COUNTY OF NORFOLK PARKS, FACILITIES AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 COUNTY OF NORFOLK

The County of Norfolk is an expansive geographic community of approximately 65,000 people on the north shore of Lake Erie in southwestern Ontario. From a community development perspective, Norfolk County involves six urban centres: Simcoe, Port Dover, Delhi, Courtland, Port Rowan and Waterford, as well as forty-two smaller rural hamlets and neighbourhoods, two resort areas and a large agricultural area.

The local economy has been in significant transition due to changes in the tobacco industry, manufacturing and related sectors, but continues to grow with the enhancement of tourism services, the attraction of seniors particularly in the Port Dover area, and ongoing community economic development initiatives.

In support of developing longer term strategic planning and service delivery approaches for the County, Municipal Council identified the need for and authorized the preparation of a twenty-year Parks, Facilities and Recreation Master Plan. The communities in Norfolk County before amalgamation, had developed a wide array of parks, facilities and recreation services involving arenas, parks, sports fields, community centres and a host of other active and passive activity opportunities for residents and visitors. A Master Plan was needed to establish policies and priorities for the future planning and delivery of these services.

Figure 1-1: Map of Norfolk County
Image Source: Google Maps, 2015
1.2 PARKS, FACILITIES AND RECREATION MASTER PLANNING PROCESS

In 2005 the County of Norfolk completed its first Parks, Facilities and Recreation Master Plan. Over the last number of years, the County has undertaken steps to initiate the development of a more comprehensive Parks, Facilities and Recreation Master Plan to respond to the continuing growth of the County, changes in the operating environment, new initiatives and emerging trends. In the spring of 2014, a consulting team was selected, and based on a Terms of Reference, a three-phased work program was developed for the Norfolk County’s Parks, Facilities and Recreation Master Plan:

- Phase 1 – Situational Analysis Report;
- Phase 2 – Draft Parks, Facilities and Recreation Services Master Plan and Community Review;
- Phase 3 – Parks, Facilities and Recreation Services Master Plan Finalization.

In support of the key outcome areas of the Master Plan, a comprehensive Situational Analysis Report was completed and is available under separate cover. It establishes the research, consultation and analytical foundation that was utilized as a basis for the various policies and specific initiative recommendations within the Parks, Facilities and Recreation Services Master Plan.

The key tasks completed in support of the Situational Analysis Report were as follows:

- A population profile, demographic analysis and projections analysis, along with a community development profile and related community development perspectives.
- Current leisure services participation profiles, facility utilization assessments and other usage profiles.
- Review of relevant planning, policy and related strategic and policy materials and documents.
- A community survey of Norfolk residents on participation patterns, services valuation and priorities.
- Over fifteen focus groups, interviews and public meetings involving some 300 plus community and organized group representatives soliciting their input on the strengths and weaknesses of the parks and recreation services availability and delivery model in Norfolk, future needs and perspectives, and specific initiative inputs.
- A financial review of municipal investments in parks and recreation services, as well as a Divisional organizational review.
- A facilities and lands inventory, involving recreation facilities, parks, open spaces, trails and related resources.
- A trends analysis related to parks and recreation services, delivery models, partnerships and other considerations that will shape future use of and involvement in parks and recreation services within Norfolk.
- Other key inputs and assessments.
Once the Situational Analysis Report was completed, the draft Parks, Facilities and Recreation Services Master Plan for Norfolk County and was reviewed by the community and staff before finalization.

1.3 PARKS, FACILITIES AND RECREATION MASTER FORMAT

The Norfolk County Parks, Facilities and Recreation Services Master Plan has been developed based on five levels, moving from its strategic foundation through to specific initiatives and then an implementation framework.

- **Level 1 – Plan Foundation** – Section 2.0 provides the philosophical and conceptual basis of the Plan via a Vision, Mission, Principles, Values and Goals.

- **Level 2 – Parks, Facilities and Recreation Services Policies and Delivery Strategies** – Sections 3.0 and 4.0, focus on establishing a policy foundation for Norfolk County’s development, delivery and evaluation of parks and recreation services, as well as the various delivery approaches that could be utilized and participated in by the County related to its roles, priorities and structure.

- **Level 3 – Specific Parks, Facilities and Recreation Initiatives** – Section 5.0 identifies specific actions, investments and approaches that are proposed for consideration by Norfolk County over the next twenty years related to parks, facilities and recreation services.

- **Level 4 – Forestry and Cemetery Services Strategies** – Sections 6.0 and 7.0 provide assessments, policies and directions recommended for Norfolk County’s Forestry and Cemetery Services as part of an integrated Parks, Facilities and Recreation Services Master Plan.

- **Level 5 – Implementation** – Section 8.0 provides an implementation framework and related elements developed to guide the Master Plan’s ongoing implementation, updating and positioning.

The following graphic depicts the Master Plan’s development format.
1.4 MASTER PLAN GOALS

The following goals and outcomes have been established for 2015 Norfolk County Parks, Facilities and Recreation Master Plan.

1. To recommend **policy frameworks and servicing strategies** that will direct the planning, delivery and evaluation of Norfolk County Parks, Facilities and Recreation Services for the next twenty years.

2. To create the **framework for community engagement, leadership and accountability** in contributing to the planning, delivery and evaluation of Norfolk County Parks, Facilities and Recreation Services.

3. To recommend the primary roles, responsibilities and contributions in the planning, delivery and evaluation Norfolk County Parks, Facilities and Recreation Services.

4. To identify specific Norfolk County Parks, Facilities and Recreation Services initiatives that respond to **resident needs, Divisional and corporate planning priorities and financial capacity strategies**.

5. To provide an **implementation plan and strategies** that will guide community collaboration and development, decision-making and service delivery strategies over the life of the Master Plan.
1.5 NORFOLK COUNTY PARKS, FACILITIES AND RECREATION SERVICES MASTER PLAN DOCUMENT

This document represents the Norfolk County Parks, Facilities and Recreation Services Master Plan. It was reviewed by divisional and corporate staff, with a subsequent draft developed. That draft was the basis for undertaking a community input process to gain residents perspectives on the draft Master Plan via two public workshops. Public workshops were held on Tuesday April 28, 2015 in Simcoe, with 101 attendees and another held April 29, 2015 in Port Rowan with 8 attendees. A summary of the input is provided in Appendix A.

Following these tasks, the Master Plan was presented to County Council on June 16, 2015.
2 PARKS, FACILITIES AND RECREATION SERVICES MASTER PLAN FOUNDATION

2.1 CORPORATE ALIGNMENT

Norfolk County has developed a Corporate Strategic Plan for the 2014 to 2019 period. It is important that the Parks, Facilities and Recreation Services Master Plan be aligned with the overarching County Strategic Plan and directions, as the Master Plan needs to be supportive and contributory to the achievement of the broader Vision, Mission and Principles of the County.

The County’s 2014 to 2019 Strategic Plan is built on a series of strategic priorities. The following strategic directions and priorities are connected to and have assisted in developing the Parks, Facilities and Recreation Services Master Plan.

All five areas have connectivity to the development, delivery and evaluation of parks and recreation services in Norfolk.

2.2 PARKS, FACILITIES AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

1. PRINCIPLES

The following Principles have been developed as a basis for the directions, strategies and recommendations within the Master Plan, as well as support measuring the Master Plan’s performance and success.

Principles have two applications at this level of planning. First, they provide an opportunity to further outline key components of the Mission. Second, they identify how the Master Plan and the service
providers need to interact with residents and participants, and the types of relationships that need to be developed in order to be successful.

**Recommendation: Principles**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Norfolk Parks, Facilities and Recreation Services Master Plan will contribute to…</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Corporate Strategic Alignment</strong></td>
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<td><strong>A Balanced Array of Park and Recreation Opportunities</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Fairness and Inclusion</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Balancing Public Accessibility and Revenue Generation</strong></td>
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<td><strong>County Leadership Role</strong></td>
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Conservation of Natural Resources

Ensuring that the County’s parks, open spaces and trails continue being valued by the community, conserve key environmental resources, are accessible to the public for both programmed and non-programmed activities where feasible, and contribute significantly to a positive urban form within Norfolk.

Flexible and Environmentally Responsible

Developing parks and recreation services that are flexible and environmentally responsible over the longer term through innovative designs, are adaptable and flexible, facilitate an ease of maintenance and support the inclusion of all residents.

Parks and Recreation Services do not stand alone as to their rationale and scope. They are important investment instruments in terms of broader community strategies. The Master Plan needs to ensure that the services being proposed are supportive to various senior government and County’s initiatives, e.g.: Smart Growth, the County’s evolving economic development strategy, the Strategic and Official Plans, transportation priorities and investments, and other strategic initiatives.

2. VISION STATEMENT

A Vision Statement sets a horizon towards which all the County’s stakeholders can gravitate. It should be both inspirational and a statement that creates a common bond and sense of direction. The Vision Statement establishes a direction for the Master Plan and is a basis upon which the Plan evolves, both in terms of its development and its ongoing implementation.

Recommendation: Vision

Norfolk residents will have access to a diverse array of parks and recreation opportunities that meet their evolving leisure interests, improve their health and well-being, facilitate individual and community participation and volunteerism, and enhance the sustainability of the natural environment.

The key component of the Vision is that there will be a diverse and balanced array of parks and recreation opportunities to meet the varied interests of Norfolk residents, and that these opportunities will be accessible and evolve over time.

The second part of the Vision identifies the three key focuses that collectively identify the rationale for these investments and why residents benefit from participation in recreation and leisure activities.
The first benefit recognizes that there is a diverse array of interests and needs amongst the residents of Norfolk and that they will change over time. The Vision clearly articulates a service delivery environment that has a balanced array of opportunities that respond to resident interests and needs. This balanced array needs to be responsive to cultural diversity, evolving age and ability perspectives, changing interests and technologies and a host of other considerations that continually influence the development and delivery of these services. The service delivery environment needs to be dynamic, responsive and accessible.

The second benefit speaks to the health and well-being of the residents through their participation. Active participation involves fitness; the development of the mind; the achievement of new skills and enhanced personal development; the pursuit of one’s interests; and the ongoing development of the whole person, as both an individual and as contributing member of the community. It also involves ensuring a healthy natural environment and liveable communities.

Capacity building, is the third benefit, involving the opportunity for residents to invest in their community through direct participation, volunteerism, leadership and other roles.

3. MISSION STATEMENT

A Mission Statement speaks to the fundamentals and the focus of what is going to be achieved via the Master Plan. It articulates intent and the broad strategic approaches to be utilized within the Master Plan to achieve the Vision and contribute to the achievement of the County’s strategic priorities.

Recommendation: Mission Statement

Norfolk County Parks, Facilities and Recreation Services Master Plan directs the achievement of a balanced array of accessible and distributed parks and recreation opportunities that support the interests of County residents.

The Master Plan builds on the breadth of the community’s parks and recreation resources that collectively contribute to the enrichment of the quality of life for Norfolk residents through both collaborative and direct service delivery strategies that:

- **Inspire a true value** for the benefits of parks and recreation participation, and encourage broad-based, active lifestyles that contribute to improved resident health, well-being and personal development.

- Generate a strengthened sense of community identity, spirit and volunteer service amongst all residents.

- Support improving community unity and capacity development.

The primary outcome for the Master Plan is to provide directions and strategies that support continually enriching the quality of life of Norfolk residents by being able to access recreation, sports, trails, park and related services that respond to both their current and evolving interests and needs, and work within the geographic structure of the County.
The first objective of the Mission Statement is to position the Master Plan and its strategies to focus on residents understanding of the benefits of parks and recreation participation as an important part of life within the community for both them and their families.

This objective focuses on parks and recreation benefits enhancing resident health, well-being and personal development. This could involve fitness in terms of physical activity. It could include well-being in terms of reducing stress or being able to socialize and be with others as a means to overcome isolation. It also could involve personal development in terms of advancing one’s skills or being involved as a volunteer and contributing back to the community to satisfy their need to be a member of their community and to serve.

The second objective speaks to the community as a collective of its residents. Parks and recreation services, through team sports, individual activities, external travel, etc. have the opportunity to strengthen residents’ sense of community through creating a stronger identity and affinity for the County, which is Norfolk being a positive and good place to live. Another perspective, is that parks and recreation services can create unique opportunities for people to serve their community through volunteer roles and other supports that contribute to enhancing the quality of life of individuals in the community and the overall well-being of the community itself, through taking direct individual responsibility for improving and enriching community life.

The third objective focuses on the growth and vibrancy of the County’s communities via building the leadership, interest and connecting points necessary for all areas of Norfolk to be engaged and sustainable. The Master Plan also needs to be able to provide contributions to the County’s community and economic development initiatives. These can be achieved through parks providing significant urban form resources and the ongoing physical development of the community trail system that connects various nodes within the County as an alternate transportation system. Economically, sports and tourism and other economic activities within the parks and recreation services mandate can be valuable to the community in terms of job creation, economic sustainability and enhancing the revenue generation capacities of key parks and recreation facilities, thus reducing their financial impacts on residents and users.
3 NORFOLK COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICES DELIVERY POLICIES

3.1 PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICES STRATEGIC POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR NORFOLK COUNTY

Overview

Municipalities face increasing expectations to deliver a widening range of parks and recreation opportunities, many of them involving increasingly sophisticated facilities, integrated services delivery approaches and growing long term capital, operating, financial and sustainability requirements. Society has moved to a point where there is a growing array of parks and recreation activities that people want to be involved with.

As a basis for the County to express its role in the planning, development, delivery and evaluation of parks and recreation services, it requires a policy framework upon which to ensure that it is not seen as the sole party responsible and that everything related to this service sector does not lead back to the County. However, the policy also needs to recognize that the County is in a unique position within the park and recreation services delivery model in terms of skills and capacities, assets and financial resources, service stability and other key delivery factors and outcomes. Finding a balance that is a basis to undertake this role is part of the long term planning process for parks and recreation services in Norfolk.

Recommendation: Parks and Recreation Services Delivery Policy Framework

Service Delivery Approach

That community-based organizations and volunteers represent the principal recreation programs delivery approach in Norfolk, and represent the primary means for expanding the accessibility, availability, affordability and mix of parks and recreation programming available to Norfolk residents.

Prioritization Process

That the prioritization process for Norfolk County’s direct participation in parks and recreation services focus on County residents first as the primary users and beneficiaries within the following decision framework
County Servicing Priority Framework

- **Supporting Corporate Strategic Plan**
  - Services that are primarily intended to support key strategic priorities of the County outlined in the Corporate Strategic Plan and approved strategic initiatives.

- **Broad Based Resident Participation and Benefit**
  - Services that facilitate and encourage broad-based participation amongst County residents at recreational participation levels, including in-County, regional and provincial competitively oriented activities for children and youth.

- **Inclusion and Accessibility**
  - Services and accessibility supports that link to requirements for identifiable groups, including those with disabilities, seniors, young children, teens, new Canadians and others.

**County Role**

The County will fulfill its role in the planning, development, delivery and evaluation of parks and recreation services based on the following hierarchy of County responses and roles, and within its budgetary priorities and strategies as established by Council.
1. **Facilitation**  
Actively work to facilitate and support community groups and individuals in the development and delivery of parks and recreation programs and services by providing:

- Technical supports
- Access to grants / financial resources, data and information
- Volunteer training and recognition
- Access to facilities
- Trends research
- Related strategies and supports

2. **Partnerships**  
Enter into partnerships, joint ventures and related collaborative initiatives, at variable levels of involvement, that result in a shared responsibility for park and recreation programs and services delivery where:

- The interest of the residents of Norfolk are fully realized.
- Need / demand for the service is demonstrated;
- Sustainability exists within acceptable risk parameters.

