

Parks and Recreation Master Plan

2015–2025

Prepared by the Community Services Department
Updated September 2019



**SAULT
STE. MARIE**

Acknowledgments

The Community Services Department would like to thank the members of the community, staff, organizations, agencies and over 2,000 citizens who responded to surveys and provided feedback, resources and information in support of the City of Sault Ste. Marie Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

City Project Team

Community Development and Enterprise Services Staff

We would also like to acknowledge the contribution of:

Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee, Corporate Services and Public Works and Engineering Departments

Table of Contents

MESSAGE FROM MAYOR CHRISTIAN PROVENZANO	4
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
INTRODUCTION	6
PLANNING PROCESS	8
BENEFITS OF PARKS & RECREATION IN OUR CITY	9
TRENDS IN RECREATION	11
MUNICIPAL PARKS & RECREATION STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	12
STRATEGIC FOCUS & PRIORITIES.....	18
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	20
FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS	20
MONITORING AND UPDATING THE PLAN.....	21
RESOURCES	22



VISION

To be the leading innovative, dynamic and efficient municipal corporation in the Province of Ontario.

MISSION

To promote, encourage and lead economic and social growth within our community through the effective provision of municipal services and development of community partnerships.

CORPORATE VALUES

Accountability and Transparency

We will be accountable to our citizens and transparent in our decision-making process.

Integrity and Honesty

We will demonstrate honesty, sincerity and fairness in carrying out our responsibilities.

Commitment to Citizens and the Community

We will work together to provide inclusive and accessible services to our diverse community. We will strive to promote a safe and healthy community.

Innovation and Productivity

We will embrace innovative solutions to improve productivity and achieve excellence in customer service.

Fiscal Responsibility

We will manage municipal finances in a responsible and prudent manner. We will implement best practices to ensure best value in service delivery.

Respect, Engage and Value Employees

We will foster a respectful workplace where employees are treated with dignity and can excel as members of the corporate team.

Environmental Stewardship

We will use resources wisely to maintain and create a sustainable city for future generations.



MESSAGE FROM MAYOR CHRISTIAN PROVENZANO

A day spent with children at a playground, a game of pick-up hockey on an outdoor rink, a walk along the Hub Trail—these activities and many more like them are sources of everyday enjoyment in our lives. For many of us, they also form the basis of some of our fondest memories.

To keep creating such memories, a vibrant and modern city needs a vibrant parks and recreation system—one that can meet varying needs and accommodate a range of uses by its citizens. This system needs to be flexible, adaptable and able to respond to future changes in our community.

This plan sets forth the priorities for the City of Sault Ste. Marie's parks and recreation services and facilities over the next 10-year period. It will ensure that decisions about our parks and recreation offerings are in harmony with other City priorities.

Completing the Parks and Recreation Master Plan has been a big undertaking. I'd like to thank the project team, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee and the more than 2,000 citizens who took the time to offer their input.

Looking ahead, with the guidance provided by this plan, I'm confident that our parks and recreation system will continue to evolve to be more sustainable, accessible and inclusive. Our parks, community centres and programs are well-positioned to encourage all residents to partake in active lifestyles. Most certainly, they will continue to be sources of enjoyment and positive memories for many years to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christian Provenzano". The signature is stylized with a large, looping "C" and "P".

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Plan is intended as a guide for the Corporation of the City of Sault Ste. Marie in planning strategies to enhance and improve the delivery of municipal parks and recreation services and determining long-term budgets based on the priorities identified.

By providing a clear picture of our community today, and where we should be in 5 to 10 years, we can strive to ensure that municipal parks & recreation facilities and services are in place to meet future needs. It is important to make sure tax dollars are spent wisely, that partnerships are being maximized, and that service gaps are being addressed in an efficient and effective manner.

The Corporation's Asset Management Facility Condition report guides the characteristics and condition of existing infrastructure assets. The asset management plan will assist to develop strategies to implement the planned actions.

It is important to remember that the City of Sault Ste. Marie Parks and Recreation Master Plan cannot be all things to all people. Community groups often bring capacity, passion, technical skills, and different funding capabilities. In addition, it is not the City's intent to duplicate recreational facilities or services that exists within the community.

Decisions with respect to parks and recreation facilities and services have taken into consideration a balance between quality of life and financial sustainability. The City of Sault Ste. Marie will be fiscally responsible through the cost-effective and cost-efficient management of resources and the appropriate and reasonable application of user fees and community resources.

INTRODUCTION

The Community Development and Enterprise Services of the City of Sault Ste. Marie consists of Recreation & Culture, GFL Centre and Arenas, Planning and Enterprise Services. Parks is a division of the Public Works & Engineering Services Department. Together these areas are responsible for recreational facilities, parks & recreation services. The revised Parks & Recreation Master Plan provides a framework to guide the development and management of parks and recreation facilities, resources, programs, infrastructure and investment over the next 5 year period from 2020 - 2025. Bellevue Park is a unique park and as such is governed by the Bellevue Park Master Plan. The cultural aspects of the department are addressed in the Sault Ste. Marie Community Cultural Plan 2019-2014.

The intent is to look at what has been done in the past and build upon existing patterns of service provision. It is recognized that Sault Ste. Marie has changed and our community continues to evolve. The Plan is aimed at guiding the overall actions of the City of Sault Ste. Marie's municipal parks & recreation long-term budgets and improving the delivery of parks & recreation services. Through a blend of research, input and strategy this Plan will separate the "needs" from the "wants" and help to make justified choices and meet legislated playground standards.

The Official Plan provides policy directions for parks, recreation and open spaces. The Parks & Recreation Master Plan provides overall direction for the parks and recreation services. The detailed planning is the responsibility of the staff. The Plan identifies strategic, operational and existing infrastructure priorities for the short, medium and long term that will assist in program planning, infrastructure maintenance, funding applications and development of the annual budgets.

In preparing this plan staff consulted with the community (general public, stakeholders, staff and council) and received over 2000 responses to form an accurate understanding of what the needs are for parks and recreation. The Plan was developed in partnership with City Council, City staff, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee (PRAC), community organizations, agencies and citizens at large. An inclusive and transparent process was followed to assess the needs of the current and anticipated future needs of the community.

The Master Plan is intended to be a living document that adapts to changing needs of residents. Through annual reviews new opportunities will be explored and appropriate projects identified that will support the corporate vision and mission and be consistent with the corporate strategic focus areas: Infrastructure; Service Delivery; Quality of Life; Community Development and Partnerships.

The following sections describe the planning process, the results, the priorities, financial implications, future considerations and the monitoring and evaluating the Plan. A detailed Action Plan and Appendices follow the main document.

Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Municipal Indoor Recreational Facilities

GFL Memorial Gardens
Northern Community Centre
John Rhodes Community
Centre
W.J. McMeeken
55+ Active Living Centres
(Seniors Drop In Centre and NCC
locations)

Municipal Outdoor Recreational Facilities

Strathclair Sports Complex
Queen Elizabeth Sports Complex
Elliot Sports Complex
Esposito Pump Track
North Street Park
Bellevue Marina
Roberta Bondar Park & Marina
Peter G. Manzo Pool
V. E. Greco Pool

Parks and Trails

78 Parks
Including Regional Parks:
Bellevue Park
Point des Chenes
John Rowsell Hub Trail
Waterfront Boardwalk
Outdoor Rinks
Horticulture & Forestry

PLANNING PROCESS

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan was developed by Community Services Department staff in partnership with City Council, City staff, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee (PRAC), community organizations, agencies and citizens at large. Staff followed an inclusive and transparent five-phase process that began in December 2014.

In **Phase 1** the Framework for the Plan was developed. Staff reviewed background information, identified goals and objectives for the project, examined demographic data describing the community and considered trends and best practices in the parks and recreation industry. Other relevant studies and reports were reviewed.

Phase 2 involved conducting public consultations and collecting information from the community through stakeholder meetings, open houses and surveys. This included engagement sessions and surveys along with interviews with seniors, youth and the community at large. Surveys were available in hard copy as well as on-line. City Council, City staff, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee, community organizations, agencies and citizens at large participated in the planning.

During **Phase 3** additional data was collected that included an inventory of parks and recreational facilities and utilization reports were gathered in order to identify what was working well and how services could be improved. The principles and guidelines of governing associations in the area of parks and recreation such as Canadian Parks and Recreation Association, Parks and Recreation Ontario, and Ontario Recreation Facilities Association were also reviewed.

The draft Parks and Recreation Master Plan was prepared in **Phase 4** and in **Phase 5** the Plan was presented and implementation began. (See Action Plan for Appendix for a thorough update on Operational& Maintenance items identified supporting the objectives).

The Plan describes the results and analysis that will guide the planning and implementation of Municipal programs, services and facilities to meet the recreation needs of residents of Sault Ste. Marie.

BENEFITS OF PARKS & RECREATION IN OUR CITY

Recreation fosters the wellbeing of individuals and communities, and our built and natural environments. Recreation remains a fundamental human need in all ages and stages of life. Individuals, households, and entire communities benefit greatly from access to leisure services. The Canadian Parks and Recreation Association and Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport produced summary documents that highlight research reports that describe the many benefits of providing parks and recreations services. The Recreation and Culture Division of the Community Services Department of Sault Ste. Marie is committed to providing leisure services that enhance the city as a place to live and provide opportunities for residents to enjoy health and wellbeing. This is in alignment with the Corporate Strategic Plan in a number specifically to Quality of Life and Service Delivery by providing opportunities to be engaged and outstanding service to citizens benefitting the resiliency of our community and our collective future as a society.

Benefits of Recreation

The Canadian Parks and Recreation Association published “A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015 – Pathways to Wellbeing”. The document outlines the five benefits of recreation which are outlined below:

1. Enhance mental of physical wellbeing - Public recreation and parks services have an important role in enhancing physical activity, which in turn, is a critical factor in improved physical and mental health. Increased physical activity levels are associated with the presence of trails for walking, hiking and cycling, and organized events, including sport competitions and other attractions. For children, the presence of a playground within a nearby park is significantly associated with enhanced levels of physical activity. Among all ages, recreational experiences involving physical activity facilitate the maintenance of healthy weights, and thus a reduction in health care costs.

Participants in recreation report improvements in mental wellbeing, including increased self-esteem and life satisfaction. Recreation provides opportunities for personal growth and development for people of all abilities and can be especially helpful to people living with disabilities.¹

2. Enhance social wellbeing - Participation in recreational experiences is shown to enhance social wellbeing. For both children and adults, recreation can facilitate and support social relationships– through clubs, social

organizations participating on a team or making a new friend. Among youth, recreation can help decrease anti-social behaviours.¹

3. Help build families and communities - Recreation can be an important vehicle for promoting family cohesion, adaptability and resilience. Culture and recreation help build social capital in the form of arts, recreation and parks programs, and community celebrations, such as festivals, parades and block parties. Community events help keep neighbours in touch with each other and reinforce relationships that make neighbourhoods strong. Participation in cultural and artistic programs has been shown to promote social connectedness and social cohesion, and positively influence civic behaviour, mutual caring and voluntarism. Recreational activities can help build welcoming communities for people and families from diverse cultures.¹
4. Help people connect with nature - Enhancing opportunities to connect people with nature can result in both environmental and human benefits. Natural playgrounds (which incorporate natural elements like logs, flowers and trees) stimulate physically active and imaginative play and help children connect with nature. Studies have shown that exposure to the natural environment and green spaces have an independent, positive effect on health and health-related behaviours. From lowering blood pressure, to reducing stress levels, to supporting children's cognitive development, nature has a profound ability to support both physical and mental health. Nature-based recreation fosters a better understanding and appreciation for all aspects of nature. This may be especially important in Aboriginal communities, where fishing, hunting and nature conservation are traditional activities.¹
5. Provide economic benefits by investing in recreation - Provide economic benefits by investing in recreation. Recreation is an important contributor to community economic development and cost reductions in other areas. Spending on recreation creates jobs, fosters tourism, and makes communities more attractive places in which to live, learn, work, play and visit. "Upstream" investments in recreation can lead to improvements in individual and community wellbeing, which helps to reduce costs in health care, social services and justice.¹

TRENDS IN RECREATION

Five common trends:

1. **Sustainable environments** – increasing people's nature-based recreation allows them to develop an understanding and appreciation for nature. Facilities that minimize ecological footprints while meeting the needs of the community are vital to the success of parks and recreation. Indoor and outdoor facilities must balance both the needs of users and natural ecosystems.
2. **Healthy active living communities** – Evidence shows that parks and recreation services contribute to increased physical activity, which in turn improves both physical and mental health. Large events such as Canada Day celebrations allow for socialization among community members and increase the strength of the community, which positively affects individuals and creates a healthy living environment for all those involved.
3. **Aging Population** – the number of seniors aged 65+ will continue to grow over the next several years and the City will need to recognize their needs and support their continued participation in recreational activities. Continued and increased physical activity leads to healthy living and improved quality of life for seniors.
4. **Accessibility** – In Ontario, approximately 15% of the population has disabilities. Given this statistic and the increasing number of seniors expected in the community, plans must address the need to address physical and financial barriers.
5. **Inclusion** – in planning and delivering recreation and parks facilities it is important to ensure accessibility to all economic groups, Aboriginal peoples, new immigrants, all abilities, all genders, and sexual orientations.

