

City of Sault Ste. Marie



Parks and Recreation Master Plan

April 2024



**Parks and
Recreation
Master Plan**



Prepared by thinc design in association with Mehak,
Kelly & Associates and Oraclepoll Research Ltd. for the
City of Sault Ste. Marie

April 2024



Land Acknowledgment

The City of Sault Ste. Marie acknowledges this area as part of the traditional lands of the Ojibway people. This location is known as Bawating and is the ancestral home of the Batchewana First Nation, Garden River First Nation and the Historic Sault Ste. Marie Metis Council. The City recognizes the significance of the Huron Robinson Treaty of 1850 which established a relationship between First Nation and European ancestors on the basis of respect for one another.

Today, we aspire to create a welcoming community for all peoples that recognizes the honoured traditions of our collective cultures. With this plan, the City of Sault Ste. Marie commits to building relationships and developing communication protocols with indigenous communities for all planning and land development matters.



Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction	11	3.0 Recreation Facilities	49
1.1 Project Overview	11	3.1 Introduction and Background to the Assessment	49
1.2 Community Context	13	What We Heard	50
Geographic Context	13	Comparative Analysis of Facilities and Amenities	51
Socio Demographic Profile	15	3.2 General Facility Considerations	55
Relevant Policy Context	24	Accessibility	55
2.0 Programming and Events	27	Asset Management	57
2.1 Introduction and Background to the Assessment	27	Facility Planning and Evaluation	59
What We Heard	28	3.3 Indoor Recreation Facilities	61
Inventory	29	Ice Pads	61
2.2 Programming and Events Recommendations	32	Pools	67
Free and Low Cost Options	32	Artificial Turf Fields	70
Youth	33	Tracks	72
Adults	37	Tennis and Pickleball Facility	73
Seniors	39	Seniors Facilities	76
Aquatics	40	General Activity Space	77
Accessibility	42	3.4 Outdoor Recreation Facilities	80
Arts, Culture and Heritage	43	Ball Diamonds	80
Events	47	Rectangular Sports Fields and Tracks	84
		Cricket Pitches	88
		Courts: Tennis, Pickleball and Bocce	90
		3.5 Arts, Culture and Heritage Facilities	93

4.0 Parks and Trails

97

Strathclair Sports Complex

144

4.1 Introduction and Background to the Assessment

97

What We Heard

98

Inventory

99

4.2 General Park and Trail Considerations

101

Parkland Classification and Provision

101

Park Revitalization Plan

111

Accessibility and Comfort

114

Horticulture and Community Gardens

120

Free, Unstructured Outdoor Activities

122

Outdoor Ice Rinks

125

New Dog Park

127

Trail Recommendations

129

4.3 Site-specific Recommendations

131

Bellevue Park and Marina

131

Clergue Park

134

Elliott Outdoor Sports Complex

136

Esposito Park

137

V.E. Greco Pool/Capt. Nichola Goddard Park

137

Kinsmen Park, Hiawatha Highlands, and Wishart Park

139

Manzo Pool and Splash Pad

140

Pointe Des Chenes

141

Queen Elizabeth Sports Complex

142

Roberta Bondar Park and Marina

143

List of Figures

Figure 1-1: Parks and Recreation Master Plan timeline	12
Figure 1-2: Map of Land Uses in Sault Ste. Marie	14
Figure 1-3: Age Distribution in Sault Ste. Marie, Algoma, and Ontario, 2021	19
Figure 1-4: Age distribution of population in the City, District, and Province, 2021	20
Figure 1-5: Work underway for the new Downtown Plaza, Fall 2023	26
Figure 4-1: Safe walking distance (800m) from each park*	104
Figure 4-2: Ward 1 - Parks, schools, and facilities	105
Figure 4-3: Ward 2 - Parks, schools, and facilities	106
Figure 4-4: Ward 3 - Parks, schools, and facilities	107
Figure 4-5: Ward 4 - Parks, schools, and facilities	108
Figure 4-6: Ward 5 - Parks, schools, and facilities	109
Figure 4-7: Example of warming station, design and image by Susan Drysdale for the Toronto Beaches Winter Stations Design Competition	116
Figure 4-8: Urban Blu self-cleaning washroom in Fort Francis, ON	116
Figure 4-9: Unique custom wood playground made by Earthscape Playgrounds	131
Figure 5-1: Planning and evaluation process	167

List of Tables

Table 1-1: Summary of population, land and income data in the City of Sault Ste. Marie, District of Algoma and Province of Ontario	15
Table 1-2: Ethnic or Cultural Origin of Residents	16
Table 1-3: Immigrant status and timing of immigration	17
Table 1-4: Age at immigration	17
Table 1-5: Places of birth for recent immigration population in the City	17
Table 1-6: Visible Minority groups in Sault Ste. Marie	18
Table 1-7: Population age distribution in Sault Ste. Marie, Algoma, and the Province of Ontario	19
Table 1-8: Projected Age Distribution in Algoma District 2024, 2029, 2034	20
Table 1-9: Sault Ste. Marie population age breakdown by ward	21
Table 1-10: Household types in the City of Sault Ste. Marie and the District of Algoma	22
Table 1-11: Prevalence of Population within Low-income measure, after tax (LIM-AT)	22
Table 1-12: Summary of District of Algoma Population Projections	23
Table 1-13: Strategic goals, projects, and implementation updates from the 2015 Parks and Recreation Master Plan	25

Table 2-1: Overview of organized recreation programs and events available in the City	29	Table 4-2: Comparison of selected park amenity provision in Sault Ste. Marie	100
Table 2-2: Overview of recreation programs and events available in the City	30	Table 4-3: City of Sault Ste. Marie parkland classification system	102
Table 3-1: Comparative Service Levels for Municipal Indoor Facilities	53	Table 4-4: Neighbourhood Park Revitalization Timeline	111
Table 3-2: Comparative Service Levels for Municipal Outdoor Facilities	54	Table 4-5: Park analysis form used to rank and identify parks in need of revitalization	112
Table 3-3: Indoor Ice Pads in Sault Ste. Marie	61	Table 5-1: Existing and Proposed Parks and Recreation Policy	148
Table 3-4: Peak Ice Pad Use 2017 to 2022	64	Table 5-2: Example of Service Pricing Categories	150
Table 3-5: John Rhodes Community Centre Pool	67	Table 5-3: Areas of Interest for Additional Municipal Support to Volunteer Groups	152
Table 3-6: Sample of 50-metre Aquatic Facilities in Large Ontario Markets	69	Table 5-4: Use of Information Sources About Recreation Services	166
Table 3-7: Municipal Activity Space in Sault Ste. Marie	79	Table 5-5: Services Planning Information Requirements and Application	169
Table 3-8: Ball Diamonds in Sault Ste. Marie.	81	Table 6-1: Summary of total estimated costs per service area from 2024-2034	174
Table 3-9: Total Prime Time May through August for 2023 Season	82		
Table 3-10: Prime Time Scheduled Diamond Use by Location from May Through August 2023	83		
Table 3-11: Municipal Sports Fields in Sault Ste. Marie	86		
Table 3-12: Peak Prime Time Scheduled Field Use by Location from May Through August 2023	87		
Table 3-13: Participation in Cricket in Canada from 2012 to 2016	89		
Table 3-14: Municipal Courts in Sault Ste. Marie	92		
Table 4-1: Summary of key park amenities for unstructured use in the City	99		



Sault Ste. Marie municipal greenhouse, Bellevue Park

This page was intentionally left blank



1.0 Introduction

1.1 Project Overview

This Parks and Recreation Master Plan (herein referred to as 'The Plan') has been prepared to guide the provision of parks and recreation services in Sault Ste. Marie over the next 10 years (2024-2034). The Plan should be viewed as a living document to be updated and adjusted through the annual budget planning process. It acts as a road map, identifies needs and priorities, and suggests implementation timing of recommendations. However, they may be advanced, delayed or amended to respond to changing circumstances, and some initiatives will require additional community consultation to arrive at detailed plans and designs. Council, in consultation with municipal staff, will determine when and how initiatives are actually implemented.

The development of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan is a multi-phased project that began in summer 2023, and is planned to conclude in Spring 2024 (See Figure 1-1). Phases one and two focused on establishing the current context and undertaking extensive community consultation. In Phase three, the team conducted needs assessments using a broad data set including the feedback from Council, staff, residents and community organizations; facility use and program participation data; review of related plans and studies;



recreation trends; City capital plans and budgets; future growth and development; and related/concurrent projects and initiatives. In the final phase (Phase 4), the draft Plan will be shared with the community for review and comment before finalizing and presenting to Council.

