amenity and for</p>	Planning and Development with input from Community & Economic Development	Short to Medium-term, (Official Plan Review process).	Official Plan updated to include policy through next review &	Connecting People & Nature Supportive Environments



5.0 Optimization of Infrastructure, Programming & Service Delivery

GOAL: To efficiently deliver Parks, Recreation and Cultural services.

Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
	the potential use as a passive recreational and educational feature.			Parkland Standard Ratio Prepared by 2021 - 2022	
	99. The City should monitor population growth/decline and facility provision to ensure facilities and infrastructure (playfields, ball diamonds, etc.) meet the Guidelines for Developing Public Recreation Facility Standards.	Community & Economic Development	Ongoing	Population growth and facility provisions reviewed annually	Supportive Environments
	100. Plan for the installation of three (3) or four (4) new splash pads by the next Master Plan update in order to meet recommended service levels.	Community & Economic Development	Medium – Long-term	Have installed three to four splash pads by next Master Plan update.	Inclusion & Access Recreation Capacity
	101. New parkland dedication should focus on creating more neighbourhood parks or parkettes. Focus should also be given to park ‘gaps’ as identified in the Master Plan.	Planning and Development, Community & Economic Development	Ongoing	Opportunities to obtain parkland are reviewed as they arise.	Supportive Environments
	102. As required, assess future use of surplus public lands, such as school sites, to maintain current levels of park space and cemetery space.	Planning and Development, Community & Economic Development	As potential lands become available	As surplus lands become available, future uses are assessed and discussed with relevant partners/departments	Supportive Environments
	103. Ensure the 2019-2029 Parks and Recreation Master Plan is reflected in	Community & Economic	Long-term	Plans are updated as needed	Supportive Environments



5.0 Optimization of Infrastructure, Programming & Service Delivery

GOAL: To efficiently deliver Parks, Recreation and Cultural services.

Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Anticipated Target or Outcome	Alignment with Framework for Recreation in Canada
	the City's Economic Development Strategic Plan, Official Plan and other vision documents.	Development, CAO and other City Departments			
	104. Undertake an annual review of the recommendations in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan as part of the municipal budgeting process, including a description of recent achievements and future objectives.	Community & Economic Development, Division Managers	Annually	Community & Economic Development Department Managers and relevant stakeholders meet annually to review progress of Master Plan	Supportive Environments
	105. Undertake a comprehensive update of the Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan prior to the end of the 10 year timeframe of the Plan (2030).	Community & Economic Development, Division Managers	Long-term	Update of Master Plan undertaken in 2030	Supportive Environments

Appendix **A**

Tourism Festival and Event Assessment Criteria

The City of Port Colborne may utilize the following criteria as a tool to assist in determining which festivals and events have the highest potential for tourism. The criteria is not listed in a suggested order of priority as it is expected that the community will prioritize and weight each criterion in order to reflect its priorities.

Scoring Chart

0 = clearly does not meet the description

1 = somewhat meets the description

2 = clearly meets the description

3 = exceeds the description (new and innovative thinking is demonstrated)

Criteria	Score
- Development of the festival/event idea aligns with the strategic intent and organizational strategy of stakeholders	
- Development of the festival/event idea will not put un-due stress on existing human resources. - The producer of the festival/event has a strong organizational structure that can support growth (e.g. leadership, business infrastructure, experience, management capacity). - The festival/event idea will attract and retain new human resources to support growth. - The festival/event idea has the potential to "repackage" some of what is currently being done, thereby reducing stress on existing human resources.	
- The community is open to hosting the festival/event idea. - The community is willing to promote the festival/event idea as a tourism product.	
- The festival/event idea fosters the culture, health and development of the community by enhancing community spirit.	
- The festival/event idea provides strong opportunities for partnerships (public and/or private).	
- The festival/event idea has clear product development opportunities that will lead to increases in new and complementary product on an annual basis.	
- The festival/event idea has a reasonable expectation to achieve year over year growth in revenue, product and visitation.	
- The festival/event idea reaches identified target markets. - The festival/event idea demonstrates market demand through relevant indicators (e.g. visitation statistics, gap analysis, expressed demand, survey data, population projections, trends, etc.). - Limited competition exists relative to market demand (by geography, season, product offering, etc.).	
- The festival/event idea should have the potential to be promoted year round to leverage the brand of Port Colborne. - The festival/event idea should have the potential to attract the attention of the media.	
- Provides an authentic, experience-based product that highlights what is unique and valuable about Port Colborne. - Product differentiates itself from the competition.	
- The festival/event idea has minimal environmental impacts (risks are mitigated).	

<p>- The community has the physical infrastructure in place to support development of the festival/event idea (e.g. roads, public facilities, parking, accommodations, etc.).</p>	
<p>- The festival/event idea is logistically sound and will not require a large amount of addition resources or planning in the execution of high quality experiences for visitors.</p> <p>- The festival/event idea can be executed safely with minimal risk to visitors, staff and residents.</p>	
<p style="text-align: right;">TOTAL SCORE</p>	

Appendix **B**



City of Port Colborne Sponsorship Policy

EFFECTIVE DATE: _____ POLICY NO. _____

1. POLICY STATEMENT

The City of Port Colborne recognizes sponsorship as an opportunity to offset the costs of municipal infrastructure, programs, and operations, and as a way to recognize individual, and or corporate partnerships supporting programs and operations.

2. PURPOSE

2.1 The purpose of this policy is to create an authorized environment for entering into sponsorship agreements in order to:

- Provide employees and contractors with guidelines related to the sponsorship of City assets including land, facilities, structures, services, programs and events;
- Uphold the City's strong governance role to pursue joint ventures and partnerships;
- Enhance Municipal Services through effective and efficient initiatives that is respectful of cost and impact to the community.

2.2 The policy provides an enabling environment for the City of Port Colborne to enter into naming rights and sponsorship agreements with corporations, groups, or individuals within set guidelines and procedures for the purpose of enhanced financial sustainability.

2.3 This policy does not apply to:

- Independent foundations or registered charitable organizations that the City of Port Colborne may receive benefit from.
- Gifts or unsolicited donations to the City;
- Funding obtained from other orders of government through formal grant programs;
- City sponsorship and/or financial support of external projects where the City provides funds to an outside organization;

- Third parties who lease City property or hold permits with the City for activities or events.

3. PRINCIPLES

3.1 The City of Port Colborne supports the ongoing practice of entering into sponsorship agreements with third parties where such partnerships are mutually beneficial to both parties.

3.2 The City of Port Colborne will seek out sponsorship opportunities with third parties who have a positive public image, and reflect a high level of integrity and who reflect the values and maintain operational policies that are not in conflict with the City's values, mandate, or operating policies.

3.2.1 Sponsorship shall not be solicited from businesses, organizations, or individuals who, in the sole discretion of the Chief Administrative Officer, are inappropriate partners of the municipality in that their products or businesses activities do not align with the City of Port Colborne values as outlined in guiding documents. Sponsorships will not be pursued with:

- Tobacco and alcohol companies;
- Bottled water brands or products;
- Religious or political groups or factions or organizations that actively promote a religious or political group or faction;
- Companies that sell or promote pornography;
- Companies that present imaging that is derogatory, prejudicial, harmful to or intolerant of any specific group or individual;
- Companies that create fiscal hardship for the City of Port Colborne and/or its residents.

3.3 The City of Port Colborne will seek out sponsorship opportunities with third parties whose purchasing practices embed environmental and ethical criteria into their own purchasing procedures.

3.4 It is necessary for the City of Port Colborne to be recognized for those facilities, programs, services, etc. where it makes an ongoing significant contribution to capital or operating costs. Clear and permanent identification of the City will be displayed in adherence to branding guidelines established by the City.

3.5 While the physical display of the naming right shall be negotiated or decided upon on an individual basis, such recognition must not unduly detract from the character, integrity, aesthetic quality, or safety of the property or unreasonably interfere with its enjoyment or use.

3.6 The City shall not relinquish to the sponsor any aspect of the City's right to manage and control the City's assets and facilities.

3.7 The City reserves the right to terminate an existing sponsorship agreement should any of the following occur:

- The sponsor organization uses the City's name outside the parameters of the sponsorship agreement, without prior consent;
- The sponsor organization develops a public image inappropriate to the City's values and/or objectives.

4. DEFINITIONS

1) **Sponsorship** – A mutually beneficial business arrangement between The City and a third party, wherein the third party provides cash and/or in-kind services to the City in return for access to the commercial marketing potential associated with City assets. Marketing sponsorships may include sponsorship of one or more of the City's land, facilities, structures, services, programs or events.

2) **Sponsorship Agreement** - A mutually beneficial, contractual agreement that reflects the business arrangement for the exchange of marketing benefits between the City and an external organization for a specified period of time.

3) **Sponsor** - A corporation, organization or individual that enters into a sponsorship agreement involving a City asset and makes a financial contribution or value-in-kind in return for access to commercial potential associated with the asset.

4) **Naming Rights** - A type of sponsorship in which a corporation purchases the exclusive right to name an asset. Usually naming rights are considered in a commercial context; that is the naming right is sold or exchanged for significant cash or other revenue support. This arrangement is usually documented in an agreement signed by the interested parties and has a specified end date to the contractual obligations.

5) **Naming Rights Agreement** - The sale of the right to name or re-name a City asset as evidenced in a written contract that contains terms acceptable to The City. In most cases, indemnification and termination clauses would be required as part of the agreement. Dates indicating the term of the agreement will be indicated.

6) **Gift** - An unsolicited contribution to the City of Port Colborne for which there is no reciprocal commercial benefit expected or required from The City. As gifts are unsolicited and do not involve a business relationship, they are separate and distinct from sponsorship.

7) **Donation** - Similar to a gift in that no reciprocal commercial benefits are given or expected. If reciprocal commercial benefits are given and a business relationship exists with a donor, the principles of this policy apply.

8) **Sponsorship Project Manager** – The City of Port Colborne employee who has responsibility for sponsorship of a facility, program, or service in their accountability agreement or job description.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

Parties involved in sponsorship negotiations and decisions undertake the following specific responsibilities:

5.1 City Council:

- Approve The City of Port Colborne Sponsorship Policy;
- Determine which City facilities and assets are marketed for sponsorship;
- Approve sponsorship agreements with a total value over \$100,000 annually or that involve the sale of naming rights of a facility or that Administration believes may be sensitive.

5.2 Chief Administrative Officer

- Approve sponsorship agreements with a total value less than \$100,000 annually.

5.3 Sponsorship Project Manager:

- Hire or appoint staff member and/or manage consultants and/or undertake asset evaluation and pricing of sponsorships;
- Bring report to council for approval of City facilities and assets before marketing them for sponsorship;
- Hire and manage a consultant and/or review and assist in the development of sponsorship opportunities as needed;
- Recommend sponsorship agreements for approval to the CAO and or City Council;
- Annually track and report to council all City sponsorship agreements over \$5000;
- Ensure that representatives of the City are aware of and act in accordance with the sponsorship policy.

6. STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

Policy principles 3.1 and 3.2.1 identify that all sponsorship opportunities with third parties must be in line with the City's values.

7. ATTACHMENTS

SPONSORSHIP PROCEDURES

The general procedure for developing sponsorship agreements will be as follows:

1. Council will be asked for approval before any City of Port Colborne facility is considered for sponsorship.
2. Inventory valuation and marketing of City of Port Colborne assets will be undertaken by either City of Port Colborne staff with appropriate expertise or consultants hired through a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) process.
3. Concept approval for sponsorship projects will be obtained from the appropriate sponsorship project manager before potential sponsors are approached or agreements are made.
4. Sponsorship agreements for naming rights, having a value of greater than \$100,000 annually, or are perceived by administration to be sensitive, will be brought to council for approval.
5. Sponsorship agreements will be confirmed in writing via a legal signed contract and be signed by an authorized representative of both the City of Port Colborne and the sponsor.
6. The written agreement will:
 - a. Outline the term of the agreement;
 - b. Identify renewal options, if permitted;
 - c. Identify the value of the consideration and, in the case of in-kind contributions, the method of assessment;
 - d. The payment schedule;
 - e. Include the details of the exchange of benefits and a description of the contractual relationship, including both what the City will receive from the sponsor, and what benefits are to be provided to the sponsor;
 - f. The disposition and ownership of any assets resulting from the sponsorship arrangement;
 - g. Identify release, indemnification and early termination clauses;
 - h. Outline related insurance clauses;
 - i. Describe any confidentiality terms.
7. The following specific guidelines shall be applied when entering into a naming rights agreement for municipally owned and operated assets:

- a. An asset analysis and inventory valuation is to be completed to determine the value of the asset in the marketplace, unless exempted by council; the valuation is to be approved by Council before going to market with any of the inventory;
 - b. A proposed naming rights purchaser must support the image and values of the City of Port Colborne.
 - c. The City shall not relinquish to the purchaser any part of the City's right to manage and control the asset;
 - d. Signage branding, publicity, and advertising shall conform to all applicable municipal bylaw and policies ;
 - e. Costs for promotion of the renaming of a facility shall be incorporated into the naming rights agreement.
8. The role of the City of Port Colborne owner and operator of its assets shall be ensured throughout the sponsorship agreement.
 9. Solicitation and negotiation of sponsorship will be conducted by City staff or by a hired consultant working on behalf of the City of Port Colborne who are trained in sponsorship practices.
 10. All City sponsorship agreements will be negotiated in good faith and represent the City in a professional manner.
 11. Use of the City's logo in combination with the sponsor logos will be in keeping with the City's visual identity guideline.
 12. Use of sponsor logos and direct link from the City's website are permitted within the standard guidelines for content. Any reuse or non -standard use will be considered jointly by the sponsorship project manager and website administrator.
 13. The City will only enter into agreements with sponsors who are compatible with the City's values, mandate and policies.
 14. All provincial and federal laws governing sponsorships including those regarding the issuing of charitable donation receipts will be adhered to.