MUNICIPAL PARKS & RECREATION STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The municipality's operational and infrastructure action items are detailed in the *Action Plan*. These represent the results to be achieved by the Plan, by year, and the activities are specific actions required to reach the goals. The corporate vision and mission, along with the priorities and activities, provide direction for the municipality and the Parks and Recreation staff. The updated plan will provide direction over the next 5 years.

In keeping with the corporate strategic focus areas, the priorities of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan are:



INFRASTRUCTURE

- Asset management
- Maintaining Existing Infrastructure
- New Infrastructure



SERVICE DELIVERY

- Delivering Excellent Customer Service
- Eliminating Barriers to Business and Streamlining Processes
- Developing Employees



QUALITY OF LIFE

- Promote Quality of Life Advantages
- Promote and Support Arts and Culture
- Welcome and Seek out Immigration
- Vibrant Downtown Areas



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS

- Create Social and Economic Activity
- Develop Partnerships with Key Stakeholders
- Maximize Economic Development and Investment

Sault Ste. Marie Demographic Profile

The population of Sault Ste. Marie has been stable for several years. Research conducted through the Official Plan review projects that the population will increase by almost 10,000 people by 2040. The demographic data has been updated using the 2016 census data.

- Children aged 0 to 14 represent 14.3% of the population – 2.1% lower than the provincial average. It is expected to decrease slightly to 13.4% by 2041.⁵
- According to census Canada, 22.4% of the people living in Sault Ste. Marie are aged 65+. This is an increase of 1.97% over the 2011 census data, and 5.7% higher than the provincial average. The national average is expected to increase to 25% by 2036 and in Northeastern Ontario it is expected to reach 31.5%.⁵
- The median after-tax income for all families is \$65,356 (2016) compared to the provincial average of \$79,531. The lower income suggests a need for lower cost programs that allow for inclusion.⁵
- Changing residential demographics – occur as new neighborhoods are developed and older ones evolve.
- Sault Ste. Marie has seen an increase in cultural community diversity.

2014 Community Feedback

Understanding the characteristics, interests, preferences, and participation patterns of current and future residents is critical to establishing an effective Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Through the planning process, approximately **2,000 community responses were received**. Appendix C includes a description of the groups, the formats and number of respondents to the types of surveys.

The intent of this phase was to look at what has been done in the past and build upon existing patterns of service provision and to hear from user groups and citizens about what they like and their suggestions for improvements. Staff analyzed information gathered through recreation trends, surveys of stakeholders and organizations, the community at large, senior citizens and youth, open houses, interviews, facility inventories and G.I.S. analysis. Four themes were identified in the data gathered: social factors, general service provision, outdoor facilities and indoor facilities.

Highlights of Senior's Input

Among seniors surveyed (n=193), more than 50% agreed, or somewhat agreed, that they are satisfied with services, the learning programs, recreational programs, and the access to affordable programs. Two-thirds of participants reported that they have used the Senior Citizen Drop-In Centre. Suggestions for future activities included: tennis, exercise, and technology programs. Suggested Hub Trail amenities were: additional parking, an increase in public restrooms, and seating/benches along the trail.

Highlights of Community Surveys

The community members responding (n=899) on the survey indicated that they use the following recreational services most often:

- Walking and hiking trails - 81%
- Cycling and mountain biking - 54%
- Swimming - 53%
- Aerobics, fitness, weight training – 48%

The three most common reasons for not participating in recreational activities were lack of personal time, lack of money, and unaware of opportunities.

Recreation activities available to children aged 6-12 was rated as satisfactory and those available to youth aged 13-19 and people with disabilities were the least satisfactory.

The most common preferred methods of communication between the City of Sault Ste. Marie and the community were reported as through electronic media, City website, social media and newspaper.

Participants also identified the need for restroom facilities and garbage disposal along the Hub Trail, repair and cleanup of soccer fields and parks, and low-cost family programs.

Among the sports groups the suggestions for future facilities included: 400-metre refrigerated outdoor oval and a covered oval; cricket oval and practice batting cages; cross country skiing clubhouse; new gym facilities and a 50-metre pool complex.

The Official Plan

An Official Plan is a legal document approved by Council that contains the community's vision and goals for the city. The Official Plan serves as a guide for the current and future growth of our built environment and will provide policy directions for parks, recreation and open spaces. The document will outline and define public parks hierarchy; regional parks, neighbourhood parks, parkettes and squares and trails. In addition, criteria for disposing of public parks and criteria to evaluate park space usage requests will be outlined. As per the Planning Act S. 42 the Official Plan will define parkland dedication requirements required for developments.

Other Reports

Algoma Public Health Unit completed a comprehensive study of the utilization of the John Rowswell Hub Trail and concluded that the trail system is being widely used by the residents of the city and that users reported increased levels of physical activity since the trail was completed. The respondents reported that the Hub Trail is an asset to the community and they had a number of suggestions for improvements including: improving awareness, developing a map, promoting trail etiquette and trail risks, and increased lighting.

The report of participation at events and activities at City facilities indicates that the numbers have remained steady over the past few years.

Age-Friendly Sault Ste. Marie began its work in 2012 under the leadership of then Mayor Debbie Amaroso. The Age-Friendly Communities Initiative is a program of the World Health Organization (WHO). A specific Age-Friendly survey was conducted and the results show that the transportation criteria were rated as accurate or somewhat accurate, with the exception of the following:

- A voluntary transport service is available where public transportation is too limited
- Taxis are accessible and affordable and drivers are courteous and helpful
- Roads are well maintained with covered drains and good lighting
- Traffic flow is well regulated
- Priority parking and drop-off spots for people with special needs are available and respected

Among the criteria related to outdoor spaces and building the highest ratings for all items were "somewhat accurate".

Parks and Recreation Facilities

Following a survey of other municipalities regarding playground equipment it was determined that a playground replacement and development policy is needed and equipment that is 18-20 years old must be updated to meet current standards. A funded municipal cost centre for playground development would allow for growth and changes in neighbourhood needs and children's interests.

The City of Sault Ste. Marie has 78 park locations, 63 of which contain playground apparatus. Bellevue Park is the City's main passive park with new and expanded play structures (including accessible and inclusive play apparatus), formal walkways, floral beds and structural improvements. The City's Horticulture crew have had a significant positive impact throughout the City with their creation and care of 245 floral beds, over 114 floral planters and 229 hanging floral baskets.

New neighbourhoods are developing and the City's residents continue to seek spaces and places where they can engage in meaningful activities that enrich the quality of life.

It is anticipated that the population will increase by 10,000 people by 2040. Careful monitoring of the demographic composition and geographic distribution is needed to monitor needs and priorities of residents.

The Waterfront Walkway and John Rowsell Hub Trail have become highly used and are focal points in the community for walking, cycling and all-wheel options.

Municipal indoor recreation infrastructure currently includes four ice pads, an artificial turf facility, two senior citizen multi-use recreation centres, and one indoor municipal pool. Several of these City facilities are under review to ensure that the aging infrastructure is maintained; plans for preventive maintenance will ensure that future needs are met.

The City of Sault Ste. Marie has been able to keep its facilities in good repair through regular capital investments and a funded asset management plan.

Community Recreation Facilities

Quality municipal recreation facilities are essential for effective and efficient services that meet community expectations and needs. The City's new facilities include the GFL Memorial Gardens and Northern Community Centre.

Two local school boards have several elementary school developments that include indoor and outdoor recreation opportunities. The Algoma District School Board has developed the City's first outdoor artificial turf providing a much needed field option for the entire community. Sault College has undergone renovations including upgrades to its gymnasium and fitness components. Algoma University has completed a multi-million dollar upgrade to its athletic centre. The Huron-Superior Catholic District School Board has developed an outdoor natural field with score clock to complement its new high school. These community recreation developments and partnerships enhance the recreation opportunities available to residents of the City.

Sault Ste. Marie's outdoor recreation infrastructure is well utilized by residents of all ages. Sports fields, playgrounds, the skate park, two outdoor municipal pools, marinas, outdoor courts, and outdoor rinks are all in demand. As the population continues to age a need exists to plan for the introduction of new activities and age-friendly sports and programming for other interests.

STRATEGIC FOCUS & PRIORITIES

VISION

Municipal recreation facilities, services and programs will focus on enriching the lives of community members by supporting accessible and inclusive play experiences.

MISSION

Support accessible and inclusive opportunities to participate in parks and recreation activities, programs and services for residents, regardless of age gender, physical ability, ethnic origin or economic means.

City of Sault Ste. Marie Parks & Recreation Master Plan identifies and details priorities which are categorized into strategic projects, operational and existing infrastructure priorities (Strategic priorities are project based initiatives) which are also detailed in the *Action Plan*. The action plan identifies the activities that will be addressed to improve efficiencies and meet targeted operational and existing infrastructure elements. The priorities represent the long-term results to be achieved by the Plan and the activities are specific actions required to reach the goals.

In keeping with the Corporation of the City of Sault Ste. Marie's Strategic Plan, community responses and data analysis and recent feedback received through Shape the Sault, the Parks & Recreation Master Plan Strategic priority projects include:

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Provide a diversity of parks, open spaces and recreation opportunities for residents of all ages and abilities.
2. Ensure all residential areas are served by recreational facilities and ensure this infrastructure is accessible by a variety of modes of transportation.
3. Identify recreational opportunities that enable and support unstructured, self-scheduled, multi-ability and low cost activities, in addition to local sports and other organized activities.
4. Support recreation events in the community that foster physical activity and enhance quality of life in the community; especially in the downtown.
5. Support inclusive, affordable, and high quality sports, recreational, arts, and cultural programs throughout the community.

STRATEGIES

1. Work closely with community organizations to support recreational programs and avoid duplication; where gaps exist, City staff will work to fill gaps by seeding the development of new programming
2. Annually evaluate usage and participation rates to respond to community need
3. Monitor and seek out funding support from different levels of government and service groups; proactively develop “shovel ready” projects and new program ideas based on community priorities to be in a position to leverage new funding opportunities
4. Encourage joint utilization of municipal and other publicly owned open space
5. Encourage subsequent development of the John Rowswell Hub Trail as a facility for recreation, leisure, and active transportation within the City.

High level priorities for 2020 to 2025 are outlined below. The “Parks and Recreation Action Plan’ provides a detailed listing of all action items including those items that have been completed to date.

1. Infrastructure
 - Phase 3 of the Northern Community Centre development, replacement of the W. J. McMeeken Centre ice pad.
 - Implement a park revitalization program
 - Develop a downtown plaza
2. Service Delivery
 - Utilize technology to improve communication and service delivery of municipal parks & recreation opportunities.
3. Quality of Life
 - Improve amenities along the John Rowswell Hub Trail.
4. Community Development and Partnerships
 - Assess and evaluate future skate park development and determine feasibility of implementation of the plan to include partnerships, funding and financial targets.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The City of Sault Ste. Marie will endeavour to optimize external funding sources. In order to do so, allocations of municipal financial resources are required for the development of Parks & Recreation Master Plan Priority Project plans including project design. This will allow for the readiness when applying for external funding sources and grant applications.

Decisions with respect to parks and recreation facilities and services have taken into consideration a balance between quality of life and financial sustainability. The City of Sault Ste. Marie will be fiscally responsible through the cost-effective and cost-efficient management of resources and the appropriate and reasonable application of user fees and community resources.

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

The City of Sault Ste. Marie will continue to evaluate requests from community organizations for municipal participation in capital projects. The analysis has indicated that the City of Sault Ste. Marie will need to consider projects in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan that address service and responsible facility asset management. Funding of items identified in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan will be accomplished through the annual budgeting process. This process will define and prioritize projects and developments. Operating costs to maintain facilities is an ongoing challenge and will continue to be assessed.