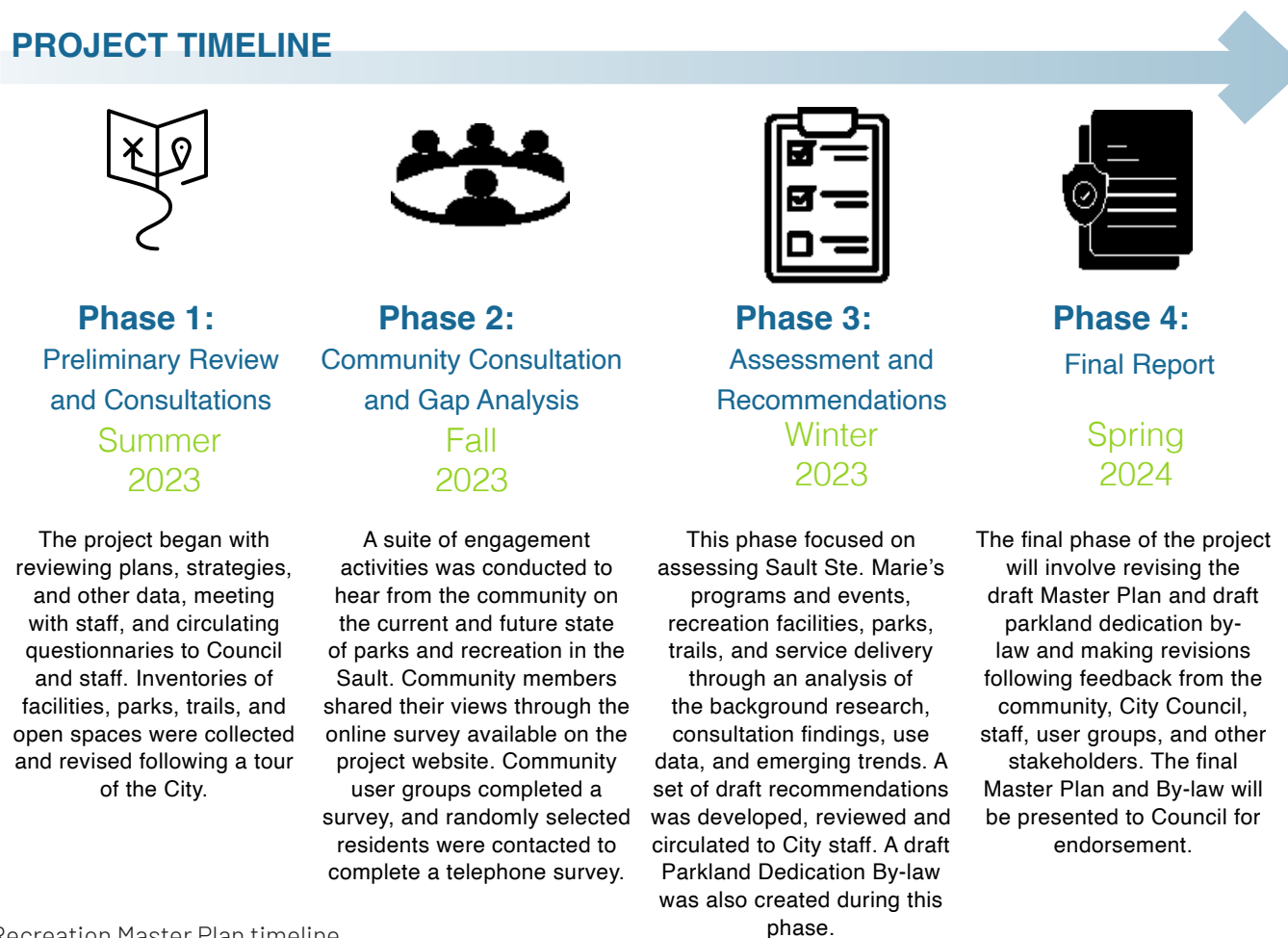


Figure 1-1: Parks and Recreation Master Plan timeline



1.2 Community Context

Geographic Context

Sault Ste. Marie is 222 square kilometres in area, with a population density of 324.6. The City is bordered by Lake Superior and the St. Marys River to the South, Algoma Unorganized to the north, Prince Township to the west, and Batchewana First Nation and Garden River First Nation to the east. Sault Ste. Marie benefits from extensive forested areas and waterways for outdoor recreation and nature appreciation.

The City's rural and Precambrian Uplands Area comprise around 75% of the City's total land mass, and approximately 10% of Sault Ste. Marie's population lives outside of the city's urban area. Per the draft Official Plan 2022, the Precambrian Uplands Area in the northern portion of the City will continue to be protected from development by directing the majority of new growth to existing urban areas. This will help to maintain the existing character of the rural area, while protecting large rural parcels to accommodate future urban development and other land uses requiring large acreages, such as agricultural uses and sand and gravel pits.¹

The Official Plan anticipates that growth will continue to be directed to reinforce the City's existing urban structure. The land supply within the Urban Settlement Area (USA) is

designed to accommodate an appropriate range and mix of residential, industrial, commercial, institutional and park space development. The USA includes the Downtown, which is a Strategic Core Area for the purposes of the Growth Plan for Northern Ontario, and the main Node of the community. Other Nodes, Corridors and Major Activity Hubs also exist in the Urban Settlement Area. Figure 1-2 illustrates the varied land uses within the City as outlined by the Official Plan.

¹ The City of Sault Ste. Marie Official Plan, 2022.



District of Algoma
(unorganized)

Land Uses

- Residential
- Commerical
- Industrial
- Institutional
- Parks
- Rural Areas
- Extraction Zone
- Precambrian Uplands

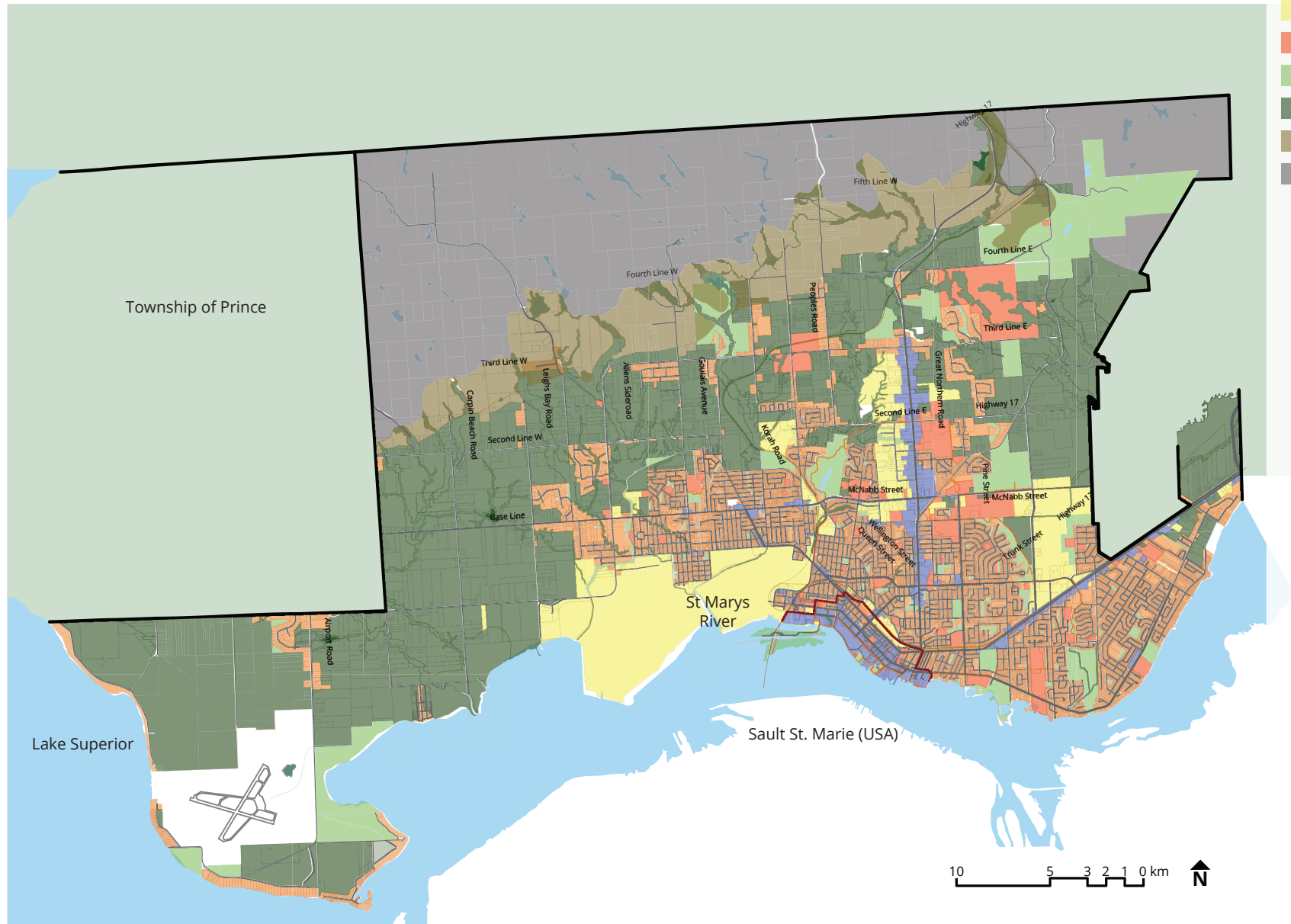


Figure 1-2: Map of Land Uses in Sault Ste. Marie



Socio Demographic Profile

This socio-demographic profile highlights current and projected populations, socio-demographic details, and population age distribution, for the City of Sault Ste. Marie. This profile also includes data for the District of Algoma and the Province of Ontario.

