



# City of Sault Ste. Marie Parks and Recreation Master Plan

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Recreation & Culture Division

**PROJECT UPDATE**  
**PHASE 3**  
**September, 2014**



*Bellevue Park*

## **THE CITY OF SAULT STE. MARIE 2015-2020 PARKS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN**

### **Update Summary**

The Development of the City of Sault Ste. Marie Parks and Recreation Master Plan is a collaborative initiative involving City of Sault Ste. Marie City Council, Municipal Departments, community organizations, as well as agencies and citizens at large. The Plan reflects principles and trends tied directly to governing associations in the area of parks and recreation.

#### ***City of Sault Ste. Marie Parks & Recreation Master Plan focus:***

- Sustainable environments
- Healthy active living/communities
- Aging population
- Accessibility
- Inclusion

A comprehensive document has been prepared that examines data and forms the analysis by which the City of Sault Ste. Marie Parks & Recreation Master Plan will be developed. This analysis will map the direction for Municipal Parks and Recreation over the next five years.

Financial resources and outside funding sources can be the determining factor in the City of Sault Ste. Marie's ability to implement recommendations that will be contained within the Parks & Recreation Master Plan. Potential funding sources are included as part of the Master Plan Analysis.

The following background document provides an update on progress to date in regards to the development of the City of Sault Ste. Marie Parks and Recreation Master Plan through the various phases. As we enter into Phase 4 of the plan, it is vital that there is an understanding of building blocks that form the foundation of the 2015 – 2020 City of Sault Ste. Marie Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

# Master Plan Development



### **City of Sault Ste. Marie Demographics**

Understanding the makeup of our community is the catalyst to determining present and future Municipal Parks and Recreation facilities and services.

In 2011, the percentage of the working age population (15 to 64) was 66.3% and the percentage of children aged 0 to 14 was 14.4%. In comparison, the national percentages were 68.5% for the population aged 15 to 64 and 16.7% for the population aged 0 to 14.<sup>i</sup> The percentage of the population aged 65 and over in Sault Ste. Marie was 19.3%, compared with a national percentage of 14.8%. This national percentage is expected to almost double by the year 2036, to 25%.<sup>ii</sup>

In terms of economic status, the average after-tax income of all economic families in Sault Ste. Marie is \$65,531 compared to \$71,128 as an average in all of Ontario. Decreased average income increases the City's need for low-cost programs that allow for inclusion from all socio-economic classes.<sup>iii</sup>

Observations from Sault Ste. Marie Demographics:

- Median after-tax income of all economic families is \$65,531 compared to \$71,128 in Ontario
- 66.5% of families in Sault Ste. Marie are married couples; 13.4% are common-law; and 20.1% are lone-parent
- Work age population (15-64) in Sault Ste. Marie is 2.2% below that of the national average
- Senior age population (65 and up) in Sault Ste. Marie is 4.5% higher than the national average

Data from the 2011 Census Canada report was analysed using the City of Sault Ste. Marie corporate geographic information system to identify Municipal Parks and Recreation facilities and services in relation to the community's demographics by age category and household income. Through this analysis, recommendations will be developed regarding parks and recreation services, facilities and developments.

### **Engaging the Community**

Development of the Municipal Parks and Recreation Master Plan will facilitate opportunities for physical activity, social interactions and access to park land. Over the course of six months, input was received from various groups in the community to include stakeholders, city council, senior citizens, youth, staff and the general public through surveys, community engagement meetings and an Open House in reference to City of Sault Ste. Marie recreation programming and facilities.

Significant responses were received forming a solid basis to develop a plan to meet the changing and growing sports and recreation services and facility needs in our community. Some specific comments and suggestions made by citizens in reference to various municipal recreation facilities have been forwarded to area specific managers for their attention. Details of specific comments and survey results are available in the Data Examination and Analysis Report.

A brief overview of the information received from various sources includes the following:

➤ Sporting Group Responses

There is an increasing trend in the total participation of league usage of indoor recreation activities.

Outdoor league participation numbers seems to have plateaued.

Over half of sporting groups believe that there will be an increase in participation in the future.

Sport groups provided specific suggestions of improvements to Municipal recreation facilities.

Additional ice time for hockey sports groups is needed.

Development of Sport Tourism with grass roots sports organizations is needed.