MONITORING AND UPDATING THE PLAN

The City of Sault Ste. Marie's Parks and Recreation Master Plan will strategically position the City to manage parks and recreation services. The Plan is a viable and ongoing tool for the betterment of parks and recreation in our community. The Master Plan is the resource tool for the overall direction of parks and recreation. This document is considered a "living" document, and will be updated and expanded upon as initiatives are completed, funding sources become available, and our community evolves.

On an annual basis, the City of Sault Ste. Marie will reconcile the recommendations with its fiscal capacity and align requests to capital planning programs to ensure timing and scope meet the needs of the City of Sault Ste. Marie residents.

RESOURCES

1. Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (2015, January) A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015 Pathways to Wellbeing
2. Canadian Parks/Recreation Association (1997). The Benefits Catalogue, Summarizing why recreation, sports, fitness, arts, culture and parks are essential to personal, social, and economic well-being.
3. Belair, S., Brandon, R., Clapperton, T., Cooper, D., Culp, S., Harris, W., Hunt, G., Lane, J.S., Leggat, M., Moore, S., Okimi, K., Poland, J., Prout, S., Taylor, M. (2014). *Pathway to Recreation: Learning about Ontario's Accessibility Standard for the Design of Public Spaces*. Ontario: Parks and Recreation Ontario.
4. 2011 Census Profile - Sault Ste. Marie, *Ontario*. (2014, May 12). Retrieved from Statistics Canada.
5. 2016 Census Profile – Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario (2019, September 15) - Retrieved from Statistics Canada.
6. Monteith Brown Planning Consultants, Tucker-Reid & Associates, The JF Group, Hill Strategies Research. (2009, July). Recreation, Parks & Culture Master Plan & South End Centre Component Study. Community Services Department, Community Design and Development Services Department, Guelph, 34
7. Monteith Brown Planning Consultants, F.J. Galloway Associates Inc., IBI Group. (October 2010). The Municipality of Chatham-Kent Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Chatham-Kent, 2-2

APPENDICES

Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2015-2025

List of Appendices

APPENDIX A – Summary of Community Feedback.....	3
APPENDIX B – Data Collection: Sporting Groups	4
APPENDIX C – Data Collection: Organizations	8
APPENDIX D – Data Collection: Senior Citizens.....	10
APPENDIX E – Data Collection: Community – General Public	14
APPENDIX F – Data Collection: Youth (age 13 – 19)	22
APPENDIX G: Comments: Suggested Facility Operational Improvements – Sporting Groups & Organizations:	32

APPENDIX A – Summary of Community Feedback

Social Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Youth showed interests in sports and physical activity, special events, leadership training and facility development focusing on youth interests ▪ Increased need for youth engagement ▪ Aging population & the “New Seniors age 55+” ▪ Increased need for affordable recreation opportunities ▪ Focus on user-friendly designs and options ▪ Growing interest in self-serve options
General Provision of Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Informed citizens with greater expectations ▪ Funding challenges ▪ Emphasis on community partnerships and resource sharing ▪ Growing emphasis on accommodating people with disabilities ▪ Volunteer groups require additional support services such as training opportunities, nurturing partnerships to improve facilities and programs ▪ Over half of the sporting groups surveyed believe that there will be an increase in participation in the future ▪ Most sporting leagues and organizations are volunteer driven
Outdoor Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Aging infrastructure ▪ Active seniors growing interest in physical activity opportunities ▪ Need for support amenities such as benches and washrooms (i.e. along the John Rowsell Hub Trail) ▪ Environmental awareness ▪ Emerging new activities (cricket, skatepark, hiking, pickleball) ▪ Usage of facilities is increasing and users require more services ▪ Citizens are interested in neighbourhood-based play options and recreational opportunities
Indoor Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Aging infrastructures ▪ Usage of facilities is increasing and require more services ▪ Facilities/infrastructure require continued investment ▪ Increase in special events and multi-use options ▪ Citizens are interested in neighbourhood based play options and recreational opportunities

APPENDIX B – Data Collection: Sporting Groups

19 surveys were completed.

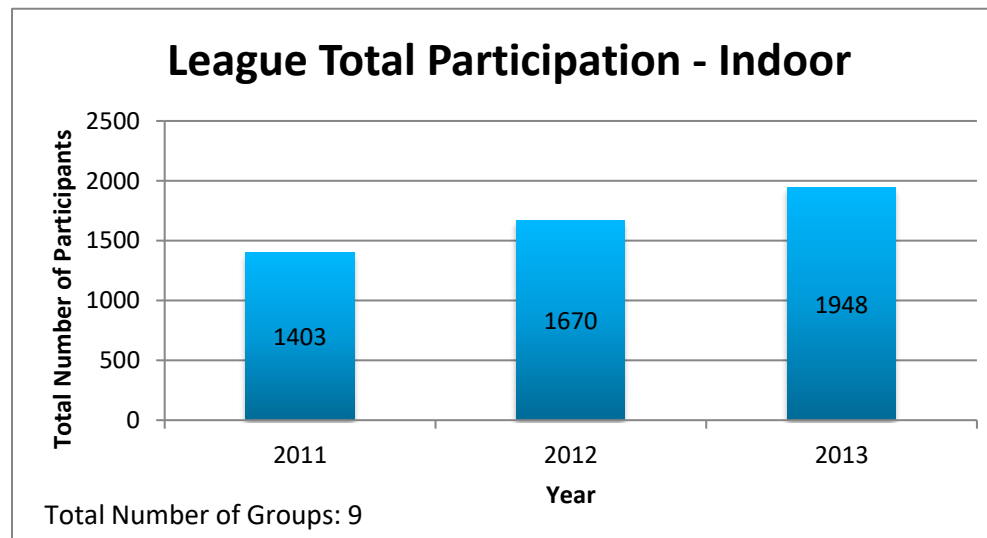
Satisfaction with Current Facilities:

- Scale of 1 to 5 used where 1 is poor and 5 is excellent

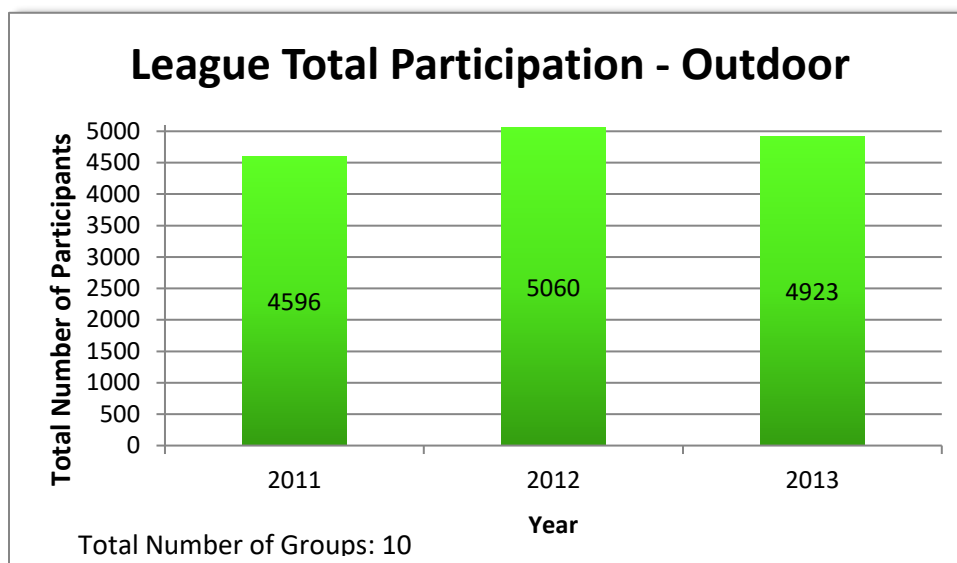
Question	Average Importance to user groups	Average Our performance
1. Facilities and equipment are kept clean and in good repair	5	3.94
2. Concerns and complaints are handled quickly and accurately	4.73	3.72
3. Leisure Services employees work hard to ensure facilities are ready to be utilized by the public	4.5	3.61
4. Leisure Services management and staff have the experience and training to handle my needs	4.65	3.91
5. Leisure Services employees recognize me as a valuable client or user group	4.73	3.73

The degree the Sporting Groups agree with the following statements:

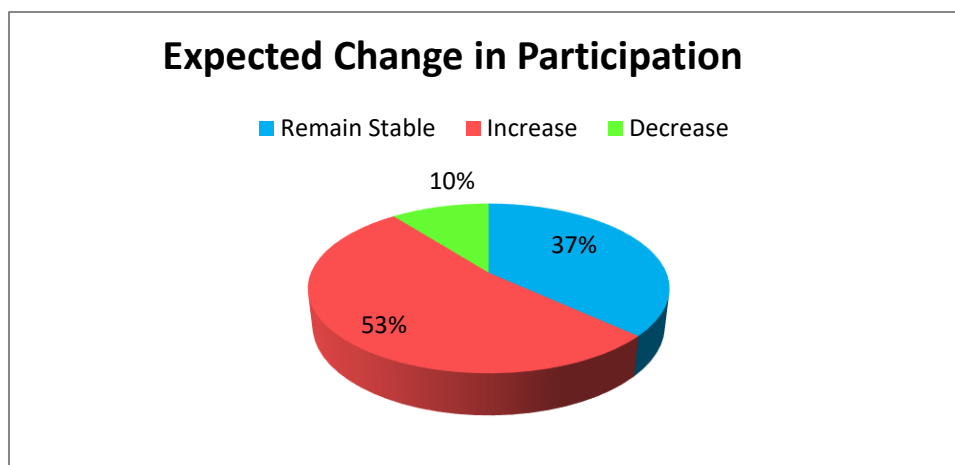
Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Your group's volunteers require additional support and resources from the City	22%	17%	33%	17%	11%
The City should explore partnerships with public and non-profit organizations to improve facilities/programs	39%	44%	11%	6%	/
The City employs a holistic view of health, wellness and active living through policies and services	10.5%	37%	47%	/	5.5%
Sport tourism is an important component toward enhancing the development of sporting programs	60%	28%	6%	6%	/
Our organization has the capacity to help facilitate and organize a sport tourism event	47%	42%	5.5%	5.5%	/



Observation:
There is an increasing trend in the total participation of indoor recreational activities



Observation:
There appears to be a plateau in the number of participants in outdoor recreational activities



Observation:
Over half of all Sporting Groups believe that there will be an increase in participation in the future

Additional comments:

- Additional ice time for hockey sporting groups
- Development of sports tourism, becoming a viable commercial industry
- Additional pool hours (John Rhodes) as well as a re-evaluation of age restriction on competitive swimming
- Creation of turf football fields
- Improvements to soccer and baseball/slo-pitch fields

APPENDIX C – Data Collection: Organizations

24 surveys were completed.

Satisfaction with Current facilities:

- Scale of 1 to 5 used where 1 is poor and 5 is excellent

Question	Average Importance to user groups	Average Our performance
1. Facilities and equipment are kept clean and in good repair	4.74	4.36
2. Concerns and complaints are handled quickly and accurately	4.66	4.46
3. Leisure Services employees work hard to ensure facilities are ready to be utilized by the public	4.71	4.58
4. Leisure Services management and staff have the experience and training to handle my needs	4.70	4.54
5. Leisure Services employees recognize me as a valuable client or user group	4.63	4.34

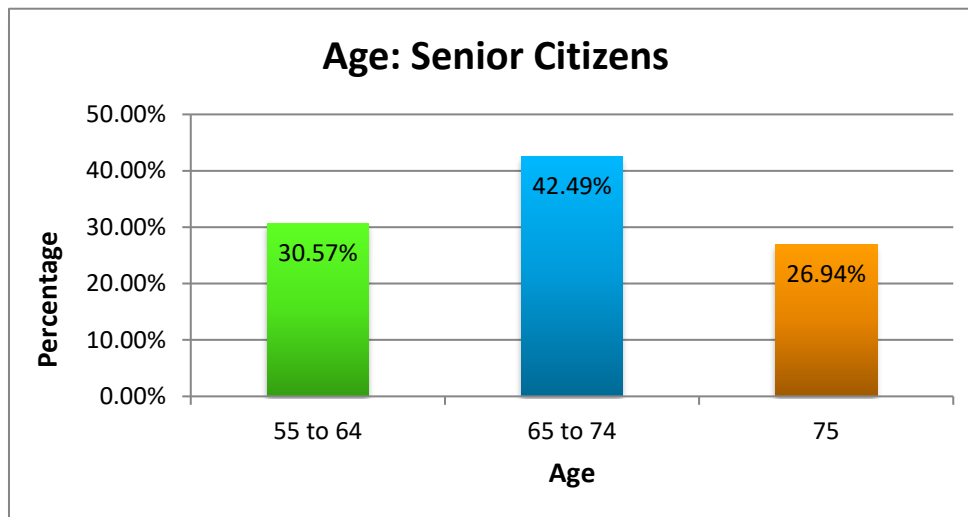
The degree the Organizations agree with the following statements:

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Your group's volunteers require additional support and resources from the City	9%	45.5%	27%	4.5%	14%
The City should explore partnerships with public and non-profit organizations to improve facilities/programs	23%	36%	32%	/	9%
The City employs a holistic view of health, wellness and active living through polities and services	9%	54.5%	32%	/	4.5%
Sport tourism is an important component toward enhancing the development of sporting programs	18%	45.5%	32%	/	4.5%
Our organization has the capacity to help facilitate and organize a sport tourism event	19%	29%	19%	14%	19%

APPENDIX D – Data Collection: Senior Citizens

193 surveys were completed.