Table 1-1 illustrates population, land, and income data from the 2021 Canadian Census. Sault Ste. Marie has a high population density per square kilometer (relative to the district) and is classified as a medium sized population centre. The average and median incomes in Sault Ste. Marie are about the same as the District, and lower than the Province as a whole.

Table 1-1: Summary of population, land and income data in the City of Sault Ste. Marie, District of Algoma and Province of Ontario

	City of Sault Ste. Marie	District of Algoma	Province of Ontario
Population	72,051	113,777	14,223,942
Population Density per square kilometre	324.6	2.4	15.9
Land area in square kilometre	221.99	48,281.36	892,411.76
Median after-tax individual income	\$37,200	\$36,000	\$37,200
Median after-tax household income	\$65,500	\$63,600	\$79,500
Average total income in 2020 among recipients (\$)	\$49,680	\$48,160	\$56,350

Source: 2021 Canadian Census



City of Sault Ste. Marie Ethnocultural Data

The existing ethnocultural diversity of the City of Sault Ste. Marie is a key consideration for parks and recreation planning. Expanding programs, events, and activities to reflect the interests of diverse communities can enhance and support healthy and active communities through increased participation and intercultural community building.

The population in Sault Ste. Marie primarily comprises residents who identify their ethnic or country of origin as Europe and Eastern Europe, including English, Irish, Scottish, Italian, and French. A proportion of residents identify as Canadian (13.3%), German (9.7), Ukrainian (5%), and First Nations (North American Indian) (4.5%) (Table 1-2).

Table 1-2: Ethnic or Cultural Origin of Residents

Origin	Population ¹	Percentage*	Percentage in Ontario
English	17,825	25.2%	16.7%
Irish	15,160	21.4%	14.3%
Scottish	15,005	20.6%	6.5%
Italian	14,560	20.6%	6.5%
French	14,210	20.1%	7.4%
Canadian	9,405	13.3%	11.6%

¹ Ethnic or cultural origin for the population in private households - 25% sample data

Origin	Population ¹	Percentage*	Percentage in Ontario
German	6,885	9.7%	7.5%
Ukrainian	3,520	5.0%	2.4%
Finnish	3,435	4.9%	0.5%
First Nations (North American Indian)	3,200	4.5%	1.1%
Metis	2,855	4.0%	0.9%
Polish	2,650	3.7%	3.3%
British Isles, n.o.s.	2,110	3.0%	3.3%
Dutch	1,640	2.3%	3.4%
French Canadian	1,590	2.2%	1.4%
Caucasian (White) n.o.s.	1,355	1.9%	1.6%
North American Indigenous, n.o.s.	1,355	1.9%	0.4%
Ojibway	1,350	1.9%	0.4%
Welsh	1,205	1.7%	1.3%
Swedish	1,110	1.6%	0.5%
European n.o.s	860	1.2%	1.3%
American	845	1.2%	0.6%
Croatian	835	1.2%	0.6%
Indian (India)	830	1.2%	5.4%

*includes individuals who identified multiple ethnic origins

Source: 2021 Canadian Census



Approximately 8.5% (5,990) of Sault Ste. Marie's population are immigrants, 15.2% (910) of which have landed between 2011 to 2021, showing a pattern of increasing immigration rates since the year 2000 (Table 1-3). Of the existing immigrant population, the majority arrived between the ages of 25-44 years (30%), 15-24 years (27%), and 5-14 years (24%)(Table 1-4). According to Statistics Canada, the top three regions or places of birth for immigrants include Europe (65%), the Americas (15%), and Asia (16%)².

Table 1-3: Immigrant status and timing of immigration

Status	Population ³	Percentage
Non-immigrants	63,820	90%
Immigrants	5,990	8.5%
Before 1980	3,930	66%
1980-1990	325	5%
1991-2000	320	5%
2001	500	8%
2011-2021	910	15%

Source:2021 Canadian Census

Table 1-4: Age at immigration

Age	Population ⁴	Percentage
Under 5	930	16%
5-14 Years	1,410	24%
15-24 Years	1,595	27%
25-44 Years	1,800	30%
45 Years and over	250	4%

Source:2021 Canadian Census

More than half of the recent (2016 or later) immigrant population⁵ (52.5%) were born in Asia, primarily from India and Syria (Table 1-5).

Table 1-5: Places of birth for recent immigration population in the City

Location	Population	Percent
Asia	310	52.5%
India	110	35%
Syria	115	37%
Americas	130	22%
Africa	110	18.6%
Europe	45	7.6%

Source:2021 Canadian Census

² Specific countries within each region identified include the United States of America, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, China, India, and Syria

³ 25% sample data

⁴ Out of 5,995 self-identified immigrants who responded to the question

⁵ Based on 25% sample data, total of 590 individuals



The top three visible minority groups in the City identify as South Asian (35.3%), Black (19.8%), and Chinese (14%)(Table 1-6).

Table 1-6: Visible Minority groups in Sault Ste. Marie

Minority Group	Total	Percent
South Asian	1,135	35.3%
Chinese	450	14.0%
Black	635	19.8%
Filipino	185	5.8%
Arab	140	4.4%
Latin American	215	6.7%
Southeast Asian	70	2.2%
West Asian	55	1.7%
Korean	105	3.3%
Japanese	50	1.6%

Source: 2021 Canadian Census



Age Distribution of Population

Table 1-7 and Figure 1-3 illustrate the population age distribution for the City of Sault Ste. Marie, District of Algoma, and Ontario in 2021. According to these figures, the City of Sault Ste. Marie has a large concentration of adults 20 - 49 (33%) which reflects the proportions in the District of Algoma (32%). Additionally, the City also has a relatively higher proportion of seniors aged 75+ (15%) in comparison to the District of Algoma (11%), and the Province of Ontario (8%).

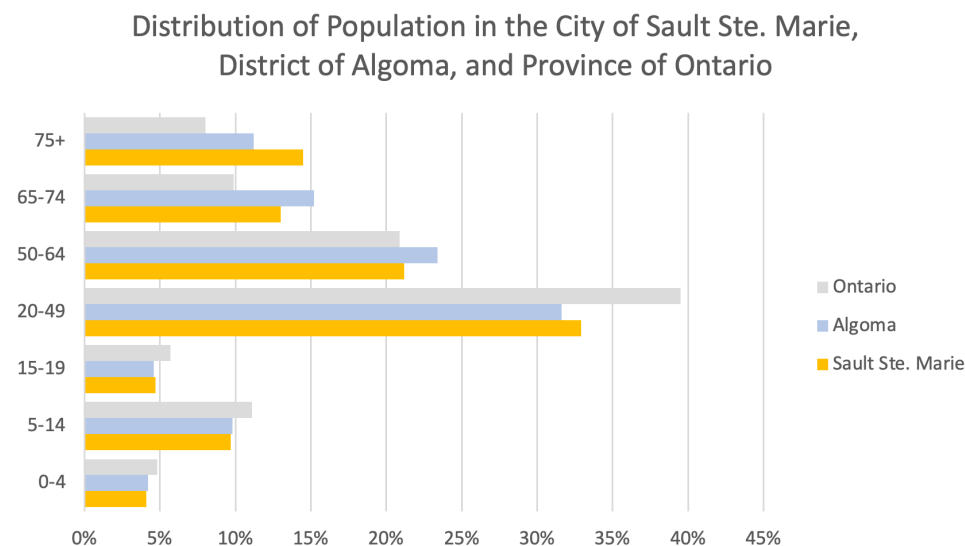


Figure 1-3: Age Distribution in Sault Ste. Marie, Algoma, and Ontario, 2021

Table 1-7: Population age distribution in Sault Ste. Marie, Algoma, and the Province of Ontario

Age Group	0-4	5-14	15-19	20-49	50-64	65-74	75+	Total
City of Sault Ste. Marie	3,040	7,205	3,510	24,550	15,805	9,725	10,185	74,650
Percent of Total	4.1%	9.7%	4.7%	32.9%*	21.2%	13.0%	14.5%	100.0%
District of Algoma	4,765	11,175	5,255	35,920	26,600	17,310	16,385	117,410
Percent of Total	4.2%	9.8%	4.6%	31.6%	23.4%	15.2%	11.2%	100.0%
Province of Ontario	683,515	1,568,280	801,455	5,584,980	2,948,005	1,404,495	1,133,205	14,123,935
Percent of Total	4.8%	11.1%	5.7%	39.5%	20.9%	9.9%	8.0%	100.0%

*cell colour denotes top three proportions with the darkest shade showing the highest proportion



Projected Age Distribution

Table 1-8 and Figure 1-4 illustrates the projected population age distribution for the District of Algoma from 2024-2034. Population projections by age were not available for Sault Ste. Marie.