3. **Direct Delivery by County**  
Undertake the direct delivery of park and recreation programs and services where need is established and other service delivery strategies are not viable or available, utilizing direct capital investment and annual budget support, as well as County staff operating alone or in partnership with volunteers.
That any County involvement in park and recreation services delivery should be based on the following criteria:

- Identification of demonstrated need at reasonable participation levels;
- Evidence of long term sustainability for the program or service;
- Assured public accessibility, participation and affordability;
- Involvement by the County at a scale reflective of the benefits to be achieved to both the participants and the community at large;
- The use of business case analysis as a basis to support County investments in parks and recreation services initiatives;
- Consistent with County revenue generation strategies;
- A transferability assessment of directly delivered County programs as to how they might be delivered in the future by an alternate service provider.

The County will establish an evaluation process with appropriate data collection and outcomes / performance monitoring capacity that will effectively assess:

- The value of the County's role in the various service delivery strategies;
- The degree of participation that is being realized;
- The benefits being achieved through the County's investments.

This policy framework focuses on the fact that the County is better served if organized community and other groups and individuals can be fully integrate into and are able to drive the delivery of parks and recreation services where viable. This strategy generally focuses on programs delivery, as many facilities are too costly to operate and often require some form of direct or partial County involvement. The County cannot be all things to all people. Therefore, groups of individuals with
a particular interest need to galvanize themselves to a point where they can take on many of the leadership, administrative, program development and delivery roles and accountabilities.

The County has a significant role in supporting community groups to assist them to organize, to provide technical supports and to aid them in terms of overcoming some of the challenges that may occur from time to time. This role allows the County to engage with these groups at points where the groups can remain independent but do not have the capacity to access key resources which could range from marketing and advertising, to registration, to volunteer training and development, to program evaluation, to accessing grants, to assessing new opportunities, etc. The County has some of these skills and capacities in-house or may have access to such resources that can be beneficial to these groups, especially if they are experiencing difficulties and their sustainability becomes threatened.

The second level of the policy indicates that the County, before it undertakes direct involvement in the delivery of a parks and recreation service, will assess alternative delivery approaches. This task could involve partnerships, joint ventures or other collaborative formats. This is not a new perspective for the County, but asking the question early in a services review and development process, as to whether other delivery strategies are available, needs to be formalized. It may be that these opportunities are not apparent to proponent groups, and that partnerships and joint ventures may need to be initiated by the County or even organized by the County in terms of forming groups or operations that could eventually be a partner.

The third dimension of the delivery hierarchy, is that the County, based on evident need and policy compliance, decides to undertake a direct investment in the development and delivery of a parks and recreation service. This will occur when no other available delivery alternatives exist but need for the services are apparent or required by a policy, standard or a law. Also, this policy position is not intended to become a catch all or “saviour” approach for existing services. All direct County services require evident need, be an identifiable priority and are supportable within available resources, consistent with County Council budgetary priorities and strategies.

This policy further articulates key criteria and related considerations to be addressed whenever the County becomes involved in parks and recreation services initiatives. The affordability and accessibility of the public becomes a major criteria, as does sustainability and other considerations. Another important consideration is that the scale of the County’s involvement needs to be in balance with the benefits that are to be realized. It is possible that some ideas that come forward are out of scale with the benefits that will be realized. This needs to be assessed, all within a business case model.

From a policy implementation perspective, the County will need to further develop the implementation dimensions of the policy, giving particular consideration to the last point which is ensuring the data recording systems are in place to assess both participation and benefits, as well as performance monitoring of the outcomes desired and how they are being achieved.
3.2 PARKS AND RECREATION DIVISION ROLE

Overview

Currently, the Parks and Recreation Division has principal responsibility for the development and delivery of parks and recreation services in Norfolk. Other municipal departments also have some aligned responsibilities in terms of finance, legal, information systems and technology, development approvals, planning and other divisions in the overall corporate structure.

The main perspectives that emerged from the various consultations and assessments, involved two key considerations:

- The community taking increased responsibility for program and services development and leadership;
- The County engaging more in community development and capacity building and potentially reducing the scope of its direct programs delivery activities;

The proposed Parks and Recreation Services Policy for Norfolk County increases the focus and attention on facilitation and partnerships / joint ventures as the primary means of parks and recreation services delivery. The intent is to move the County’s scope in direct delivery (that is where County staff / contractors provide the program or service directly to the public), where feasible towards engaging community members more intensively in services development and delivery. However, the policy recognizes, that the County has a significant role, whether partnering in direct initiatives, or providing community and capacity development supports that are necessary to sustain and stabilize community service providers over time.

Community development and capacity building is generally defined to have the following key potential roles:

- Working with community organizations on a direct basis to support them in their governance, program operations, longer term planning, grants acquisition and related tasks, ultimately their sustainability;
- Providing training and development on governance, volunteer recruitment and development, marketing, program evaluation and other functions;
- Undertaking organizational reviews;
- Facilitating access to information, facilities, funding and other available resources within the County, the community or beyond;
- Working with community groups to undertake orientation and training activities in order to build leadership, succession initiatives, and skills-based capacities within the organization;
- Supporting organizations in understanding how to present proposals, to advocate, etc.;
- Facilitating the development of new community organizations and leadership initiatives that lead to the further development and delivery of both existing or new parks and recreation services;
- Respond to organizational issues and challenges that could undermine the availability of a balanced array of accessible parks and recreation services in Norfolk;
- Other tasks that are helpful to the ongoing sustainability, growth and capacity of County community service delivery organizations to grow and remain relevant and capable.
In light of this proposed direction which would see a programs delivery transition to an emphasis on community development and capacity building, Norfolk will also have to examine whether there are areas within its direct delivery of services approach that could be delivered via community organizations or other service sectors in order to align with the proposed policy directions and County priorities. Any potential cost savings realized should be reinvested into the full scope of community development and capacity building resources. This transition would primarily impact leisure programming activities. Asset management and parks operations would be sustained as for the most part as County functions due to investment, technical, liability and related perspectives.

Recommendation: Parks and Recreation Division Services Roles and Priorities

That the Parks and Recreation Division undertake a functional reorganizational initiative that:

- Prioritizes its staffing and services in alignment with the directions and strategies of the Master Plan;

- Continues to intensify its efforts at formulating, managing and evaluating partnerships, joint ventures and other collaborative approaches to services delivery within the County, and on a broader geographic market basis as appropriate;

- Establish an organizational model should be developed based on consultation, best practices and other inputs that supports the multi-dimensional service approach necessary to effectively develop and implement a community development and capacity building priority.

That the County undertake a review of its directly delivered programs and services and candidly assess the opportunities and risks associated with transitioning such services to community and institutional service providers, the private sector or via the formulating of new service delivery organizations, with the review and implementation strategy to be undertaken over the next five years involving community members and service provider organizations representatives.

Some of the key areas of potential transition could involve considering positioning the Adult Community Centre within a new not-for-profit corporate structure that self-operates with County support; potential use of other providers for senior support services where improved efficiencies, communication and service integration may be derived due to a larger scope of operations; a range of leisure programs that are offered in multiple venues which could be undertaken by community associations or other groups, such as inviting the YMCA to consider partnership opportunities in Norfolk County.
3.3 COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTEER CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Overview

Volunteers and voluntary organizations represent a key cornerstone in the development and delivery of parks and recreation services in Norfolk. They are engaged in virtually all levels of service delivery whether through voluntary organizations in minor sports, the arts and culture or special events and festivals. Volunteers are also actively engaged not only in these areas, but also in some Norfolk delivered programs.

The future services delivery direction within the Master Plan, identifies an opportunity for Norfolk to engage with community volunteers and voluntary organizations to enhance their presence, capacities and role in the development and delivery of parks and recreation services. This is a significant policy direction that reflects the importance of engaging the community in not just identifying parks and recreation service’s needs, however also being actively involved in and responsible for leading and providing these services.

A number of recommendations within this Master Plan contribute to the building of capacity amongst the voluntary sector. These include the Parks and Recreation Services Delivery Policy, the recommendations in regards to Divisional repositioning and organizational development, collaborative and shared services and other policies and strategies.

Recommendation: Voluntary Sector Services Delivery

That the County engage with the various voluntary organizations at a level consistent with the capacities, experiences and approaches of each voluntary service delivery organization, respecting the fact that each organization is unique and may be at different levels of development and capability;

That County supports to the voluntary service delivery sector also include the provision of common supports, such as marketing, research and related perspectives that will bring benefits to these groups that they likely could not achieve within their own resources;

That the County annually undertake a multi-tiered recognition program for volunteers and voluntary organizations with respect to longevity of service, special initiatives and benefits they achieve so that the community is aware of the important contributions volunteers make to the quality of life in Norfolk;

- That the County host an annual community services provider forum that focuses on:
  - Sharing and networking opportunities amongst forum participants;
  - Overviews trends and strategic directions emerging relative to parks and recreation services within municipal and other environments;
- Provides theme specific training and development opportunities relevant to participants;
- Provides workshops on strategic planning, governance, program evaluation, volunteer recognition and recruitment and other topics of interest;
- Undertakes consultation on and / or delivery of strategic directions, policy initiatives and related considerations that the County is engaged in and which could influence this service area.

### 3.4 CUSTOMER SERVICE AND SERVICES PLANNING

**Overview**

Norfolk has established important capacities in enhancing customer service and for facilitating access. In an era of electronic transactions, a need exists to continue to explore and implement increasingly user friendly registration, payment, information gathering and market research processes that enhance both customer service and services planning and evaluation.

The County is exploring a new registration system technology. Some constraints may exist in the system in moving towards full online registration, payment and information gathering. The County, should consider being a leader in online services.

In addition, service planning would be enhanced by increased market research activities and customer program evaluations, both of which could be undertaken through online surveys and electronically driven analytical programs.

**Recommendation:** Customer Service and Services Planning

- That the County incorporate parks and recreation services needs into its [Technology Plan](#) to support the full development of online registration, payment, program evaluation, venues with WiFi services and related services;

- That the County continually upgrade and develop new electronic information points of access and [social media that support the marketing and promotion](#) of both County and community service providers' programs, including opportunities for market research and program evaluation analysis, and support a comprehensive, one stop web information portal for all parks and recreation information in the County.
3.5 FINANCIAL AND FUNDING INITIATIVES

Overview

A number of financial and funding perspectives were identified through the research and consultation program for the Master Plan. They range from transparency and community groups understanding, particularly related to user fees; to consistent expenditure envelopes; to fundraising, corporate sponsorship and related funding sources.

The County has been engaged on a long-term basis with fundraising as a particularly important capital funding component for major recreation facilities. Fundraising will continue to be important on a long-term basis, especially related to the pressures on parks and recreation capital development funds availability and the overall capital funding capacity of the County.

Another consideration could be the application of capital surcharges on rental fees for sports fields, arenas and related spaces. This is a strategy that is becoming increasingly utilized in such communities as Burlington, Pickering, Oshawa and other centres, even in smaller centres such as the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc. It is also a strategy under consideration for the more recently developed arena facilities in the Stratford. Such a strategy is used to fund capital rehabilitation and renewal costs, and in Burlington, funds new arena development.

Recommendation: Financial and Funding Strategies

- That the County require community fundraising, corporate sponsorship and related community investments for the development of new recreation facilities, major facilities expansions or major facility renewals (not rehabilitation or systems replacement), particularly for projects above a threshold cost of $1 million, with a guideline of 33% of total project costs.

- That the County consider and consult on the opportunities and risks associated with the use of capital surcharges on facility rental fees as a means to raise funds to support ongoing facility renewal and potential new facility development.

3.6 USER FEES

Overview

Over the last ten years, there has been a substantial increase in and focus on the development and application of user fees for municipal parks and recreation, services. Municipalities have increasingly been under pressure due to services downloading from the provincial government, increasing infrastructure reinvestment requirements, health and safety considerations and an assortment of other financial pressures, which have caused them to increase user fees as a way to limit impacts on tax levels. As a result, user fees have grown steadily, often well above inflation, creating concerns related to fairness and equity, affordability, access and related considerations.
Several key trends were identified in the Situational Analysis Report in regards to significant increase in user fees. In summary, these are as follows:

- Concerns related to affordability, especially for families wishing to place their children in minor sports and other recreation programs;
- Growing financial pressures on families over a wide range of household cost increases, resulting in some expectations that municipal parks and recreation services should have a lower cost and be supported by significant community investment;
- Increasing concerns amongst some community service providing organizations, particularly user groups, related to why those organizations are expected to pay higher coverage rates for the cost of the facilities they use compared to other groups, such as sports fields, arts and culture, etc. which is identified as a fairness and equity issue;
- The ability of emerging parks and recreation activities to be able to launch themselves in the initial years if the venue cost structure is too high.

One of the primary characteristics of parks and recreation services user fees in virtually all communities, is that they are often ad hoc, have evolved historically over time based on special relationships and arrangements and have little or no connection to the cost of the service’s delivery. This statement reflects a general perspective, though specific user fees may be connected to other criteria. In more recent years, there has been increased use of targeting certain user fees areas for above inflation increases and to increase coverage ratios. A coverage ratio is the revenue as a percent of service delivery cost. However, what constitutes a cost in the formula is highly variable related to direct costs, department administrative costs, corporate overhead costs, facility reinvestment costs, etc. These cost structure components to support policy development will need to be finalized and approved.

Several municipalities, Windsor, Burlington and others, have undertaken investigations and strategies to assess whether a cost driven user fee model can be achieved. There can be significant challenges, but it does represent a potentially important platform upon which to develop user fees in the future, establish policy directions and targets to ensure alignment with key principles, such as fairness and equity.

The User Fee Policy has specific linkages with other policy areas, specifically County investments involving facility and sports field fees subsidies to support low income and other populations’ participation in recreation and leisure activities. All these policies need to be integrated to ensure consistency, fairness and equity, effective and user friendly implementation approach.

**Recommendation: User Fees**

- That Norfolk County undertake a comprehensive assessment and development strategy associated with program, services and facility user fees that results in:
  - User fees being increasingly based on the cost of service delivery, with costs potentially incorporating direct costs, Division overhead allocations and facility renewal / reinvestment charges;
  - Fairness and equity amongst all user groups be established within the user fee development model over time related to the design and application of the fee development formula;
The model establish clear coverage targets by service area, as well as for the overall Division as a basis to establish fees and budgetary directions;

- Staged implementation strategies of up to five years, where appropriate, to support major increases in fees so as not to dramatically impact user groups in the short term;

- That the User Fee Policy framework be based on the following key principles:
  - Fair and equitable County user fee development;
  - Maximum utilization of facilities;
  - Maximum revenue generation from ancillary income sources;
  - Direct benefits realized and the cost of delivery;
  - Transparency and simple to understand;
  - Cost effective facilities and program operations by the County.

- That the overall user fee policy development program ensure stakeholder consultation in regards to the development of its key principles and approaches;

- That user fee strategies also reflect market-based strategies, such as multiple price points to balance utilization levels and to maximize income in high demand categories;

- That the user fees be reviewed annually and comprehensively assessed at a minimum every five years as to the cost inputs to the approved formula that emerges from this recommendation.

- That policies on organizational and individual participant financial support related to user fees be aligned with and considered as per the specific recommendations on these topics in Sections 3.8 of the Master Plan.