Age:



Observation:

About 31% of respondents are aged 55 to 64, 42% are between the ages of 65 to 74 and 27% are 75 and over

Gender:

74.61% of respondents were female while 25.39% were male.

Residents of Sault Ste. Marie:

98.45% are residents of Sault Ste. Marie while 1.55% are non-residents.

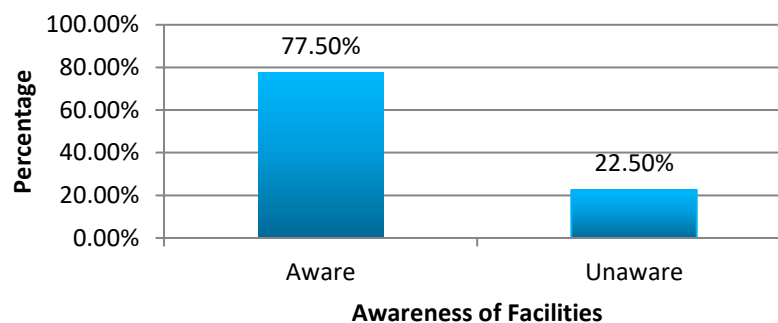
Full-time vs. seasonal residency:

95.85% of respondents were permanent residents while 4.15% were seasonal residents of Sault Ste. Marie.

Experience at City of Sault Ste. Marie facilities:

Statement	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
I am satisfied with the current city of SSM recreation programs	17.62%	33.16%	24.35%	13.47%	5.70%	5.70%
The City of SSM offers adequate continued learning programs	20.21%	34.72%	25.91%	9.33%	3.63%	6.22%
The City of SSM offers recreational programs I enjoy	27.46%	23.83%	25.91%	10.88%	3.11%	8.81%
The City of SSM offers sports programs I enjoy	16.58%	21.76%	34.20%	8.81%	8.81%	9.84%
The City of SSM meets my recreational and sports needs	14.51%	27.46%	26.42%	12.44%	10.36%	8.81%
The City of SSM John Rhodes Community Centre Pool meets my recreational needs	23.83%	20.73%	36.79%	6.22%	2.59%	9.84%
The City of SSM offers adequate access to available social programs	19.69%	30.57%	31.61%	7.25%	2.07%	8.81%

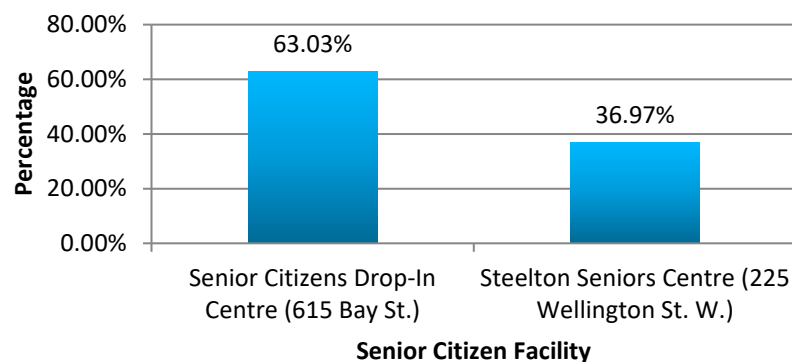
Citizens Aware of the Programs Offered by Seniors Services



Observation:

Although the majority of seniors are aware of the programs offered by Seniors Services, over 20% still need to be informed

Primary Seniors Facility Attended



Observation:

Two thirds of the surveyed seniors who have used seniors' facilities have attended the Senior Citizen Drop-In Centre; one third have visited the Steelton Seniors Centre.

Common themes: Programs that are important:

- Crafts: quilting, bunka, sewing, crocheting, etc.
- Tennis: indoor and outdoor
- Dinners (dinner dance), luncheons and teas
- Art: painting, drawing, etc.
- Walking/hiking, both the boardwalk and hub trail
- Dancing
- Card games: bridge, 500 cards, etc.
- Pool: swimming and aquabics
- Exercise: zumba, fitness classes, weight lifting, etc.
- Yoga

Common themes: Recommended future leisure activities:

- Tennis: working courts
- Exercise programs: Pilates, weight training, Tai Chi
- Technology programs
- Dog park
- Male-oriented programs

Additional comments:

- One quarter of respondents believe there is a need for additional parking at the Steelton Senior Centre
- Many respondents feel that the tennis courts in the City need to be updated to allow for safe tennis playing
- Several requested an increase in public restrooms, seating and garbage cans along the Hub Trail
- Inclusion of seniors on fixed incomes is important
- Staff and senior centre have great friendly atmosphere
- Would like to see additional activities available, including swimming, yoga and Zumba

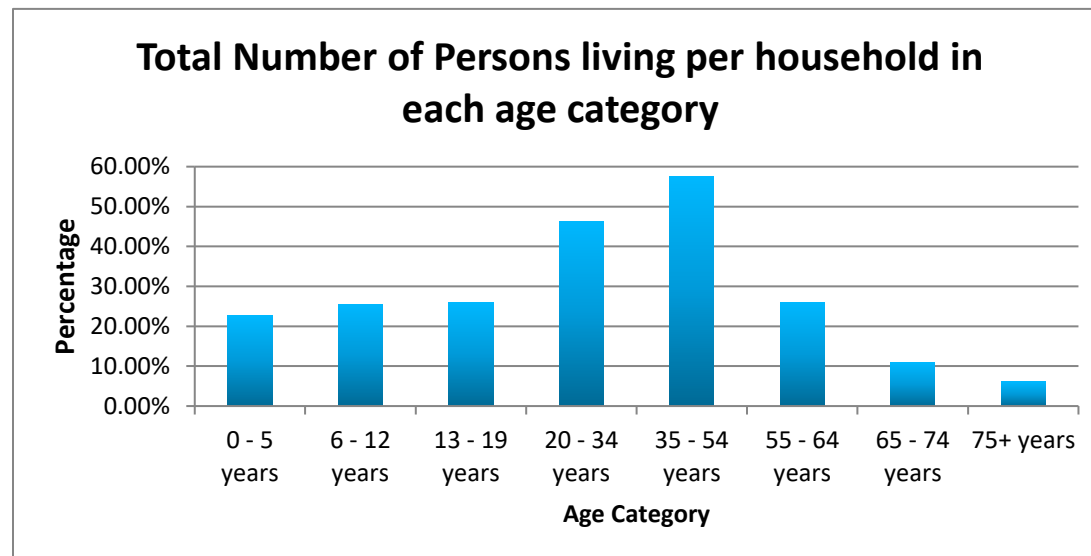
APPENDIX E – Data Collection: Community – General Public

899 surveys completed.

Average year of birth of respondents: 1960

Gender: 52.12% of respondents were male while 47.88% were female.

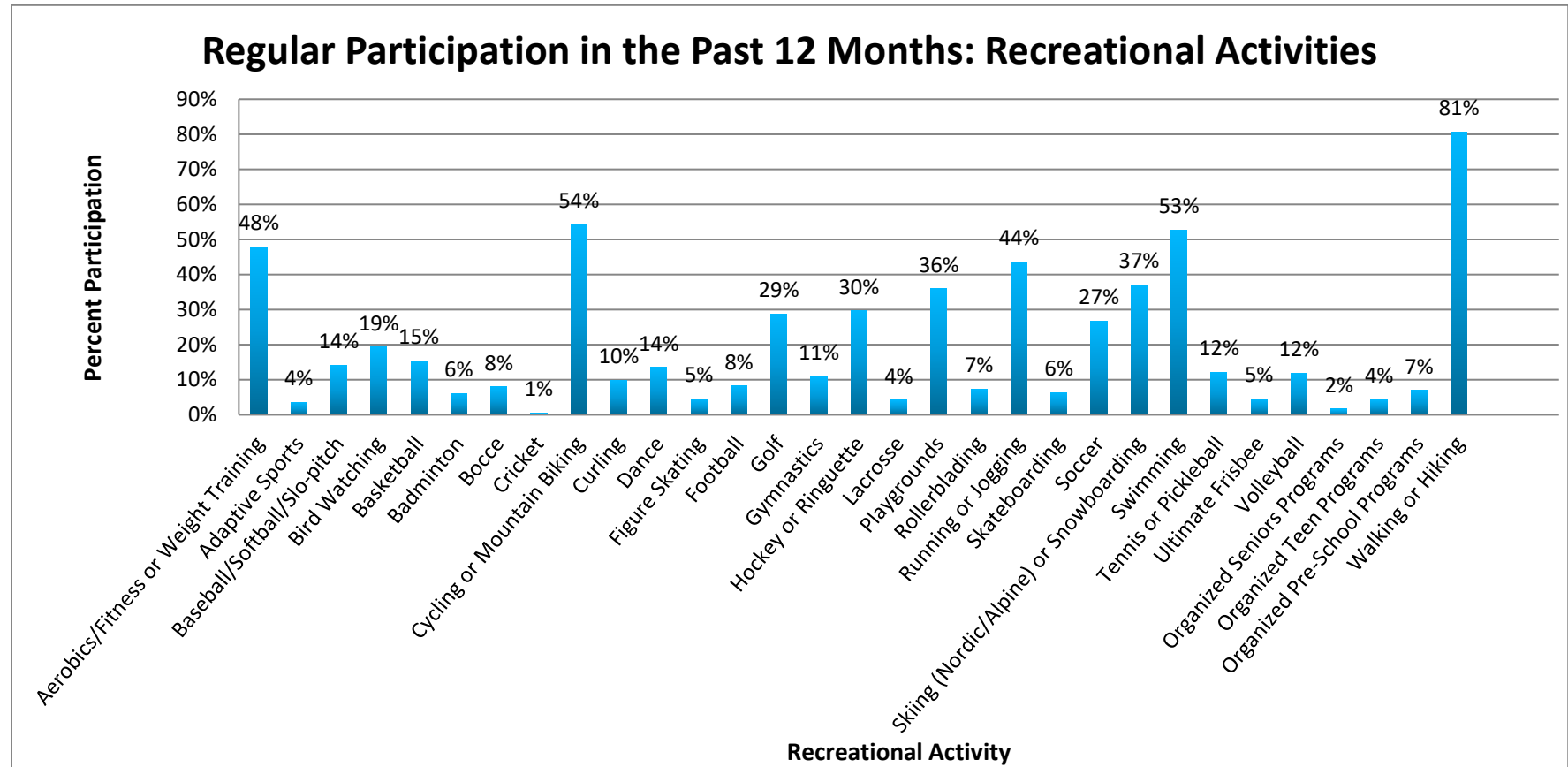
Average number of people currently living per household: 3



Observation:

The total number of persons living per household in each age category generally resembles the plot of the age categories of the whole of Sault Ste. Marie (refer to pg. 7 “City of Sault Ste. Marie Demographic Overview” for graph).