Projected Population Age Distribution in the District of Algoma

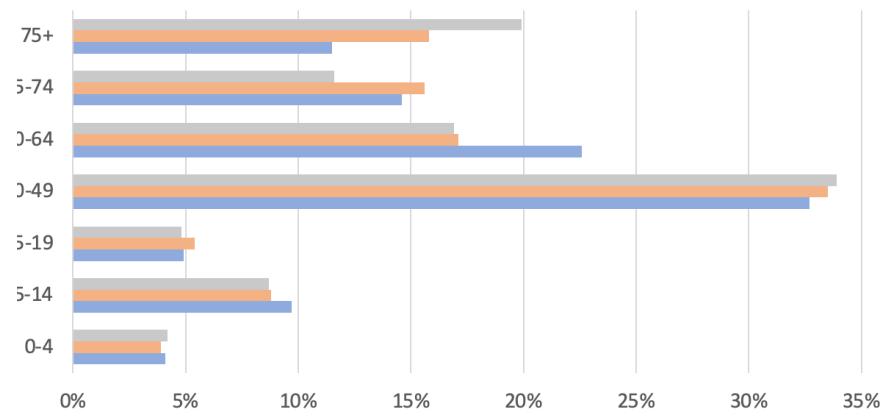


Figure 1-4: Age distribution of population in the City, District, and Province, 2021

Table 1-8: Projected Age Distribution in Algoma District 2024, 2029, 2034

Age Group	0-4	5-14	15-19	20-49	50-64	65-74	75+	Total
District of Algoma, 2024	4,677	11,355	5,941	39,139	24,596	17,993	15,213	118,914
Percent of Total	3.9%	9.5%	5.0%	32.9%	20.7%	15.1%	12.8%	100.0%
District of Algoma, 2029	4,727	10,764	6,342	39,814	21,210	18,959	17,708	119,524
Percent of Total	4.0%	9.0%	5.3%	33.3%	17.7%	15.9%	14.8%	100.0%
District of Algoma, 2034	4,739	10,355	6,218	40,800	20,010	17,283	20,848	120,253
Percent of Total	3.9%	8.6%	5.2%	33.9%	16.6%	14.4%	17.3%	100.0%

Source: Ministry of Finance Ontario Populations Projections 2021-2046



Population by Ward

Table 1-9 displays the age breakdown of population in Sault Ste. Marie by ward. Based on this information, Ward 3 has the largest proportion of adults over the age of 75, and Ward 1 has the largest proportion of children under the age of 19.

Table 1-9: Sault Ste. Marie population age breakdown by ward

Age Group		0-4	5-14	15-19	20-49	50-64	65-74	75+	Total
Ward 1	#	820	1,890	940	5,755	3,570	2,320	1,580	16,875
	%	4.9%	11.2%	5.6%	34.1%	21.2%	13.7%	9.4%	100.0%
Ward 2	#	575	1,350	595	5,420	3,115	2,150	1,870	15,075
	%	3.8%	9%	3.9%	36%	20.7%	14.3%	12.4%	100.0%
Ward 3	#	575	1,280	750	4,805	3,195	1,895	2,295	14,795
	%	3.9%	8.7%	5.1%	32.5%	21.6%	12.8%	15.5%	100.0%
Ward 4	#	580	1,275	640	4,650	3,270	1,850	1,515	13,780
	%	4.2%	9.3%	4.6%	33.7%	23.7%	13.4%	11%	100.0%
Ward 5	#	490	1,320	490	3,925	2,660	1,515	930	11,430
	%	4.3%	11.5%	4.3%	34.3%	23.3%	13.3%	8.1%	100.0%

Source: 2021 Canadian Census



Current Household Breakdown

Table 1-1010 illustrates the household breakdown for the City of Sault Ste. Marie and the District of Algoma. Sault Ste. Marie is currently home to 32,530 households, most of which are comprised of couples without children (26.9%) and couples with children (20%). The distribution of household types within the City are proportionally similar to that of the District.

Table 1-10: Household types in the City of Sault Ste. Marie and the District of Algoma

Household Type	Sault Ste. Marie		Algoma	
	#	%	#	%
Couple Family Households with Children	6,580	20.2%	9,920	19.2%
Couple Family Households without Children	8,740	26.9%	15,360	29.7%
One Parent Family Households	3,385	10.4%	4,890	9.5%
Multigenerational Households	560	1.7%	915	1.8%
Multiple-Census-Family Households	95	0.3%	155	0.3%
One-Census Family Households with Additional Persons	850	2.6%	1,325	2.6%
Two-or-more-Person Non-Census-Family Households	1,240	3.8%	1,820	3.5%
One-Person Households	11,075	34%	17,320	33.5%

Source: 2021 Canadian Census

Low Income and Income Inequality

Table 1-111 shows the prevalence of low income based on the Low-income measure, after tax for the City of Sault Ste. Marie. Based on this information, more than 10% of each age group listed live within the low-income measure.

Table 1-11: Prevalence of Population within Low-income measure, after tax (LIM-AT)

Age Group	Sault Ste. Marie	District of Algoma
0 to 17	13.4%	15.6%
18 to 64%	11.2%	17.6%
65+	11.7%	13.7%

Source: 2021 Canadian Census



Population Projections 2024-2034

Table 1-12 illustrates the current and projected populations for the City of Sault Ste. Marie and the District of Algoma from 2024 to 2034. According to these figures, the City of Sault Ste. Marie is projected to grow by 2,664 (3%) residents between 2024 and 2034 and through the duration of the Plan. Comparatively, the population of Algoma is projected to increase by 1,239 (1%) during the same period.

Table 1-12: Summary of District of Algoma Population Projections

Year	Sault Ste. Marie	District of Algoma
2024	72,743	119,014
2029	76,424	119,524
2034	79,177	120,253

Sources: Housing Needs Assessment 2023-2025, and Ontario Ministry of Finance Projections (Summer 2022)





Relevant Policy Context

Official Plan, 2022 (draft)

The Official Plan recognizes that parks, recreation, arts, culture, and heritage are critical quality of life components and state that the City shall:

- Expand and maintain the City's park space system;
- Ensure that wherever possible all residential areas are within the 800 metre safe walkable service radius of a neighbourhood park;
- Ensure equitable and appropriate distribution of park space service levels in the City;
- Provide facilities for diverse recreation opportunities for citizens and visitors;
- Work closely with other organizations that supply, utilize and program public park space, to ensure the long-term viability of park space and the optimal utilization of resources;
- Provide a range of opportunities and experiences for youth recreational needs as well as a broader demographic, including but not limited to play structures, pathways, gathering areas, sports fields, community gardens and multi-use pads/courts;

- Expand and maintain the multi-use John Rowswell Hub Trail network on public lands;
- Incorporate the trail system with other recreation components such as parks; and
- Continue to work with local service providers, nonprofits and user groups to assist in the programming of park spaces.

The recommendations of this Plan build on these directives, with actionable items for implementation that further these goals.

Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2015-2024

The 2015 Plan discussed the important benefits of recreation (enhances mental, physical and social well being; builds families and communities; helps people connect with nature; and boosts overall economic growth), and outlined four municipal park and recreation strategic goals, summarized in Table 1-13. The projects originally planned for 2020 - 2025 will be discussed in this Plan, assessed, updated/ revised, and carried through as recommendations as appropriate.