AUTHORIZATION:

Chief Administrative Officer

Appendix C

Facility Condition Index – Recreational Facilities

In order to address the condition assessment of recreational facilities, it is important to understand the term Facility Condition Index (FCI).

The FCI is a standard benchmark used in the asset management industry in order to objectively assess the current and projected future condition of an asset.

The FCI of a site or structure is represented as a percentage and is calculated by taking the total renewal costs of components in a given year and dividing the figure by the total replacement value of the asset itself. A high FCI value reflects a high renewal requirement and therefore a poor condition recreational facility.

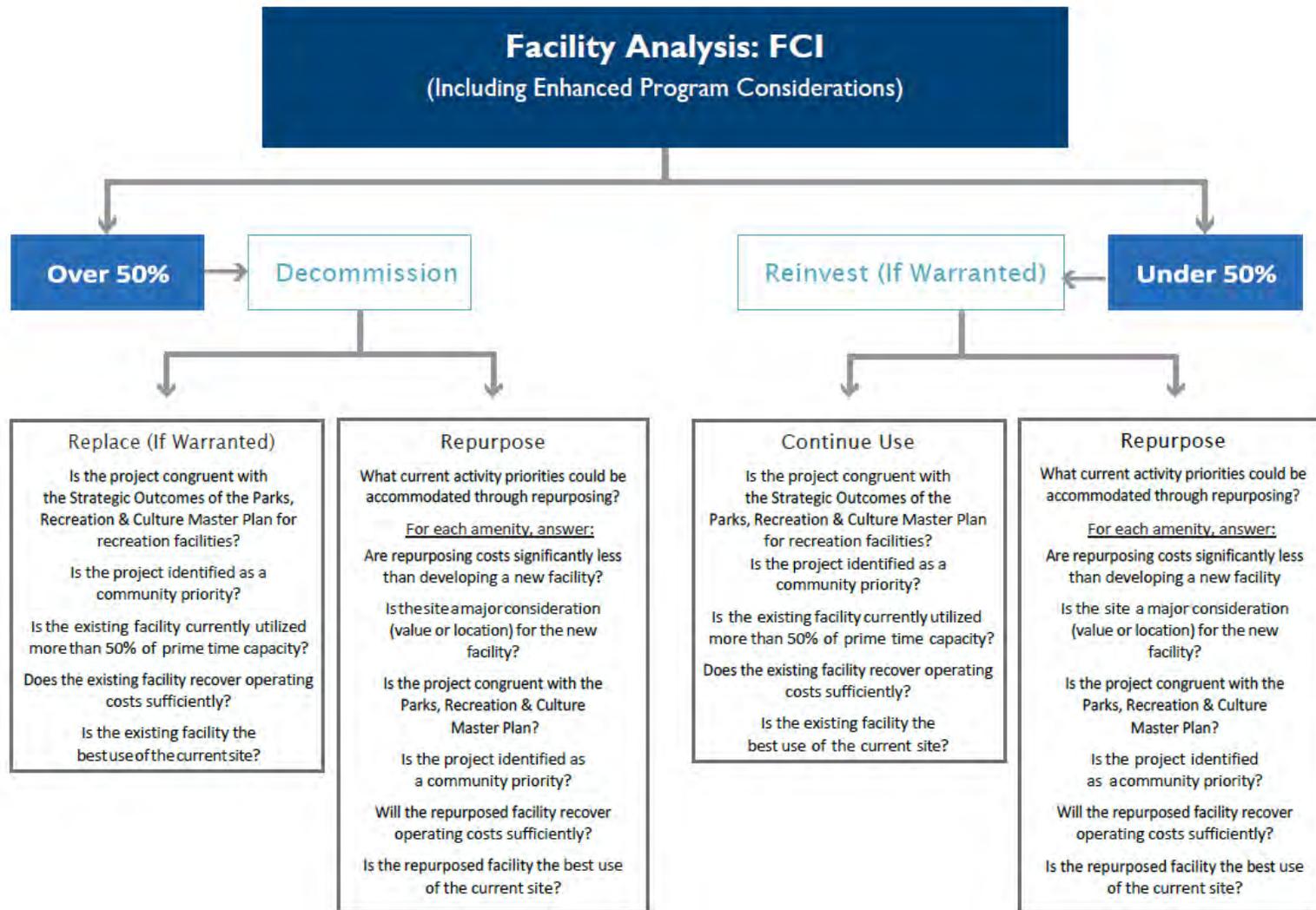
- A facility with an FCI of less than 5% is in good condition;
- Between 5% and 10% is in fair condition;
- Between 10% and 30% poor condition; and
- Over 30% is considered critical condition.

$$\text{Facility Condition Index} = \frac{\text{Renewal Requirement in a Given Year}}{\text{Replacement Value of an Asset}^*}$$

**Replacement Value* – The like for like replacement costs for an asset including construction costs of the asset expressed in current dollars. It is the product of gross area of asset and cost per unit measure for the type of asset.

The following figure provides a suggested framework for the decision-making process around facility reinvestment, repurposing or decommissioning: it can be used when contemplating the future of existing indoor ice facilities. The questions asked in the framework can be answered by the Town, community members, or a combination of both.

One way of engaging the public and community partners in decision-making is to establish an ad hoc task force every time the decommissioning or repurposing of a major recreation resource is contemplated. The task force would then use the framework and rely on municipal staff to provide the necessary information. It would offer a broad perspective of community need, and, if it included members of the public, the perspectives of impacted residents and groups as well.



* If two or more of the questions posed above are answered "NO," then the facility should be decommissioned. If not, the reinvestment/repurpose should be ranked through the system presented in the Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan against other potential projects.

Appendix **D**

Name	Park Classification (Based on Amenities and/or size)	Address	Area (ha)	Area (ac)	Notes
Chestnut Park	Neighbourhood (w/ Tot Lot)	9 Chestnut Street	0.94	2.33	
Chippawa Park	Parkette	85 Chippawa Road	0.06	0.16	
Derek Point Memorial Garden	Parkette	401 Weir Road	3.96	9.79	Very large for a parkette
Dewitt Carter Playground	Neighbourhood (w/ Tot Lot)	415 Fares Street	0.04	0.10	
East Village Community Park / Victoria Playground	Neighbourhood (w/ Tot Lot)	145 Welland Street	0.38	0.93	
H.H.Knoll Lakeview Park	City (w/ Tot Lot)	160 Sugarloaf Street	8.75	21.63	
Harry Dayboll / Oakwood Park	Parkette	281 Omer Avenue	0.96	2.38	
Hawthorne Heights Park	Neighbourhood (w/ Tot Lot)	10 Hawthorne Blvd	0.84	2.07	
Helen Kinnear Memorial Park	Parkette	552 Fielden Avenue	0.72	1.78	
Humberstone Cenotaph Park	Parkette	831 King Street	0.07	0.16	
Humberstone Centennial Park	Community (w/ Tot Lot)	2734 Vimy Ridge Road	17.82	44.03	
Humberstone Centennial Park Beach	Community	2767 Vimy Ridge Road	1.28	3.17	
Humberstone Shoe Park	Neighbourhood (w/ Tot Lot)	721 Elm Street	0.41	1.02	
Jacob E. Barrick Park	Neighbourhood (w/ Tot Lot)	13 Hillcrest Road	1.31	3.25	North end of park (near development) should be utilized for sports fields in the future
Johnston Street Playground	Neighbourhood (w/ Tot Lot)	215 Johnston Street	0.22	0.54	
King George Memorial Park	Parkette	64 Clarence Street	0.11	0.27	
Library Park	Neighbourhood (w/ Tot Lot)	310 King Street	0.21	0.52	
Lock 8 Gateway Park	City (w/ Tot Lot)	163 Mellanby Avenue	3.56	8.80	
Lockview Park	Community	5 John Street	0.06	0.15	
Maple Park	Neighbourhood	360 Elgin Street	0.79	1.96	
Nickel Beach / Nickel Beach Playground	City (w/ Tot Lot)	69 Lake Road	7.49	18.52	
Oxford Boulevard Park	Neighbourhood (w/ Tot Lot)	16 Oxford Boulevard	1.21	2.99	Propose to remove/naturalize; only has swings
Port Colborne Lions Field	Community	148 Killaly Street West	1.95	4.81	
Port Colborne Tennis Club	Community	143 Helen Street	0.77	1.90	
Port Colborne Westside / Rotary Complex	Community	52 West Side Road	3.66	9.04	
Reservoir Park	Neighbourhood (w/ Tot Lot)	811 Fielden Avenue	2.21	5.47	Unlit soccer/baseball
Rose Shymansky Memorial Park	Community (w/ Tot Lot)	30 First Avenue	1.46	3.61	
Seaway Park	Parkette	31 Clarence Street	0.69	1.69	
Sunset Park	Neighbourhood (w/ Tot Lot)	150 Scholfield Avenue	2.04	5.03	
Thomas A. Lannan Sports Complex	City (w/ Tot Lot)	550 Elizabeth Street	23.15	57.21	
Vimy Park / Melissa's & John Daly Playground	Community (w/ Tot Lot)	670 Fielden Avenue	1.31	3.23	
Westdale Park	Neighbourhood (w/ Tot Lot)	114 Merritt Parkway	0.20	0.50	
		TOTAL	88.65	219.05	
		TOTAL # OF PARKS	32		
		TOTAL # OF TOT LOTS/ PLAY STRUCTURES	19		

Park Classification	Radius Served	Standard	Required Area (based on current OP standard)	Provided	Percentage of parks that meet design guidelines (size)
City Park	Serve entire City	2.2 ha/1000 residents	40.26 ha	42.96	n/a
Community Park	4.8 km radius	0.8 ha/1000 residents	14.65 ha	28.3	37.50%
Neighbourhood Park	0.8 km radius	1.0 ha/1000 residents	18.31 ha	10.81	53.80%
Parkette	Serve entire City	No standard	n/a	6.57	71%
Tot Lot	0.4 km radius	No standard	n/a	n/a	85.70%
			Minimum 73.22 ha parkland required based on OP park standards	88.65 ha	

* Calc. based on 2016 population - 18,306
Total service level: 88.65/18.03 = 4.9 ha/1000 population

Appendix **E**

Port Colborne Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan

EXISTING PARK INVENTORY

#1 Chestnut Park

Address: 9 Chestnut Street **Transit Connection:** No

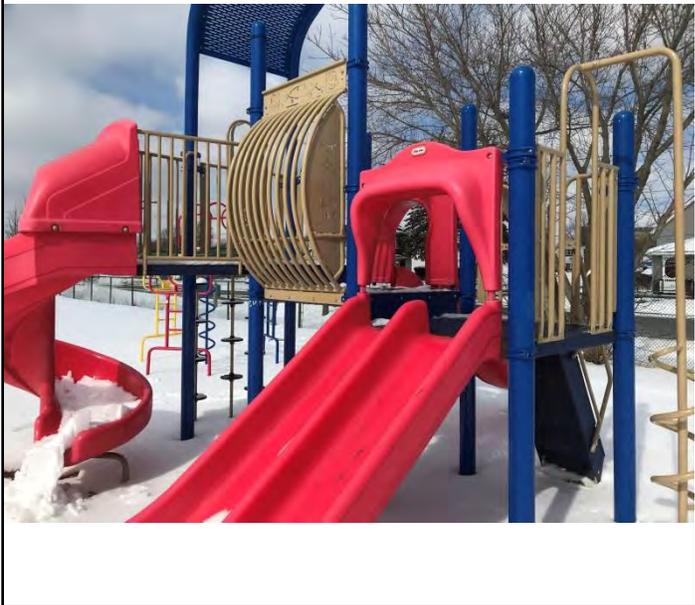
Type: Neighbourhood w/ Tot Lot **Size:** 9447.84m2 **Trail Connection:** None

Date of Review: March 2019

Description:
 Chestnut Park is located on the east side of the canal just off of Main Street East, at the corners of Chestnut Street, Clarke Street and Lock Street. The park is surrounded by residential neighbourhoods to the north and east, Industrial lands to the west and residential and parkland (Lock Park) to the south.
Trail Connections:
 There are no connections to any trail system but the site does connect to the adjacent Park and school.
Nearest Transit Stop
 It is 200m to nearest bus stop at Chestnut Street and Wellington Street (Port Colborne East Bus Route)



- Park Elements:**
- Standard City Identification sign
 - Picnic Table
 - Play Structure (1 – ages 2-12)
 - Swings (2 belt and 2 baby)
 - Wood-chip Surface
 - Raised Plastic Edger
 - Single Basketball Court on asphalt
 - Shade Trees
 - Etiquette sign
 - Trash Can (plastic drum)
 - Parking on gravel



- Condition:**
- Play Structure is in good condition
 - Landscape is well maintained
 - Park is contained by a chain link fence

Comments:
 Limited Shade
 No Lighting except from street lighting

Safety and CPTED:
 There is good visibility into the site and from the site outwards. Across Chestnut Street and Clarke is residential which allows for neighbourhood monitoring of the site. There is no lighting within the site as its intended time of use is from 7am to 10pm only. This site does not have the 911 location sign that most other parks contain.