Fairness and equity are key principles for User Fee Policy development. The intent of these terms is to ensure, that as a public funded and / or support initiative, available services are not priced to benefit certain user groups over others that is all groups are treated in a similar way. Also, these terms are intended to ensure all residents as taxpayers have access to, can participate in and realize the benefits of leisure activities no matter their ability, background or other considerations. Various recommendations in the Master Plan in support of Individual Financial Assistance, Inclusion and other themes are important linkages in shaping the User Fee Policy.
3.7 POLICY DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

Overview

Through the course of the master planning process, the need to either undertake existing policy reviews or pursue new policy development initiatives was identified.

A significant consideration from the Situational Analysis Report, was the need to develop a policy framework to balance public accessibility to major facilities and support broad-based participation with the need to maximize revenue generation in order to more effectively manage the cost impacts of major recreation and leisure facilities on taxpayers. Achieving a balance in this regard was preferred but within a structured and workable policy framework.

Recommendation: Policy Development Initiatives

1. Balancing Public Accessibility and Revenue Generation Goals

- That a policy be developed related to integrating and balancing the competing perspectives of public accessibility and maximizing revenue generation from major recreation facilities, focusing on the following components:
  
  o Ensuring public accessibility at viable times in support of low or non-programmed activities, such as public skating, unstructured sports field utilization and related uses;
  
  o Giving preference to minor sports, youth and other special needs groups within selected timeframes for regularly scheduled and program-based activities;
  
  o Maximizing opportunities beyond targeted groups allocations for adult and other activities that generate higher fees;
  
  o Developing a tournament, shows, event and festivals component that supports service provider goals on program diversification / variety and fundraising, but within limits that do not displace key points of accessibility, such as public skating, and has clear displacement parameters related to impacts on regularly scheduled activities involving space reallocations, number of reallocations per year, replacement facilities access and related considerations;
  
  o Developing the context of the financial coverage targets established annually and as approved by Council for its recreation facilities;
  
  o Ensuring evident linkages are made between the user fee, fairness and equity, special populations and other key County policies;
• Developing policy using best practices analyses, community organization consultation and technical assessments on utilization, revenue generation and related profiles and inputs.

2. Facilities Allocation

• That current policies, particularly the facilities allocation policies, be reviewed or developed to ensure the following key value considerations are incorporated:
  
  o Fairness and equity amongst all user populations
  
  o Inclusion and transparency
  
  o Support of emerging parks and recreation services and for less developed or known programs and services that are evolving
  
  o Enhancing participation involvement for new Canadian, residents with physical and other challenges and other populations who require integration supports to facilitate equitable participation.

3. Community Advisory Engagement

That a community-wide policy be developed in the use, roles, decision-making and recruitment of Community Advisory Committee members for any area of parks, facilities, open space, programming, community trials, or aligned areas of community services delivery.

4. Policy Format

• That consideration be given to developing policies based on the following framework in order to establish a consistency of format, presentation and understanding:

  o Policy rationale and need;
  
  o Policy principles and foundation;
  
  o Policy statement and content;
  
  o Operational procedures and standards;
  
  o Linkages to all regulatory and / or statutory acts or legislation, regulations and other County policies;
  
  o Implementation and monitoring procedures;
3.8 PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICES DELIVERY STRATEGIES

There are multiple approaches relative to parks and recreation service delivery strategies for the County. The following material identifies priority services delivery strategy.

1. DATA COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, EVALUATION AND PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT PROGRAM

Overview

Currently, some of the County's statistical gathering formats are not as comprehensive or offer the needed depth of analysis necessary to formulate and support investment or policy-based decisions and services evaluations. At the level of complexity that is being experienced, an enhanced data collection and analysis system needs to be considered. Complementing the data collection process, is the need for an ongoing monitoring process to ensure that the benefits cited are being realized, risk is not being unduly experienced and preventative actions can be taken prior to major problems evolving. Complementing this initiative, is the need to develop a performance measurement and reporting system as a means to align goals, priorities and intended investments being made with the outcomes and the benefits desired.

This latter consideration becomes increasingly important as non-profit organizations become more invested in facilities, service delivery leadership and other considerations. Also, in order for the County to fulfill its service sector planning and integration role, it needs quality data and analytical tools to support these tasks.

- Mandatory policy review, potentially every five years;
- An amendments tracking capacity.
Recommendation: Data Collection, Analysis, Evaluation and Performance Measurement

- That a comprehensive review and further development of the Division’s data collection, analytical, evaluation and performance measurement activities be undertaken, to ensure increasingly relevant, accurate and timely data to support current and future-oriented operational and strategic priorities identification, decision-making and performance management, with emphasis on:
  
  o The County’s parks and recreation services operations to ensure that revenues are being optimized, expenses are being minimized and participation opportunities are maximized.
  
  o Identifying and responding to changes that are occurring in the parks and recreation services and regional markets that could influence future participation patterns and which might impact financial results, related to reduced revenues, increased expectations or other changing market conditions.
  
  o Supporting organizations that the County is significantly connected with in terms of grants or related to the potential impacts if the organization were to cease operations or run into a major organization or financial challenges.
  
  o Assessing service trends, government policy initiatives, evolving societal priorities and other service influences as key impacts to ongoing strategic analysis and services development.
  
  o Developing and applying performance measurement criteria, targets and reporting on the results achieved.

The data collection and evaluation initiatives need to reflect both operational and strategic level analyses.
3.9 PARTNERSHIPS/JOINT VENTURES

Overview

Over the last ten to fifteen years, there has been considerable discussion and experimentation with partnerships, joint ventures and other initiatives. Some have worked, and others have failed to materialize due to the rigors and risk management requirements that are often in place. This is an area that the County may wish to increase use of where opportunities exist. However, to increase the use of these strategies will require some form of increased flexibility and risk taking. The County will need to assess the levels of risk and their reasonableness on a case-by-case basis. However, it is becoming increasingly demonstrated that partnerships and joint ventures have the ability to expand the array of parks and recreation opportunities, reduce financial pressures on a municipality and provide other benefits. However, they also require the development of new skills in terms of contract management, partnership evaluation and supervision and other inputs, along with enhanced risk taking and other change perspectives.

Recommendation: Partnerships and Joint Ventures

That the County actively continue to lead and / or support partnership, joint venture and related initiatives where:

- Need is identified and demonstrated;
- Public access and affordability are assured;
- The partnership arrangement is financially sound and sustainable;
- The scope of County investment is reflective of the benefits to be realized by Norfolk residents.

3.10 INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPANT FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Overview

Most municipalities and not-for-profit community parks and recreation services providers have developed over the years, a financial subsidy program for individuals, families and other groupings who do not have the financial means to pay participant fees but who would clearly benefit from participation. Many minor sports programs have developed internal resources or have worked with service clubs and other bodies to generate the funds necessary to reduce or waive fees in order to facilitate the participation of children from low income families or other challenging situations. This
form of investment is vitally important in order to support the principles of inclusion, fairness and equity and in supporting the personal well-being and healthy lifestyles of all residents.

Recommendation: Individual Participant Financial Support

- That the County consider opportunities in offering individual participants financial support to access parks and recreation programs for its directly delivered County services, based on the following principles:
  - Evident benefit to qualifying participants;
  - A reasonable assessment of the financial or other limitations that are barriers to participation;
  - Selective tracking of financially supported participation to ensure engagement and to assess the benefits realized;

- That the individual participant financial support program be positioned outside the user fee policy of the County in order to separate participant financial subsidies from revenue generation targets;

- That financial support offered to individual participants be aligned with their assessed capacity to fund portions of the fees applicable;

- That the financial support program be positioned within formats and strategies that ensure awareness of this opportunity and be subject to budgetary approval;

- That an annual report, consistent with Freedom of Information and Privacy Acts requirements, be provided to Council on the level of participant financial support provided by:
  - Program and / or service;
  - Full or partial fee contributions;
  - Individuals, families and age profiles.

- That through the County’s recommended community development role, the County actively promote, where appropriate and possible, by providing proposed advice and direction to community service providing organizations to develop their policy frameworks and the resources necessary to facilitate the participation of individuals or families who have limited financial capacity and who would otherwise benefit from program participation.
\begin{itemize}
\item That the County \textbf{not provide direct funding support} to community service providing organizations for fee subsidies.
\end{itemize}

\section*{3.11 FACILITIES PROJECT DEVELOPMENT}

\textbf{Overview}

Norfolk has undertaken important parks and recreation facility developments based on various inputs, assessments, etc. A Business Plan model for individual facility initiatives has been used. Many communities have this as a requirement prior to final decision-making on major capital investments.

A Parks, Facilities and Recreation Services Master Plan is a process that brings together significant amounts of research to identify priorities, needs and strategies over an extended period of time, in this case, twenty years. It identifies not only facilities but also criteria, strategies, etc. However, Master Plans do not, in and of themselves, typically deal with the policy development and Business Plans for individualized parks and recreation facility initiatives due to the changing characteristics of the market and demand over time, community growth patterns, trends, the municipality's financial resources and commitments, etc. The Master Plan sets the overarching facilities development framework for parks and recreation services and priorities. Then, individual Business Plans may be undertaken based on timelines established within the Master Plan and the County's business case template. A Business Plan should focus on:

\begin{itemize}
\item Assessment of partnerships, joint ventures and community-based development and delivery opportunities;
\item Location considerations, principles and evaluation;
\item Connections to County and Division's Strategic Plan goals, policies, objectives, etc.;
\item Alternative development strategies in terms of redeveloping existing facilities, building new facilities, undertaking additions, etc.;
\item Need and demand profiles, marketing requirements, etc. and related feasibility assessment components;
\item Determining competitive market profiles, etc.;
\item Identification of space and size needs and special equipment, often involving conceptual / simplified floor plans;
\item Identification of the total square footage as a basis to develop more detailed capital costs and funding sources;
\item Three year operating pro formats in order to identify annual revenues, expenses, staffing requirements, etc.;
\item Governance and management plans.
\end{itemize}
These and other elements are developed to focus on a specific facility. This is an excellent strategy in order to ensure these major capital investments are targeted with clear outcomes, sound capital cost projections and other key outcomes.

**Recommendation: Business Plan Development Applications**

That Norfolk County continue to require a **Business Plan for all capital parks and recreation service proposals** as follows:

- That any new facility or servicing initiative or major addition to an existing parks and recreation resource with a potential **capital cost of over $500,000** be supported by a **comprehensive Business Plan**.

- That the County direct the undertaking of the Business Plans, **seeking broad-based public consultation, and working within partnerships** where appropriate with community proponents and participants.

- That the results of the Business Plan, when finalized and accepted, become the basis for a new or expanded parks and recreation service being incorporated into the **ten year capital budget forecast** for the County related to timing, capital cost projections, County role / involvement, etc.

- That the capital cost projections should be **reviewed regularly and re-incorporated** into the County’s ten year capital cost forecast program in order to respond to:
  - The potential impact of inflation that may not be predictable or certain over time.
  - Any subsequent alterations in a proposed facility’s design or use which should be approved by Council first as to rationale and need for the changes.

### 3.12 MULTI-USE/MULTI-PARTNER FACILITY DEVELOPMENT

**Overview**

Over the last decade or more, there has been a significant move towards the development of park and recreation facilities on a multi-use / multi-partner basis. The key rationales for this strategy are as follows:

- Potential capital cost savings, often in the order of 10% to 25%;
- Significant potential for operational savings, up to 25%;
- Improved, more cost effective marketing opportunities and approaches;
- Enhanced customer / user satisfaction relative to convenience and visiting one site only as an individual and/or a family;
- Greater critical mass, visibility and community identification;
- Potential for enhanced facilities development relative to scope, quality and participation volumes.

There are significant benefits to this strategy and it can be creative in its application. These facilities can involve arenas, community centres, branch libraries, school facilities, social service facilities, community policing offices, fire stations, etc. The County has utilized this model on several occasions.

**Recommendation: Multi-Use / Multi-Partner Approaches**

That Norfolk County, for all major parks and recreation facility renewal and new facility development initiatives, investigate in depth, the potential for a wide range of multiple use opportunities within a single facility venue, as well as multi-partner participation.

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### 3.13 COMMUNITY USE OF SCHOOLS

**Overview**

Community use of schools has been a long established practice in Ontario and many other jurisdictions. Due to the significant expansion of public schools, colleges and universities, taxpayers have supported the development of a wide array of facilities that have significant potential to support recreation and leisure activities. These facilities include gymnasiums, resource rooms, outdoor sports fields, specialized facilities, classrooms, etc., and at universities and colleges can include arenas, aquatic centres, gymnasiums, etc.

Since the mid-1990s, there has been a significant decline in the community use of schools due to the gravitation towards increased fees for utilization, customer service challenges, accessibility consistency concerns and other issues. Some communities have divested their responsibility to coordinate community group use of these facilities, while others have experienced significant challenges in regards to their user groups wishing to develop more stand alone or separate municipal facilities as a substitute for school accessibility.

In the summer of 2004, and again in the spring of 2007, the Province of Ontario announced a $20 million program as part of an overall initiative to facilitate and encourage increased utilization of publicly funded schools by community organizations, especially in higher risk neighbourhoods. Considering that these facilities are built by the same taxpayer, and that there is a wide array of indoor and outdoor recreational facilities, these venues represent a potential resource for recreation and leisure programming, often located in neighbourhoods.
Relative to outdoor recreation facilities, school venues can offer sports fields, playgrounds and open spaces. In some older communities, school sites are sometimes the principal source of parkland and green space, and therefore, have added value and importance.

Sports fields on school sites can sometimes augment facilities often found in park areas. Such a strategy can reduce certain user drive times. Also, using existing resources, can potentially reduce the potential need for additional publicly-developed facilities. Efforts should be made to maximize the use of existing school-based sports fields where feasible. However, such a strategy also needs to recognize the limitations of such sports fields related to low School Board maintenance, fields of limited quality, neighbour-land use conflicts (lights, noise, and ball intrusion) and the preference of some sports field organizations to consolidate use on a few venues.

The County has taken leadership to explore with the local school boards with facilities in Norfolk, the opportunity for municipalities and local services providers to access publicly funded schools in order to provide more local recreation and leisure facility capacity and to reduce the pressures and need for additional long-term municipal investments in stand-alone parks and recreation facilities.

Advantages related to the public use of schools include:

- More extensive use of existing public-owned facilities;
- Good locations in proximity to neighbourhood and district populations;
- Reduced need for municipal capital investment;
- Access and on-site parking is available;
- Local residents are often familiar with the venues.

**Recommendation: Community Use of Schools**

That Norfolk County continue to explore with local School Boards, strategies and protocols that would effectively increase community accessibility to publicly funded **schools for recreation uses** as a key support and service to both community service provider organizations and for County services.
4 PARKS, OPEN SPACES, COMMUNITY TRAILS AND WATERFRONT AREAS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Norfolk County is endowed with a diversity of parks, open spaces, trails and waterfront areas which allow for a healthy and active lifestyle for both residents and visitors. These park and trail resources are augmented by indoor recreation facilities and resources that lead to various participation opportunities and contribute to the quality of life of the community. Parks, open spaces and trails contribute to achieving the goal of maintaining a high quality of life for residents through protecting natural and cultural features and providing recreation and leisure services and amenities.

As the County of Norfolk has evolved from a number of smaller urban communities and dispersed rural areas, into a larger municipal entity, there exist a number of park, trail and open space amenities in these smaller communities that eventually aggregated into the County. The main park facilities and amenities that can be found in Norfolk County are dispersed amongst the main urban communities in the County, these are Delhi, Port Dover, Simcoe, Waterford, Courtland and Port Rowan.