Table 1-13: Strategic goals, projects, and implementation updates from the 2015 Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Parks and Recreation Strategic Goal	Projects for the 2020–2025 Period	Updates as of Q4 2023
1. Infrastructure - Asset Management - Maintaining Existing Infrastructure - New Infrastructure	- Phase 3 of the Northern Community Centre development - Replacement of the W.J. McMeeken Centre ice pad - Implement a park revitalization project - Develop a downtown plaza	- Park revitalization plan was proposed - Consultation was done in 2018 for the expansion of the W.J. McMeeken Centre - Downtown Plaza completed - Northern Community Centre opened in March 2023
2. Service Delivery - Delivering excellent customer service - Eliminating barriers to business and streamlining processes - Developing Employees	Utilize technology to improve communication and service delivery of municipal parks & recreation opportunities	- Interactive map was added on the website - Online bookings - GIS being used internally - Activenet
3. Quality of Life - Promote quality of life advantages - Promote and support arts and culture - Welcome and seek out immigration - Vibrant downtown areas	Improve amenities along the John Rowswell Hub Trail	- New parking at Seniors Active Living Centre - Boardwalk Promenade - Marine updates at Bellevue Park Marina
4. Community Development and Partnerships - Create social and economic activity - Develop partnerships with key stakeholders - Maximize economic development and investment	Assess and evaluate future skate park development and determine feasibility of implementation of the plan to include partnerships, funding and financial targets.	Ongoing



Corporate Strategic Plan 2021-2024

The mission of the corporate strategic plan is to promote, encourage and lead economic and social growth within the community through the effective provision of municipal services and the development of community partnerships. The Strategic Focus Areas that are outlined in the strategic plan include infrastructure, service delivery, quality of life, and community development.

Key 2021 activities within the community development focus area include the Twin Pad Arena Project, and within the Quality of Life focus area include a community wayfinding implementation, active transportation implementation, and the downtown revitalization project.



Figure 1-5: Work underway for the new Downtown Plaza, Fall 2023



2.0 Programming and Events

2.1 Introduction and Background to the Assessment

Balancing the supply and demand of recreation programs, activities and events is a key contributor to supporting the long-term health, well-being, and quality of life for all communities. Among all age groups, programs and events can be effective tools that help to foster social cohesion and a sense of belonging. Furthermore, these quality of life attributes are key in attracting new migrants which are critical in not only sustaining, but growing the local population. An adaptive and responsive approach to developing recreation programs that reflects the interests and needs of communities can generate more participation locally, and contribute to the increased use of existing assets.

The public engagement phase of this project revealed important insight into the current supply and availability of programs, program use patterns, and new program



demands and trends. The current supply of City-led recreation programs and events includes a range of sports, arts, community, education and training programs.

What We Heard

The following bullets summarize key, overarching feedback related to programs, activities, and events received from consultation with Council, staff, user groups, partners, and the community.

- Expand offerings to be more culturally relevant to the shifting demographic
- More options for youth such as drop in centres, events, more outreach
- More free activities and events (e.g., concerts)
- Licensed music events to attract and entertain adults
- More options for adults
- Better marketing and communications to reach all sectors of population
- Broader sport offerings (more than hockey) for kids of all ages
- Activities for grade school aged children particularly during summer months
- Need to appropriately maximize space usage
- Indoor activity centres that can be utilized year round
 - Examples provided include water park, mini golf, indoor roller skating, and something new, interactive and innovative that would bring tourists in as well
- Young adult groups
- Newcomers programs
- More science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) focused activities for youth
- Ensure that all programming, activities, and events are accessible for persons with disabilities
- Prioritize affordable and/or free programming to ensure availability for everyone
- More free programs (e.g., free swimming, free learn to skate, free team sports, etc.) especially for marginalized communities
- Intergenerational activities for different age groups in the same location so that people of all ages can intermingle
- Community arts space and programs



Inventory

Programs and events in the Sault are provided by the City, sport organizations, and other community groups and agencies (e.g., the Library, EarlyON, YMCA, etc.). Options are varied, including sport, fitness, social, learning, arts and culture, literacy, and options for all age groups and abilities. Table 2-1 provides an overview of organized programs available.

Table 2-1: Overview of organized recreation programs and events available in the City

Type of Program	Sample of Programs	Sample of Providers ¹	Free or low cost options available?
Sports	• Hockey • Soccer • Baseball/softball • Gymnastics • Pickleball and tennis • Sport fundamentals	Sport leagues and clubs, Sault Ste. Marie Gymnastics, YMCA	None/few, aside from pick-up play (not including self-directed play)
Fitness	• Gym memberships • Fitness classes (e.g., yoga, belly dancing, group fitness etc.)	YMCA, commercial gyms, City	None/few, aside from self-directed exercise in outdoor spaces, and low cost options for seniors

¹ Not an exhaustive list of providers or programs



Table 2-2: Overview of recreation programs and events available in the City

Type of Program	Sample of Programs	Sample of Providers ¹	Free or low cost options available?
Aquatics	• Lessons • Aquabics • Drop-in swim at Manzo and Greco Pools	City, YMCA	Yes, mostly in summer
Social (e.g., lunches, games, etc.)	• Baby/preschool drop-ins at library and EarlyON • Child/youth drop-in at library • Seniors Centre cards, game nights, and lunches/dinners • Wii Night, Games Night, etc.	Library, Seniors Centre, City	Yes, most are free
Arts and Crafts (e.g., visual arts, knitting etc.)	• Crochet/knitting Clubs • Baby Picasso • Visual art lessons	Library, Seniors Centre	Yes, many are free or low cost
Heritage (e.g., events at ECNHS², Canadian Bushplane Heritage Centre)	• Fridays by the Fire, Poutine Feast, Fall Rendezvous, school tours, etc. at ECNHS • Tiny Pilots, Sky Explorers, Indigenous Teachings, etc. at the Bushplane Heritage Centre	City, Canadian Bushplane Heritage Centre, Sault Ste. Marie Métis Centre	Yes

² ECNHS = Ermatinger Clergue National Historic Site



Type of Program	Sample of Programs	Sample of Providers ¹	Free or low cost options available?
Health and Wellness	• Mindfulness at library • Yoga at Seniors Centre	Library, Seniors Centre	Yes
STEM	• Camps • School visits	Science North	Yes (school visits)
Literacy	• Preschool/Baby Time • Forest of Reading • Book Club	Library	Yes
Community events	• MultiCultural Day • Italian Fest • Canada Day • Monster Madness • Concerts	City, local organizations	Yes



2.2 Programming and Events Recommendations

Free and Low Cost Options

The City acknowledges the importance of recreation, and the impact it has on overall community health and wellbeing, and has made it a priority to provide free and low-cost recreation options to residents. The City is on the leading edge in this regard, offering free programs not seen in many municipalities, including access to both Manzo and Greco outdoor pools, free summer drop-in programs, and free breakfast programs for children.

In addition to these organized programs, there are many unstructured recreation opportunities, particularly outdoors, including using trails, the skate park and pump track, ice rinks, playgrounds, outdoor workout equipment, community gardens, and more (section 4.0 Parks and Trails discusses these amenities further). In addition to unstructured use of these amenities, the City can also provide free or low-cost events, and pop-up programs for all age segments (e.g., skateboarding basics, pump track race events, outdoor fitness 101 etc.).

Another approach for low-cost physical/sport activities is pick-up/intramural leagues. Apps like Pick-up Hub have been used successfully to facilitate low-cost sport play at municipal facilities:

Pickup Hub is an app that assists municipalities in organizing pick-up sports games. Residents can view upcoming scheduled games including the location, time, cost, age level and required number of players. After creating an account, participants secure their spot with a credit card via the online payment system. The municipality can schedule games from a few hours to four months in advance. Participants can see the names and number of players who have signed up for a game slot. If the minimum number of players is not reached, the game is cancelled and players are not charged.

The City of Waterloo has successfully used Pickup Hub to deliver adult shinny, basketball, soccer and volleyball as well as youth basketball and ball hockey, all at low costs ranging from \$5-\$10 per player per game.

Free and low-cost activities benefit broad segments of the community: seniors, youth, single parents, people with disabilities, individuals and families with fixed and/or low incomes, newcomers, etc. While the City recognizes that free and low-cost recreation benefits the mental and physical



health of residents, increases social cohesion, and improves outcomes for at-risk individuals (including youth), municipal recreation budgets are increasingly constrained. The City should prioritize seeking private and community support to help fund these programs and ensure their longevity, as is already the case for park amenities that local service clubs have helped fund on numerous occasions. In partnership with non-profit organizations, community groups and/or commercial partners, the City should continue to support existing free/low-cost programs, park amenities for unstructured use, and increase opportunities for free/low-cost activities. A prime example of this type of collaborative approach for providing free services is the new Youth Centre set to open in Winter 2023/2024, which is further discussed under Youth Programming.

- PE 1: Continue to provide free access to both Manzo and Greco outdoor pools, free summer drop-in programs, and free breakfast programs for children.
- PE 2: Seek partnerships and collaborations with other agencies, community organizations and businesses to help fund/subsidize free and low-cost recreation.
- PE 3: Consider use of an app to facilitate pick-up play at sport facilities.
- PE 4: Introduce new free events/pop-up programs at parks and facilities.