Participation in recreational activities in the past 12 months:

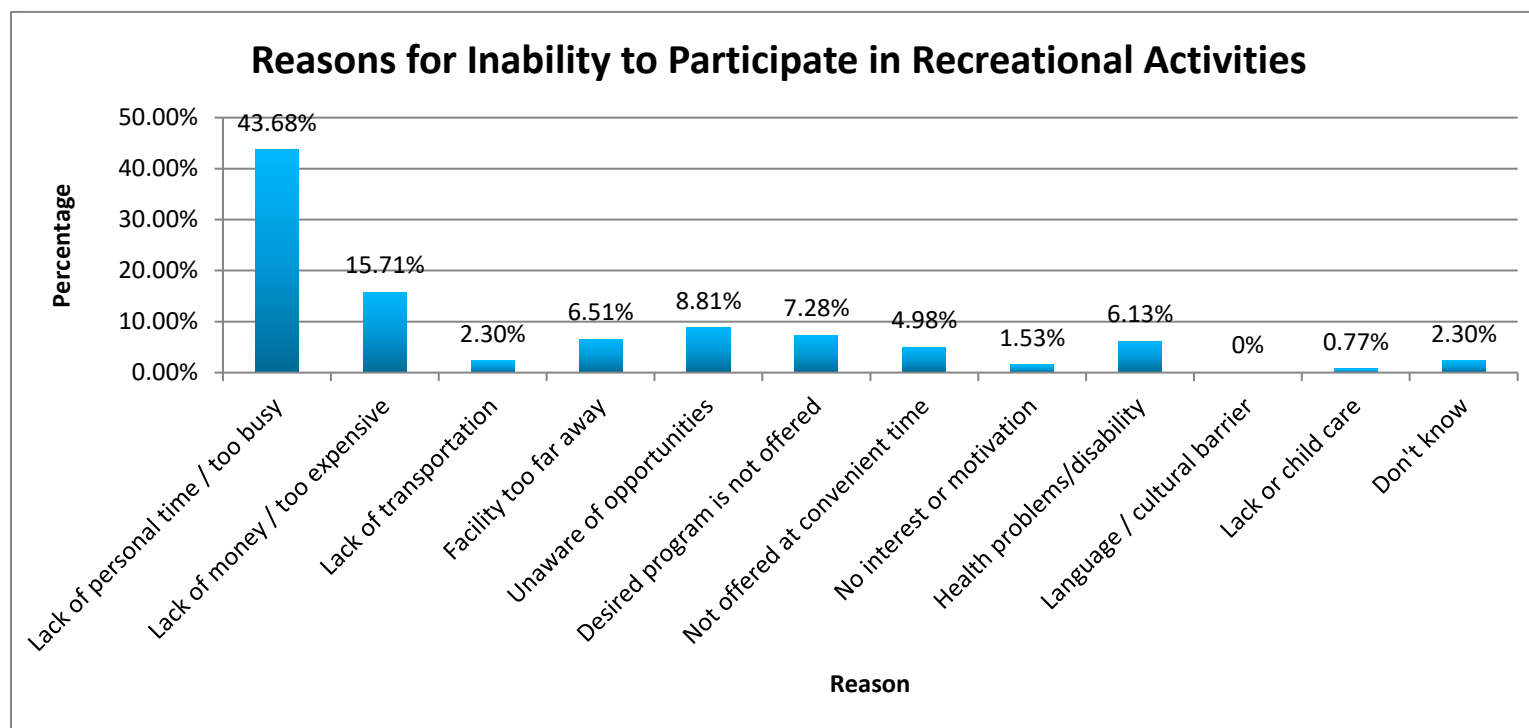


Additional activities:

- Snow Shoeing
- Skating
- Fishing/Boating/Kayaking
- Yoga
- Martial Arts

Are members of the community participating in parks and recreational activities as often as they would like:

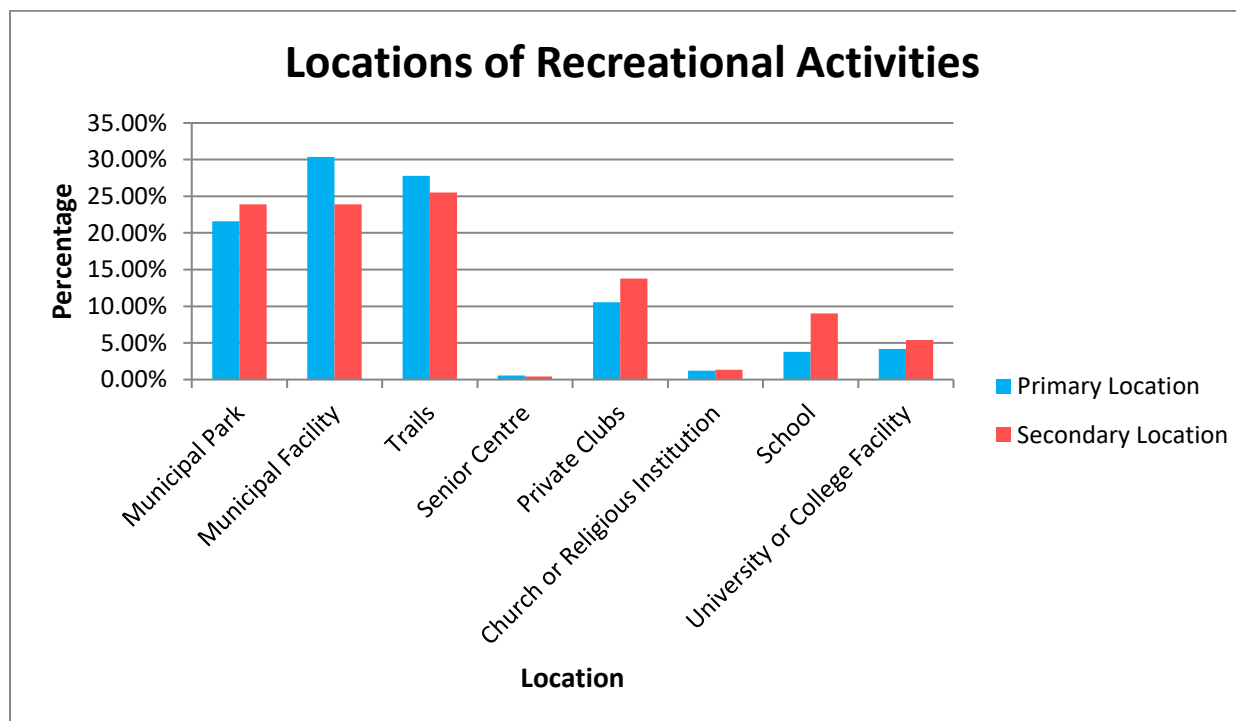
- 50.47% responded YES
- 38.86% responded NO
- 10.66% responded Don't Know



Additional reasons for inability to participate in recreational activities:

- Lack of/inadequate facilities
- Facilities in disrepair: e.g. tennis courts
- Weather
- Age limitations

Primary and secondary location of recreational activities:



Is there a need for additional facilities:

- 62.36% responded YES
- 21.47% responded NO
- 16.17% responded Don't Know

What facilities are required:

- Off leash dog park
- Water park/splash pad
- Additional parks downtown
- Further development of Hub Trails/biking trails, also maintained in winter
- Additional community pool – West End
- Updates and repairs to existing tennis courts, additional indoor tennis courts for year round use
- Ice rink facilities
- Additional/repairs soccer fields – both indoor and outdoor

Importance of City operated facilities:

	Very Important 5	4	3	2	Not at all Important 1	N/A
Indoor recreation facilities	58.74%	16.44%	12.26%	7.77%	3.59%	1.20%
Summer outdoor recreation facilities	55.52%	24.18%	10.75%	7.16%	1.94%	0.45%
Winter outdoor recreation facilities	39.88%	22.36%	20.09%	10.73%	6.34%	0.60%
Parks and playgrounds	52.03%	24.51%	15.04%	5.71%	1.65%	1.05%
Passive parks that preserve natural areas	57.47%	23.23%	12.22%	4.37%	1.51%	1.21%
Trails and pathways	70.12%	18.62%	6.31%	2.25%	2.10%	0.60%
Pools	45.98%	22.76%	14.72%	8.65%	6.22%	1.67%
Seniors Centres	22.15%	13.20%	13.35%	15.78%	19.73%	15.78%
Marinas	24.10%	14.31%	16.11%	14.16%	21.69%	9.64%

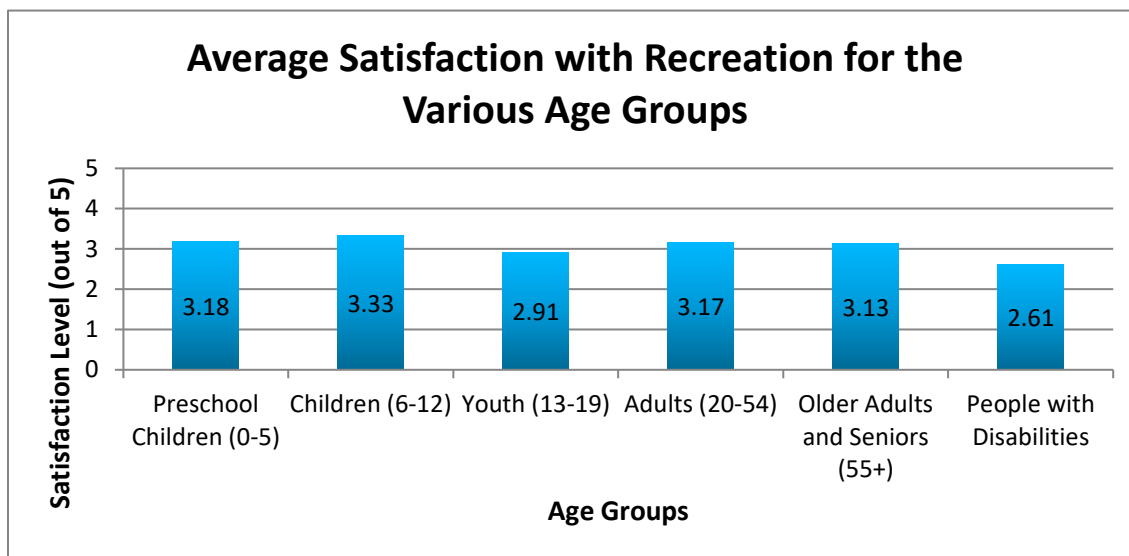
Satisfaction with the quality and condition of City operated facilities:

	Very Important 5	4	3	2	Not at all Important 1	N/A
Indoor recreation facilities	19.82%	43.82%	24.14%	5.37%	2.38%	4.47%
Summer outdoor recreation facilities	10.94%	34.18%	27.89%	10.64%	9.75%	6.60%
Winter outdoor recreation facilities	14.74%	38.35%	25.41%	5.71%	1.95%	13.83%
Parks and playgrounds	10.68%	36.39%	35.64%	9.62%	3.76%	3.91%
Passive parks that preserve natural areas	13.27%	37.20%	30.62%	11.46%	2.87%	4.68%
Trails and pathways	23.38%	41.18%	24.43%	7.39%	2.11%	1.51%
Pools	19.21%	36.13%	23.78%	5.49%	2.59%	12.80%
Seniors Centres	5.33%	12.48%	13.55%	3.81%	1.52%	63.32%
Marinas	5.30%	16.82%	21.06%	7.42%	5.15%	44.24%

Satisfaction with customer service at City operated facilities:

	Very Important 5	4	3	2	Not at all Important 1	N/A
Indoor recreation facilities	17.35%	36.65%	24.74%	6.64%	3.92%	10.71%
Summer outdoor recreation facilities	11.63%	29.15%	26.59%	9.97%	6.34%	16.31%
Winter outdoor recreation facilities	11.09%	28.42%	25.08%	7.75%	2.89%	24.77%
Parks and playgrounds	12.20%	28.51%	24.70%	9.30%	3.66%	21.65%
Pools	18.29%	28.35%	24.54%	6.10%	3.20%	19.51%
Seniors Centres	8.45%	10.29%	12.75%	1.84%	1.69%	65.98%
Marinas	7.38%	14.46%	15.54%	6.46%	4.77%	51.38%

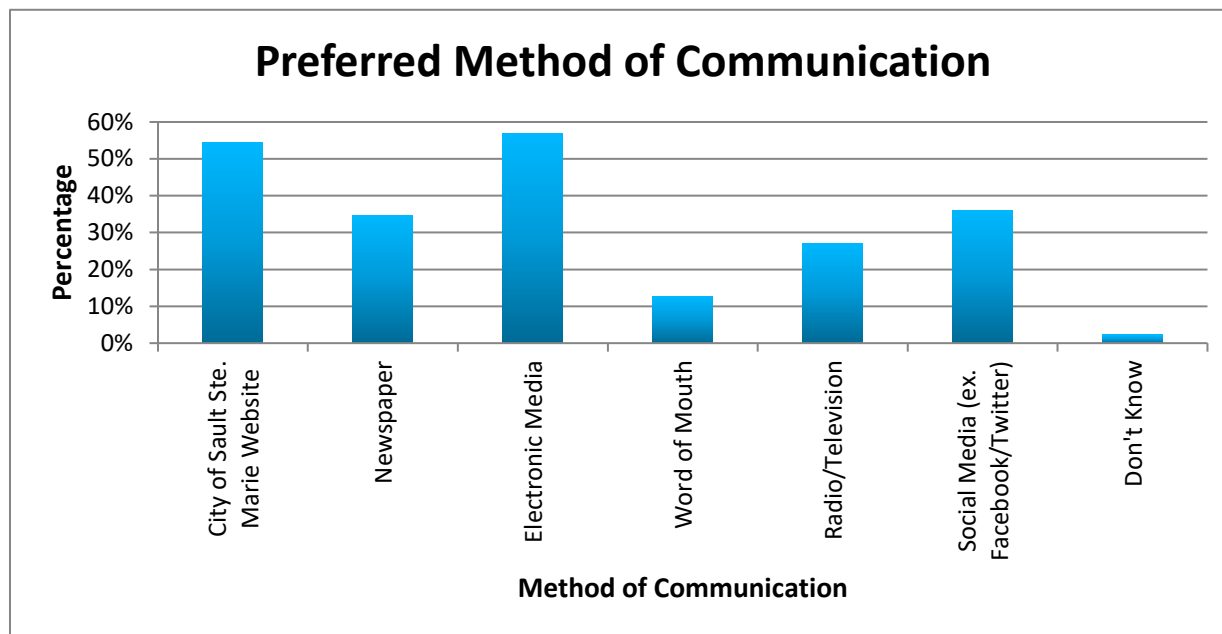
Satisfaction with parks, recreational facilities and recreational opportunities provided by the Corporation of the City of Sault Ste. Marie for the following age groups:



Observation:

It appears that both youth aged 13 – 19 and people with disabilities are the least satisfied with the recreation available to them; recreation available to children aged 6 – 12 seems to be the most satisfying.