Most parkland within the County is categorized as Community Parks, which can be defined as those containing athletic, special purpose and nature amenities for residents within a cluster of neighbourhoods in a larger geographic area. The park facilities within Norfolk County are more dispersed as a result of the aggregated nature of Norfolk County, with comparable parks in the varying urban communities. Norfolk County also has a significant amount of linked open space and natural heritage areas, which are also considered park spaces. In addition, Lakeshore Parks contribute to existing parkland and allow residents access to the waterfront. The waterfront is an invaluable resource for the County that provides opportunities for recreation, tourism and environmental stewardship.

Trails are also considered a significant amenity within Norfolk County, which are part of the open space and natural heritage system. Trails contribute to healthy communities and have significant economic, social and environmental benefits, they also contribute to active transportation networks. Trail connectivity continues to be important within the County, there are many existing trails that are well maintained, accessible, offer a diversity of flora and fauna, and exercise options. Trails are particularly important considering population demographics within communities. It is important that the County considers an aging population when planning for parks, trails and open spaces. These residents may be interested in experiences that offer the opportunity for personal growth, as well as recreational activities that are less strenuous. Trail amenities can contribute to providing recreational opportunities such as walking, cycling and other low impact activities.

The following section gives a detailed description of the current parks, open space, trails, and waterfront amenities within the County and also provides recommendations for the future direction of these amenities. The recommendations propose initiatives that the County should consider over the next twenty years within a master planning context relative to their parks, trails and open spaces.
4.2 PARKS, OPEN SPACES, COMMUNITY TRAILS AND WATERFRONT FRAMEWORK

This section outlines considerations with respect to the development and delivery of these amenities along with key strategies and direction. This information forms the basis upon which to develop the various recommendations for this section of the Parks, Recreation and Facilities Master Plan.

Table 1-1 - Parks, Open Spaces, Community Trails and Waterfront Development Profile

<table>
<thead>
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<th>GENERAL</th>
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| Considerations | • Highly valued by community members and appreciated, well used and containing a good variety of recreation opportunities.  
• Innovative initiatives relating to parks, trails, open spaces and waterfront areas are highly supported and valued. Protecting and augmenting these resources is widely supported. |
| Strategies | • Focusing efforts on solutions for an aging population, youth out-migration and planning for tourism are some key items to focus on. |
| Directions | • Seek opportunities to incorporate accessibility, improved amenities along trails, considering facilities for a wide range of users.  
• Developing connections between trails and downtown areas, also considering how best to connect existing parks and open spaces. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARKS AND WATERFRONT AREAS</th>
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| Considerations | • When planning for parks support active and passive recreation opportunities.  
• Contribute to positive urban form and park beautification.  
• Support new sport and activity uses emerging for parks, understanding demand requirements. i.e. soccer, pickle ball etc. |
| Strategies | • Design venues to ensure both active and passive recreation.  
• Ensure parks planning considers a wide range of age groups, i.e. aging population and youth.  
• Venues need to be flexible and renewable to meet changing needs and expectations. |
| Directions | • Incorporate water based recreation and waterfront access in parks.  
• Consider additional resources that are available for park acquisition; schools, waterfront property owned by County, etc.  
• Develop new sports fields and related capacities to meet changing use and preferences. |
## OPEN SPACE

### Considerations
- It is important to preserve natural and cultural features.
- Provide unique experiences in the form of both active and passive uses, educational and conservation functions.

### Strategies
- Develop recreation opportunities that incorporate cultural elements, such as; an agricultural landscape, Carolinian forest, waterfront areas etc.
- Offer educational and interpretive opportunities.
- Develop forest management and conservation strategies.

### Directions
- Consider developing recreation opportunities that reflect historic, cultural and geographic factors.
- Explore environmental stewardship solutions and actions.
- Partner with Conservation Authority to develop new open space and waterfront areas.

## COMMUNITY TRAILS

### Considerations
- Need to support both recreation and active transportation.
- Consider historic and cultural factors when developing trails.
- Special age groups are important in trail development considerations.

### Strategies
- Enhance trail networks and ensure connectivity.
- Integrate opportunities for accessibility and education.

### Directions
- Develop a linked, connected and destination based trail network.
- Encourage rails to trail projects, which incorporate history and a cultural landscape
- Incorporate accessible amenities wherever possible in trail development projects.
4.3 PARKS AND OPEN SPACES CLASSIFICATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT PROFILES

Norfolk County is home to many parks and open spaces of varying sizes. The Official Plan organizes parks into five distinct categories, these include:

- Community Parks
- Neighbourhood Parks
- Parkettes
- Linked Open Space and Natural Heritage
- Lakeshore Parks

The Norfolk County Official Plan includes standards for parkland provisions. The use of the hectares per 1000 population standard provides an effective analysis for parkland provisions. The Official Plan standards are as follows:

- Community Parks - 1 hectare per 1000 population
- Neighbourhood Parks - 1 hectare per 1000 population
- Parkette - .3 hectares per 1000 population
- Linked Open Space and Natural Heritage - Standards based on connectivity and natural attributes
- Lakeshore Parks - Areas should be defined considering the physical resources of the site

The above standards for Norfolk County are comparable with parkland provisioning standards for municipalities in Ontario. Therefore, the above standards should continue to be used for park provisioning throughout Norfolk County. Relating to existing parks within the County, the following was evident after an analysis of the parks and open space inventory and public engagement feedback:

- Community Parks are well represented and accessible within the County of Norfolk urban communities, with 3.05 hectares per 1000 population.
- Neighbourhood Parks fall below the recommended minimum standard, at .57 hectares per 1000 population. Infrastructure, primarily for playgrounds, is aging and lacking a modern and creative component.
- Parkettes fall below the recommended minimum standard, at .04 hectares per 1000 population. Only two of the urban communities within Norfolk County contain Parkettes. During public engagements it was also revealed that this something that is desired by residents and stakeholders.
- In terms of linked open space and natural heritage areas, trail connectivity and integration with natural features and downtown areas are desired. Additional amenities on trails such as interpretive signs and rest areas are also required.
- At this time Norfolk County includes only one Lakeshore Park in Port Dover. Public feedback and advancing the role of parks as critical to the urban fabric and economics of the community point to the need for additional lakeshore parks. These parks offer water based recreation, areas for community festivals and other waterfront amenities.
Classification and Development Policies

The following is a general guideline for the Parks Classification System to be used by the County in its ongoing management of parks, open spaces and trails, in accordance with the Official Plan:

- **Community Parks**
  - Larger sites intended to support the outdoor recreational needs of residents within a cluster of neighbourhoods in a larger geographic area.
  - The park amenities are further broken down into Athletic, Special Purpose and Nature.
  - Ideally located on arterial / collector roads to enhance access via walking, cycling, trails, cars and public transit and to reduce neighbouring land use impacts.
  - Facilities would include primary and secondary youth and adult sports fields. Elements found in community parks include lighting, spectator and user amenities, such as parking, seating, washrooms, and concessions. These parks also include playground structures and large open play areas, specialized facilities, such as skateboard and water play facilities and other similar features.
  - Trails, trailheads and linkages, woodlots, naturalized zones and other passive use areas could be included.
  - It is possible for these types of parks to contain amenities such as maintenance buildings and parking lots.
  - These parks may also provide neighbourhood park services to the immediate residential areas.

- **Neighbourhood Parks**
  - Sites intended to support the outdoor recreational needs of a specific local neighbourhood area for all ages.
  - Access to these parks is mainly via walking and biking, with parking facilities to support residents as required.
  - It is important to ensure that these parks contain neighbourhood level amenities such as playgrounds, passive areas, open space areas, trail linkages, and secondary level sports fields. These facilities need to be updated at certain intervals.
  - Neighbourhood parks could also contain woodlots and naturalized areas.
• **Parkettes**
  o These parks are small in size and intended to contribute to the community’s civic beautification and act as passive rest areas and amenities.
  o Parkettes should include seating, planting design elements, public art, lighting, information signage and opportunities for passive recreation.

• **Linked Open Space and Natural Heritage**
  o Open space areas that contain cultural, natural and agricultural landscape features or are linear connections within the community trail system.
  o Are intended for the conservation of key natural assets and can also include aspects related to trails.
  o Natural features such as forests, woodlots, watercourses, ponds, wetlands, grasslands, beaches could all form part of this park system.
  o Opportunities for linkages include hydro-right-a-ways, rails to trail developments, share the road programs, and other linear trail connections.
  o Access for recreation purposes will vary based on the sensitivity of a venue’s natural environment.

• **Lakeshore Parks**
  o These sites have unique waterfront settings and amenities. They often include public beaches, walking areas, marine harbours, seating areas, and opportunities for passive and active recreation.
  o There are opportunities to provide enhanced public access to existing waterfront areas.

**Recommendations: Parks and Open Spaces Development**

The following should be undertaken when parks and open spaces are developed, acquired and managed:

- **Ensure that Community Parks have sufficient trails**, trail heads and linkages, which could be located near woodlots, natural features and other passive areas.

- **Provide residential areas with Neighbourhood Parks**, preferably walking or biking distance away. **Update Neighbourhood Park amenities, specifically playgrounds and ensure modern and updated equipment** for both existing and proposed playgrounds.
Within Open Space and Natural Heritage areas ensure that there is significant trail connectivity between communities, neighbourhoods, key nodes (cultural, recreational tourism, and agricultural areas), waterfront, and downtown areas.

Increase the number of Lakeshore Parks within Norfolk County. This will allow enhanced opportunities for water based recreation, passive and active recreation near the waterfront, and connections between waterfront areas and downtown centres. Ensure that this is completed in accordance with natural heritage policies in Section 6 (Sustainable Natural Heritage) of the Official Plan.
4.4 PARKS AND OPEN SPACES PROVISIONING STANDARDS

Norfolk County contains a wide range of parks, open spaces and trails due to the aggregated nature of the municipality. Some examples of well used parks and trails are the Courtland Lions Community Park, Delhi Sports Park, the Lynn Valley Trail, and the Waterford Heritage Trail. In spite of these effective recreation facilities and parks, there are shortages in certain types of parks. It would be beneficial for the County to acquire more parkland in order to satisfy the current and future population and to advance the system of parks, so that park provision meets the adopted standards in the Official Plan. The community engagement process revealed that parks, open spaces and community trails are highly valued by residents. Some of the key findings include:

- There is a need for integrated and connected trail systems, which allow for connections to communities, downtown areas and waterfront areas. Residents and stakeholders would like cultural and historic elements integrated, such as the development of more multi-use trails on abandoned railway corridors.
- Due to an aging population there is and will continue to be a need to focus on accessibility in parks, open spaces and trails. This includes increased amenities such as washroom facilities, exercise stations and updated infrastructure for access in all parks and trails.
- A need to integrate passive recreation into parks, open spaces, trails and waterfront areas.

As there is a shortage of both Neighbourhood Parks and Parkettes in Norfolk County, securing land that will allow for the development of new parks is necessary. The County should implement a Surplus School Strategy which would be able to aid in successfully securing additional park and open space land, by acquiring property after a school closes. For example, the County purchased Doverwood School in 2014, a facility which is now utilized as public land for recreation.

It is important to communicate the need for additional park and trail land provisioning. This can be achieved by explaining the co-benefits of parkland acquisition for parks and trails, such as: health, social, and environmental impacts, to all involved in decision-making in order to encourage funding and further action.

Recommendations: Provisioning Standards

In order to ensure that the County is well served with parks and open space amenities. The County’s focus should be on:

- **Securing publicly owned-lands as opportunities arise**, such as schools and other public facilities.
- **Determining locations** for additional multi-use trails on abandoned railways and other linear trail connections.
- **Ensuring the addition of amenities for passive recreation** in parks and open spaces, such as opportunities for wildlife observation, walking, hiking, biking, and canoeing or kayaking.
4.5 PARKLAND DEDICATION POLICIES

Parkland dedication is one of the means by which the County acquires lands in support of its parks, open space, trails and related facilities development. Parkland dedication is a function of the Ontario Planning Act, a recent amendment to the Planning Act through Bill 73 (first reading) indicates that the County can receive up to one hectare of land for public park purposes for each 500 dwelling units proposed in a residential subdivision or an equivalent value in funds (cash-in-lieu of parkland). In addition, public parkland that is acquired or cash-in-lieu of parkland can both be used for trail development.

Through considerable negotiations, Ontario Municipal Board hearings and many years of experience, municipalities and developers have discussed the kind of land that should be dedicated, including ravine lands, slopes and other non-developable lands for parkland purposes. It is recognized that a portion of these lands may be non-developable which also means they may not be suitable for desired park functions, including sports fields, playgrounds, ancillary buildings and trails. These lands often have safety or natural hazard conditions which make them unsuitable for anything but passive trail use or as environmental lands.

A parkland dedication strategy is required to give direction to the negotiations for dedicated parklands. It is also important in view of the fact that provincial and environment planning and other initiatives are resulting in increased amounts of land being deemed non-developable and that municipalities are under increasing pressure to absorb more of these lands as part of dedication requirements. This pressure could jeopardize the ability to secure table land for park based activities and could result in parks that are not in preferred locations, creating potential challenges related to access, utility, maintenance and operations.

These undeveloped lands often provide amenity spaces for surrounding property owners. At the same time, developers normally do not want to retain these lands for liability purposes and the responsibility associated with maintaining their environmental and aesthetic character and features. It is recommended that Norfolk County identify an acquisition budget related to natural heritage and environmental areas, and that this resource be separated from parkland acquisition or dedication funds related to acquiring active parkland space.
Recommendations: Parkland Dedication

It is recommended that Norfolk County accepts parkland dedications that:

- Meet the park and open space hierarchy and provisioning standards of the Official Plan and the Parks, Facilities and Recreation Master Plan.
- Effectively support the development of park based facilities and amenities in accordance with the parks hierarchy and development strategy.
- Are not designated environmentally sensitive, such as significant woodlots, ravine lands, stormwater management ponds, lands subject to flood hazards and erosion and related lands.
- Include 2% of parkland for commercial or industrial development.
- For residential subdivisions are in the amount of one hectare for each 500 dwelling units.
- Include 5% of the land for all other development.
- Where development incorporates a mix of land uses, parkland dedication required for each use will be added together to determine the sum of total land or cash-in-lieu contribution to be provided.

That Parkland Dedication Funds, taken in lieu of land, should be used when the required land dedication does not provide an area of suitable size, shape or location for the development of public parkland. The review processes for such discussions should involve the Community Services Department in Norfolk County.
4.6 PARKS, OPEN SPACE, COMMUNITY TRAILS AND WATERFRONT INITIATIVES

Through the course of the Master Plan process a range of specific parks, open space, trails and waterfront recommendations have been developed, based on the public engagement process, strategic themes and other perspectives that have developed over the course of this initiative. Recommendations for Norfolk County parks, open spaces, community trails, and waterfront areas should focus on the following items:

- A changing demographic and greater need for accessibility.
- Outdoor recreation geared for both an aging and youth demographic.
- The unique aspects of parks, open spaces, and community trails in rural settings.
- Improving usability and quality of existing outdoor recreation facilities such as sports fields.
- The improvement of parks and increasing the current usability of community parks, neighbourhood parks, and parkettes;
- Addressing beautification and renewal issues in parks.
- Enhancing community trails for both active transportation and recreation purposes; ensuring connectivity, considering an aging population and a community concerned with quality of life.
- Aging and outdated park infrastructure that will require renewal and structural improvements.
- Acquiring a sufficient amount of park and open space lands for the County.
- Improving waterfront access to the public, while ensuring the conservation and enhancement of significant natural features along the lakeshore.

Port Dover Lighthouse and Beach, Image Source: www.flickr.com
The following are recommendations for parks, open spaces, trails and waterfront areas.