- Recommendations:**
- Promote a cohesive package that unifies site elements. (Example: site furniture and trash receptacle from Maglin or other outdoor furniture company)
 - Add accessible park elements such as saucer swings and a walkway with a lowered section in the edger for access to the play structures
 - Add small shade structure
 - Add bench for seating
 - Basketball court needs upgrades
 - Add City standard 911 sign

Port Colborne Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan

EXISTING PARK INVENTORY

#2 Chippawa Park

Address: 85 Chippawa Road **Transit Connection:** No

Type: Parkette **Size:** 645.77m2 **Trail Connection:** None

Date of Review: March 2019

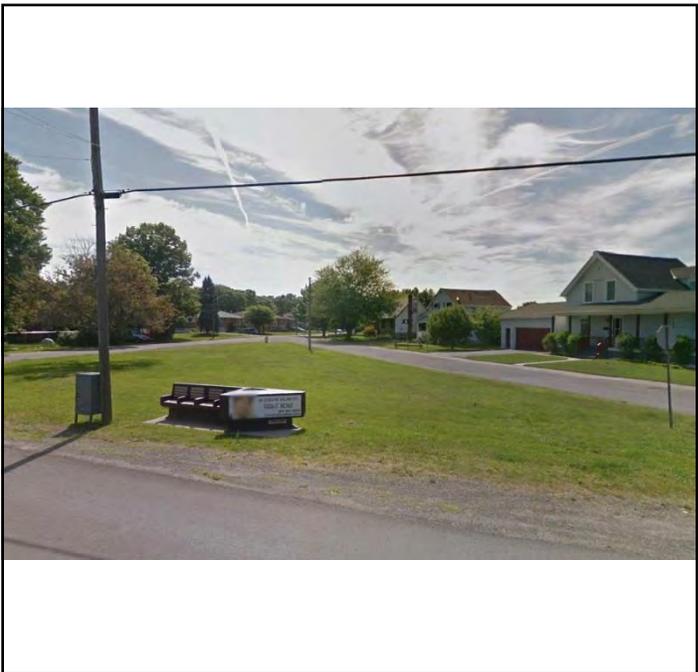
Description:
Chippawa Park is located on the east side of the canal just off of Chippawa Road and Dolphin Street four blocks north of Chestnut Park. Chippawa Park is a small open greenspace locked between Chippawa Road, Berkley Avenue and a side street.

Nearest Transit Stop:
87m to nearest bus stop at Willard Avenue and Dolphin Street (Port Colborne East Bus Route)



Park Elements:

- Bench
- Trash Can



Condition:

- Landscape is well maintained.

Comments:
Limited Shade

Safety and CPTED:
There is good visibility into the site and from the site outwards. The site is flanked by residential and contains a street light near the middle of the site. The site contains no signage for identification or etiquette and does not have the 911 location sign that most parks contain. The site is quite small and has residential roadways on all side with no fencing. As the site has no amenities it is not a CPTED concern at this point.

Recommendations:

- Promote a cohesive package that unifies site elements. (Example: site furniture and trash receptacle from Maglin or other outdoor furniture company)
- Add bench for seating
- Add City Standard Park Identification Sign

Port Colborne Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan

EXISTING PARK INVENTORY

#3 Derek Point Memorial Garden

Address: 401 Weir Road

Transit Connection: No

Type: Parkette w/ memorial site

Size: 39,604m²

Trail Connection: Yes (asphalt)

Date of Review: March 2019

Description:
Derek Point Memorial Garden is a park that is located along the old and new sections of the Welland Canal on the northern portion of the central island. Access points are at the gated entrance off Weir Road and a trail connection off of Ramey Avenue. The park was built as a memorial to Derek Kirk Zavitz who was lost in a shipping accident. The park is an open green space with trail connections. Layout of onsite artifacts are arranged to look like ship components
Nearest Transit Stop:
380m to nearest bus stop at Lock 8 Gateway Park on Main Street West (Port Colborne East Bus Route)



- Park Elements:**
- Benches (3)
 - Trash Can
 - Remnant ship components and artifacts
 - Gravel area inside the site that would accommodate parking)
 - Open green space
 - Poplar stand in center for shade
 - Asphalt trail system that connects park and neighbourhoods.
 - Vista views for watching ships in canal.
 - 911 signs
 - Large entrance feature



Condition:

- Landscape is well maintained.

Comments:
Limited Shade
The park has a lockable gated access point off of Weir Road

- Recommendations:**
- Promote a cohesive package that unifies site elements. (Example: site furniture and trash receptacle from Maglin or other outdoor furniture company)
 - Add City Standard Park Identification Sign
 - Create a better vehicular access to site with site lighting and open view into the site for safety.
 - Make the site more purposeful with a better perceived connection to the canal trail system.

Safety and CPTED:
The site has no lighting
There is good visibility once inside the park but poor visibility from outside views from roads

Port Colborne Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan

EXISTING PARK INVENTORY

#4 Dewitt Carter Playground

Address: 415 Fares Street

Transit Connection: No

Type: Neighbourhood w/ Tot Lot

Size: 407m²

Trail Connection: Yes (asphalt)

Date of Review: March 2019

Description:
The Dewitt Carter Playground is a small playground that is directly associated with the Dewitt Carter Public School directly to the north and is located on Fares Street. To the south of the site is a fire hall and Bell Street with residential in behind. The Dewitt Carter Playground is a small school/community park with fairly new playground components.



Nearest Transit Stop:
200m to nearest bus stop at Fares Street and Killaly Street East (Port Colborne East Bus Route)

- Park Elements:**
- Benches (2)
 - Trash Can
 - Newly installed small structures with fire house theme (2 structures - ages 2-12)
 - Wood-chip surface
 - Swings (2 belt and 2 baby and 1 accessible)
 - On-street parking
 - Small open green space
 - 911 signs
 - Site is fully fenced (chain link)
 - Memorial marker.
 - Some shade trees to the rear with some newly planted
 - There is a pollinator garden nearby



- Condition:**
- Landscape is well maintained.

Comments:
Limited Shade
Majority of the park surface is grass and play structure area. An edger was not determinable at time of review but there are no visible accessible walkways into the site.

- Recommendations:**
- Promote a cohesive package that unifies site elements. (Example: site furniture and trash receptacle from Maglin or other outdoor furniture company)
 - Add City Standard Park Identification Sign
 - Add etiquette signs
 - No edger at play structures and should have one installed.
 - Add bicycle rack
 - Add picnic table

Safety and CPTED:
The site has no lighting
This park is likely mostly used during school hours which allows for monitored use of the area. There is good visibility into the site and from the site outwards. Across Fares Street is residential which allows for neighbourhood monitoring of the site. There is a fire station to the south which also adds an element of security for the site.

Port Colborne Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan

EXISTING PARK INVENTORY

#5 East Village Community Park / Victoria Playground

Address: 145 Welland Street **Transit Connection:** No

Type: Neighbourhood w/ Tot Lot **Size:** 3780m2 **Trail Connection:** Yes (asphalt)

Date of Review: March 2019

Description:
 The East Village Community Park is located on the east side of the canal two blocks south of Clarence Street and the lift bridge. The park is in close proximity to the Friendship Trail and the Canal trail system. The park is flanked to the north and south by residential houses with Welland Street and Fares Street to the east and west. The park is separated from the residential lots by a chain link fence.
Nearest Transit Stop:
 72m to nearest bus stop at Fares Street and Nickel Street (Port Colborne East Bus Route)



- Park Elements:**
- Benches (2) Picnic table (2)
 - Trash Can (2)
 - Newly installed small structures with fire house theme (1 structure - ages 5-12)
 - Wood-chip surface with plastic edger
 - Swings (2 belt and 2 baby)
 - Small open green space Berms
 - City park identification signage
 - 911 signs Etiquette signage
 - Small picnic kiosk
 - Memorial flagpole Memorial trees,
 - An asphalt walkway,
 - Some shade trees along northern edge
 - Outdoor classroom/seating area made of armourstone.
 - Large paved surface area for basketball.



Condition:

- Landscape is well maintained.

Comments:
 The edger does not allow full access to the play structure. There is a walkway through the site that does allow access to the park but not the equipment or hard surface area and is in disrepair and needs updating. There is also a picnic shelter that is not accessible.
Safety and CPTED:
 The park has good site visibility into and out of the park. Its close proximity to residential lots makes for a safer setting. The site does not appear to have any lighting other than what is located on the adjacent streets.

- Recommendations:**
- Promote a cohesive package that unifies site elements. (Example: site furniture and trash receptacle from Maglin or other outdoor furniture company)
 - No edger at play structures and should have one installed.
 - Add bicycle rack
 - The basketball court could use an upgrade and a net added.
 - The walkway through the site is in disrepair and needs updating which would be an opportunity to add access paths to the play areas and seating.

Port Colborne Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan

EXISTING PARK INVENTORY

#6 Harry Dayboll / Oakwood Park

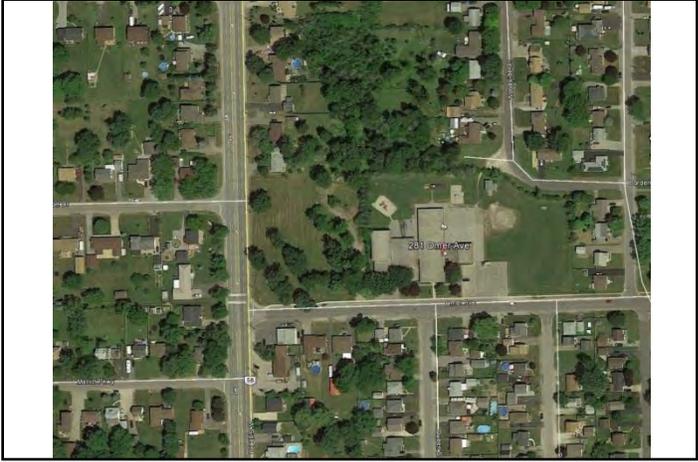
Address: 281 Omer Avenue **Transit Connection:** No

Type: Parkette **Size:** 9,613m2 **Trail Connection:** No

Date of Review: March 2019

Description:
 The Harry Dayboll/Oakwood Park is located on the northeast corner of Omer Avenue and highway 58 in the northwest portion of the city. The park is an open green space with large mature oak trees and a decorative garden by the City park identification sign. The park is closely associated with the Oakwood Public School to the east.

Nearest Transit Stop:
 185m to nearest bus stop along Highway 58 (Port Colborne West Bus Route)



- Park Elements:**
- Trash Can
 - Small open green space
 - City park identification signage
 - 911 signs
 - On street parking
 - Large mature shade trees
 - Ornamental plantings at sign
 - Gravel maintenance road.



Condition:

- Landscape is well maintained.

Comments:
 The site is not fully accessible except for a gravel maintenance road.
 The park is used as an open space for passive activities

Safety and CPTED:
 The park has good site visibility into and out of the park. Its close proximity to residential lots and a school makes for a safer setting. The depth of the site would be a concern after dark as there are no light in the park. The site does not appear to have any lighting other than what is located on the adjacent streets.

- Recommendations:**
- It is recommended that the existing trees be reviewed for health and any structural defects.
 - If this is to remain an open green space it is recommended that a trail system be included for full access and enjoyment of the space.
 - Design of any walkway and seating would have to be carefully considered in location so as to not adversely affect the health of the trees.
 - The site should also include some etiquette signage included.

Port Colborne Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan

EXISTING PARK INVENTORY

#7 Hawthorne Heights Park

Address: 10 Hawthorne Blvd **Transit Connection:** No

Type: Neighbourhood w/ Tot Lot **Size:** 8,391m2 **Trail Connection:** No

Date of Review: March 2019

Description:
 Hawthorne Heights is a large neighbourhood park located in the northwest section of the city. The park is surrounded by streets and residential lots on all sides. The site has Runnymede Road to the east, Park Lane to the north and Thorncrest Road to the west where it becomes Hawthorne Boulevard to the south.

Nearest Transit Stop:
 470m to bus stop at corner of Barrick Road and Apollo Drive (Port Colborne West Bus Route).



- Park Elements:**
- City park identification signage
 - Bench (1)
 - Picnic table
 - Play structure (1 – ages 5-12) – fairly new
 - Swings (2 belt and 2 baby)
 - Wood-chip surface
 - Raised plastic edger
Etiquette signs
 - Trash Can
 - Large basketball court on asphalt
 - Large shade trees along the perimeter of the site
 - Large green open space



Condition:

- Landscape is well maintained.

Comments:
 The site is not fully accessible and does not have a walkway system through the site.

Safety and CPTED:
 The park has fairly good site visibility into and out of the park. The site is surrounded by residential lots which make for a safer setting. The site has streets on all sides which may create potential safety concerns for people accessing the park. The site does not appear to have any lighting other than what is located on the adjacent streets.