➤ Senior Citizen Responses

Approximately 31% of respondents were age 55 to 64; 42% were between the ages of 65 to 74; and 27% are over 75 years of age;

74.61% were female; while 25.39% were male.

Requests for future leisure activities included physical activity programming and technology programs.

Concerns included a need for additional parking at the Steelton Seniors Centre; increase in availability of washrooms city wide; and seating on the hub trail.

Inclusion of seniors on fixed income is important.

Data from the Age Friendly results were included in the analysis of this report.

➤ Organization Responses

45.5% of groups' volunteers felt they required additional support and resources from the City.

36% of organizations felt the City should explore partnerships with the public and non-profit organizations to improve facilities/programs.

➤ Community On-Line Responses

Average number living in a household was three.

Responses were received from across the community including identified areas with lower financial incomes.

Half of the respondents were participating in Parks and Recreation activities as often as they liked.

62.36% of respondents felt there was a need for additional facilities such as off-leash dog park, waterpark, additional parks in the downtown area, and further development of the Hub Trail to include more benches and washrooms.

Low-cost programming for inclusion such as a free swimming at the John Rhodes Community Centre Pool should be considered.

➤ Youth Voice Surveys

Information was collected to support the City of Sault Ste. Marie Playworks Youth Friendly Community Designation application that focuses on youth play. Comments and opinions were gathered from youth ages 13-19 providing a comprehensive inventory of youth-focused initiatives, opportunities and future needs. The on-line survey ran from September 16 through to October 16, 2014. Roll out included information to community partners and Boards of Education, and focus groups were held at various schools throughout the City. Analysis to follow.

### **Outdoor and Indoor Municipal Facilities and Green Spaces**

A detailed inventory of the Corporation of the City of Sault Ste. Marie's owned and operated indoor and outdoor Parks and Recreation facilities including infrastructure and age was completed and is contained in the analysis report. City Parks and Recreation facilities include:

- 4 outdoor multi-sport complexes (soccer / slopitch / football / track & field amenities)
- 3 indoor arena facilities for a total of 4 ice pads
- 1 artificial turf multi-use indoor field (or 2 junior fields)
- 2 senior citizen indoor multi-use recreation facilities
- 23.5 km multi-use trail system
- 62 playgrounds & 13 green spaces
- 2 outdoor municipal swimming pools
- 3 board hockey rinks; 1 skating oval
- 11 tennis court locations
- 1 cricket pitch
- 1 practice batting cage

In April 2014 the City of Sault Ste. Marie Asset Management Plan, prepared by Morrison Hershfield Limited was presented to City Council. This strategic document states how the Community Services Department will manage its assets. These recommendations will be contained within the Master Plan. A strategy to finance the recommendations of the asset management plan will be addressed during current and future budgets.

### **Municipal Programming Analysis**

The City of Sault Ste. Marie participates in a corporate wide performance measures program under the direction of Manager of Audits and Capital Planning, Finance Department. MPMP is a performance measurement and reporting system that promotes local government transparency and accountability. This data provides tangible information to make informed decisions while optimizing available resources and examine efficiencies and effectiveness measures for services provided in the area of parks and recreation. Future programming and facility development will include consideration of this data. Comments received from surveys will assist to identify area-specific needs and interests.

### **Development of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan**

The development of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan will strategically position the City to manage parks and recreation services. . An inclusive and transparent process is being used to assess the needs of the current community and anticipated future needs. The Parks and Recreation Master Plan will become a viable and ongoing planning tool for the betterment of parks and recreation in our community.

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<sup>i</sup> *Census Profile - Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario.* (2014, May 12). Retrieved from Statistics Canada: <http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2011/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CSD&Code1=3557061&Geo2=CD&Code2=3557&Data=Count&SearchText=sault%20ste.%20marie&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1=All&Custom=&TABID=1>

<sup>ii</sup> *Proportion of population aged less than 15 years old and 65 years old and over, 1982 to 2036, Canada. Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario* (2014, May 15). Retrieved from Statistics Canada: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/91-215-x/2012000/ct008-eng.htm>

<sup>iii</sup> *NHS Focus on Geography Series – Sault Ste. Marie.* (2014, May 12). Retrieved from Statistics Canada: <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/fogs-spg/Pages/FOG.cfm?lang=E&level=3&GeoCode=590>

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