Recommendations: Park and Waterfront Improvements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parkland Acquisition</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acquire new parkland using the parkland dedication policies in the Official Plan. When undertaking new subdivision developments ensure that the Norfolk County Official Plan standards for parkland provisions are followed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquire new parkland utilizing the surplus school strategy and/or securing publicly owned lands as opportunities arise.</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neighbourhood and Community Parks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Due to a County-wide deficit in neighbourhood parks, utilize brownfield sites for potential new neighbourhood parks – this is especially true in communities such as Simcoe and Port Dover where most of the population growth is anticipated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure the addition of neighbourhood park amenities such as playgrounds, seating, trails, shade structures, planting design elements, and sports fields to existing community parks in all of the urban communities within Norfolk County. This allows community parks to provide neighbourhood park amenities to residents, especially in Courtland, Langton, Port Rowan, and Waterford.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure that in all urban communities within Norfolk County, schools are utilized for additional park amenities, such as sports fields where feasible, and where demand and community initiative warrants a partnership, for example for skateboard facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure that facilities which attract challenging issues at night, such as skateboard parks, are located on arterial streets, well lit and away from residential areas.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accessibility and Special Age Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ensure that accessibility is integrated into park design and development, focusing on solutions for an aging population. Incorporate adequate and accessible seating, relatively flat trails, amenity buildings with washroom facilities, and exercise stations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a plan to update and renew park amenities and infrastructure. Replace aging playgrounds with an increasingly creative design.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrate outdoor recreation activities geared at special age groups, such as more skateboard parks, outdoor basketball courts, outdoor pickleball courts, beach volleyball, stand up paddleboarding etc. Many of these activities are for a youth demographic, however pickle ball is also popular among an aging demographic.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lakeshore/Waterfront Parks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work with the conservation authority and use environmental stewardship principles to acquire land suitable for waterway and lakeshore park development. Ensure to increase access to waterfront areas, harbour marinas, and natural beach/dune features. Follow best management and planning practices that are outlined in the County Official Plan and Zoning By-Law.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Ensure to provide public access to the lakeshore through the development of trails, lookouts, access points, beach areas, marina areas, promote recreational opportunities associated with the lakeshore. Allow opportunities for water-based and passive recreation and amenities that will enhance tourism.

- Support the use of County owned Lake Erie shoreline property for the recreational use of all County residents and tourists.

- Redevelop the Port Dover Waterfront Marina, in order to provide increased public access to the waterfront and provide lakeshore park amenities. The Port Dover Marina has the ability to attract both boaters and non-boaters to the waterfront, and provides connections to both the downtown and access to Lake Erie. Specific enhancements should include:
  - Developing an effective entrance to the Marina
  - Building an event centre in a park setting with a pavilion designed to handle both public and private events
  - Adding seating in the form of benches and picnic tables
  - Improve traffic flow patterns, by adding effective sidewalks, trails and boardwalks
  - Add green areas and planting design elements

- Redevelop the Port Rowan Waterfront Marina, in order to provide increased public access to the waterfront and provide lakeshore park amenities. Enhance the historic attributes and amenities of the Port Rowan Marina in order to contribute to tourism. Provide opportunities for water sports activities within the calm water of the Inner Bay and Long Point Bay. Specific enhancements should include:
  - Building up community access to the marina next to the adjoining historic downtown area
  - Adding picnic tables and barbeque grills
  - Improving traffic flow patterns through the addition of sidewalks, trails, and boardwalks
  - Adding green areas and planting design elements

- Undertake an update to the 2009 Lakeshore Special Policy Area Secondary Plan, incorporate the lakeshore and waterfront recommendations from this Master Plan. Also conduct further research and consultation to propose additional waterfront/lakeshore park and amenity recommendations.
Recommendations: Community Trail Improvements

- Develop an Active Transportation Plan at the county-wide level, which connects communities, as well as infrastructure such as shoulder widening, safe routes for school, and recreational/commuter bike routes.
- Address individual urban communities in an Active Transportation Plan in order to deal with specific barriers and connections.
- Engage a community-based group and/or champion, to gain momentum and support which will lead to resources and action regarding trail planning and improvements.
- Work with community-based groups and/or champions in order to identify, assess and implement solutions to various County and community-wide trail issues.
- Develop additional multi-use trails on abandoned railway corridors, connecting various communities. Proposed future trail links could include:
  - Concession 14 as well as the new Lakeshore Road which have been identified to link to Haldimand County trails
  - Lakeshore Road which has been identified as a link to Elgin County
  - Highways 3 and 59 which have been identified as links to Oxford County
- Utilize existing public land owned and managed by the Canadian Wildlife Service, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, the Long Point Region Conservation Authority and Norfolk County in order to connect and expand trail networks and recreational opportunities. In addition, take advantage of land that is owned by non-governmental agencies, such as the Nature Conservancy of Canada and the Long Point Land Trust.
- Develop trails adjacent to the water along Big Creek and the Lake Erie waterfront.
- Incorporate a consistent, aesthetically fitting and approachable trail signage and wayfinding program. Include a trail map at each major trailhead, plus brochure maps for distribution throughout the County.
- Provide educational and interpretive signage regarding natural history, culture, heritage and wildlife.
- Develop rest areas and distance markers along trails, integrate seating at appropriate locations in order to create opportunities for rest and reflection for residents and visitors.
- Develop a trail maintenance plan including snow clearing/packing guidelines for key community trail connections to clear/pack.
- Undertake an update to the 2009 Norfolk County Trails Master Plan and incorporate the recommendations from this Master Plan, in relation to trail maintenance and connectivity. As well as undertake consultation and research to propose additional trail improvement, connection and maintenance options.
5 PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICES INITIATIVES

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Norfolk County is endowed with a significant array of park and recreation facilities and services, involving six arenas, some fifteen community centres / halls, sports fields, indoor and outdoor pools, seniors' venues and a host of other resources that support a significant array of opportunities to participate in recreational activities by both residents and visitors. These park and recreation resources are augmented by parks, open space, community trails and waterfront resources that extend the outdoor participation opportunities, house many recreation facilities and contribute to the quality of life of the community.

As a result of the historical development of the County of Norfolk, evolving from a number of smaller urban communities, there has been the development of major recreation facilities in these smaller communities that eventually aggregated into the County. As a result, there is a model of park and recreation services delivery that is more dispersed with comparable facilities in each urban area. This reflects the historical development pattern of community members coming together in their local areas to develop facilities, the availability of provincial grants like Wintario in previous decades, local service clubs and fund raising initiatives, and community demographics that have now evolved over the last fifty years.

Norfolk County operates a dispersed model of park and recreation facility services delivery that is highly valued by residents in the various geographic areas of the County. It is also a model that is more costly to operate as it results in more standalone facilities, spread over larger geographic areas, many which are aging, and some which are experiencing more limited use.

The following recommendations propose initiatives that the County should consider over the next twenty years within a master planning context relative to their park and recreation facilities.

5.2 COMMUNITY CENTRE/HALLS

In terms of major recreation facilities, the most prolific facilities in Norfolk are community centres / halls. In total, there are fifteen such facilities available across the County. They have evolved primarily from local communities prior to amalgamation and reflect a common perspective in rural Ontario there halls were the centre of community life, for everything from weddings, recreational activities, community meetings, special community events and other gatherings. The nature and use of community centres / halls has changed significantly over the last five decades.

The following profile was identified in the Situational Analysis Report for Community Centre / Halls:

- Six facilities were built prior to 1950. Four of them in the mid to late 1800s. Seven were built between 1950 and 1980, and two were built since 1980.

- Seven of the fifteen halls are operated by the County. Eight of the halls are operated by various community groups, involving Lion’s Clubs, senior citizen clubs, Women’s Institutes, Kinsmen Clubs and several by local Management Boards.
The halls vary widely in size from 1,559 square feet for the Port Dover Kinsmen Scout Hut to over 24,000 square feet for the Simcoe Adult Community Centre. Eight of the halls are under 5,000 square feet in total size, eg: Walsh.

The community centres / halls are valued by local community members but have significant variable use, are aging, several will require significant investments to meet the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and other considerations. With an aging population, changes in recreation activity profiles and other considerations, a question emerges as to the sustainability of all the community centres / halls in terms of their use, access to alternate facilities, and the significant investments that will be required to rehabilitate these aging facilities over the next number of years. Some early estimates indicate that potentially $2 million will be required to refit the halls in terms of aging components, such as HVAC, roofs, windows, accessibility and related improvements.

Sustaining this level of infrastructure which supports a dispersed model of recreation facilities delivery has significant ongoing capital renewal costs. Also, some facilities have limited or declining use. A question emerges as to what the appropriate delivery strategy is going forward for the County and its residents for these facilities.

A preferred approach to this question is to undertake a strategic review of the community centres / halls portfolio collectively rather than looking at community centers / halls on an individual basis. The future direction in regards to these facilities is really about developing a strategy for moving forward that supports local community use but within a balanced capital renewal and operating cost framework.

Recommendations: Community Centres / Halls Assessment

That Norfolk County, working in conjunction with community centre / hall partners, undertake a strategic review of the community centres / halls within Norfolk, ensuring this review incorporates assessments related to:

- Up-to-date current Building Condition Studies
- Reinvestment costs to both to sustain the facilities and to meet AODA requirements.
- Evolving demographics within the local service areas of each facility.
- Local leadership and volunteer sustainability in support of each facility.
- Demand and use profiles for each facility.
- Determination of an appropriate number, size and capabilities of community centres / halls that continue to support reasonable access across the County.

That a public engagement program be part of the strategic review.

That the review balances accessibility and local interests and use levels with the impacts of capital and operating costs requirements.
5.3 ARENAS

Norfolk County operates six arenas dispersed throughout the community. They are all standalone facilities ranging in age from approximately thirty to sixty years. Most of the arenas evolved when the urban areas of the County were independent municipalities. Through amalgamation, they have become aggregated facilities within the Parks and Recreation Division of Norfolk.

Many of these arenas were developed based on local community fund raising initiatives, as well as Wintario and other funding sources. The arenas have been rehabilitated on an ongoing basis, and many of the items on the Division's ten year capital forecast and a significant portion of the identified capital funds within the forecast support arena renewals related to ice plants, floors, mechanical equipment and related upgrades.

The arenas’ utilization profile developed in the Situational Analysis Report indicated that there is significant prime time ice available with little evidence of any material latent demand. The issue within this Master Plan for arenas is not about additional arena capacity, but the number of arenas and their configuration going forward.

Standalone arenas have the highest operating cost profile. Twin pad arenas are typically 25% less costly to build and to operate than two standalone facilities. However, the dispersal model of recreation facility delivery reflects not only the legacy of arena development but also supports local access to these important facilities within such an expansive geographic community.

From a trends perspective, hockey registration has been declining, hockey and ice skating club programs have been consolidated in many communities and other impacts are occurring. Also, with the introduction of female hockey teams, as well as female participation within existing minor hockey programs, the need for additional change room and amenity supports is essential from both supporting flexible gender participation and other broader human right perspectives.

From a master planning perspective, the question moving forward over the next twenty years is determining how to respond to aging facilities, how to accommodate female and other population access and how to sustain these important resources as use levels transition.

**Recommendations: Arenas**

That when major reinvestments in an individual arena facility reaches a significant level, such as $500,000 over five years, that a review be undertaken to assess if consolidating two standalone arenas into a twin pad facility is viable, particularly with respect to Simcoe and facilities.

That if an individual arena experiences less than 70% prime time utilization over three years, a strategy review be undertaken of the facility in terms of its need and sustainability.

That no new arena capacity be developed in the community unless there is a substantive change in population growth and use, the current inventory of prime time ice is more utilized or it is to replace an existing facility.

That a review of all six arenas be completed and work undertaken to ensure that there are an adequate number of dressing room with supporting amenities available for the mix of participant orientations.
That a comprehensive arena upgrading program be considered over the next ten years that focuses on a more strategic investment perspective in renewing arena facilities, linked to the recommendations above, AODA requirements and ice utilization trends.

That a webpage be developed indicating ice availability and capacity and be promoted widely for the more active selling of non-reserved available ice one to two weeks ahead of its availability.

5.4 INDOOR SOCCER

Indoor soccer facilities are experiencing significant growth in urban communities, especially with populations over 50,000. In light of Norfolk County’s location, the significant rise in soccer participation in both youth and adult levels, and the anticipated growth in soccer as a strategic trend, consideration could be given over the life of this Master Plan to develop an indoor soccer facility. Such facilities support the strong trend towards year round soccer participation and skills development as well as such a facility supporting winter time baseball, football, lacrosse and other uses that are also experiencing more non-typical seasonal growth.

This would be a joint initiative with the soccer community in Norfolk. A decommissioned arena or similar space that can be repurposed is often utilized as a cost effective way to develop such capacity.

Recommendations: Indoor Soccer

That Norfolk County, working in conjunction with the soccer community, plan for the development of an indoor soccer facility that would have a multi-use capability.

That consideration be given to repurposing a decommissioned arena, if one were to become available, or other large indoor facility as a basis to achieve a more cost effective approach.
5.5 BASEBALL FIELDS

Baseball field reservations for those fields operated by the County declined from 1,003 reservations in 2010 to 878 reservations in 2013, down approximately 12.5%. Use levels have been somewhat erratic on a year to year basis, however use has been declining incrementally.

Based on utilization data, baseball fields in Delhi, Port Dover and Simcoe have the highest use levels, while other areas of the County have more limited use.

The utilization data from a strategic perspective, would not support additional capacity to the eighteen fields identified in the utilization data. However, from a consultation perspective, and the utilization levels in Simcoe, an additional baseball field may need to be considered in that community as 60% of the 2010 to 2013 baseball field reservations occur across the seven fields in Simcoe.

What is likely required in the future, is the possibility of reorienting or upgrading some fields as an alternate to a new field. If new field capacity is developed because some of the lower use fields are not expandable or cannot be enhanced, then the decommissioning of low use fields in support of developing increased field quality and capacity should be considered.

Also, consideration needs to be given to enhancing amenities at the ball fields, particularly shade areas over dugouts or players benches, safety fencing and the replacement of aged backstops, foul poles, bleachers and related components.

Recommendations: Baseball Fields

That no new baseball fields be established in the County, except for possibly a new field in Simcoe with the potential decommissioning of one or two low use fields, e.g.: Lions, Stolker and Memorial Parks.

That ball fields that have less than ten reservations a year over a three year period, be considered for decommissioning

That the Parks and Recreation Division develop a ten year plan to ensure that aging baseball infrastructure related to field quality, fencing, player shade coverage and related components meet contemporary standards and safety expectations.
5.6 SOCCER PITCHES

Soccer at the adult and youth level, male and female, is a high growth activity. It is the most registered sport in Canada with over one million individuals participating.

A club-based facility development strategy has occurred in Simcoe and Delhi through various partner relationships with the County. Other fields have also been developed on County parkland.

One of the soccer pitch development trends has been to aggregate pitches in groups of six to twelve fields, with one high quality field to support playoffs, older age groups, tournaments and related field of play uses, often having some stadium level amenities involving seating, lights, washrooms, etc.

Unlike some other sports, soccer pitch development is often undertaken through soccer club leadership, supported by the municipality in terms of land, capital investments and related perspectives. This type of development model is seen in many communities and exists in Norfolk. It is a model that should be supported. It is dependent on a positive working relationship between the partners which is essential for success in this area.

Recommendations: Soccer Pitches

- That the County continue to support the current soccer pitch development model in partnership with organized soccer clubs.
- That effective working agreements be developed between soccer clubs and the County with respect to the roles and requirements of each of the parties to ensure quality soccer pitches that meet participant needs, are safe, accessible and sustainable.
- That the Parks and Recreation Division, along with the partners, plan on the possible need to develop four to five new soccer pitches over the life of the Master Plan by monitoring participation trends for both youth and adult soccer.