- Recommendations**
- Maintenance is required at the City park identification sign.
 - Existing trees be reviewed for health and any structural defects.
 - Address accessibility by adding a walkway system through the park connecting its amenities.
 - The edger at the play areas could be bridged or modified to allow full access to the play structure
 - Add a 911 information sign
 - Promote a cohesive package that unifies site elements. (Example: site furniture and trash receptacle from Maglin or other outdoor furniture company)

Port Colborne Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan

EXISTING PARK INVENTORY

#12 Humberstone Centennial Park Beach

Address: 2767 Vimy Ridge Road **Transit Connection:** No

Type: Community (Beach) **Size:** 12,817m2 **Trail Connection:** No

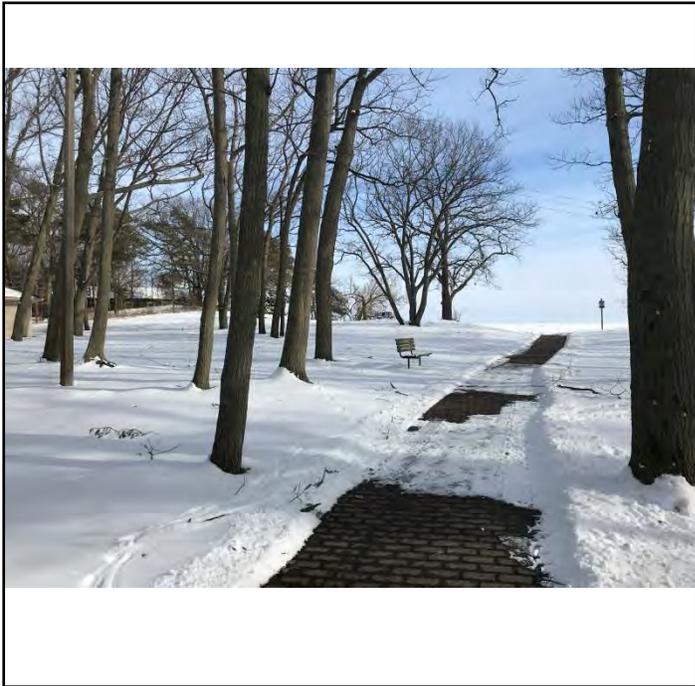
Date of Review: March 2019

Description:
 The Humberstone Centennial Park Beach is located on the east side of the City off of Pine Crest Road south of Humberstone Centennial Park. The park/beach has residential units to the east and west and Lake Erie to the south.

Nearest Transit Stop:
 There is no transit stop for this area.



- Park Elements:**
- Benches
 - Trash Cans
 - Park identification signage (Not City standard)
 - 911 signs
 - Etiquette signage
 - Large picnic kiosk
 - Memorial flagpole
 - Memorial benches
 - A stamped asphalt walkway to the beach
 - Large shade trees
 - No parking.
 - Streetlight out by beach and at walkway connection by road
 - Washroom Building
- Picnic tables
- Memorial cairn



Condition:

- Landscape is well maintained.

Comments:
 Access might be difficult due to the stamped concrete walkway.

Safety and CPTED:
 The park has poor site visibility into and out of the park with no visibility to the beach. Its close proximity to residential lots makes for a bit safer setting. The site does have some internal lighting.

- Recommendations:**
- Promote a cohesive package that unifies site elements. (Example: site furniture and trash receptacle from Maglin or other outdoor furniture company)
 - Add bicycle rack
 - The walkway through the site may require resurfacing to make it more access friendly.

Port Colborne Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan

EXISTING PARK INVENTORY

#13 Humberstone Shoe Park

Address: 721 Elm Street		Transit Connection: Yes	
Type: Neighbourhood w/ Tot Lot	Size: 4114m2	Trail Connection: No	
Date of Review: March 2019			
Description: The Elm Street Park is located on the west side of the canal in the north central part of the city at the intersection of Elm Street and Neff Street. The site is an open green space with play structures and some parking. <i>Nearest Transit Stop:</i> Located roadside at intersection of Elm and Neff Street (Port Colborne West Bus Route)			
Park Elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benches (2) • Picnic table (2) • Trash Can (1) • Newly installed multiple play structures (ages 5-12) • Wood-chip surface with plastic edger • Swings (2 belt and 2 baby) • Medium open green space • City park identification signage • 911 signs • Young shade trees • Side street parking • Small decorative planting bed (2) 			
Condition: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape is well maintained 			
Comments: The edger does not allow full access to the play structure.		Recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote a cohesive package that unifies site elements. (Example: site furniture and trash receptacle from Maglin or other outdoor furniture company) • No edger at play structures and should have one installed. • Add bicycle rack • The site could use a pathway through the park connecting the parking area or sidewalk to the play area for better access. • The site should contain etiquette signs. 	
Safety and CPTED: The park has good site visibility into and out of the park. Its close proximity to residential lots makes for a safer setting. The site does not appear to have any lighting other than what is located on the adjacent streets. The site is not fully accessible and does not have a walkway system through the site.			

Port Colborne Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan

EXISTING PARK INVENTORY

#14 Jacob E. Barrick Park

Address: 13 Hillcrest Road **Transit Connection:** No

Type: Neighbourhood w/ Tot Lot **Size:** 13,140m2 **Trail Connection:** No

Date of Review: March 2019

Description:
 Jacob E Barrick Park is located on a large green parcel of land on the west side of the canal in the north of the city. Access to the park is off of Hillcrest road and a pedestrian access off of Appolo Drive. This is a large pocket park surrounded by residential lots on three sides and future development to the north.

Nearest Transit Stop:
 170m to nearest bus stop at the intersection of Barrick Road and Apollo Drive. (Port Colborne West Bus Route)



- Park Elements:**
- Picnic table (1)
 - Trash Can (1)
 - Newly installed play structures (2 structures - ages 18 months - 5 and 5 - 12)
 - Wood-chip surface with plastic edger
 - Swings (2 belt and 2 baby)
 - Large open green space
 - City park identification signage
 - 911 signs
 - Some large shade trees
 - Decorative planting at park sign
 - Chain link fence along perimeter
 - 2 access points



Condition:

- Landscape is well maintained.

Comments:
 The edger does not allow full access to the play structure. This is a large sloped site with the play structures halfway up the hill. The site does not have a walkway system through the site.

Safety and CPTED:
 This is a large park that is mostly isolated from view along the neighbouring streets. Views into the park are mostly visible from residential area, with views out of the park on one side due to the high grade of the site. The site has no lighting and would not be a suitable site to use after dark due to its limited visibility and isolation.

- Recommendations:**
- Promote a cohesive package that unifies site elements. (Example: site furniture and trash receptacle from Maglin or other outdoor furniture company)
 - Add bicycle rack
 - The site could use a pathway through the park connecting the park to the neighbourhood and allow for better access to the play area.
 - The site should contain etiquette signs.
 - Development to the north could include a parking area and more sport related facilities.

Port Colborne Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan

EXISTING PARK INVENTORY

#15 Johnston Street Playground

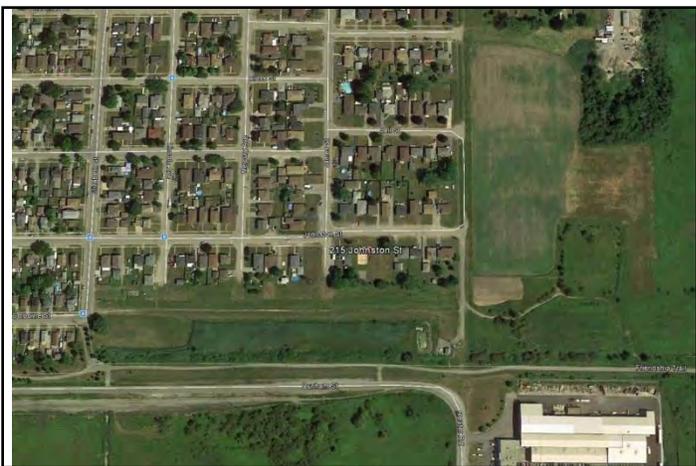
Address: 215 Johnston Street **Transit Connection:** No

Type: Neighbourhood w/ Tot Lot **Size:** 2,191m2 **Trail Connection:** No

Date of Review: March 2019

Description:
 The Johnston Street playground is located on the east side of the canal in the southeast corner of the city on Johnston Street. This site is a small sized green space in a residential neighbourhood. There is not a trail connection but the site is 250m away from the Friendship Trail

Nearest Transit Stop:
 215m to nearest bus stop at the intersection of Johnston Street and Lincoln Avenue. (Port Colborne East Bus Route)



- Park Elements:**
- Picnic table (1)
 - Trash Can (1)
 - Newly installed play structures (1 structure - ages 5-12)
 - Wood-chip surface with plastic edger
 - Swings (2 belt and 2 baby)
 - Small open green space
 - City park identification signage
 - 911 signs
 - Etiquette signage
 - A large shade tree
 - Paved surface area for single basketball court.
 - Chain link fence on three sides



Condition:

- Landscape is well maintained.

Comments:
 The edger does not allow full access to the play structure. Although this is a small park area there is no walkway system allowing access to the playground, swings or basketball court.

Safety and CPTED:
 This is a small park that is fenced on three sides with residential on three sides as well. The site is wide open with good visibility but no lighting.

- Recommendations:**
- Promote a cohesive package that unifies site elements. (Example: site furniture and trash receptacle from Maglin or other outdoor furniture company)
 - Add bicycle rack
 - The site could use a pathway through the park and a sidewalk across the frontage.

Port Colborne Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan

EXISTING PARK INVENTORY

#16 King George Memorial Park

Address: 64 Clarence Street

Transit Connection: No

Type: Parkette

Size: 1102m2

Trail Connection: No

Date of Review: March 2019

Description:

The King George Memorial Park is located at the intersection of Clarence Street and Catharine Street on the west side of the canal in the central part of the city. This is a small memorial park, urban green space. Although there is not a trail connection the site is 200m from the canal promenade.

Nearest Transit Stop:
120m to the nearest bus stop at the corner of Clarence Street and King Street or at the intersection of Charlotte Street and Catharine Street (Port Colborne West Bus Route)



Park Elements:

- Benches (3)
- Picnic table (2)
- Trash Can (1)
- Bike rack (1)
- small open green space
- City park identification signage
- 911 signs
- Memorial artifacts
- memorial flagpole
- memorial cairn and plaques
- precast paver walkways bisecting site
- some shade trees
- Parking is available on street and in parking lot



Condition:

- Landscape is well maintained

Comments:

The park has a precast paver sidewalk bisecting the park with bench seating directly adjacent to the hard surfacing. There is a sidewalk on three sides which allows access from the downtown area along with accessible parking from the parking lot.

Safety and CPTED:

The park is a small, very open space that is located in busy part of the core. The site has good visibility and a strong community presence. The site does not appear to have any lighting other than what is located on the adjacent streets.

Recommendations:

- Promote a cohesive package that unifies site elements. (Example: site furniture and trash receptacle from Maglin or other outdoor furniture company)
- The walkway through the site may require updating
- Bike rack could use a concrete base
- Add etiquette signs to the park

Port Colborne Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan

EXISTING PARK INVENTORY

#17 Library Park

Address: 310 King Street

Transit Connection: No

Type: Neighbourhood w/ Tot Lot

Size: 2,104m²

Trail Connection: No

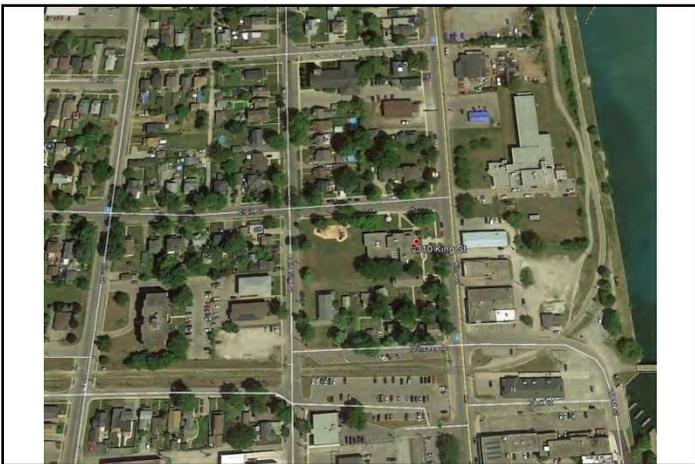
Date of Review: March 2019

Description:

Library Park is located at the intersection of Elgin Street and Catharine Street on the west side of the canal in the central part of the city. This small neighbourhood park has a direct connection with the library

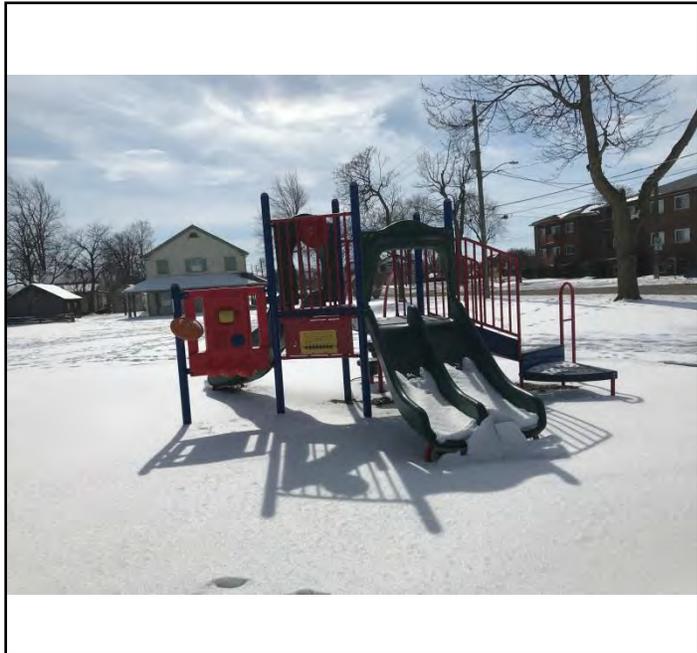
Nearest Transit Stop:

170m to nearest bus stop at the intersection of Catharine Street and Elgin Street. (Port Colborne West Bus Route)



Park Elements:

- Benches (1)
- Picnic table (2)
- Trash Can (1)
- Play structures (2 structure - ages 18 months – 5 and 5-12)
- Wood-chip surface with plastic edger
- Swings (2 belt and 2 baby)
- Small open green space
- Small gazebo associated with library
- A concrete walkway
- Some shade trees along edge of park
- Parking is available on street



Condition:

- Landscape is well maintained.