Youth

Youth were a key demographic identified during consultations as in need of recreation opportunities. Youth (typically considered those between ages 13 – 18, but could extend beyond that range) have many opportunities for recreation including a number of organized sports leagues, park and trails for casual use, and two casual indoor spaces, one at the Northern Community Centre (NCC), and second downtown. However, recognizing that sports can be prohibitively expensive for some families, making them inaccessible for youth, and recognizing the importance of health, wellbeing, positive influences and guidance on outcomes for youth, youth remain a key focus demographic for recreation.

The City converted the old library at NCC to a community space that is open for drop-in after 5:00 pm (from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm it is dedicated to seniors programs). Youth can use the space to socialize, do homework, play games etc. In addition to this space, a new Youth Centre space downtown was made possible by a number of organizations: Canadian Mental Health Association – Algoma, Algoma Public Health, John Howard Society, the Indian Friendship Centre, THRIVE Child Development Centre, the Children's Aid Society of Algoma, Northern Youth Services, the Sault Ste. Marie District Social Services Administration Board, Youth Wellness Hubs Ontario, and the City of Sault Ste. Marie. The project involved renovating the former International Order of Odd Fellows Lodge (at 124 Dennis St.) to provide a free space open five days a week (with



the aim of increasing to seven days), offering the following services:

- Mental Health / Substance Use Counselling
- Health Promotion
- Employment Counselling
- Food security
- Housing and Income Support
- Cultural and LGBTQ2+ Support
- Anti-Human Trafficking
- Child Protection

The Youth Wellness Hubs press release says:

“Youth will play a central role in the co-creation and design of the space here, as well as the services and programs to be offered. The hub will be a culturally safe place for youth ages 12-25 years of age to find the help they need, to connect with other youth, to learn about the services available to them, and to create a better tomorrow.”³

Youth lounges typically include comfortable seating, tables, games and/or game tables (e.g. air hockey), and access to free

or low cost food and snacks. If this is not part of the Youth Wellness Hub, the partners should seek ways to incorporate this type of space as well. The City should plan to provide a third drop-in free space for youth in another area of the City with a high population of youth and/or near a high school. The space should be open immediately following school hours, provide free and low-cost snacks, games, and access to resources (see sidebar case study). Another approach would be to adapt the space at NCC so that it is open earlier, which could be a temporary solution until a third space is provided. An additional benefit of opening the NCC space to youth earlier in the day is the opportunity for intergenerational programming, and simply having the chance to socialize across generations, rather than segregating age groups to their own areas.

³ <https://youthhubs.ca/en/news-algoma-region-youth-wellness-hubs-location-announced/>



The Dam, Mississauga, ON

The Dam is a charitable organization that has been operating in Mississauga for 25 years. They have two centres that provide free drop-in space immediately after school for middle school and highschoolers. For example, the Meadowvale location is open from 2:30 – 4:30 pm daily, and is walking distance to one middle school and two high schools, as well as the transit terminal. The Centre is staffed by youth mentors, has couches, tables, chairs, game tables, and offers free warm meals (e.g., mac n' cheese, bruschetta, etc.). In addition to drop-in times, the space has a Youth Employment Program, a program to bring in post-secondary students to volunteer at the space, and hosts/participates in events such as the Coldest Night of the Year Walk. The centres are funded by myriad donors, including a number of foundations, the Provincial Government, and City of Mississauga.⁴

The Teen Advisory Group (T.A.G.) at Sault Ste. Marie Public Library (SSMPL) is a committee made up of teens (13 -18) from the secondary schools in the community. It provides an opportunity for teens to develop leadership, organizational, and communication skills, acquire volunteer hours, and make a direct impact on teen programming at the library⁵. For

⁴ <https://www.thedam.org/donors>

⁵ [https://ssmpl.ca/teens/teen-advisory-group-\(t.a.g\)/](https://ssmpl.ca/teens/teen-advisory-group-(t.a.g)/)

example, the T.A.G is currently working on a Teen Advisory Group Book Club and ideas for community events.

The Mayor's Youth Advisory Council (MYAC) provides another opportunity for youth to participate in local governance, career opportunities, advocate for themselves, and earn volunteer hours. MYAC members spend about eight to 13 hours per month on council-related activities and they must be between the ages of 14 and 24 and reside in the City of Sault Ste. Marie. Applicants must also be enrolled in secondary or post-secondary school while serving on the Council.⁶

These two committees provide access to engaged youth who can help inform program development. Youth engagement can be further strengthened through outreach at local schools. For example, the Town of Innisfil recreation staff partners with local high schools to provide a Youth Mental Health Summit, HIGH FIVE training to students, workshops on youth mental health and wellness during school hours, and facilitates special projects such as the Youth Urban Art Project and the design of the Mobile Youth Centre Trailer Wrap (see sidebar). Engaging with T.A.G, MYAC, and local students will provide valuable insights into other recreation needs and interests for youth.

⁶ <https://saultstemarie.ca/Government/City-Departments/Community-Development-Enterprise-Services/Community-Services/Recreation-and-Culture/Youth/Mayors-Youth-Advisory-Council.aspx>



Innisfil Mobile Youth Centre

The Mobile Youth Centre is a truck that features various equipment (e.g., skate parks, skate equipment, spike ball, basketball, life-sized board games, etc.) that are free to use for all ages, and travels to different parks during the summer.





This outreach and focus on developing youth spaces and programs is in addition to existing programming tasks, and as such the City should add a full-time Youth Programmer to lead these initiatives. The Youth Programmer portfolio could be expanded to include similar outreach and program development for children under 13, if workload allows.

- PE 5: Add another drop-in youth space during the term of this plan and in the interim, and/or adjust availability at NCC to be open to Youth from 2:00 pm onwards.
- PE 6: Consult with T.A.G, MYAC, and local high schools to develop youth programs.
- PE 7: Add a full-time Youth Programmer to lead youth outreach and program development.

Adults

Historically, municipalities have focused on providing parks and recreation services to children, youth, and seniors. However, municipalities across Ontario have seen a noticeable increase in adult interest in municipal recreation services for themselves. Anecdotal reasons for this trend are likely a blend of increased awareness of the importance of physical activity for long-term health (mental, physical, emotional) overall decline in disposable incomes and growth, and greater sophistication in the provision of delivery of public recreation services. Within Sault Ste. Marie, adults form a significant demographic segment (33% of the population are aged 20-49 and 21% are aged 50-64), warranting special attention in program planning. Currently, adults have access to drop-in adult fitness classes at the Sault Ste. Marie YMCA, a small number of City run programs, local events, private exercise gyms and studios, and unstructured activities within the City.

Through consultation, it was remarked that the City does not offer many programs or activities for adults, and staff indicated it is due to a lack of staffing and available space. The facilities assessment (section 3.0) provides a number of recommendations to better understand space needs for all demographics:

- Review all existing uses of general program space by facility to identify opportunities to consolidate programs/ uses in terms of aligning those that are compatible while



maintaining an appropriate geographic and scheduling distribution of services (F 25)

- Conduct an audit of current use of individual spaces, to be informed by the facility conditions assessment, to identify opportunities to make better use of existing spaces for seniors' programming. (F 21)
- Determine scheduling related changes needed to achieve better overall space allocations. (F 22)
- Determine capital upgrades required to support changes in use for expanded/new programs. (F 23)
- Consider opportunities for seniors and adult programming to share the same spaces at different times. (F 24)

This is a considerable amount of work to be undertaken by staff, and as such it is warranted to add a full-time staff person to assist in sharing the load of programming tasks. An additional staff person could also focus on program development for regularly occurring fitness, wellness, learning, general, etc. programs that are geared towards adults. This person would work collaboratively with other program staff, including general programmers, seniors' programmers and the recommended youth programmer.

- PE 8: Add a full-time Recreation Programmer to develop adult-specific programming and activities.
- PE 9: Expand adult programming, including registered and drop-in options.



Seniors

According to the 24 Hour Movement Guidelines for Adults 65 Years or Older, adults aged 65 years or older should participate in a range of physical activities in a variety of environments and contexts across all seasons. The health benefits associated with following these guidelines include

- A lower risk of mortality, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, type 2 diabetes, several cancers, anxiety, depression, dementia, weight gain, adverse blood lipid profile, falls and fall-related injuries; and
- Improved bone health, cognition, quality of life and physical function.⁷

Seniors in Sault Ste. Marie currently have access to a wide variety of programming, activities, and events (targeted to those aged 55 and up). The City provides several seniors programs including fitness and health, sports, cards, games and hobbies, arts and crafts, and events and talks. During consultation, staff indicated that the programs are very well attended, such that they have maximized the spaces available to them, and would need additional space to meet program demand. Staff also noted a strong demand for more fitness/health/sport programming for seniors, and the need for additional staffing to plan and provide said programs.