5.7 OLDER ADULT FACILITIES

Older adult leisure services are being delivered across the County, often using community centres in local communities. In Simcoe, a dedicated building exists that is aged, has access and related constraints, along with a series of other challenges. The facility is a former factory and parks facility, which is relatively centrally located. But due to its two storey nature, not having an elevator and other safety issues, is likely not a medium or long term solution for the delivery of the services offered at the facility which are both for seniors and the arts and culture community.

Norfolk County will experience an aging in population as the ‘baby boomer’ generation retires. There will be an acceleration in the number of older adults who will be interested in targeted services around their interests. It is also anticipated from a trends perspective, that the new generation of older adults will be looking for more active and participation-based services than the more typical social recreation activities that have been utilized in older adult centres.
With the aging demographic profile emerging within Norfolk, the perspectives within the Master Plan identify a need to develop an expanded and sustained older adults recreation services strategy. Due to the geographic size of Norfolk, ensuring these services are available in the various communities needs to be a priority to minimize drive times, especially in the winter, and to facilitate maximum access and participation. This is particularly true in Port Dover which is becoming a retirement community.

**Recommendations: Older Adult Recreation Services**

That the Parks and Recreation Division undertaken the development of an **older adult services strategy** for Norfolk and continually **assess the needs for and best service delivery approaches for older adult services** in each of the local communities, utilizing available community centre/hall space or other available spaces on either a scheduled or dedicated basis as demand warrants.

That the Parks and Recreation Division **actively work with local older adult organizations**, clubs and agencies, including public health, social services, community older adult service agencies, and others to identify program and service needs, to market services availability, to achieve more integrated services delivery on a holistic basis, and to develop broader menus of services that connect with both existing and emerging older adult audiences and their changing interests.

That the County initiate the planning for the replacement of the Simcoe Seniors Centre with a dedicated space preferably within a multi-use environment that supports anticipated growth, changing program interests and supports, both older adult and arts and culture participation opportunities.

### 5.8 AQUATICS

Aquatic activities are valued as they respond to the interests at all age levels, from tots to older adults for water safety, swim lessons, fitness activities, master swims, competitive swim teams, recreational fun, summer camp and related uses. Due to the pool's non-regulation length, no swim records can occur in the Simcoe Recreation Centre pool.

Norfolk County has one indoor pool in Simcoe, as well as an outdoor pool in Delhi. Additionally, there are seasonal opportunities for water-based participation along the Lake Erie shore via the Provincial Park, and a few public access beaches.

Indoor pools are typically delivered within an integrated multi-use facility as occurs in Simcoe, with the delivery ratio of approximately one indoor pool to every 50,000 plus residents. Indoor pools are high fixed cost operations and require a significant volume of use in order to minimize operating deficits. In larger urban centres like Kitchener, with its four pools for 250,000 people, operating deficits are often in the order of $125,000 to $150,000 per year per pool.
From an indoor pool perspective, one indoor pool satisfies Norfolk’s population size. This service cannot be delivered on a dispersed delivery model as the operating costs would be unsustainable. Low volume, indoor pools are typically not able to be sustained due to their higher net operating cost.

Outdoor pools are popular but often only have approximately fifty to sixty days a year of use when one looks at the seasonal schedule and deducts poor weather days where use is minimized or no use can occur. A more popular trend involves the development of splash pads, often replacing wading pools, and in some cases, outdoor pools. Splash pads can be developed for various age levels in terms of younger children or children between seven and twelve. They can self-operate and represent lower operating costs while being a more interesting and exciting experiences for children.

Based on the analysis, there is no capacity requirement for another indoor pool or outdoor pool in Norfolk. Splash pads could be considered through community partnership initiatives. With respect to waterfront access for seasonal aquatic activities, the Parks, Open Space, Community Trail section of the Master Plan provides those recommendations.

To-date, Norfolk County has developed two splash pads, one being the Simcoe Kinsmen Splash Pad and the other being the Delhi Spray Park.

Consideration related to additional splash pads could be considered for Waterford, a second one in Simcoe and in other communities depending on the youth orientation of the population.

**Recommendations: Aquatic Services**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>That Norfolk County <strong>not consider developing additional indoor pool capacity</strong>, unless there is substantive growth in the population over the next twenty years or on a replacement basis.</td>
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<tr>
<td>That <strong>no additional outdoor pools be planned</strong>, unless a community initiative identifies a sustainable need based on a growing youth population, access challenges to other outdoor pools and related considerations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>That <strong>additional splash pads be considered over the life of the Master Plan</strong>, potentially focusing on Simcoe and Waterford based on feasibility assessments of demand and availability of community partnerships.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
5.9 SIMCOE MULTI-USE FACILITY

In parallel to both this Master Plan and a community initiative, consideration has evolved around the development of a multi-use, integrated recreation complex in Simcoe that potentially could replace the Adult Community Centre, the Simcoe Recreation Centre and the Talbot Gardens Arena. These are aged or aging facilities, have use constraints, are more challenging to operate from a cost perspective as they are all standalone facilities and the Adult Community Centre is at the end of its life expectancy. As a result of these considerations, it is timely to consider the possibility of an integrated facility to serve the Simcoe and area population. The facilities that would be replaced are all located in that community. None of the recreational activities that could be developed within a multi-use centre are growing to the point where additional capacity is necessary. Such an initiative would occur based on operational efficiencies, providing more contemporary user and participation experiences, enhanced marketing and destination-based awareness, and enhanced supports for tournament, tourism initiatives and related perspectives.

A large seated arena venue, being the Talbot Gardens, and an indoor pool are municipal-wide services. They would be typically located in close proximity to the largest population centre. The other services within these facilities are Simcoe-based opportunities as there is availability of arena and older adult services in the other local communities in Norfolk.

It is also important to recognize that all three of these facilities under discussion are not near the end of their life expectancy. Also, alternatives strategies could be employed to overcome both real and perceived facility deficiencies.

**Recommendations: Simcoe Multi-Use Centre**

That Norfolk County complete an [Engineering and Locational Study](#) and use the recommendations as a basis for future alternative decisions and investments for a multi-use facilities strategy.
6 CEMETERY PLANNING

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Currently, the Forestry and Cemeteries Division of the Parks, Facilities and Recreation Department, has the principal responsibility for overseeing a geographically disparate system of 20 active and 26 inactive cemeteries. Oakwood Cemetery in Simcoe is the largest and by far the most active of all County owned cemeteries. There are 19 additional active cemeteries in rural locations, of which eight are operated by a Cemetery Management Board.

There are 6 key considerations that emerged from the assessment of cemetery services, they are as follows:

- Develop a strategy for the transfer of responsibilities from Cemetery Management Boards to the County;
- Develop a burial and land needs acquisition for long term needs at Oakwood Cemetery and the eastern sector of the County;
- Prepare a benefit cost analysis for in-ground cremation lots;
- Prepare a benefit costs for columbaria;
- Prepare a marketing strategy for full-body and cremation interments, and
- Operating Efficiencies.

6.2 CEMETERY MANAGEMENT BOARD

Norfolk County owns 19 County rural active cemeteries, of which eight are managed by Cemetery Boards. County staff noted that each board has their own approach to operating a cemetery with varying degrees of County assistance. In addition to County owned cemeteries, there are 35 cemeteries that are operated by private cemetery boards on an independent basis.

There is a movement towards turning over the volunteer managed cemeteries to the County, due in large part to the Cemetery Board’s aging membership and a lack of succession planning. In addition, cemeteries are more complex and expensive to operate than in years past. New provincial legislation introduced in 2012, risk management, legal implications, rising costs and perpetual care consequences also contribute to the increasing responsibilities. Three of the thirteen Cemetery Boards (Courtland Baptist, Silver Hill and Teeterville), responsible for County owned cemeteries, have formally approached the County with intentions to transfer their responsibilities to the County. An additional five cemeteries, formerly operated by Cemetery Boards (Hartford, Port Royal, Salem United, Ukrainian Greek Orthodox and Walsh Baptist), are now operated by the County. There has been no formal process to transfer the responsibilities from these five Boards to the County.
Provincial legislation has been in effect since 1972 whereby a municipality is obligated to take over the ownership, operations and perpetual care of all abandoned cemeteries within its boundaries. There is no known option where the County can avoid this obligation. A pro-active approach to transferring board managed cemeteries to the County will advance the process, such as procuring records, maps, revenue, trust funds and personal knowledge, in future years. Discussions are underway, between County staff and the various Cemetery Boards, in the form of current needs, as well as current and future challenges (perpetual care) that will set the tone for the transition at a mutually agreed time.

**Recommendations: Cemetery Management Boards**

Volunteer boards and organizations are a worthy asset to the community and their historical significance is greatly valued. Cemeteries, however, have a rigorous set of rules and regulations set out by provincial legislation that cemetery owners are obliged to follow. A more direct delivery in the administration, operation and maintenance of cemeteries will have many benefits as far as providing the needed resources to effectively manage cemeteries, including transparency and consistency.

The following initiatives should be undertaken when considering Cemetery Management Boards’ responsibilities being transferred to the County:

- Take a lead role in facilitating the transfer of cemetery operations currently being administered by Cemetery Management Boards, including stakeholder meetings;

- Prepare a strategy that will allow for a smooth transition of Cemetery Board responsibilities, including administration (record keeping, financial, trust funds), operations (interment services) and grounds maintenance (grass cutting, monument care) to the County, and

- Prepare cemetery budgets that will support the potential cost increases for the additional administration, operation and maintenance responsibilities based on the transfer of each Cemetery Board’s responsibilities.

### 6.3 FUTURE INVENTORY REQUIREMENTS

Oakwood Cemetery, in Simcoe, is the largest County cemetery with an inventory of 1850 spaces remaining. Based on current sales, a +/- 25 year window is projected before inventory is exhausted. Oakwood serves residents in the central and western parts of the County. Bayview Cemetery in Port Rowan is a small 4 acre County owned cemetery in the western sector. This cemetery is managed by a Cemetery Board with an inventory of 300 remaining spaces, which, based on current lot sales, will be sufficient for the next +/- 20 years. County staff has indicated that Port Rowan is experiencing an in-migration of older adults, resulting in a potential increase in the death rate; therefore current capacity may be reduced as far as number of years remaining.
**Recommendations: Future Inventory Requirements**

The County will be able to serve residents of the central and eastern part of the County at Oakwood Cemetery, with +/- 25 years capacity remaining. Bayview Cemetery, located in the west part of the County will serve residents with +/- 30 years capacity remaining. The County’s cemetery inventory is adequate in the short term with the following recommendations for long term needs:

- Develop a burial capacity and land acquisition strategy for long term needs at Oakwood Cemetery, and
- Develop a needs assessment for future land acquisition in the eastern sector of the County that will reflect the population growth and death rate in this sector.

**6.4 CREMATION OPPORTUNITIES**

Cremation interment is an increasingly popular alternative to traditional full body interment. The cremation interment rate is +/- 50% at the County owned cemeteries, which is slightly lower than the provincial average at 53% and the Canadian average at 58%. Although 125 in-ground cremation lots at Oakwood Cemetery have been available for sale since 2008, sales have yet to be realized. The cremation lots are not as cost efficient in comparison to a single adult lot, with a 10% difference in price. Four cremations are allowed in a cremation lot, while a single adult lot may contain 6 cremations on top of a full body interment at a lesser cost. Given the option of purchasing a smaller, higher priced cremation lot, allowing for up to 4 cremations, or a larger, less expensive single lot, allowing for up to 6 cremations and a full body, the consumer would likely select the less expensive option.

Columbaria urnments are a popular alternative to in-ground cremation interments across North America. Columbaria are operation and maintenance friendly and, with the appropriate setting, can be a valued service to the community. A columbarium was designed in 2014 and County staff indicate that the intention is for installation to take place in 2015.

**Recommendations: Cremation Opportunities**

In order to ensure a well-balanced inventory of interment opportunities, the County should:

- Prepare a cost analysis for in-ground cremation lots with the intention of improving their marketability in comparison with single grave lots;
- Prepare a benefit cost analysis for columbaria with an anticipated installation taking place in 2015, and
- Prepare a marketing strategy for cremated remains interment that will see a favourable increase in cremation related sales and services.
6.5 BUSINESS PLAN

Prior to committing to future capital requirements for any facet of cemetery budgeting, it is our opinion that the municipality should assess the financial viability of return on these potential investments to determine the feasibility of providing interment options that serve the emerging cemetery market. In effect, all of the analysis noted in the above section of the master plan could be enshrined in a single study. To this end, the review of the following items in a study that integrates the background research, financial analysis and key findings of this initial assessment would form part of the municipal due diligence with respect to its cemetery obligations.

This report would include the following items:

- **Market Profile + Cemetery Sites Review;**
  - Assessment of the current cemetery market and cemetery site character for the County.

- **Demand Need Analysis;**
  - Assessment of demographics, disposition, usage levels, expected demand and trends in social and cemetery practices, to determine the current and future cemetery market in the region and best use of cemetery lands in the future.

- **A Review of Current Fee Schedules**

- **Financial Plan;**
  - A business model including estimated market capture, the significance of pre-need sales as part of future interments and disposition data;

- **Perpetual Care Fund;**
  - Analysis and recommendations regarding the disposition of perpetual care funds and alignment with provincial regulations and best practices;

- **Capital Development & Implementation Plan.**
  - Identification of plans and costs related to the implementation of the site plans.

The recommendations in this report would serve as a guide for decision-making for the next 25 years. It is anticipated that this study would cost between $25,000 - $75,000, depending on the extent of the terms of reference for it that evolves from the review by staff and Council subsequent to their approval of the Norfolk County Master Plan for Parks, Facilities and Recreation.
7 FOREST MANAGEMENT PLANNING

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The strategic themes emerging from the Situational Analysis of forestry services lead to the following considerations for the management of the forest resources of Norfolk County:

- The optimization of revenue generation from public forests in the County;
- A clearly articulated strategy for the retention or disposition of county-owned forests, based on financial, environmental and recreational value criteria;
- Considering the functional role of small woodlots within the agricultural landscape, as well as the natural heritage role;
- Examining the role of the urban forest within the County Official Plan review process;
- Embarking on a public engagement program that establishes the programmatic basis for the management of forests within the County in the future, and
- Enshrining the results of that consultation in a comprehensive master plan.

Based on the themes, these considerations have been developed into a series of recommendations to assist in the planning of the County’s forest resources in the future.

7.2 REVENUE GENERATION

Recommendation: Define assets and liabilities
To optimize revenue generated from public forests in the County, an assessment should be conducted to determine which components are an asset or a liability from both a silvicultural and natural heritage perspective.

Recommendation: Objective-based landowner assistance
Most contractors already understand and are willing to practice good forestry practices with landowners. Landowners and contractors need to have simple guidelines, such as those laid out in the Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program (MFTIP). The MFTIP prescription was designed by the province for landowners to manage their own properties for tax reductions. Since an individual Forest Management Plan must be prepared for the subject lands by a forestry professional and approved by a Managed Forest Plan Approver (MFPA), it may be more efficient for the County to offer basic instruction in good forestry practices that assists landowners in achieving objectives that are beneficial to both the individual and the County.

Recommendation: Compensation
The legislative basis underlying the current methods used in assessing financial compensation for woodlot alteration, and the subsequent use of these funds, should be examined.
**Recommendation: Assistance to other regulatory agencies**
Woodlot management services are provided to Haldimand County on a contractual basis. The benefit-cost of this should be determined.