Comments:

The park has a walkway connection from the sidewalk to the play area with an opening in the edger for access.

Safety and CPTED:

The park has good site visibility into and out of the park. Its close proximity to residential lots makes for a safer setting. The site does not appear to have any lighting other than what is located on the adjacent streets.

Recommendations:

- Promote a cohesive package that unifies site elements. (Example: site furniture and trash receptacle from Maglin or other outdoor furniture company)
- Add a City park identification sign for wayfinding purposes along with 911 and etiquette signs
- Although there is a bike rack at the library an additional one at the park complete with concrete pad might be beneficial.

Port Colborne Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan

EXISTING PARK INVENTORY

#23 Port Colborne Lions Field

Address: 148 Killaly Street West		Transit Connection: No	
Type: Community	Size: 19,462m ²	Trail Connection: No	
Date of Review: March 2019			
Description: Lions Field Park is located on the west side of the canal in the central part of the City. It is a sports field with Kiosk, lights and change facilities <i>Nearest Transit Stop:</i> Located roadside at site at the intersection of Killaly Street West and Elm Street (Port Colborne West Bus Route)			
Park Elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Picnic table (10+) – possibly used for storage • Trash Cans • Small open green space • Park identification signage • Etiquette signage • Food kiosk • Change/Washroom building • Flag pole • Lighting • Baseball diamond • Memorial cairn • On street parking 			
Condition: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape is well maintained. 			
Comments: The park has a ball diamond, but doesn't look used. The site is accessible.		Recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The buildings look dated and may need an upgrade along with an update to the lighting if retained for baseball. 	
Safety and CPTED: The park has good visibility and is located next to police station			

Port Colborne Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan

EXISTING PARK INVENTORY

#18 Lock 8 Gateway Park

Address: 163 Mellanby Avenue **Transit Connection:** Yes

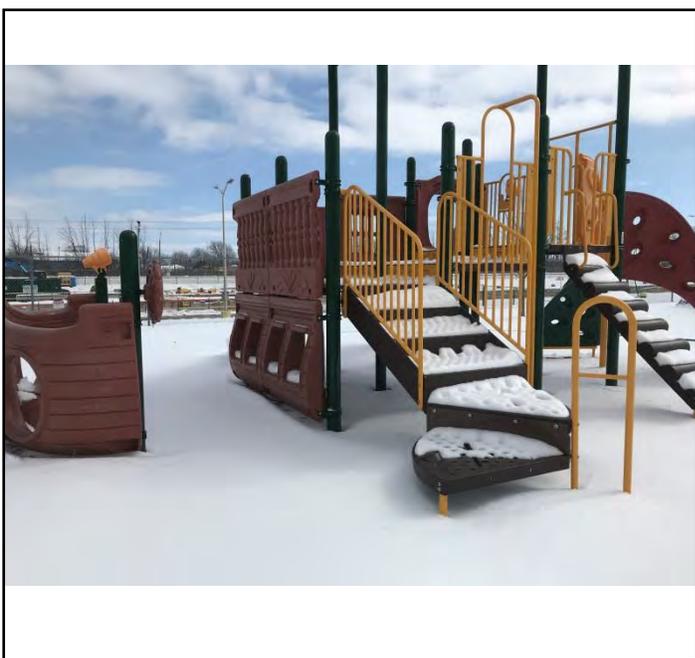
Type: City w/ Tot Lot **Size:** 35,629m2 **Trail Connection:** Yes (asphalt, concrete)

Date of Review: March 2019

Description:
 Lock 8 Gateway Park is located on the island and runs along the canal from Main Street West down to the lift bridge on Mellanby Avenue. The park is part of a larger community Canal Trail system.
Nearest Transit Stop:
 A transit stop is located roadside on Main Street West (Port Colborne East Bus Route)



- Park Elements:**
- Benches (5+) Picnic table (5+)
 - Trash Can (5+) Bike racks
 - Themed play structures (1 structure - ages 5-12)
 - Wood-chip surface with plastic edger
 - Swings (2 belt and 2 baby)
 - Large open green space with lookout area
 - City park identification signage
 - 911 signs and etiquette signage
 - Wayfinding, information and interpretive signage
 - Multiple shade structures
 - Flagpoles, memorial trees and benches
 - Asphalt and concrete walkways
 - Shade trees and planting beds throughout park
 - Washroom facilities are available
 - Parking available in 2 parking lots
 - Heritage building and BBQ shelter
 - Boat themed skate park, water fountains



Condition:

- Landscape is well maintained.

Comments:
 The edger does not allow full access to the play structure. There is a large newer skate park located in the south section of the park that has many benches, trash cans associated with it along with Parks signage, some way finding signs and specimen park stature trees. Not all of the park is accessible.
Safety and CPTED:
 This is a very long park with no visibility from one end to the other. The site is located in a busy section of the town with lots of activity in the area which makes for a safer setting. There are a few areas obscured from the road such as the picnic pavilion and parts of the lookout.

- Recommendations:**
- Promote a cohesive package that unifies site elements. (Example: site furniture and trash receptacle from Maglin or other outdoor furniture company)
 - The picnic pavilion should be maintained more often during off season times to remove garbage and other debris.
 - The play area could have a walkway that leads to it along with a break in the edger to allow for full access.
 - Mature trees should be reviewed for health and structural defects with a replanting scheme developed to replace mature trees in decline such as the willows.

Port Colborne Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan

EXISTING PARK INVENTORY

#19 Lockview Park

Address: 5 John Street

Transit Connection: No

Type: Community

Size: 60,102m²

Trail Connection: No

Date of Review: March 2019

Description:

Lockview Park is a large open green space located at the end of John Street on the east side of the canal south of Chestnut park and north of Lakeshore Catholic School.

There is a road connection to the Thomas A Lannan Sports Complex which is only 230m down John Street

Nearest Transit Stop:

230m to nearest bus stop at the intersection of John Street and Wellington Street (Port Colborne East Bus Route)



Park Elements:

- Benches (2+)
- Picnic table (2+)
- Trash Can (2)
- Large open green space
- Many vegetable/community gardens (some are raised)
- Large water storage container
- 911 signs
- Etiquette signage
- Some shade trees are scattered throughout park
- Parking is available south of Chestnut Park
- Restrooms are available at facility building.
- Small soccer pitch (1) with bleacher
- Large soccer pitch (possible part of school)



Condition:

- Landscape is well maintained.

Comments:

Park is directly adjacent to a school that has a large football field and bleachers. Both soccer fields have a small bleacher area. Close proximity to Thomas A Lannan Sports Complex. There are raised planters but they are more for convenience than accessibility. The washrooms are not fully accessible and access to this building from John Street is hindered by a drainage ditch and no walkways.

Safety and CPTED:

This is a large community green space that has no lighting and limited site visibility and access.

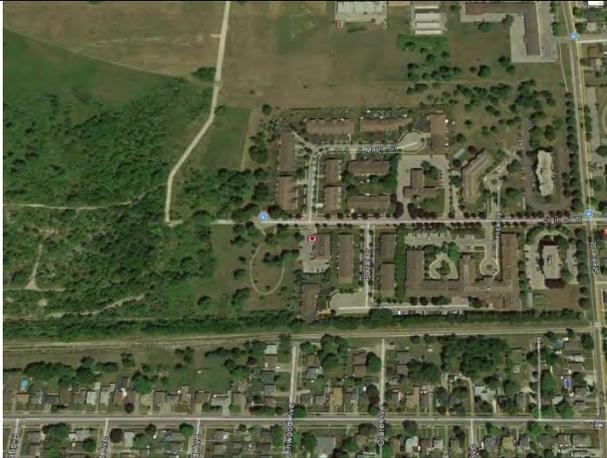
Recommendations:

- Add bicycle rack on concrete pad
- Soccer goals require repair
- Add City Identification signage for park
- Add additional etiquette signage
- The site could be made more accessible with the addition of a walkway that could tie in from Chestnut Street to John Street along with the inclusion of a culvert or small bridge to cross the ditch.
- Additional trees could be planted for shade
- Trees on canal side need to be maintained, removed and replanted

Port Colborne Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan

EXISTING PARK INVENTORY

#20 Maple Park

Address: 360 Elgin Street		Transit Connection: Yes	
Type: Neighbourhood	Size: 7,920m ²	Trail Connection: Yes (not formal)	
Date of Review: March 2019			
Description: Maple Park is located at the end of Elgin Street on the west side of the canal near the west central section of the City. The site connects to an informal trail system around an old quarry to the west. <i>Nearest Transit Stop:</i> Located roadside at site (Port Colborne West Bus Route)			
Park Elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Benches (3)• Picnic table (1)• Trash Can (1)• medium open green space• City Park identification signage• 911 signs• A looping asphalt walkway,• Large shade trees• Horseshoe pit			
Condition: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Landscape is well maintained.			
Comments: There is a walkway through the site that does allow access to the park and seating areas.		Recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote a cohesive package that unifies site elements. (Example: site furniture and trash receptacle from Maglin or other outdoor furniture company)• Add bicycle rack• Upgrades to this site are not recommended until the demographics for the new development have been determined in order to assess what should be included in upgrades or additions to the park.• Add etiquette signs	
Safety and CPTED: The park is located at the end of the street and has woods on two sides of it with a residential/medical clinic development on the east and north side. Visibility into this park in the evening would be very limited with its location and no lighting.			

Port Colborne Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan

EXISTING PARK INVENTORY

#21 Nickel Beach / Nickel Beach Playground

Address: 69 Lake Road

Transit Connection: No

Type: City (w/ Tot Lot and Beach) **Size:** 74,941m²

Trail Connection: No

Date of Review: March 2019

Description:
Nickel Beach Park is located at the end of Lake Road on the east side of the canal south of Rodney Street on the shore of Lake Erie. The site contains a controlled access gate, an asphalt drive to beach, washroom building and some lighting along the beach.
Nearest Transit Stop:
1000m to bus stop at intersection of Fares Street and Nickel Street. (Port Colborne East Bus Route)



- Park Elements:**
- Picnic table (10+)
 - Trash Can (10+)
 - Older small play structure (1 structure - ages 5-12)
 - Sand surface with no edger
 - Swings (2 belt and 2 baby)
 - Small open green space
 - Park identification signage
 - 911 signs
 - Etiquette signage
 - Warning signage
 - Interpretive signage
 - Storage building with security fence
 - Some shade trees at play area
 - Parking is available in a small lot at the entrance and on the beach.
 - Beach area with dunes
 - Washroom and change facility



Condition:

- Landscape is well maintained.

Comments:
The park has a large beach area but no programmed activities.
The sand base would limit any accessibility to the swing and play area. The play structure is not accessible.

Safety and CPTED:
This park and beach area is very difficult to find and has very limited visibility of the park area from the road and no visibility of the beach area. There is lighting along the bank of the beach to the washroom building but its effectiveness was not determinable.

- Recommendations:**
- Add bicycle racks
 - Play structure needs to be updated
 - Updates to washrooms and change rooms needed
 - Consider updating concession stand
 - Parking area is small and not well maintained.
 - Consider alternative access and parking.
 - Storage building needs to be maintained off season.
 - One recommendation might be to have some wayfinding signage as this park is difficult to locate.
 - The site could be made more accessible with the addition of a walkway in the play and picnic area.

Port Colborne Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan

EXISTING PARK INVENTORY

#22 Oxford Boulevard Park

Address: 16 Oxford Boulevard

Transit Connection: No

Type: Neighbourhood w/ Tot Lot

Size: 12,107m²

Trail Connection: No

Date of Review: March 2019

Description:

Oxford Boulevard Park is located on the west side of the canal in the northwest section of the City.

Nearest Transit Stop:

960m to bus stop at intersection of Barrick Street and Apollo Street. (Port Colborne West Bus Route)



Park Elements:

- Benches (1)
- Swings (2 belt and 2 baby)
- The base under the swings is grass
- Small open green space
- Wooded naturalized area



Condition:

- Landscape is well maintained.

Comments:

There is not a play structure at this location but there are swings which are not accessible.