The Bay Street Active 55+ Living Centre and NCC 55+ Centre are the primary two locations where seniors' programming is offered. In the Youth Programs Assessment above, it was recommended that the NCC 55+ Centre be made available to Youth from 2:00 pm onwards so that they have a dedicated space to go to after school. Though this would mean that the space is no longer solely dedicated to Seniors from 10am to 5pm, this will allow for intergenerational programming opportunities/use of space that are available for both age groups.

Due to the limited space available, all of the programs that are currently offered have reached their capacity of 20 participants, and have 10+ people on the waiting list. As discussed in the Facilities section of this report, there is interest in providing more space in existing facilities to accommodate more senior programming. The facilities assessment (section 3.0) provides a number of recommendations to better understand needs, including an audit of spaces. This work will ideally result in actions to address space needs for seniors programs (among other demographics). Consideration should also be made to expand seniors programming beyond the dedicated seniors space, including holding programs in multi-purpose rooms and outdoors where feasible.

⁷ <https://www.participation.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/24HMovementGuidelines-ENG-Adults-65-Final.pdf>



- PE 10: Consider providing intergenerational programs and/or joint use of space from 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm for youth and seniors programs that appeal to youth and seniors to optimize scheduling times at the 55+ Active Living Centre in the NCC.
- PE 11: Seek new spaces to hold seniors programs, including multi-purpose rooms and outdoor spaces.
- PE 12: Expand seniors programs and activities, particularly active, health and wellness programs (based on current demand).

Aquatics

The City offers a range of swimming lessons and aquatic programs for all ages, which are all very well attended. Like many other communities, the primary challenge in expanding aquatic programs is a difficulty hiring and retaining lifeguards/instructors. Similar staff shortages and rationales being echoed across many North American municipalities⁸ in recent years. The job is demanding, with significant investment required in training, and the pay is no longer competitive. Factors attributed to the shortage include:

- Extensive training, and significant investment of time and money, for what is a part-time job for most
- More students taking on extra course work or jobs in their fields
- At the same time, demand for swimming lessons is increasing

While other municipalities are still struggling with this, some strategies being implemented include:

- An accelerated training/certification program for pre-teens/teens with an extensive swim background

⁸ <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/ottawa-lifeguard-shortage-poolhours-1.5221284>
https://www.stcatharinesstandard.ca/news/lincoln-outdoor-pools-short-staffed-for-the-summer/article_12fe8be0-afd8-5904-971e-d60cebd5a572.html
<https://globalnews.ca/news/9627874/ontario-proposes-lowering-minimum-age-lifeguards-15-ease-staff-shortages/>



- Financial aid that can be applied to cover training courses, and/or reducing the cost of courses (Sault offers these courses free of charge already)
- Being proactive about recruiting at high schools

The Province of Ontario has also become involved to help address the shortage, lowering the minimum age for a lifeguard from 16 to 15 in June 2023⁹.

Another factor to consider is that the job market is evolving and it may be time to shift the focus from lifeguarding/instructing as a traditionally student job to other populations who often seek steady part-time work, such as retirees and stay-at-home parents, or to newcomers who may be eager to obtain quality, Canadian work experience. The City could try targeting these groups, in addition to students, when advertising for lifeguarding and instructing positions.

Assuming efforts to hire and retain instructors are successful, the City should continue to offer as many swimming lessons as possible, as the demand is high for this essential life skill. Likewise, the City should continue offering aquafit classes and expand these as well (e.g., deep end aquafit, aquacycle, etc.). In consultations we also received multiple requests for more family/public swim times, at different times of day and days of the week to make them more accessible to more families with different work schedules, and those who rely on transit.

Another option for an aquatic activity, and one that does not require instructors, is an inflatable, removable obstacle course. This amenity would provide multiple benefits to the City and residents, including:

- Appealing and usable for all ages - including hard-to-engage youth
- Suitable for drop-in or pre-registered programming (that option would require instructors)
- Revenue generating potential - there are no similar amenities available nearby

Dryland “ninja” and obstacle course programs have been gaining popularity for children, and an aquatic obstacle course could capitalize on this trend while reaching target age groups (e.g., children, teens and adults), and providing a unique attraction in Sault Ste. Marie.

- PE 13: Expand targeted lifeguard/instructor recruitment efforts beyond students, to include retirees, stay-at-home parents, and newcomers.
- PE 14: Expand opportunities for swimming lessons, public swims, and aquafit.
- PE 15: Explore and offer new, alternative, aquatic activities.

⁹ <https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/1003126/ontario-lowering-minimum-age-requirement-to-be-a-lifeguard>



Accessibility

While certain aspects of accessibility are legislated and are often associated with facility design consideration, opportunities to exceed minimum standards should be pursued wherever feasible. The goal of advocating and legislating measures to ensure accessibility and inclusion is to make it the social norm by proactively integrating accessibility considerations in all aspects of parks and recreation servicing provisions, which includes how programs and events are offered to participants. Supporting accessibility means:

“Removing the barriers faced by individuals with a variety of disabilities (including, but not limited to: physical, sensory, cognitive, learning, mental health) and the various barriers (including attitudinal and systemic) that impede an individual’s ability to participate in social, cultural, political, and economic life. Disabilities can be temporary or permanent. As we age our abilities change and therefore an accessible society is one designed to include everybody; both people with disabilities and people who self identify as non-disabled.”¹⁰

Due to the cyclical nature of program planning, there are more opportunities to preemptively prioritize the accessibility, inclusivity, and adaptive nature of programs, by making considerations for accessibility at the outset of program

planning. The Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) is a potential resource for staff to consult with during program/event/activity/facility development. The Committees mandate is as follows:

The Accessibility Advisory Committee advises Council and potentially City agencies, boards and commissions, in promoting and facilitating a barrier-free Sault Ste. Marie for citizens of all abilities.

AAC Mission - We are committed to continually strive towards identifying and preventing barriers in our community.

AAC Vision - Promoting and facilitating a barrier-free Sault Ste. Marie for citizens of all abilities.¹¹

The City should continue to assess existing programs, activities, and events and ensure that they are accessible, or that accessible versions are also made available. The City has already done this for swimming lessons, offering private swim lessons for individuals who are not able to attend group lessons.

Additionally, as the City of Sault Ste. Marie continues to grow and welcome diverse residents, community members of all racial, ethnic, cultural backgrounds, and faiths should be acknowledged and made to feel welcome in/at programs and events. The City can do this by, for example, trying to

¹¹ <https://saultstemarie.ca/Government/City-Departments/Community-Development-Enterprise-Services/Planning-Enterprise-Services/Accessibility/Accessibility-Advisory-Committee.aspx>

¹⁰ City for All Women Initiative (2015). Advancing Equity and Inclusion. A Guide for Municipalities. Ottawa. p.17.



ensure that advertising and communications reaches these groups, that advertising features a diversity of people, that City recreation staff reflect the diversity of the community, and through staff inclusivity and accessible customer service training.

One way that the City is currently tackling some accessibility barriers is by running an Adventure Bus. The Adventure Bus operates on weekends and transports residents from four locations in the City to Hiawatha Highlands in the winter, and to Point Des Chenes in the summer. Many positive praises for this service were received during consultations. This service is one that many communities request, but not many provide. The City should continue with the Adventure Bus and seek opportunities to expand the service (e.g., by adding additional pick up times and/or locations, new routes, etc.).

PE 16: Employ an inclusivity lens at the outset of program and event development, as well as recreation marketing and promotions so that services are accessible and welcoming to people of all ages, abilities, ethnic/cultural backgrounds, gender identities, etc.

PE 17: Continue to provide the Adventure Bus service, and seek opportunities to expand the service.

Arts, Culture and Heritage

Growing support for arts, culture, and heritage programs and activities has been an evident trend in municipalities across Canada. Although there is no one size fits all approach, some municipalities have designated budgets to arts and culture planning, and have integrated arts and culture into local industry and tourism to expand its impact. The consultation phase revealed a general interest in the City making a concerted effort to facilitate municipal-wide arts and culture programming.

The Sault Ste. Marie Cultural Plan (2019-2024) states,

“The goal of this plan is to provide the City with a clear direction to plan, resource, and leverage arts, culture, and heritage, integrating them into all facets of municipal planning and operations to support the Sault’s social and economic imperatives over a 5-year planning horizon.”

Supported by the Cultural Plan and this Plan, Sault Ste. Marie can leverage local opportunities to enhance arts, cultural and heritage offerings within the City.