**Recommendation: Regeneration**
With respect to marketable timber, there should be consideration to utilize more effective methods for pines and red oaks regeneration after harvesting to ensure the continued ability to sustain the trees for future use. Although the current management strategy for conifers (removing the overstory to allow volunteer understory deciduous hardwood trees to take over) is cost-effective, pine and red oak regeneration is best managed by removing ground competition with major disturbances such as fire, heavy scarification or chemical application.

**Recommendation: Broader markets**
It may be that all of the marketable timber assets within the County should be brought within the purview of “forest certified council” standards to ensure that this resource is marketable beyond the region.

### 7.3 LAND OWNERSHIP

There is a need to examine the value of specific components within the County forestry system. There are a number of stakeholder groups that should be consulted, as well as a natural heritage and recreational perspectives to consider in addition to the financial determinants.

**Recommendation: Retention / Disposition**
A clearly articulated strategy for the retention or disposition of County-owned forests, based on the following criteria, should be prepared.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Potential Buyers</th>
<th>Restrictions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs) including Significant Woodlands and Significant Wetlands.</td>
<td>Private conservation groups, private landowners with restrictive covenants set in deeds. Retain conservation areas.</td>
<td>Maintain and manage the features and functions that make it an ESA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing or Potential Recreational Areas</td>
<td>Retain for operating by recreational groups, private for-profit business, conservation authorities (CAs).</td>
<td>Allow free historical public access in identified areas such as walking trails. Determine whether hunting rights are maintained.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forests that could be re-cleared for intensive agriculture with a protection strategy (e.g. (network of windbreaks.)</td>
<td>Farmers, hunting groups</td>
<td>Retain protective features to avoid erosion.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.4 WOODLOTS IN THE AGRICULTURAL LANDSCAPE

Forest management and tree-cutting by-laws are tools to promote responsible forest and land management if the by-law is laid out correctly. At the present time there is a feeling amongst the constituents that the former is too intrusive as written and that the latter is overly complex for its purposes. Finding a balance between environmental stewardship and effective farm practices will be critical to the proposed amendment, as well as the fact that urban tree-cutting by-law elements are not necessarily applicable to rural property owners.

Recommendation: Forest Conservation By-law
In the forest conservation by-law there should be a preamble that outlines the teaming of contactor and consultants with landowners, in order to meet forest management objectives. The sentiment amongst professionals is that contractors already understand, and are willing to practice, good forestry practices with landowners. This makes sense: they need to have suitable woodlands to return to for another harvest.

Landowners and contractors need to have some simple guidelines, such as is laid out in the Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program. The MFTIP prescription was designed by the province for landowners to manage their own properties for tax reductions. Separate elements such as normal farm practices need to be added to the Norfolk County tree-cutting by-law. Rural and agricultural issues need to be addressed when revising and developing this particular by-law.

One aspect of this relates to the ability of landowners to manage their own property. There is a shortage of qualified Members and Associate Members of the Ontario Professional Foresters Association. At the same time the Professional Foresters Act already allows individuals on land which they own to design, specify or approve silvicultural prescriptions and treatments, including timber harvesting under the Good Forestry Practices section. This would apply where landowners are comfortable with working alone or with a contractor. The involvement of a consultant should remain an option.
Recommendations: Council Exemptions to Tree-Cutting By-law

This by-law could be simplified, with basic provisions ensuring that:

- No trees will be cut on neighbouring lands;
- No unauthorized access onto neighbouring properties would occur;
- The existing size of a woodland wouldn’t be reduced without permission based on pre-set criteria;
- The process to apply for land clearing is transparent to constituents, and
- There is a clear definition of normal farm practices for along the edges of woodlands.

Separate elements that are part of normal farm practices should be permitted as part of these by-law revisions. Rural and agricultural issues need to be addressed, reflecting that there are several site-specific normal farm practices carried on as part of an agricultural operation that should be premitted, these are:

- The removal of trees which cross over the linear edge of the woodland;
- The removal of fence rows;
- The removal of trees for maintaining tile outlets;
- The removal of trees for reclaiming uncultivated farm lands, and
- The removal of trees for the straightening of agricultural fields and improved agricultural efficiencies.

The potential for filing a modified environmental impact study that is less onerous than the existing format should be investigated within the context of the Provincial Policy Statement.

The requirement for filing an EIS for sites +/-1ha should also be reviewed from the perspective of the next Provincial threshold of +/- 4ha.

7.5 FORESTS IN THE URBAN LANDSCAPE

Given that the County Official Plan update process is in its early phase, the timing is ideal for addressing a number of matters relating to the urban forest canopies across the County, especially as these relate to growth areas such as Port Dover. The interface of new development with the County’s natural heritage system can serve to expand tree cover in new landscapes, especially those created to accommodate the growing population of residents who have migrated to the County from the urban landscapes of the GTHA.
Recommendation: Review Planning Act Policies
Options for management of the urban tree canopy need to be examined with respect to conditions attached to Planning Act approvals, especially with respect to plans of subdivision, site plan approvals and street tree planting provisions.

Recommendation: Urban Tree-Cutting By-Law
Although the Municipal Act permits municipalities to regulate the injury and destruction of trees on private property, in our experience most property owners value their trees and have a valid reason for having a tree removed. Recent civil court decisions have reinforced this, even in the case of boundary trees and especially in the case of hazard trees. Some are of the opinion that a typical property owner should not have to bear the added expense, and sometimes frustration, of having to seek permission to remove either type. There are other constraints, as well as benefits, to the existence of an urban property tree-cutting by-law.

There are active, rather than restrictive, methods for a municipality to increase tree cover on private land. Some examples of these incentives for tree planting include providing advice to property owners regarding tree planting location to maximize its useful life, subsidizing the cost of a new tree, or providing a one-time rebate in watering costs to promote the care of a young tree.

These should be explored in the comprehensive Forest Management Plan.

7.6 PUBLIC OPINION

Recommendation: Consultation Process
The strategies and action items generally outlined in this overview report should be further developed by Council, staff and their consultants through dialogue with a wide variety of stakeholders.

7.7 COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN

Recommendation: Forest Management Plan
So that there will ultimately be a comprehensive plan for the use of all landscapes in Norfolk County, and based on proven strategies that have been introduced in Ontario and other parts of Canada and North America, considerations should be incorporated into the broader Forest Management Plan.
8 IMPLEMENTATION

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding sections of the Parks, Facilities and Recreation Services Master Plan for Norfolk County identify over thirty individual recommendations across the Master Plan’s multiple areas. Some of the recommendations are more strategic, such as for community centres / halls. Other recommendations are more process and procedural, but also make important contributions to the Vision, Mission and Goals of the Master Plan.

The intent of the Implementation Section, is to provide a structure or roadmap for the ongoing implementation of the recommendations and the periodic review of the Master Plan over its planned life. As currently written, the Master Plan covers a twenty year period from 2015 to 2035. The first ten years of the Master Plan have a sharper focus and intent as the research, use demand and related information and assessments are more current and assessable. The longer term perspective that is after ten years will be subject to significant change, policy and other impacts that will emerge within the municipal operating environment as it continues to evolve and are therefore less certain today.

The following material establishes a basis upon which to begin to initiate implementation planning. It needs to be recognized, that there will be considerable organizational and development work required for virtually all the recommendations. Some recommendations will require a range of research, important consultation strategies and fiscal assessments, both strategic and tactical, in order to facilitate their implementation. In this light, the implementation section is a roadmap, recognizing that there may be different ways of getting to the same endpoint, but the overall goal is to continue to move forward and to arrive at the preferred destination.

8.2 IMPLEMENTATION THEMES

Throughout the course of the research, consultation and the Master Plan’s development, three key themes emerged that will influence the implementation and future outcomes of the Master Plan’s recommendations. These are:

- The need for flexibility to effectively, and on a timely basis, respond to continuous change, some of which will be of high impact, such as healthcare and environmental priorities, changing municipal government responsibilities, aging and culturally diversifying populations, changing facility perspectives and other considerations;

- A need for the County to enhance its service roles and investments more substantively into the areas of community development and capacity building as a basis to support a stronger and more sustainable community-based parks and recreation services delivery model, with an increasing importance and emphasis placed on changing demographics and participation interests;

- The reality of capital and operating funding constraints that exist within the County, and which will be present for an extended period of time.
8.3 POLICIES AND STRATEGIES INTEGRATION

An important consideration for the implementation of the Parks, Facilities and Recreation Services Master Plan is its integration with a series of policy and strategy initiatives ongoing within both the Division and the County, ranging from the new County Strategic Plan, to economic development strategies and other connected perspectives. The Master Plan does not stand alone as do any of these other initiatives. Therefore, the Division will need to exercise leadership and action to ensure that all the planning, policy and direction-setting initiatives involved are effectively integrated, both in terms of their intent and outcomes, and the specifics of their actions and processes.

The following points represent some of the key areas of potential integration with the Master Plan:

- **Strategic Plan** – The County's Strategic Plan establishes key directions and priorities, and a vision with respect to partnerships, community empowerment, the environmental, capital and operating financing priorities and related considerations.

- **Best Practices** – As with most municipalities, this is an ongoing, corporate initiative which has potential points of integration with respect to how the County delivers services, the integration of County services across its various departments, and a series of other areas that could influence or connect with components of the Master Plan.

- **Tourism Integration** – The County has a number of facilities and resources that represent significant opportunities for tourism development and marketing. Integration with the County's tourism directions needs to occur in order to maximize the benefits to both the residents of the community and visitors to Norfolk from a user / customer perspective, as well as from community development, facilities and services, and economic goals.

- **Community Use of Schools** – Schools can provide multiple venues at different standards of service, such as secondary and elementary schools, for parks and recreation services, particularly at the neighbourhood / local community level. Continued and further use of these resources is important to the community in terms of key Master Plan strategies for both neighbourhood and local community servicing level recommendations and services. Using all the community's resources achieves the most effective and efficient service delivery strategies for park and recreation services.

- **Infrastructure Renewal Program** – Another key strategy is to ensure that all new and / or upgraded parks and recreation facility initiatives are fully integrated with the capital improvement and retrofitting strategies of the County, in order that a comprehensive picture of future capital replacement and upgrading costs are identified early. Operational and functional utility of individual facility resources needs to be continuously developed in order to meet the changing needs of the users and the community. This strategy needs to focus on safety, minimizing operating costs, maximizing use and revenues, and sustaining the community's long term benefits from their initial investment in a facility.

- **Development Charges** – Development Charges are a significant capital funding source with respect to new park and recreation facility development that responds solely to population growth. Ensuring that the purpose and application of the Bylaw is fully realized on behalf of the whole community is an important strategy and policy linkage that will need continuous planning and monitoring in order to determine the most appropriate application of these funds and the facilities that best reflect the intent of the By-law and the Master Plan on a long term basis.

- **County Role** – One of the more strategic transition points identified within the Master Plan is the movement of the County's Parks, Facilities and Recreation Division role into a stronger, more evident partnership development and community support role as the first
order of involvement in any specific service initiative. In this role, the Division would act as an identifier of community needs, an organizer of partnership opportunities and a potential partner, as well as a community organization support resource. Within other contexts, the Division could be a direct developer and operator of selected service delivery initiatives. This policy and strategy perspective requires repositioning and reflects a change that will need both divisional and community education, a planned approach and the tools to be effectively implemented. The Parks and Recreation Services Delivery Policy is one of the components that supports facilitating this transition, as are recommendation on services delivery, community investment funding, partnerships and other Master Plan recommendations.

These and other current and future policy and strategy initiatives need to be incorporated within the context of the implementation of the Master Plan. In some cases, the Master Plan itself will be a significant influence on other policies and strategies, while in other cases, it will be influenced by external elements. Whatever the impact, the need to ensure that all the various initiatives are linked and integrated is an important implementation task that the Division will need to ensure is identified, practiced and evaluated on an ongoing basis.

### 8.4 COUNTY LEADERSHIP

1. **INTRODUCTION**

The County of Norfolk is positioned as the leading party in the planning, evaluation and development, alone or through partnerships and collaboration, in the delivery of parks and recreation resources. It also has the largest facilities asset base and investments, as well as a significant divisional staff and skills resource that supports ongoing services operations, programming and planning.

A series of recommendations have been developed to support the County’s role and operational framework in regards to parks, facilities and recreations services in Norfolk.

2. **SERVICES INTEGRATION**

The County is responsible for not only parks and recreation services but also cemeteries, forestry, health, social services, technology and a host of other roles. Increasingly, parks and recreation services need to be integrated with other services delivery and be effectively supported by corporate services in the development and delivery of its mandate.

The County should continually look for opportunities to integrate resident health and well-being; social services in terms of accessibility and financial capacities; and related perspectives in order to maximize the benefits of park and recreation participation for residents. There is also a series of technology and other supports that will be important to achieve the Master Plan outcomes desired.

**Recommendations: County Services Integration**

The Norfolk County continually assess and pursue opportunities to integrate health, parks and recreation, environmental, social services and other service area programs and initiatives to
maximize participation benefits for residents, and to deliver services on a more holistic basis that enhances participant convenience and benefit, and maximizes operational efficiencies.

That the County, through its operating units, continually assess and pursue opportunities to maximize technology, marketing, economic development and other activities that would enhance the effectiveness of parks and recreation services, providing more integrated platforms that support resident access and convenience, and achieve multiple benefits and opportunities across different service perspectives from each investment made in parks and recreation.

3. DEDICATED/TARGETED RESERVES

Norfolk County has a considerable array of aging parks and recreation infrastructure. Many of the facilities are over forty years of age. A large number of these facilities over the next ten to twenty years will be experiencing a need for significant capital reinvestments for rehabilitation and renewal in order to sustain the facilities, to achieve operational and energy efficiencies, to better align the facilities with program and participant requirements, as well as to meet emerging health and safety, environmental, accessibility and other mandated requirements, such as the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

These types of rehabilitation and renewal investments in most cases are very difficult to fund raise for as they do not represent new capacity or significant upgrades. Therefore, they are dependent on senior government grants, County reserves or debt capital.

Currently, there are four types of reserves for the County. Development Charges can only be utilized where population growth is identifiable and only proportionate to that growth minus ten percent of the capital cost. Park Dedication income can be utilized for park, trails and related resources. However, this Fund is dependent on what dedication funds are realized when the 5% land dedication is not undertaken under the Ontario Planning Act. The County has two other reserves, one for facilities and one for equipment. Both of these reserves are limited in scale and have some significant underfunded considerations.

One practice that has emerged in some municipalities, is to have a dedicated Parks and Recreation Facilities Reserve Fund, particularly when the facility’s portfolio is primarily of an aging perspective. This practice often involves the placement of a fixed percentage allocation against the previous years insured value of the total pool of eligible assets.

Ideally, municipalities should be planning to completely turnover a facility within 30 to 50 year timeframes. In more recent years, the need for major renewal and repurposing, along with mandated upgrades and facility investments, results in a preferred turnover time being of a shorter nature, i.e.: twenty to thirty years. It is also recognized that such reserves have significant costs on the operating budget based on yearly allocations to the reserve that are very challenging to achieve due to fiscal constraints and multiple County-wide priorities.
**Recommendation: Reserve Funds**

That the County of Norfolk consider establishing a dedicated reserve for parks and recreation facilities, potentially developing a capacity over five years, to allocate 1.5% of the insured replacement value of these assets annually to the reserve.

4. PARKS, RECREATION AND FACILITIES DIVISION ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURING

The recommendations within this Master Plan have identified some redefined and extended roles and responsibilities for the Division. The key areas involve:

- Increasing focus on community development in order to enhance the sustainability and capacities of community service providers relative to their organizational development; recruitment and use of volunteers and their recognition, training and development; compliance; and related perspectives. These efforts are intended to sustain and grow community service organization volunteer capacities in light of some of the challenges being experienced as a means to the sustaining a broad array of recreation and related services that could not be delivered by the County if they were lost.