The site is very difficult to locate and contains a picnic table, swings and an open green space.

Safety and CPTED:

This park is difficult to find with very limited visual access. Most of the visible access would come from the residential units on the west side of the park. The north and east sides of the park are wooded.

Recommendations:

- If maintained as a park, promote a cohesive package that unifies site elements. (Example: site furniture and trash receptacle from Maglin or other outdoor furniture company)
- Add bicycle rack
- Add wayfinding signage, etiquette signage, City park identification signage and 911 signage.
- Add parking.
- As there are other parks in the immediate area it is recommended that this park have the swings removed and left to naturalize which will save on maintenance costs.

Port Colborne Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan

EXISTING PARK INVENTORY

#25 Reservoir Park

Address: 811 Fielden Avenue

Transit Connection: No

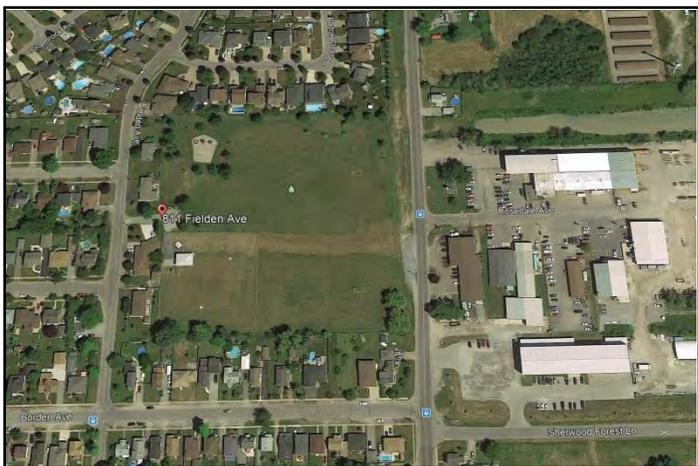
Type: Neighbourhood w/ Tot Lot

Size: 22,123m²

Trail Connection: No

Date of Review: March 2019

Description:
Reservoir Park is located on the west side of the canal in the north central part of the City. The park has residential units on 3 sides and is open to Elm Street and Industrial lands. The site has a large soccer field with goals, an old ball diamond for informal play, and a large open green space.



Nearest Transit Stop:
Located roadside at site on Elm Street (Port Colborne West Bus Route)

- Park Elements:**
- Picnic table (2)
 - Trash Can (1)
 - Play structures and climbing wall. (3 structures – ages 2-5 and 5-12)
 - Peastone surface with plastic edger
 - Swings (4 belt and 2 baby)
 - Large open green space
 - City park identification signage
 - Wayfinding signage at road
 - Etiquette signage
 - Full size soccer field
 - Old baseball diamond
 - Some shade trees along perimeter of site
 - Armour stone barriers at parking area.
 - Onsite parking, gravel lot



Condition:

- Landscape is well maintained.

Comments:
The edger does not allow full access to the play structure. The park is not fully accessible.

- Recommendations:**
- Promote a cohesive package that unifies site elements. (Example: site furniture and trash receptacle from Maglin or other outdoor furniture company)
 - Add bicycle rack
 - City park identification sign needs some repair work
 - Formalize some parking off of Elm Street
 - Create a meandering walkway that connects site to sidewalk(s), parking and play structures.

Safety and CPTED:
The park has generally good site visibility into and out of the park. Its close proximity to residential lots makes for a safer setting. The site does have a light in the parking area.

Port Colborne Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan

EXISTING PARK INVENTORY

#26 Rose Shymansky Memorial Park

Address: 30 First Avenue

Transit Connection: Yes

Type: Community w/ Tot Lot

Size: 14,589m2

Trail Connection: No

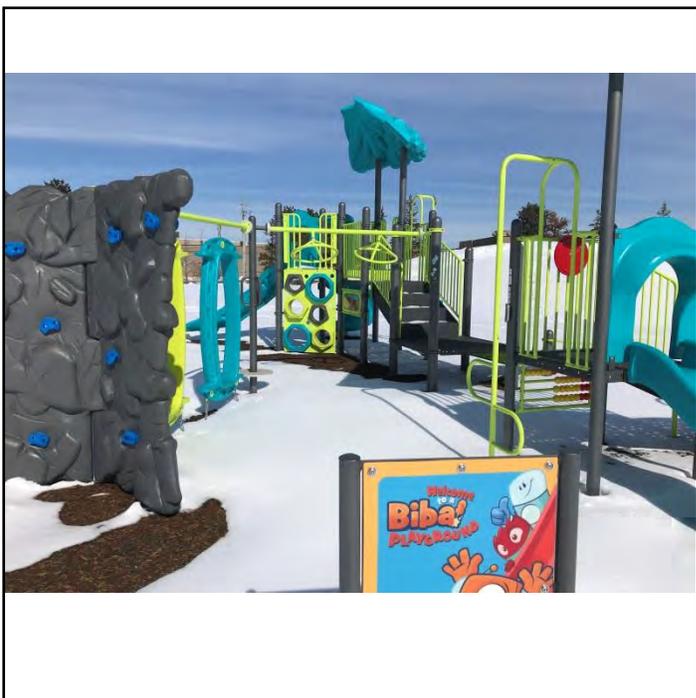
Date of Review: March 2019

Description:
 Rose Shymansky Memorial Park is located on the west side of the canal in the west central part of the City opposite the Port Colborne Rotary Complex and Tennis Club.

Nearest Transit Stop:
 Located roadside at the intersection of West Side Road and Sheba Crescent. (Port Colborne West Bus Route)



- Park Elements:**
- Benches (2)
 - Picnic table (1)
 - Trash Can (1)
 - Newly installed play structures (2 structure - ages 18 months – 5 and 5 -12)
 - Rubberized safety surface
 - Large open green space
 - Toboggan hill
 - City park identification signage
 - 911 signs
 - Etiquette signage
 - Old ball diamond
 - Decorative plantings at park sign
 - Some newly installed shade trees
 - Street parking is available on Sheba Crescent



Condition:

- Landscape is well maintained.

Comments:
 Play structures are for ages 1.5 to 5 years and 5 to 12 years. The play structures with rubberized surface are quite new and feature a full access environment with interpretive play signage at play structures. While the play structures are fully accessible there is not a walkway to them

Safety and CPTED:
 The park has good site visibility into and out of the park. Its close proximity to residential lots makes for a safer setting. The toboggan hill obstructs through site views

- Recommendations:**
- Promote a cohesive package that unifies site elements. (Example: site furniture and trash receptacle from Maglin or other outdoor furniture company)
 - Add bicycle rack
 - Formalize some parking off of Sheba Crescent or 1st Avenue.
 - Create a meandering walkway that connects site to sidewalk(s), parking and play structure.
 - Remove old baseball backstop.

Port Colborne Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan

EXISTING PARK INVENTORY

#27 Seaway Park

Address: 31 Clarence Street		Transit Connection: No	
Type: Parkette	Size: 6,854m ²	Trail Connection: Yes (asphalt)	
Date of Review: March 2019			
Description: Seaway Park is located on the east side of the canal at the lift bridge on Clarence Street in the east central part of the City. The park has multiple trail connections including the Canal Trail, Friendship Trail and is part of the Niagara Circle Route. <i>Nearest Transit Stop:</i> Located roadside along Clarence Street. (Port Colborne East Bus Route)			
Park Elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Benches (5+)• Picnic table (3)• Trash Can (1)• Small open green space• Park identification signage (not City standard)• 911 signs• Etiquette signage• Interpretive signage• Wayfinding signage• Small gazebo for shade• Flag and banner poles• Asphalt and paver walkways• Shade trees throughout site.• Parking is available on the side street.• Ornamental plantings at City park identification sign and along canal area by fence.			
Condition: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Landscape is well maintained.			
Comments: <p>The park is accessible and the trail/walkway is maintained through winter.</p> <p>The site contains cycling trails and walking trail connections.</p> <p>The walkway system allows for access through the park and to park features such as the gazebo</p>		Recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote a cohesive package that unifies site elements. (Example: site furniture and trash receptacle from Maglin or other outdoor furniture company)• Add bicycle rack.• Replace park sign with standard City Park Identification sign.	
Safety and CPTED: <p>The site is fairly open with a road and residential on 2 sides and the canal on the other.</p>			

Port Colborne Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan

EXISTING PARK INVENTORY

#28 Sunset Park

Address: 150 Scholfield Avenue

Transit Connection: No

Type: Neighbourhood w/ Tot Lot

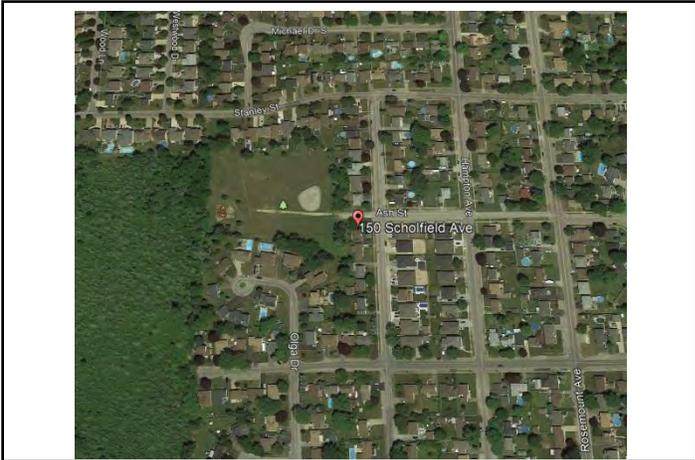
Size: 20,371m²

Trail Connection: No

Date of Review: March 2019

Description:
Sunset Park is located on the west side of the canal in the west central part of the City. The site has residential units on three sides and a naturalized area to the west.

Nearest Transit Stop:
1200m to bus stop at the intersection of Ash Street and Steele Street. (Port Colborne West Bus Route)



- Park Elements:**
- Trash Can
 - Newly installed play structures (2 structure - ages 18 months – 5 and 5 -12)
 - Interpretive play signage
 - Rubber safety surface
 - Large open green space
 - Park identification signage (not City standard)
 - 911 signs
 - Etiquette signage
 - Some shade trees throughout park
 - Old softball diamond
 - Small soccer field with small goals
 - Large paved surface area with 2 hoop basketball court which is under construction.



Condition:

- Landscape is well maintained.

Comments:
Large park with play structures and a small soccer pitch and ball diamond Basketball court is under construction. The site is not fully accessible and does not have a walkway system through the site.

Safety and CPTED:
Play area is visible from road but there is a lot of open green space only visible from residential lots. Play area is set back in the corner of the site next to the naturalized area with No lighting.

- Recommendations:**
- Promote a cohesive package that unifies site elements. (Example: site furniture and trash receptacle from Maglin or other outdoor furniture company)
 - Add bicycle rack
 - Replace park sign with standard City Park Identification sign,
 - Trashcans could be updated.
 - The inclusion of an accessible walkway would be beneficial.
 - Could make parking available onsite off of Scholfield Drive.

Port Colborne Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan

EXISTING PARK INVENTORY

#29 Thomas A. Lannan Sports Complex

Address: 550 Elizabeth Street

Transit Connection: No

Type: City w/ Tot Lot

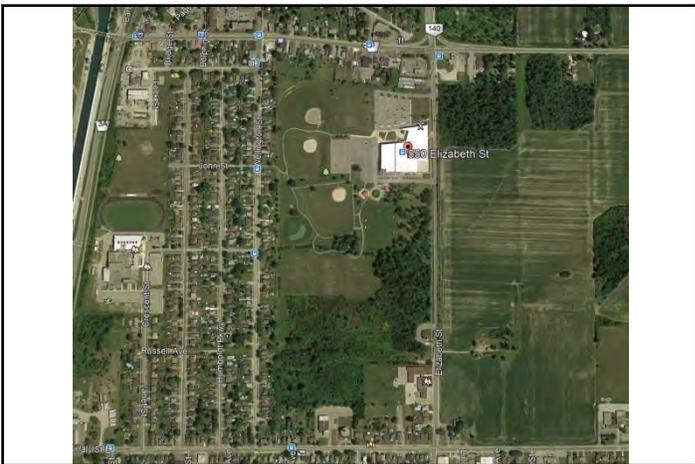
Size: 231,534m2

Trail Connection: Yes

Date of Review: March 2019

Description:
 The Thomas A Lannan Sports Complex and Vale Health and Wellness Centre are located on the east side of the canal just as you come in to the City from Highway 140. It has residential units to the north and west of the site with farmland and forest to the east and south.

Nearest Transit Stop:
 There is a transit stop right on site at the Wellness Centre. (Port Colborne East Bus Route)



- Park Elements:**
- Benches Picnic tables
 - Trash Cans
 - Play structure (1 structure - ages 5-12)
 - Stone chip surface with plastic edger
 - Small open green space
 - Park identification signage (not City standard)
 - 911 signs Etiquette signage
 - 3 baseball diamonds - 1 with lighting
 - 5 soccer playing fields – 2 with lighting
 - Lawn bowling/Bocce Ball
 - Outdoor kiosk
 - Asphalt walkways
 - Outdoor exercise area.
 - Wooded area south of site
 - Entrance feature off of wellington Street
 - Flag poles Wayfinding



Condition:

- Landscape is well maintained.

Comments:
 This is a very large site with multiple activities available on site.