Preferred method to obtain information regarding parks and recreation:



Observation:

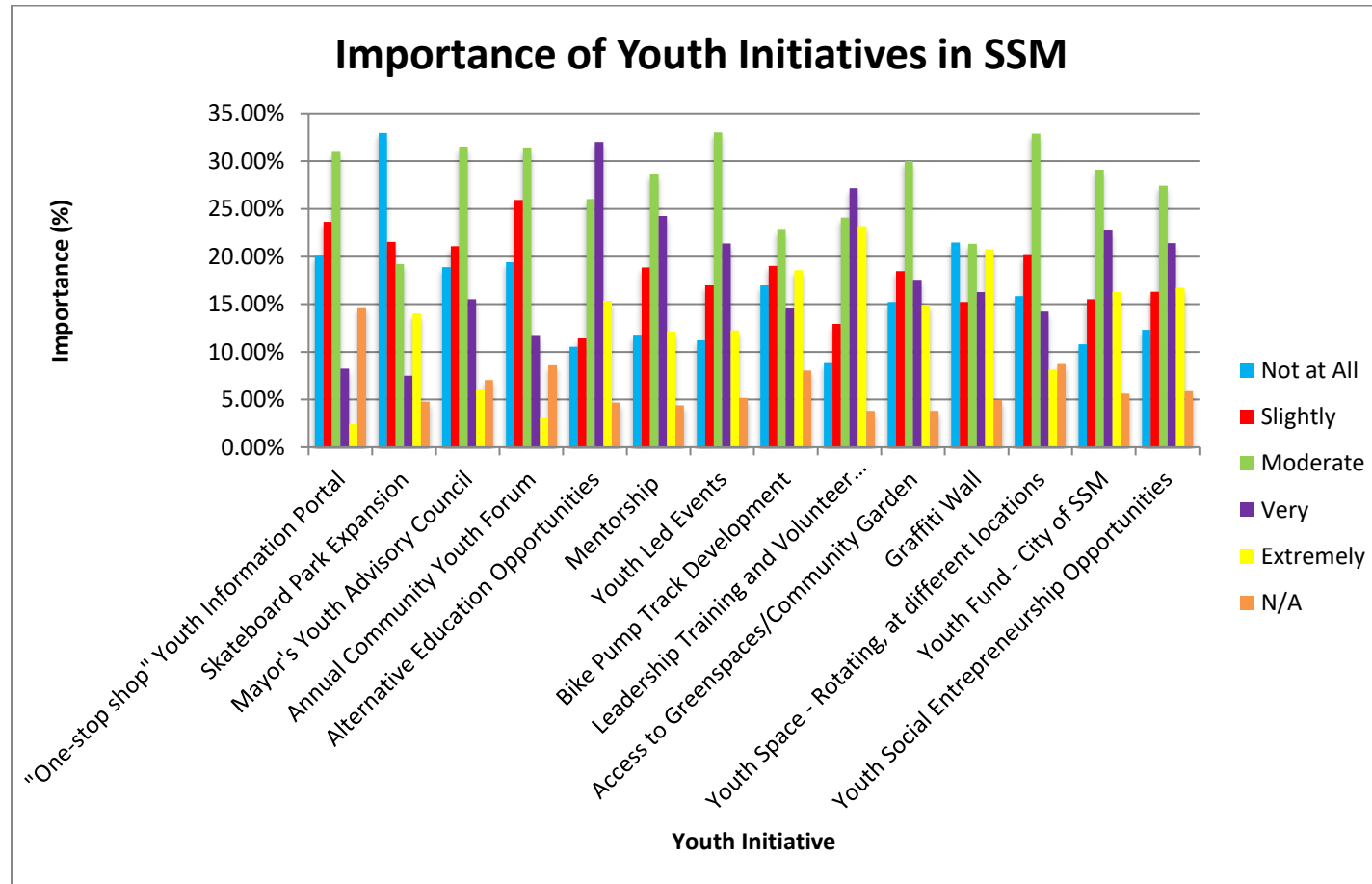
The most common preferred method of communication between The City of Sault Ste. Marie and the community is through electronic media, followed by the City website, social media, newspaper and the radio/television.

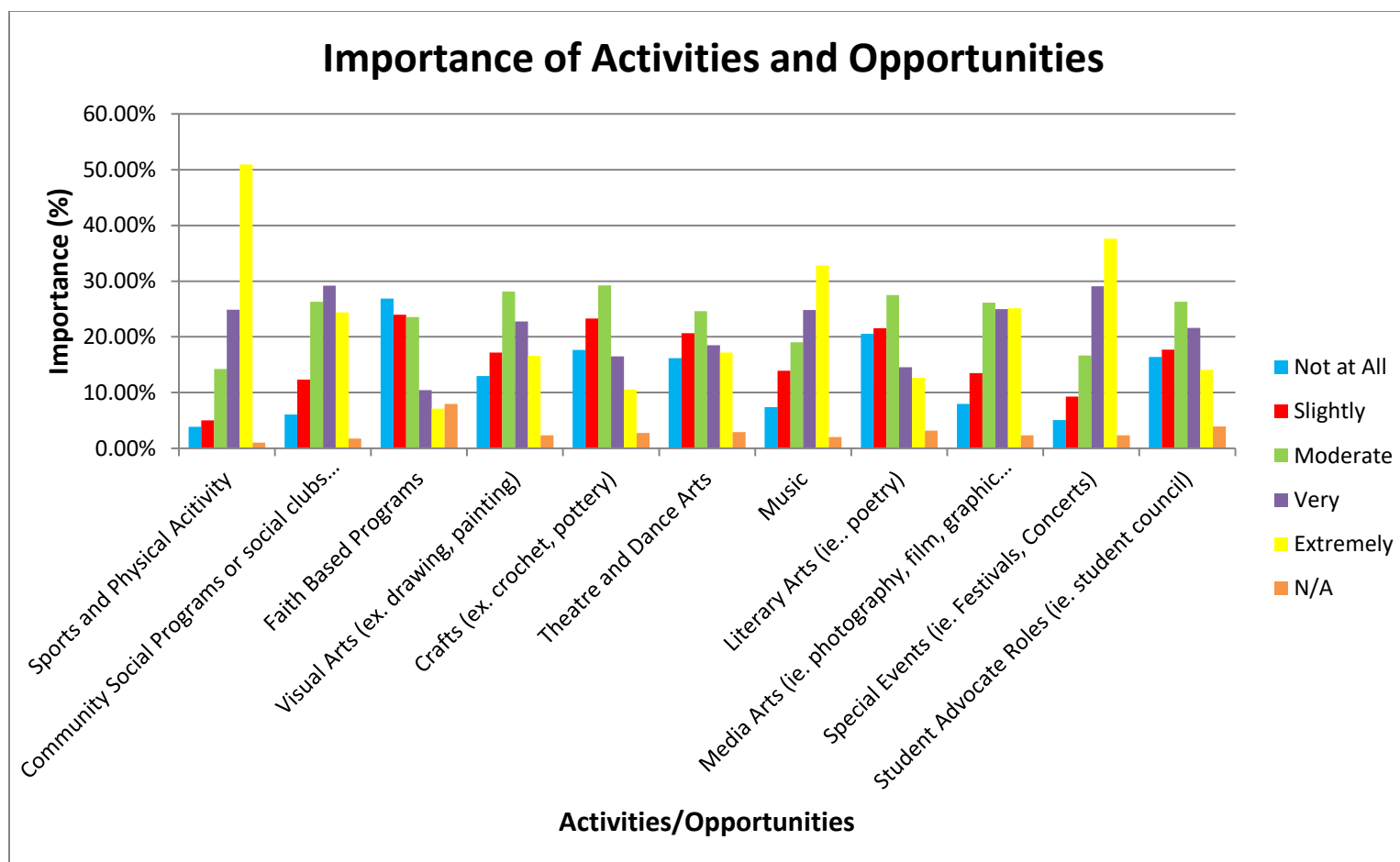
Additional comments:

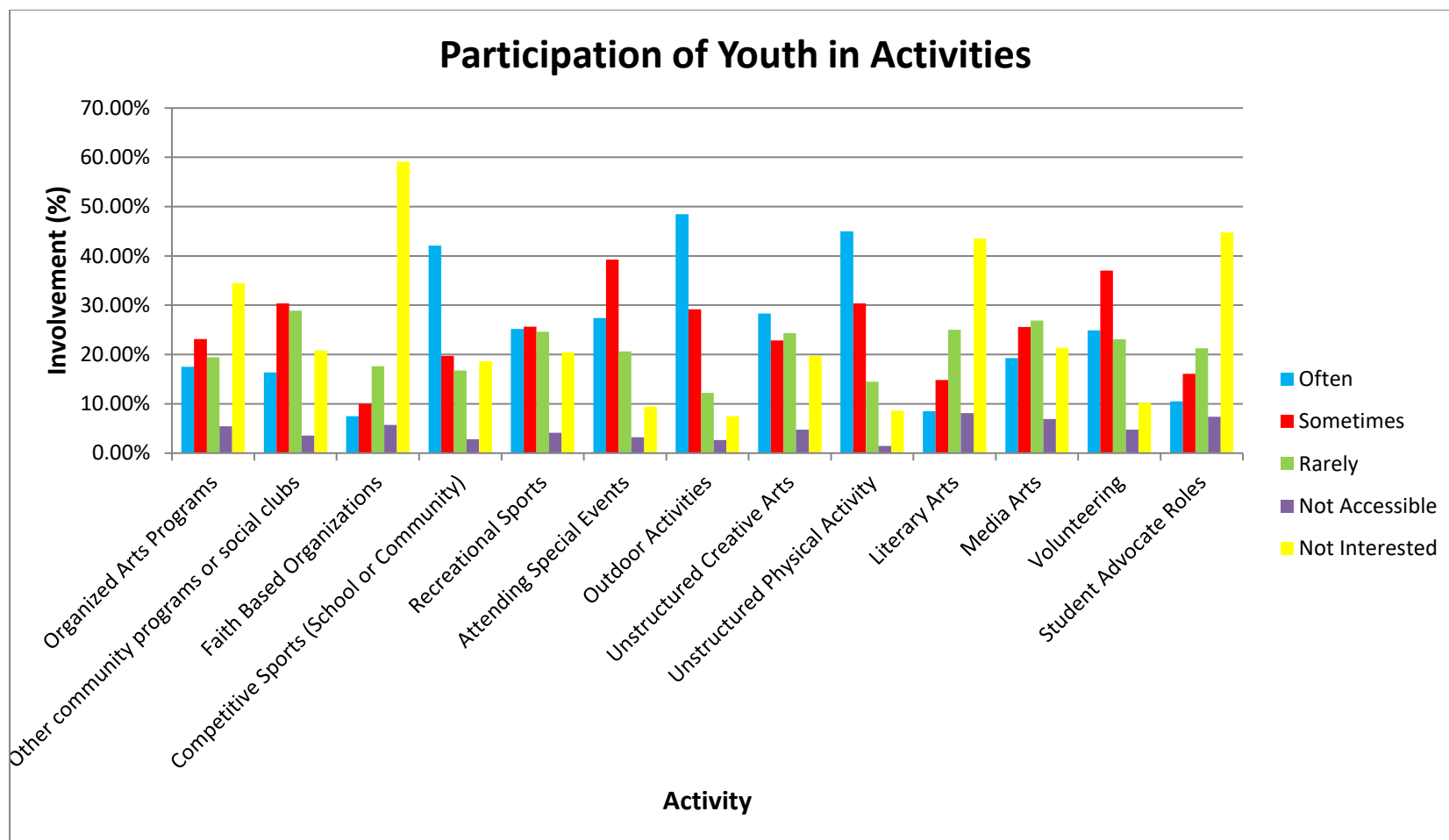
- Restroom facilities on the Hub Trail as well as additional garbage disposal needed
- Conditions of soccer fields at Strathclair need to be addressed
- Repair/clean-up of neighbourhood parks
- Low-cost programs that allow for inclusion of all families
- Additional free swim hours at the John Rhodes or new community pool facility
- Improvement of local tennis courts/addition of new indoor tennis courts
- Creation of a splash pad (Bellevue Park location) and dog park