- Improved efforts in marketing, communications and customer service, particularly related to the growing use of social media, the development and management of a community information portal, enhanced management evaluation and analytical capacity on an improved reservation system, and other functions.

- Figure 6-1 outlines an alternate organizational design for the Division. In the first order of magnitude, it is focused on establishing three functionally integrated operating units within the Division:
  - Operations
  - Marketing, communications and customer services
  - Community development and programs

This proposed model establishes an integrated Operations unit, led by a supervisor with foremen in the field leading east and west teams which reflects the significant geography of the County. This unit would also be responsible for the resource management / by-law enforcement and County forestry functions. This unit would be responsible for the maintenance, repair and related tasks associated with community trails, parks, beaches, cemeteries, forest areas, open space, recreation facilities and other assets.

The Marketing, Communications and Customer Service unit, is designed to intensify marketing communications, especially with respect to a community-wide recreation services portal. It would also be responsible for key customer service initiatives related to the selling of cemetery plots and engaging with cemetery customers, along with operating the facilities allocation technology, both in terms of reservations but also the development of management reports and required data analysis.

A Community Redevelopment and Programs unit would allow for an intensification of community development efforts with community service providers and volunteers, along with continuing to undertake the coordination of programs for adults and seniors, children and youth, special events and aquatics. This function would also be responsible for the coordination of parks and trails development which is a planning and community development function that also typically involves...
extensive community consultation, sourcing of grants and assisting in community funding strategies and related activities.

The benefits of this model involve the intensification of the community development area, creates greater integration of the operational responsibilities and provides more depth and social media, customer service and related activities. In this proposal, the Manager becomes increasingly responsible for the longer term planning, services evaluation, partnerships and negotiations and related activities relevant to finances and budgeting, procurement and human resources and other key managerial functions such as online ice reservations.

The second level of staffing, particularly at the frontlines, will need to continue to increase as more assets are brought on in terms of additional parkland, extensions of community trails, additional cemetery responsibilities and related activities. Currently, these services are being provided by the Division but there is likely another increment of frontline support necessary as additional responsibilities evolve.

The proposed alternate organizational design will require potentially an additional position due to the splitting of the Trail Development / Business Marketing Coordinator into two functional roles, with both roles having expanded responsibilities involving parks, trails and facilities development planning and enhanced social media and communications roles.

**Recommendations: Divisional Organizational Structure**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>That the County of Norfolk consider a realignment of its Parks, Recreation and Facilities Division as outlined in Figure 6-1.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>That the County of Norfolk consider an additional staffing position in the short term relative to intensifying the Division's capacities in regards to social media and communications and parks, trails and facilities development planning and the sourcing of grants / alternate funding.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 6-1
Alternate Division Organizational Design

Manager,
Parks, Facilities and Recreation

Supervisor, Operations
- Foreman East
- Foreman West
- Forestry Technician
- Resource Management / Bylaw Enforcement

Supervisor, Marketing / Communications / Social Media and Customer Service
- Coordinator Social Media / Communications
- Cemeteries Assistant
- Facilities Allocation Bookings Clerk
- Simcoe, Farmer's Market Clerk

Supervisor, Community Development and Programs
- Coordinator Adults and Seniors
- Coordinator Child and Youth and Special Events
- Coordinator Community Development and Active Living
- Coordinator Aquatics
- Coordinator Facilities, Parks and Trails Planning and Development and Grants
5. SENIOR GOVERNMENT GRANTS

It will be imperative for the County to actively pursue and maximize its access to senior government grants. Whether this involves major asset renewal and rehabilitation or new facility development, Federal and Provincial Grants will be a vital part of the capital funding strategy.

New infrastructure programs are emerging from the Province of Ontario, along with existing programs such as the Red and Blue Programs with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food. Also, there is anticipated grants from the Federal government in 2017 to celebrate Canada’s 150 Birthday. Other federal grants could also be available with respect to economic development, the environment and related areas.

Another important source of capital funding is Development Charges which need to be totally aligned with new population growth. The County should ensure that the initiatives within the Master Plan are assessed for their potential Development Charges Bylaw inclusion.

Recommendations: Capital Funding

- That Norfolk County actively **identify and pursue senior government grants** for parks and recreation investments, assigning responsibility for this function to the Coordinator, Facilities, Parks and Trails Planning, Development and Grants.
- That Norfolk County ensure that parks and recreation initiatives undertaken are **assessed as to their potential Development Charges Bylaw inclusion**.
- That Norfolk County develop a policy on community-based capital funding support for new facilities development or major additions to existing facilities, giving consideration to a capital **cost threshold of over $500,000**.

A third funding source is community fund raising which has had its strong historical application within Norfolk. This activity is best undertaken for larger projects that are new or major additions to existing facilities. A threshold of $500,000 has been established, as it significantly more difficult to raise funds for smaller projects which generally are provided by the municipality on a more equal basis across the geographical service area. Targeted community support for larger projects in the 10% to 33% range could be consider in the policy, however there needs to be assurance that areas have less financial capability within the County are not jeopardized in achieving a balanced and fair accessibility to recreation participation opportunities.
8.5 COMMUNITY FUND DEVELOPMENT

The Master Plan identifies important community and user group fundraising targets for selected facility initiatives. The ability to fundraise and achieve capital campaign goals will be a primary determinant in terms of which projects may actually proceed and their timing. The need to coordinate capital fundraising campaigns, set priorities and to ensure their ongoing support and success will be a key skill and capacity requirement that may need to be further developed at the community level for certain initiatives. The County will have some role in supporting the timing and related considerations for these campaigns, however, the leadership, direction and ownership of these campaigns rests with each community involved.

Recommendations: Capital Funding

That Norfolk County provide organizational and technical integration supports to community fund raising initiative for parks and recreation facilities.

8.6 MASTER PLAN CAPITAL COST PROJECTIONS

Table 8-1 below identifies the projected capital costs associated with the initiatives within the Parks, Facilities and Recreation Master Plan over the twenty year period. They are aggregated by individual years for years 1, 2 and 3, then for years 4 to 5, 6 to 10 and 11 to 20. This reflects that clarity on costs, etc., diminishes as one moves out over the time period.

In total, $5.4 million is identified with trail investment being consistent at $100,000 per year totaling $2,050,000 which also includes $50,000 for a Trails Master Plan Update in Year 2. The potential for $1 million for an indoor soccer facility is identified, as well as continuing annual contributions for both parkland acquisition and development; and playground redevelopment / replacement collectively in the $3 million range. The latter component is identified in the 2014 to 2023 capital forecast.

A Waterfront Master Plan is identified to initiate a significant effort towards bringing the waterfront into higher utilization and prominence within the community. Also, an Engineering and Location Planning effort is required for a possible future Multi-Use Recreation Centre in terms of how to proceed once the feasibility study is completed. One study for each of the two service units; cemeteries and forestry, has also been identified. Some of these funds are identified within the current 2014 to 2023 capital plan for the County.

The $5.4 million capital allocation for 2016 in the current 10 year capital plan is not identified as it would be an outcome of the Multi-use Recreation Centre Feasibility Study and the proposed Engineering and Location Review. The capital repair, maintenance and sustainability projects identified within the current ten year capital forecasts for 2014 to 2023 would need to be continued unless they are replaced by outcomes within the various initiatives proposed in the Master Plan.
## Table 8-1

### Capital Costs for Master Plan Initiatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4 to 5</th>
<th>6 to 10</th>
<th>11 to 20</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Trail linkages development and amenities including updating of Trails Master Plan, Year 2</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>500,000</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Community Centre Building Condition Study and Feasibility Assessment</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Arenas accessibility, female space needs, and feasibility review</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ice availability webpage and marketing program, technology upgrading</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>55,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Indoor soccer facility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Parkland acquisition and development</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>500,000</td>
<td>500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Playground redevelopment / replacement</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>250,000</td>
<td>250,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Waterfront Master Plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>75,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Multi-Use Centre Engineering and Locational Business Plan</td>
<td>75,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>75,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Cemeteries Business Plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Long Term Forestry Sustainability Study</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>280,000</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>425,000</td>
<td>450,000</td>
<td>2,250,000</td>
<td>1,750,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LEES+Associates
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8.7 OPERATING COST IMPACTS

The net operating cost impacts of the recommendations within the Master Plan are challenging to identify at this time for several reasons:

- The large number of recommendations that are associated only with policies and strategies that need to be developed first;
- The unknown net financial outcomes of the Division’s extended roles that may create some financial resources that could be reapplied in support of a number of the recommendations, i.e. grants development;
- Partnerships and joint venture arrangements that may emerge and that may share costs;
- A number of recommendations are not anticipated to incur operating costs.

The areas where operating cost impacts are identified would be:

- The winter maintenance of all or selected community trails which will depend on whether this initiative is undertaken within existing resources or requires a separate capacity;
- Increased trail maintenance as trails are extended and gaps are filled;
- Sports field maintenance, whose operating costs impacts would be dependent on field intensification increases or other strategies;
- The net income opportunities that may occur as a result of a new User Fee Policy and if capital surcharges were to be considered;

Operating cost impacts will emerge on a recommendation by recommendation basis and will need to be an important part of all the business plans and feasibility assessments that will evolve. The overall operating cost impacts of the Master Plan are not seen as being significant constraints to the Master Plan’s implementation, but need to be effectively assessed and positioned within the fiscal capacities of the County, balanced with the importance of continuing to invest in and annually support a broad array of parks and recreation opportunities that supports the diversity of resident interests, goals and aspirations.
8.8 MASTER PLAN REVIEW

The following Parks, Facilities and Recreation Master Plan review process is proposed:

Recommendations: Master Plan Review Process

- **Every year, the Master Plan should be updated** in terms of Table 8-1 in order to keep an active list of recommendations before the community, staff and Council;

- **Every five years, planning sessions / workshops** should be held to undertake a more comprehensive review of the recommendations related to changes in the operating environment, emerging strategic trends, municipal financial strategies and priorities and the progress being made and the impact of the changes undertaken;

- At the **ten year anniversary, there should be a Master Plan Update** completed to assess whether the long-term dimensions of the Master Plan remain linked to the key trends and rationales or whether other considerations have emerged that result in a need to recast the Master Plan to reflect the perspectives and trends of that time period and onward thereafter.

The first intent of this review program is to ensure the Master Plan remains relevant in a changing operating environment over the first ten years. The longer term review processes are designed to position the Master Plan as an ongoing policy and strategy foundation for the County. This approach is intended to move away from the historical context of Master Plans being one time projects undertaken every fifteen to twenty years, and moving towards being a continuously evolving and more dynamic service planning and development resource with the planning, delivery and evaluation of Norfolk’s parks and recreation services.
APPENDIX A – SUMMARY OF SPRING 2015 PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE
Situational Analysis and Draft Master Plan
Public Meetings Spring 2015

Simcoe (April 28 Talbot Gardens) and Port Rowan (April 29 Port Rowan Community Centre)

Staff from Norfolk County, F.J.Galloway & Associates and LEES+Associates Landscape Architects and Planners were present at each session.

There were approximately 110 persons at the Simcoe session and 10 people in Port Rowan. Each meeting started at 7pm. The Simcoe session ended at 9:15pm; the Port Rowan meeting was finished at 8:45pm.

Fred Galloway and Mike Leonard (LEES) introduced the findings of two distinct components of the work: The Situational Analysis & Draft Master Plan prepared by both firms, and the Facility Feasibility Study prepared by F.J.Galloway & Associates in association with Nicholson-Sheffield Architects.

Fred introduced the agenda for the session:
- Process
- Overview of Master Plan
- Implementation
- Overview of Feasibility Study
- Public Feedback Opportunity

Fred emphasized that the bulk of the evening would be devoted to the public feedback portion.

The following information was conveyed to audiences both evenings by means of a visual presentation: Parks, Facilities and Recreation Services Master Plan overview, Corporate alignment, Program delivery policies, Community trails and waterfront areas, Indoor and outdoor facilities, the Simcoe multi-use facility, Cemetery planning, Forest management planning and Implementation themes.

Fred noted that the meetings were being held in advance of the plan presentation to County Council on June 16th and were designed to:
- Determine what residents like or support about the study;
- Identify concerns or issues that they may have about it;
- Engage constituents in additional thoughts and ideas that they would suggest should be added to the plan.

It became obvious at the outset of each meeting that the primary interest of the audience was focused on the Facilities Feasibility Study, so the focus of the presentation was shifted to this component study. Fred noted that the core components of the architectural building condition study include the Simcoe Recreation Centre, Talbot Gardens Arena and the Adult Community Centre. Possible additional components for future facilities include a fitness centre and a warm water, therapeutic pool.

In relationship to this interest, Fred shared the floor at one point with representatives of the group acting as proponents of a new multi-purpose facility to serve Simcoe and its surrounding landscape.

The following comments were noted from both audiences; the Port Rowan comments are italicized.
Aquatics

- The impact of the neutral heating cycle for the pool water on all groups.
- The inadequacy of change facilities at the existing pool, especially as perceived by out of town competitors.
- The need to provide family change rooms in a renovated facility.
- A good facility for competitive swimmers, especially related to the HVAC system, since the current facility is almost uninhabitable at certain times.
- A 50m pool should be developed to enhance the marketability of a new facility to competitive swimmers from external markets.
- The sustainability of a 50m pool in a small market such as Norfolk County, with its 70,000 population, was questioned.
- The absence in Simcoe of the number of hotel rooms required to support large swimming competitions using a 50m pool was noted.
- The substantially higher operating cost of a normal pool, let alone a 50m pool, in comparison with an arena was noted.
- The timeframe required to replace the existing facility, if this is contemplated, in comparison with the renovations that need to be done to bring it up to adequate operating standards.

Parks and Recreation Facilities

- The need for on-line facility booking.
- Provision of storage space for groups such as skating clubs at specific facilities.
- More bike trails and snowmobile trails.
- The need for indoor baseball and soccer facilities
- Explore the potential for creating additional dog parks, based on the success of the Simcoe and Waterford models.
Single Purpose Facilities

- The need for AODA compliance at all indoor facilities and its budget implications.
- In addition, the need to also renovate all indoor facilities for compliance with human rights codes with respect to populations such as the GBLT community.
- Given the historic involvement of individual communities in the development of arenas and community centres (Langton, for example), the political appetite for closing many of these may never exist.

Multi-Purpose Facilities

- The potential for creating a centre of excellence, and perhaps even a world-class facility, for various athletic and cultural activities that serves a continuum of populations from Norfolk County.
- The impact of a new multi-purpose facility on the revenue base of the Norfolk Fair.
- The Wilmot Township facility as a positive precedent.
- The potential danger of an operating deficit, such as those experienced in St. Mary’s.

Senior’s Facilities

- The interior climate of the existing facility leaves much to be desired.
- Opportunities for seniors should be incorporated into a multi-purpose facility, and not be isolated into a single location.
- As nice as it would be to have cultural and recreational opportunities provided for seniors in a new multi-purpose facility, the condition of the existing facility is so deplorable that seniors cannot wait for the 5-10 year timeframe that would be required to construct this improvement.
- The potential for developing a senior’s facility in a repurposed building (such as the abandoned Zeller’s location) incorporating a mix of physical and social activities should be considered.

Other comments

- Concern was expressed regarding the format for the meeting notice.
- The challenge of retaining and attracting young adults to the County.

Notes by: Mike Leonard Distribution: by e-mail