Safety and CPTED:
 The park is well maintained and lighted but does have some areas not fully visible throughout the site.

- Recommendations:**
- Promote a cohesive package that unifies site elements. (Example: site furniture and trash receptacle from Maglin or other outdoor furniture company)
 - Add bicycle racks at fields

Port Colborne Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan

EXISTING PARK INVENTORY

#24 Port Colborne Tennis Club

Address: 143 Helen Street

Transit Connection: No

Type: Community

Size: 7,679m²

Trail Connection: No

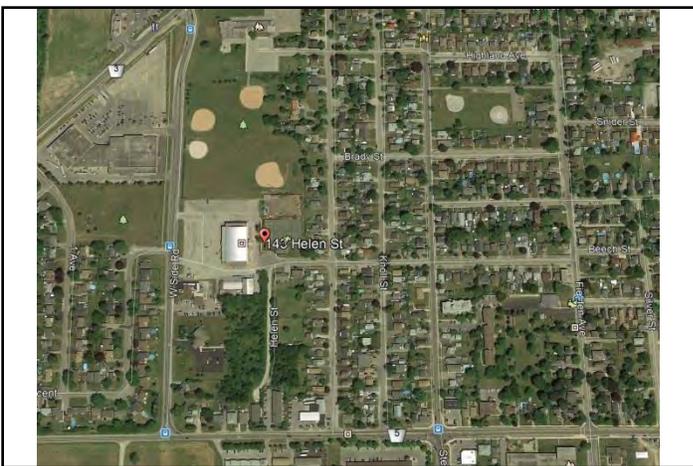
Date of Review: March 2019

Description:

The Port Colborne Tennis Club is located on the west side of the canal in the central part of the City. It is located directly adjacent to the Rotary Sports Complex.

Nearest Transit Stop:

500m to bus stop at intersection of Killaly Street West and Steele Street (Port Colborne West Bus Route)



Park Elements:

- Benches (3+)
- Picnic table
- Bike rack
- Trash Can
- Small open green space
- Facility identification signage on building
- 911 signs
- Etiquette signage
- Lighting
- Parking is available on street
- Tennis Club building
- Washroom facilities
- Shade structure is part of building overhang
- 8 tennis courts (4 are used)



Condition:

- Landscape is well maintained.

Comments:

4 tennis courts and a storage area in disrepair along with the fencing. Signage is confusing about who is eligible to play.

Safety and CPTED:

Used only during specific hours and has lighting during later hours. The facility is locked when not in use.

Recommendations:

- 4 tennis courts and their associated fencing need repair or removal.
- Shrubs in front of building could use some maintenance.

Port Colborne Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan

EXISTING PARK INVENTORY

#30 Vimy Park / Melissa's & John Daly Playground

Address: 670 Fielden Avenue **Transit Connection:** No

Type: Community w/ Tot Lot **Size:** 13,086m2 **Trail Connection:** No

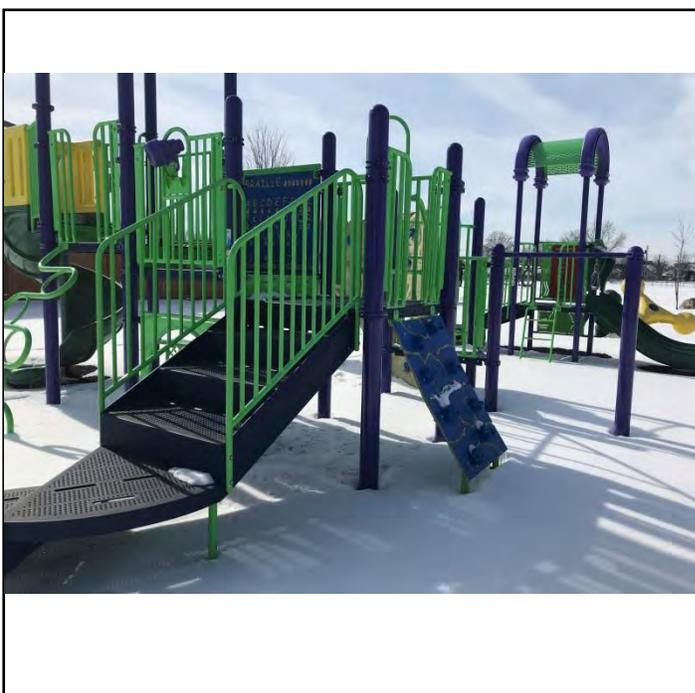
Date of Review: March 2019

Description:
 Vimy Park is located west of the canal in the west central part of the City.

Nearest Transit Stop:
 145m to bus stop at the intersection of Fielden Avenue and Neff Street. (Port Colborne West Bus Route)



- Park Elements:**
- Benches (4)
 - Picnic table
 - Trash Can
 - Play structure (2 structure - ages 18 months – 5 and 5 - 12)
 - Rubber safety surfacing
 - 2 softball diamonds with bleachers
 - City park identification signage
 - 911 signs
 - Etiquette signage
 - Memorial cairn
 - Washrooms are available in washroom/maintenance building and storage bins.
 - An asphalt walkway through site,
 - Some shade trees along northern edge
 - Onsite parking is available.
 - Large paved surface area for parking and one basketball hoop.
 - Armourstone bench seating



Condition:

- Landscape is well maintained.

Comments:
 The site has a walkway that goes through the site from one side to the other.
 People use this as a dog park in winter

Safety and CPTED:
 The park is visible from the street on either side but the buildings and one play diamond is obscured by houses. Park has graffiti on buildings and play structures. There are no lights in the park.

- Recommendations:**
- Promote a cohesive package that unifies site elements. (Example: site furniture and trash receptacle from Maglin or other outdoor furniture company)
 - Add bicycle rack
 - The walkway through the site is in disrepair and needs updating.
 - Remove graffiti.

Port Colborne Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan

EXISTING PARK INVENTORY

#31 Westdale Park

Address: 114 Merritt Parkway **Transit Connection:** No

Type: Neighbourhood w/ Tot Lot **Size:** 2011m2 **Trail Connection:** No

Date of Review: March 2019

Description:
 The Westdale Park is located on the west side of the canal on the west edge of the City. The park is in close proximity to the Westside Rotary Sports Complex and the Rose Shymansky Memorial Park. The park is surrounded by residential houses on all sides. The park is separated from the residential lots by a chain link fence.
Nearest Transit Stop:
 60m to nearest bus stop at Corvette Street and Merritt Parkway (Port Colborne West Bus Route)



- Park Elements:**
- Benches (2)
 - Picnic table (1)
 - Trash Can (1)
 - Newly installed play structure (1 structure - ages 18 months -12)
 - Wood-chip surface with plastic edger
 - Swings (2 belt and 2 baby)
 - Small open green space
 - City park identification signage
 - 911 signs
 - Large willow trees along rear of site



Condition:

- Landscape is well maintained.

Comments:
 The edger does not allow full access to the play structure.

Safety and CPTED:
 The park has good site visibility into and out of the park. Its close proximity to residential lots makes for a safer setting. The site does not appear to have any lighting other than what is located on the adjacent streets. Sides of park are fenced.

- Recommendations:**
- Promote a cohesive package that unifies site elements. (Example: site furniture and trash receptacle from Maglin or other outdoor furniture company)
 - Edger should have opening in it or be bridged for access.
 - A walkway could be incorporated into site for accessibility.
 - Add bicycle rack
 - Etiquette signs should be added

Port Colborne Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan

EXISTING PARK INVENTORY

#32 Port Colborne Westside / Rotary Complex

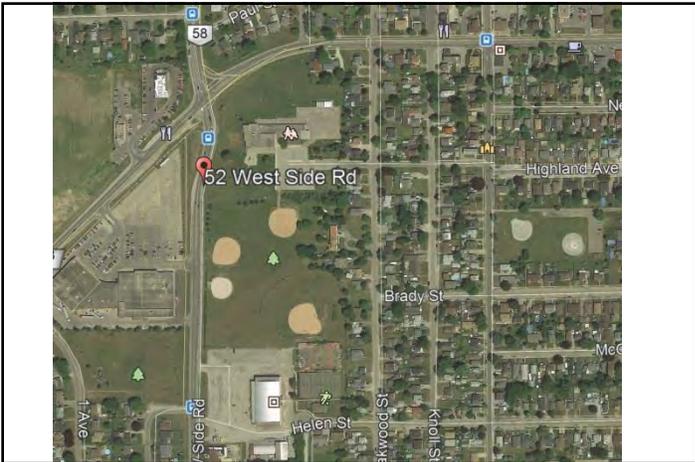
Address: 52 West Side Road **Transit Connection:** Yes

Type: Community **Size:** 36,583m2 **Trail Connection:** No

Date of Review: March 2019

Description:
 The Port Colborne Westside Rotary Park is located on the west side of the canal in the west central part of the City. The park is bordered by Hwy #3 and West Side Road to the north and west, Helen Street to the south and Oakwood Street to the east. The park is in close proximity to The Port Colborne Tennis Club, the Rose Shymansky Park and the St. John Bosco Catholic School

Nearest Transit Stop:
 Located curbside on West Side Road. (Port Colborne West Bus Route)



- Park Elements:**
- Picnic table
 - Trash Can
 - Scattered shade trees
 - Old batting cage
 - Some etiquette signage
 - Some shade trees along eastern edge
 - Indoor hockey rink (converted to storage units)
 - Large paved parking lot
 - Washroom facilities available (portable)
 - 4 baseball fields (1 with lighting)
 - Bleachers at ball fields
 - Benches at all ball fields
 - Community Events Board
 - Buildings for park maintenance (Park's Department)



Condition:

- Landscape is maintained. Facilities could use upgrade.

Comments:
 This park is in transition with the arena being phased out and the ball fields seem to be secondary use fields. Access to the fields is limited.

Safety and CPTED:
 The park has good site visibility into and out of the site. Its close proximity to residential lots makes for a safer setting. The site does appear to have some lighting on a ball diamond and on the adjacent streets.

- Recommendations:**
- Promote a cohesive package that unifies site elements. (Example: site furniture and trash receptacle from Maglin or other outdoor furniture company)
 - Add bicycle racks
 - Add Standard City Identification signs
 - Upkeep and repair is required to most physical structures and fencing.

Port Colborne Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan

EXISTING PARK INVENTORY

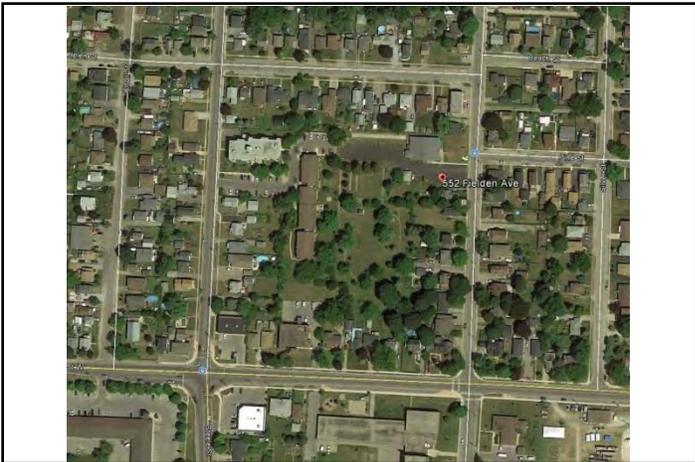
#8 Helen Kinnear Memorial Park

Address: 552 Fielden Avenue **Transit Connection:** Yes

Type: Parkette **Size:** 7,209m2 **Trail Connection:** No

Date of Review: March 2019

Description:
 Helen Kinnear is a pocket park located west of the canal in the central part of the City. The park is directly associated with the Friends over 50 senior recreation centre. This passive recreation park, which is geared towards older adults, is accessible through the parking lot of the recreation centre which is off of Fielden Avenue. Residents of Kinnear Park Place residence also have access to the park.
Nearest Transit Stop:
 The stop is located at roadside in front of Community Centre



- Park Elements:**
- Benches (6) Picnic table (1)
 - Trash Can (2)
 - Small open green space Berms
 - City park identification signage
 - 911 signs
 - Memorial trees,
 - An asphalt walkway,
 - Shade trees
 - Washrooms in Community Centre.
 - Asphalted parking lot
 - 3 raised gardens
 - 2 bocce ball areas
 - Sun shelters
 - Etiquette signage
 - Lighting



Condition:

- Landscape is well maintained.

Comments:
 There is no connection to a trail system but the site does informally connect to the adjacent residential complex. The site has a looped hard surface walkway, lighting and raised planters.
 This park is well maintained and used by the broader community and the local residents.
Safety and CPTED:
 The site is not visually accessible from outside of the parking area. Internal visibility is achieved through residential lots and the residential housing complex adjacent to the site. The site does have lighting within the park which will help reduce unwanted activity in the area.

- Recommendations:**
- Promote a cohesive package that unifies site elements. (Example: site furniture and trash receptacle from Maglin or other outdoor furniture company)
 - Add bicycle rack
 - Have the sign for the park in a more visible location for wayfinding or a wayfinding sign locating the park.