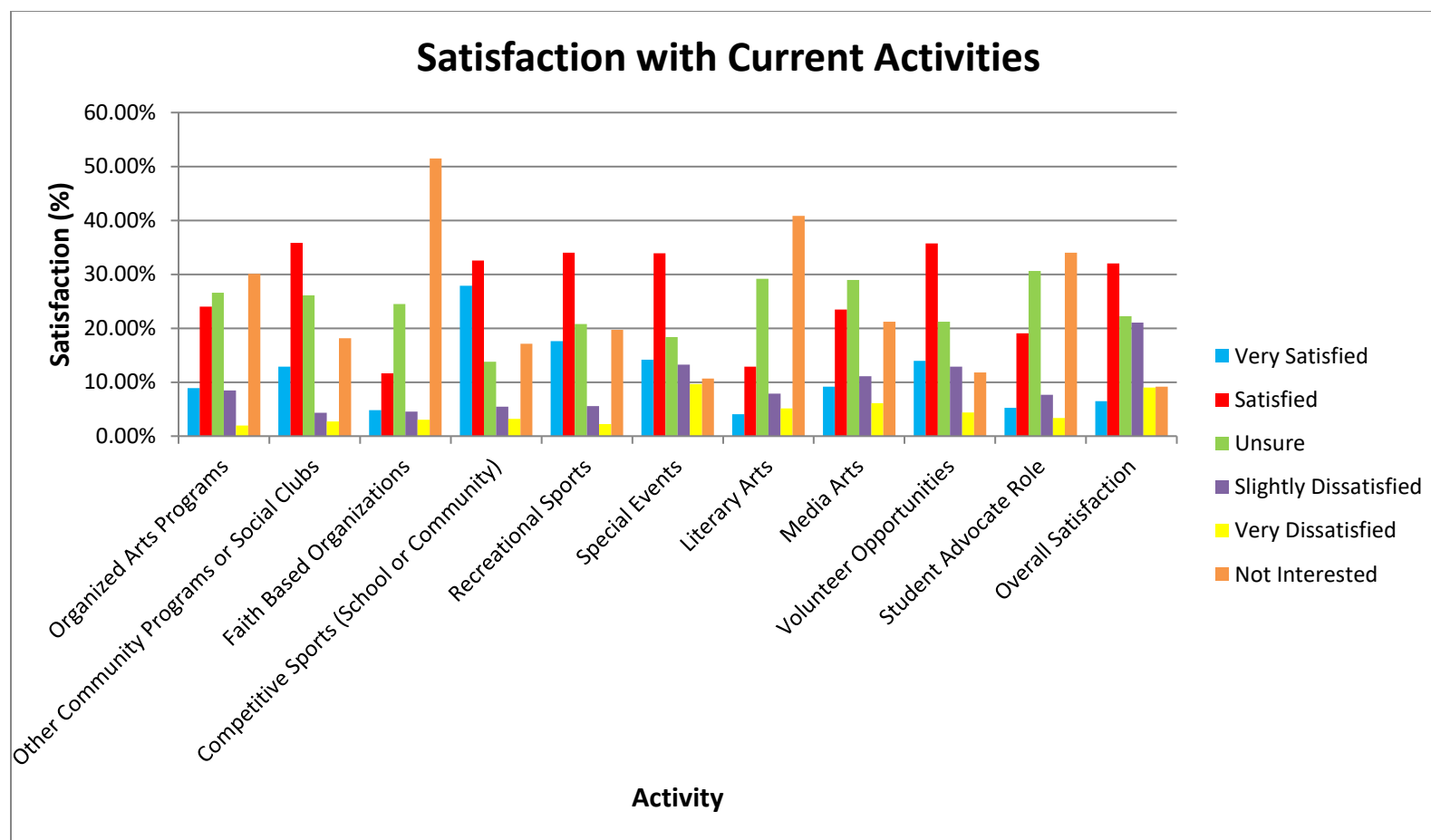
APPENDIX F – Data Collection: Youth (age 13 – 19)

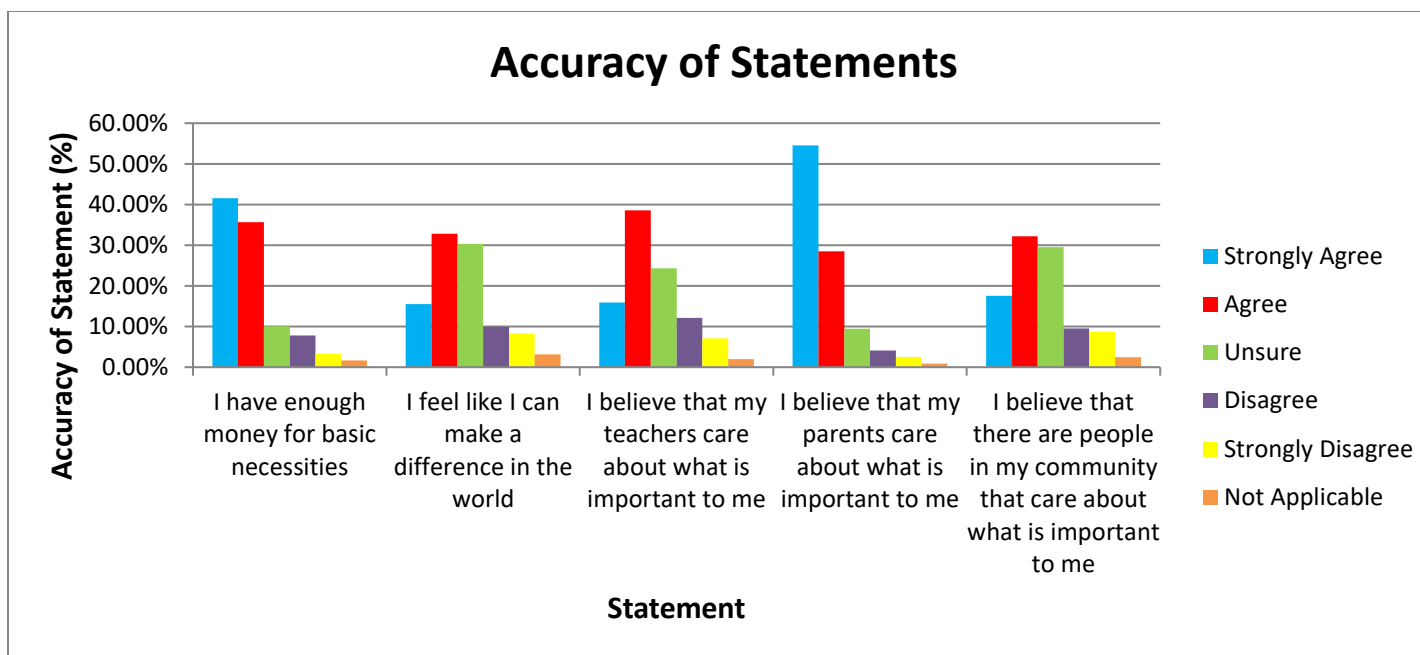
738 surveys completed.