Port Colborne Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan

EXISTING PARK INVENTORY

#9 H.H.Knoll Lakeview Park

Address: 160 Sugarloaf Street

Transit Connection: No

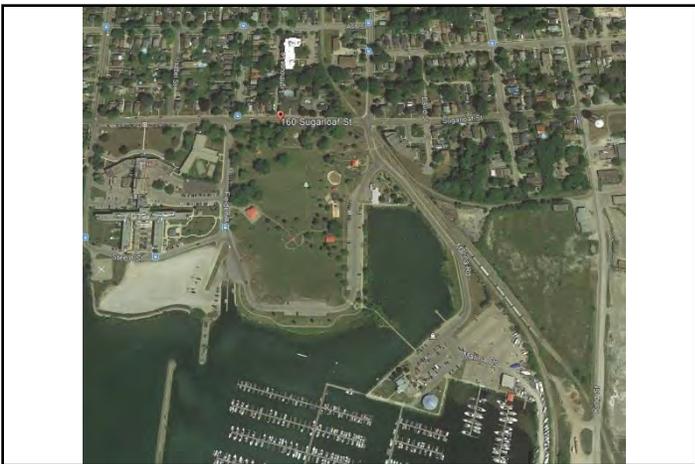
Type: City w/ Tot Lot

Size: 87,530m2

Trail Connection: Yes (asphalt)

Date of Review: March 2019

Description:
 HH Knoll Park is located on the west side of the canal fronting onto Lake Erie. The park is connected to the Canal trail system and has a large walkway system through the site.
Nearest Transit Stop:
 72m to nearest bus stop at Fares Street and Nickel Street (Port Colborne East Bus Route)



- Park Elements:**
- Benches (20+) Picnic tables (5+)
 - Trash Cans (7+) Bike repair station
 - Play structures (3 structure - ages 18 months – 5 and 5-12)
 - Wood-chip surface
 - Swings (4 belt and 1 baby and 1 accessible)
 - Large open green space Toboggan hill
 - City park identification signage
 - 911 signs Etiquette signage
 - Wayfinding signage Information signage
 - Multiple picnic pavilions
 - Memorial flagpole Memorial cairns
 - Asphalt walkway system
 - Large shade trees along northern portion of site
 - Spray pad
 - A bandstand
 - Lakefront promenade walkway with parking and marina
 - Ornamental flower beds



Condition:

- Landscape is well maintained

Comments:
 This large park has many amenities with a large portion of them being fully accessible.

Safety and CPTED:
 The park has good site visibility into and out of the park. The site does not appear to have any lighting other than what is located on the adjacent streets.

Recommendations:

- Promote a cohesive package that unifies site elements. (Example: site furniture and trash receptacle from Maglin or other outdoor furniture company)

Port Colborne Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan

EXISTING PARK INVENTORY

#10 Humberstone Cenotaph Park

Address: 831 King Street		Transit Connection: Yes	
Type: Parkette	Size: 656m2	Trail Connection: No	
Date of Review: March 2019			
Description: The Humberstone Cenotaph is a cenotaph site located at the corner of Neff Street and King Street, just off of Main Street West in the north central part of the city. The site contains a small cenotaph with community parking. <i>Nearest Transit Stop:</i> Located curbside at the intersection of Neff Street and King Street (Port Colborne East Bus Route)			
Park Elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Small open green space• Memorial flagpole• Cenotaph monument• Flagpole• Community parking			
Condition: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Landscape is well maintained.			
Comments: The site has a sidewalk on two sides and the remainder is turf. The parking lot is compacted asphalt. The cenotaph is well maintained with grass cutting and litter pickup. Some of the asphalt parking may require repair. Safety and CPTED: This site has good visibility and has a house at the end of the property. This site has limited use and would not have any CPTED issues due to that fact.		Recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote a cohesive package that unifies site elements. (Example: site furniture and trash receptacle from Maglin or other outdoor furniture company)• The cenotaph could use a walkway or landing at the monument for better access. The site also has no identifying signage or etiquette signs other than the 911 sign.• Add bicycle rack	

Appendix **F**

Project Scoring Metric					
Criteria	Metric				Weight
Market Demand	3 Points: For "7" or higher community amenity priorities	2 Points: For "5 – 6" community amenity priorities.	1 Point: For "3 – 4" community amenity priorities.	0 points: For "1 – 2" community amenity priorities.	4
Economic Sustainability	3 Points: The amenity has a low overall cost impact.	2 Points: The amenity has a moderate overall cost impact.	1 Point: The amenity has a high overall cost impact.	0 points: The amenity is not likely to be feasible.	4
Service Outcomes	3 Points: The amenity achieves more than five service outcomes.	2 Points: The amenity achieves multiple service outcomes but does not achieve more than 5.	1 Point: The amenity achieves a specific service outcome.	0 points: The amenity does not achieve any service outcomes.	4
Community Accessibility	3 Points: The amenity would be both financially and physically accessible to all Port Colborne residents, regional users and target under represented portions of the population.	2 Points: The amenity would be both financially and physically accessible to all Port Colborne residents.	1 Point: The amenity would be accessible to all area residents through Programmed and rental use.	0 points: The amenity would not be accessible to all Port Colborne residents.	3
Current Provision in Port Colborne and Niagara region	3 Points: The facility space would add completely new activity to recreation in the region.	2 Points: The facility space would add completely new activity to recreation in Port Colborne.	1 Point: The facility space would significantly improve provision of existing recreation activity in Port Colborne.	0 points: The amenity is already adequately provided in Port Colborne.	3
Economic Impact	3 Points: The amenity will draw significant non-local spending into the region and catalyze provincial, national and/or international exposure.	2 Points: The amenity will draw significant non-local spending into the region.	1 Point: The amenity will draw moderate non-local spending into the region	0 points: The amenity will not draw any significant non-local spending into the region.	2
Cost Savings Through Partnerships or Grants	3 Points: Partnership and/or grant opportunities exist in development and/or 50% or more of the overall amenity cost.	2 Points: Partnership and/or grant opportunities exist in development and/or 25% – 49% or more of the overall amenity cost.	1 Point: Partnership and/or grant opportunities exist in development and/or 10% – 24% or more of the overall amenity cost.	0 points: No potential partnership or grant opportunities exist at this point in	2

Appendix **G**

City of Port Colborne

EFFECTIVE DATE: _____

ADOPTED BY RESOLUTION #: _____

POLICY TITLE: Recreation Services User Fee & Rental Rate Policy

ASSOCIATED LEGISLATION OR REGULATIONS: _____

RELATED DOCUMENTS: Facility Allocation Policy, Master Fee Schedule, Approved User Participation and Cost Recovery Philosophical Principles, Mining the Future Vision, and City of Port Colborne Economic Development Plan

1.0 USER PARTICIPATION AND COST RECOVERY PHILOSOPHICAL PRINCIPALS

1.1 Accessibility

The City of Port Colborne will optimize community participation regarding public recreation facilities and services in order to encourage improved community health and wellness.

1.2 Inclusivity

The City of Port Colborne will reduce barriers that restrict segments of the community from participating in or accessing public recreation facilities and services.

1.3 Affordability

The City of Port Colborne will ensure that fees for facilities and services are fair and competitive to encourage maximum participation of the community.

1.4 Fiscal Responsibility

The City of Port Colborne will understand all of the capital and operational costs associated with individual facilities and services. We will ensure that facilities, services and related fees are provided in a manner that is sustainable and are provided in an effective and efficient manner.

1.5 Rate discount for target demographics

The City of Port Colborne will provide various levels of discounted rates to specific demographics to ensure that fees are not a barrier to participation.

1.6 Service and Facility Marketing

The City of Port Colborne will maximize marketing opportunities in order to increase user participation and revenue potential and reduce the amount of tax supported subsidy required for the provision of recreation facilities and services.

2.0 POLICY STATEMENT

The policy will provide Recreation Services with a framework to establish pricing for programs and facilities that are accessible, inclusive, affordable and fiscally responsible. This framework is based on a continuum of benefits realized through participation in recreation services and range from services with a larger, community wide benefit to those with highly individual benefit.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

3.1 Recreation

Recreation is the experience that results from freely chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community wellbeing. (Renewed definition from Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015)

3.2 Programs

Formal, planned, instructor led opportunities for individuals to develop skill or understanding in a specific content area, whether through registered or drop-in activity. It does not refer to community led activities that are accessed at public open spaces or through admission / permitting a facility, nor the rental / permitting of parks or facilities by individuals or groups.

3.3 Program Fee

A fee charged for access to a City coordinated and delivered program.

3.4 Facility

A City owned and operated indoor or outdoor space.

3.5 Facility Rental Rate

A rate that grants utilization and enjoyment of City owned spaces.

3.6 Drop-in Fee

A fee charged for access to Recreation programs and services.

3.7 Annual Membership Fee

A fee charged for yearly use of City owned and operated facilities and predetermined programs and services.

3.8 Direct Operating Costs

Direct operating costs are those expenses directly related to the provision of recreation programs and services. For the purpose of this Policy direct operating costs include:

- a) All program instructional costs

- b) The rental cost of non-City facilities for community based programs. If the program is provided in a City facility then the overhead cost will be applied.
- c) Cost of all equipment and supplies.
- d) A 25% overhead cost (percent of full time administration wages, advertising, insurance, software licensing and other overhead to implement the program) will be charged for Recreation Centre programs and services.
- e) For those programs identified to be of the highest individual benefit, an additional 50% will be added to the program fee.

3.9 Cost Recovery Pyramid Philosophical Principal

The Pyramid is based upon the philosophy that users of recreation services that are perceived to have a highly individual benefit will pay a higher price, while users of recreation services with a perceived higher community benefit will pay lower prices.

3.10 User Classifications

User classifications define and differentiate among the following user groups:

- 3.10.1 Preschool – an individual 3-5 years of age inclusive
- 3.10.2 Youth – an individual 6-17 years of age inclusive
- 3.10.3 Adult – an individual 18-59 years of age inclusive
- 3.10.4 Senior – an individual 60+ years of age inclusive
- 3.10.5 Senior Plus – an individual 80+ years of age inclusive
- 3.10.6 AISH – Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) individuals
- 3.10.7 Jump Start / KidSport / Everyone Gets to Play – Sport & Recreation Subsidy Programs
- 3.10.8 Family – 1-2 adults of the same household and their dependent children under the age of 18 who reside partially or fully with one or both parents / guardians
- 3.10.9 Resident - an individual who, or a business that, resides within the City of Port Colborne boundaries or pays City of Port Colborne property taxes
- 3.10.10 Non-resident – an individual or business that resides outside of the City of Port Colborne and does not pay City of Port Colborne property taxes
- 3.10.11 Not for Profit – a registered not-for-profit agency or public entity
- 3.10.12 Commercial – Any individual, company or organization engaged in the pursuit of business for profit
- 3.10.13 Private - Any individual or organization which does not meet the requirements of the “Not for Profit” or “Commercial” definitions

3.10.14 Corporate – A group of 5 or more business people who provide business services within the City of Port Colborne

4.0 POLICY PURPOSE

4.1 To provide a cost recovery framework and general guidelines for the establishment of pricing for recreation services that are in alignment with the Council approved User Participation and Cost Recovery Philosophical Principles.

5.0 POLICY FRAMEWORK

This **Cost Recovery Framework** provides a methodology for determining the appropriate percent of cost recovery desired by the City for both current and future recreation services. The adoption of this model will assist the City in delivering services that are in alignment with the approved user participation and cost recovery philosophical principles, as well as meeting the established goals for cost recovery levels and budgeting.

Parks, Recreation and Culture will implement a Cost Recovery Pyramid model that is a widely used best practice in the Recreation industry. This Cost Recovery Framework will provide guidance in the establishment of appropriate and fair pricing for Recreation services with consideration of lower fees that have the most community benefit and are aligned with market rates.

This framework is based on a continuum that considers the community wide benefit and individual benefit of a program or activity. Further it supports the notion that the use of general purpose tax revenues is appropriate to subsidize services that have the most community wide benefit, while higher user fees are appropriate for services which have higher individual benefit. Based on this continuum, pricing will be adjusted to recover a portion or all of the direct operating costs for the delivery of recreation services and be aligned with market rates.

The pyramid provided below as **Figure 1** describes the recreation service classification, where the benefit of each service is considered, as well as the cost recovery level expected in order to offset the direct operating costs.

6.0 POLICY DIRECTIVES

6.1 Program Fees and Facility Rental Rates

Pricing for access to Recreation programs and facilities will consider the identified user classifications, local and regional market analysis, degree of benefit and direct operating costs.

Fees will reflect priority consideration to residents, not for profits, youth and seniors. Factors such as number of non-permanent residents and tourists will also be given consideration to ensure access to selected services on a drop-in, daily and punch pass system.

Pricing will be designed to recover a percentage of the direct operating costs required to provide a specific service depending on the level of individual benefit versus community benefit as described in the Cost Recovery Pyramid.

7.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

7.1 The Department of Community and Economic Development will:

- a) Provide and maintain recreation programs and facilities for use by the general public.
- b) Provide trained and qualified personnel for supervision and instruction of recreation programs.
- c) Welcome public input into the planning and evaluation of recreation programs and facilities.
- d) Provide access for all residents to participate in programs and to optimize use of the recreation facilities.
- e) Establish pricing and provide reporting in accordance with the requirements of this policy.

8.0 VISION ALIGNMENT

This policy aligns itself with the [to be completed by Community and Economic Development Staff].

Figure 1 - Cost Recovery Pyramid