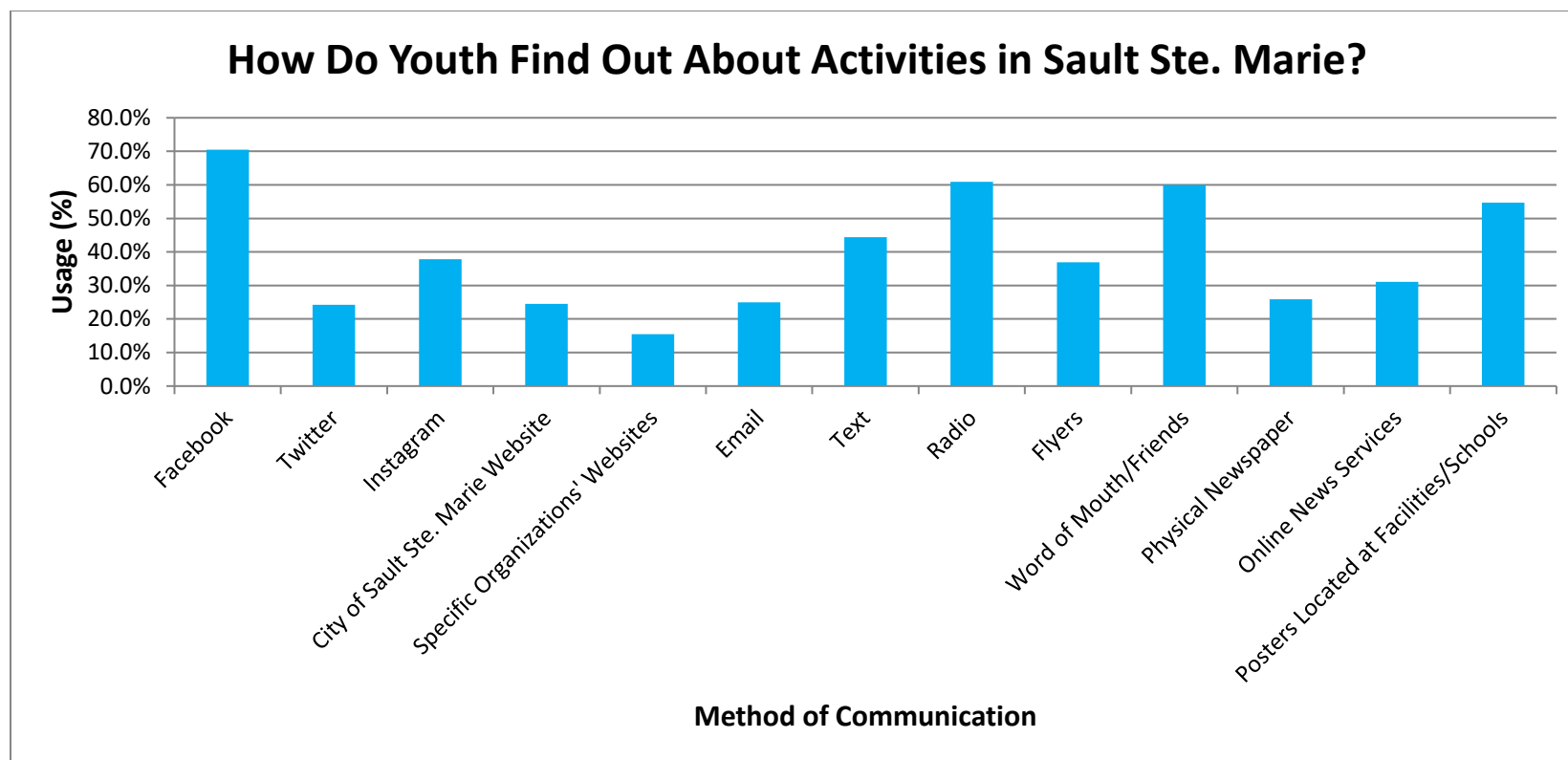




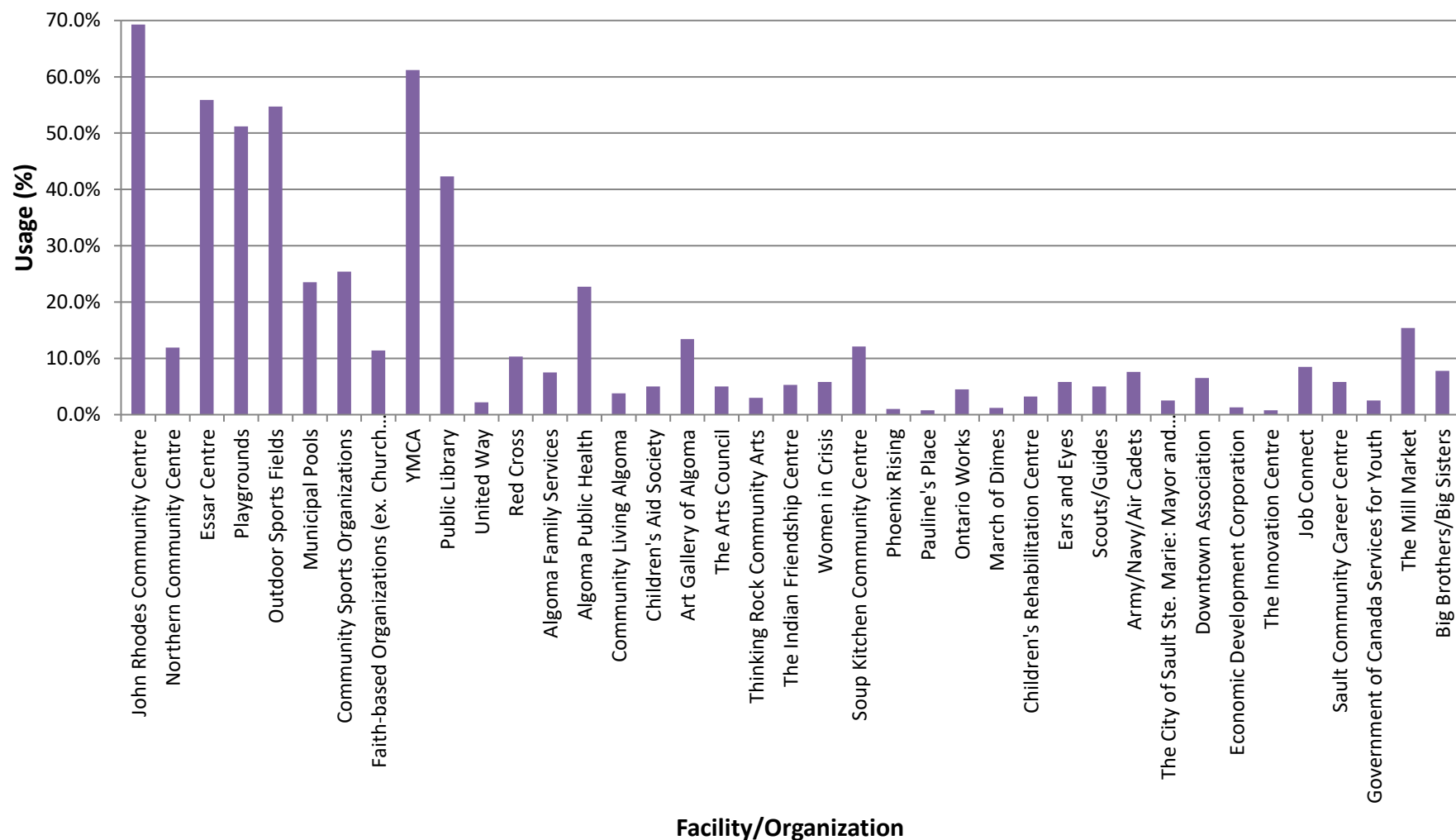


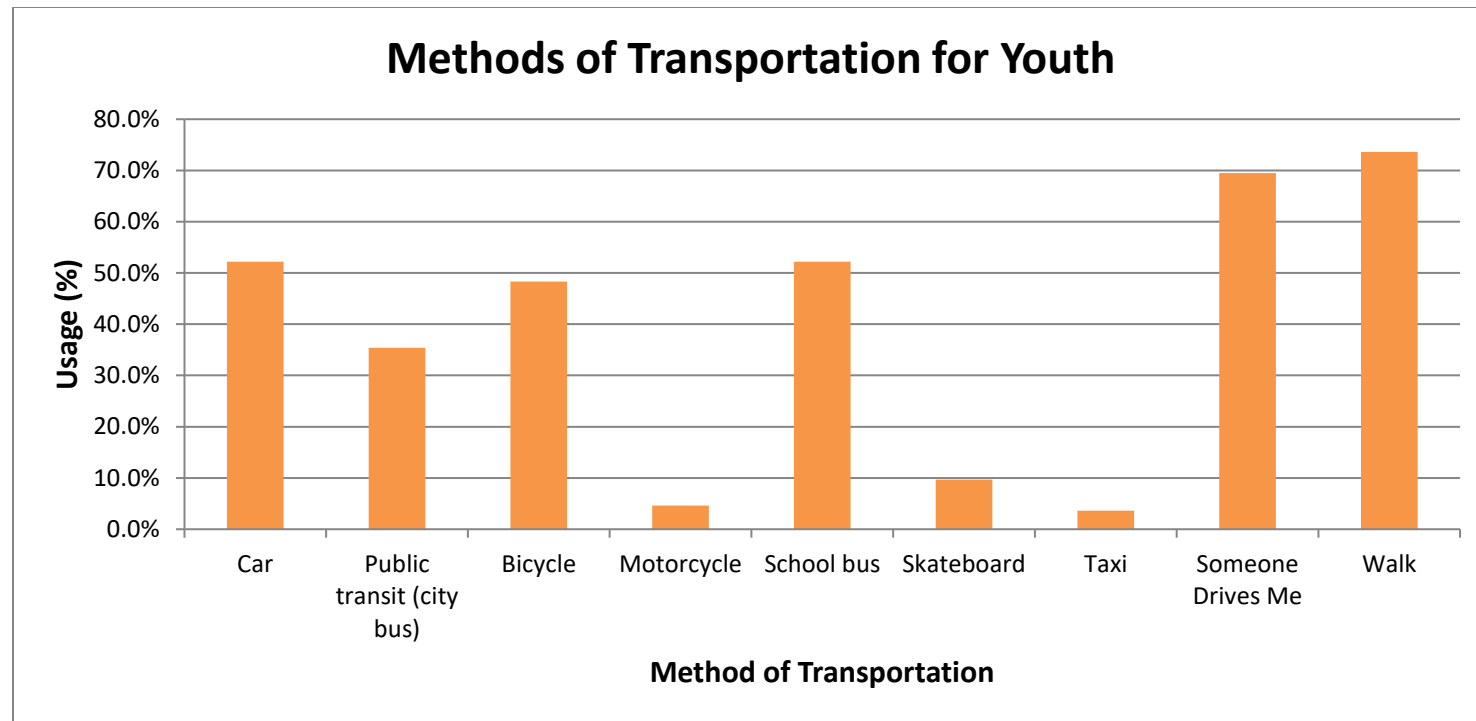


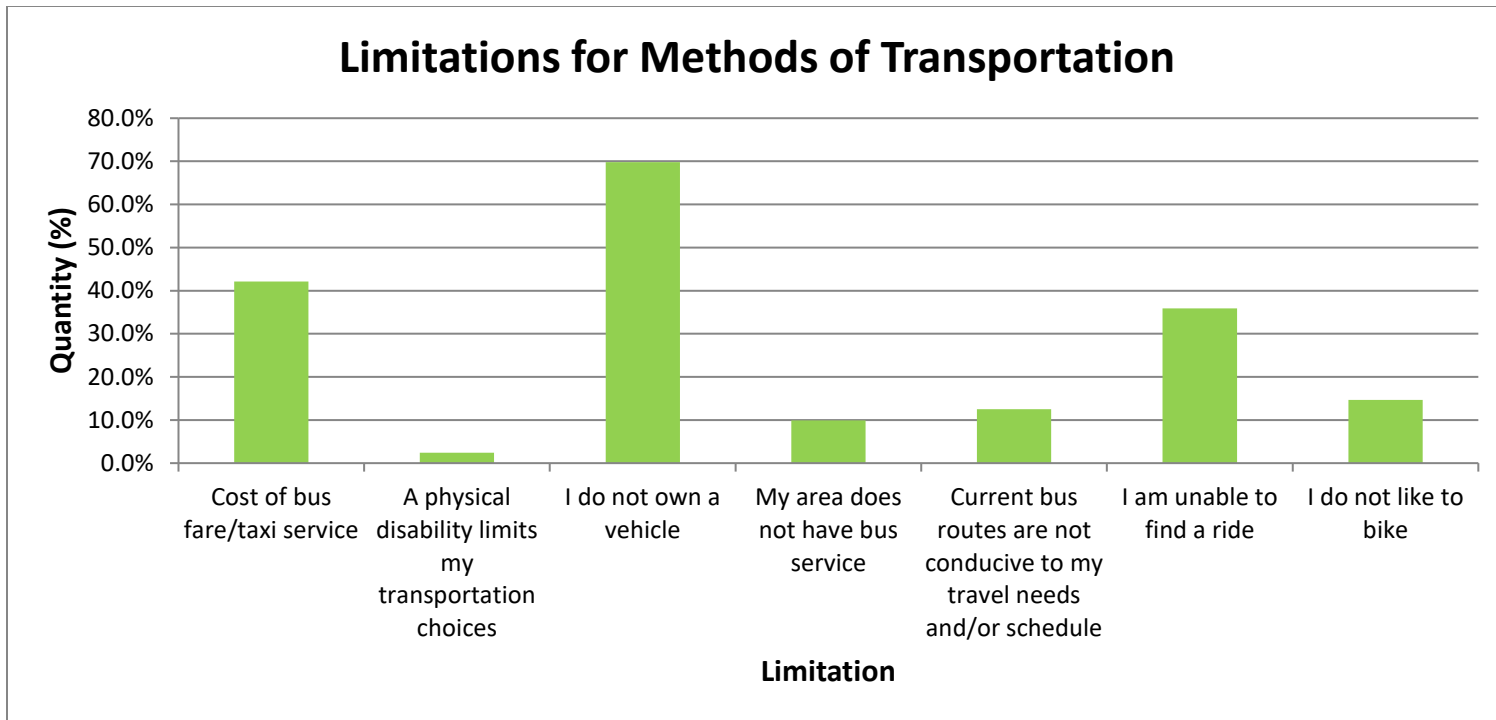




Facilities/organizations youth access to be physically active, to be creative, to volunteer, and/or to develop skills







Suggestions or recommendations to improve the current programs or opportunities available in Sault Ste. Marie:
– additional concerts
– expand skate park/construction of new skate part in the west end
– increased advertisement for events/raise youth awareness
– increased graffiti wall space

Who advocates on behalf of youth:
– Parent (more commonly Mom)
– Family member
– Friends
– Teacher

Additional Comments:
– expansion to skate park and additional lighting needed
– additional activities for youth are needed/there are few youth activities available in SSM
– help youth find out about events

APPENDIX G: Comments: Suggested Facility Operational Improvements – Sporting Groups & Organizations:

Facility	Priority	Timeframe
Art Jennings Outdoor Oval:		
○ Refrigerated oval, covered oval		
Clergue Park:		
○ Electricity and water outlets within the park		
Elliott Park:		
○ Increased playing time flexibility		
John Rhodes:		
○ Improvements to P.A. system, clocks		
○ Heat in Timekeeper's bench		
○ Expanded Restaurant hours		
○ Re-evaluation of rules for competitive swimming		
○ Repairs to ceiling – leaks, water stains, mildew		
○ Painting of reception area, offices, change rooms as well as washrooms		
McMeeken Arena:		
○ New P.A. system, clocks		
○ Functional microphone		
○ Heat in Timekeeper's bench		
○ Concession booth		
North Street Park:		
○ Trimmed trees and underbrush near field of play		
Northern Community Centre:		
○ Increased storage		
○ 3 rd field		
○ Additional pitch for indoor games		
○ Padding on end beams		
Queen Elizabeth Fields:		
○ Improved field conditions		
○ Maintenance of fields following fertilization and cutting guidelines		
○ Levelling of outfields		

Rocky DiPietro Field:

- Turf field
- Practice field facility

Rosedale Field:

- Fields levelled and potholes filled

Steeltown Senior Centre:

- Elevator
- Chair height toilets

Strathclair Fields:

- Fields #1 and #2 need improvements following fertilization and cutting guidelines
- Addition of lighting to all fields
- Address vehicle access issues and parking
- Additional player shelters to junior fields, benches

Recommendations for future facilities – Sporting Groups and Organizations:

Facility	Priority	Timeframe
400 metre refrigerated outdoor oval/400 metre covered indoor oval in conjunction with a twin pad rink and indoor track facility		
Cricket oval and practice batting nets		
Cross country skiing club house and homologated ski trails		
New gym facilities and 50 metre pool complex		
New hockey arena		
Senior Citizen Centre with increased accessibility for seniors with aids: elevators		
Turf field		