Arts and culture programs and events in Sault Ste. Marie are provided by volunteers from the Arts Council of Algoma (the City’s primary advocacy body for arts and culture), the Library, and Seniors Centre (particularly visual arts). The Roberta Bondar Tent on the waterfront is an important venue for arts



and culture, hosting many concerts and shows throughout the warmer months, as is the Ermatinger Clergue National Historic Site (ECNHS). The new Downtown Plaza will also become a key arts and culture location.

The City of Sault Ste. Marie has a rich cultural heritage, some of which is reflected in the 38 designated heritage properties within the City. These properties contribute significantly to the cultural fabric of the City, and the conservation of heritage sites help revitalize, stabilize, and enhance the character of the community. One example of the designated properties is the previously mentioned ECNHS, which offers a year-round cultural attraction for residents, schools, and visitors to Sault Ste. Marie. Currently, the ECNHS hosts 12 events annually including summer events such as the Lilac and Lavender Festival and Poutine Feast, the Strawberry Festival, the Blueberry Festival, Fall events such as the Fall Rendezvous Harvest Festival and Traditional Reenactment, and Halloween events.

Other National Historic Sites within the City are the Sault Canal Lock (see sidebar) and Whitefish Island. Through an agreement with the Federal government, the City operates and maintains the Recreational Lock. Today the Canal is a great spot for boat-watching, walking, and accessing the Whitefish Island National Historic Site:

Whitefish Island has been the site of [Indigenous] encampments since it was formed over 2000 years ago by geological processes. From the time that pottery was first used by native peoples around 300

B.C., eight successive cultures have occupied the site, culminating in the development of the Ojibwa nation in the Sault Ste. Marie area. The island's unique location between Lakes Huron and Superior, and the rich fisheries of the turbulent St. Mary's rapids, made it a focal point of prehistoric and historic trade and settlement until early in the 20th century. The island represents not only the evolution of Ojibwa culture centred on the fishery, but also the influences of other Great Lake cultures through trade and visits. Even though it was surrounded by industrial and urban development, Whitefish Island remained undisturbed.¹²

Sault Locks

The first canal near this site was built in 1798, but was destroyed during the War of 1812. The current lock dates to 1895 and was used as part of the shipping route from the Atlantic Ocean to Lake Superior. One of the walls of this lock collapsed in 1987 resulting in the canal being closed to the public. In 1998, a smaller lock was opened with the original canal and is suitable for smaller boats and mostly used for pleasure craft.

¹² https://www.pc.gc.ca/apps/dfhd/page_nhs_eng.aspx?id=510



Given the presence of rich native history, present day population within the City (4.5% First Nations, 4% Métis, 2% North American Indigenous, and 2% Ojibway), and proximity to Garden River and Batchewana First Nations, the City should focus on opportunities to celebrate and educate on Indigenous culture, and bring the Indigenous and non-Indigenous community together (the Community Art Project discussed below was a great example of this). This should be done in collaboration and consultation with the local Indigenous community, with the City providing resources and assistance or leadership where needed.

A Community Art Project (CAP) was identified by the FutureSSM Arts and Culture Action Team as a priority in the development of the arts and culture sector of the City. FutureSSM has been successful in working with community partners such as the Sault College Graphic Design Department and local youth in revitalizing neighbourhoods, providing mentorship opportunities for youth and celebrating local history. As a result of the CAP, in 2019, 13 culturally significant murals from local Indigenous artists and artists from all over the world were commissioned to create large scale murals within the City. The purpose of the mural project was to increase Sault Ste. Marie's cultural vitality by introducing more art into the public sphere (see side bar), to create destinations resulting in increased foot traffic while adding colour, vibrancy, and character to the urban environment, and to provide students in the community with opportunities for experiential learning and mentorship through the development of youth-oriented curriculum.

"Public art generates tangible and intangible benefits, and in the most successful instances, it becomes an integral and beloved part of the community. Enhancing its environment, art enriches residents' lives, instills a sense of civic pride, creates a shared history, connects communities, and provides opportunities for dialogue, engagement, and learning. By promoting cultural participation, public art stimulates cultural industries and the creative economy. And, especially important to the revitalization of Rust Belt cities, public art boosts the economy in a hyper-local way. The economic impacts benefit residents directly, driving spending to local businesses and creating jobs and opportunities for artists and residents alike"¹³

Another important cultural initiative is the opening (December 2023) of the Makwa Waakaa'igan Centre of Cultural Excellence, Truth and Reconciliation, Learning and Healing at the University of Algoma. The University has been awarded \$5M in funding from the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund. "The \$43.3 million project to be built on the Algoma campus through the leadership of the Children of Shingwauk Alumni Association (CSAA), a community of Residential School Survivors and their descendants...The facility will serve as a centre of excellence for sharing global Indigenous

¹³ <https://urbanland.uli.org/public/enriching-city-public-art/>



practices. Makwa Waakaa'igan is expected to draw more than 35,000 visitors annually and contribute to the education of 15,000 post-secondary and high school students. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2024 with a grand opening slated for 2026.”¹⁴ The Centre will be a significant new cultural resource in northern Ontario and may offer opportunities to collaborate and increase the contribution of Indigenous culture and knowledge to City programs and events.

The population of Sault Ste. Marie has had a relatively stable majority of European origin and First Nations, North American Indigenous, and Métis, with smaller proportions of other groups and visible minorities including self-identified black and Chinese. In recent years there has been an increase of immigrants from Asia (52% in 2021, most from Syria and India), the Americas (22% in 2021), and Africa (18.6%). This represents a significant increase in diversity including cultural traditions, religious holidays, foods, music, fashion and more. The City should expand the range of events offered to reflect these cultures as well. For example, the African Caribbean Canadian Association of Northern Ontario (ACCANO) and the Northern Ontario Latin-Hispanic Association (NOLHA) hold cultural events within the City. An effective way to do so would be to connect with local organizations from these communities (such as ACCANO, NOHLA and others), as well as newcomer organizations, and work together to develop, market, and execute these events.

- PE 18: Work with the local Indigenous community to increase Indigenous-focused events, programs, and initiatives in the City.
- PE 19: Work with local arts, culture, Indigenous, and heritage organizations, and artists to integrate public art into public spaces such as park design, signage, and amenity design.
- PE 20: Work with Algoma University and the future Makwa Waakaa'igan Centre to collaborate and increase the contribution of Indigenous culture and knowledge to City programs and events.
- PE 21: Integrate newcomer cultural practices and interests in community events, in consultation with local communities.
- PE 22: Allocate funding dedicated to arts, culture and heritage related initiatives.

¹⁴ <https://www.sootoday.com/local-news/algoma-u-receives-major-funding-boost-for-new-indigenous-cultural-centre-7937755>



Events

There are many events offered by a variety of organizations in the City. Most events are intergenerational and welcome all age groups, and many are free, providing recreation opportunities for the whole community. The City of Sault Ste. Marie is home to a number of major venues including the Roberta Bondar Park and Tent Pavilion, GFL Memorial Gardens, the pavilion at Bellevue Park, and the new downtown plaza. The ECNHS is also a unique and picturesque location to hold events. To maximize the use of venues, the City should consider hosting outdoor concerts at the Bellevue Bandshell during the summer months, and holding more winter events, at Clergue Park, Hiawatha Highlands, Esposito Park and the new Downtown Plaza. Consultation reported that community events were strongly desired by residents, particularly:

- Free events
- Licensed events for adults
- More culturally relevant events for shifting demographics

It was also noted a number of times that the City should improve marketing and promotion of events (and programs) to increase awareness of activities. Free events and events for the changing demographics were discussed under “Free and low cost options” and “Arts, Culture and Heritage”, respectively, so this discussion focuses on adult events.

As a medium sized City isolated from other urban centres, adult entertainment can be lacking. This should be primarily addressed through private commercial ventures (e.g., night clubs, escape rooms, etc.). However, the City, through both the Recreation & Culture and Tourism & Community Development Divisions (discussed further below) can also meet some of this demand through community events that are geared to adults. An adult event could include for example, mature comedy, concerts, alcoholic beverages, and can occur at later hours than family events. Another way the City could support adult entertainment or activities is by providing childcare services at certain events to allow parents to recreate child-free.

The City provides and organizes a few events directly, but most are offered by other organizations who depend heavily on City recreation staff to help run events. Tourism/visitor-directed events should be pursued with the involvement and support of the Tourism and Community Development Division, Algoma District, and Tourism Sault Ste Marie, to ensure available funding is directed to local efforts that benefit larger tourism objectives, and to integrate a regional perspective in planning, promoting and delivering these experiences.

Local events play an important role in community development and quality of life, and many of the recommendations in this plan relate to events (including those under free and low cost options, and arts, culture, and heritage). In consultations we heard there is a shortage of staff to assist with events, and these recommendations would increase already stretched workloads. As such,



additional staff would be beneficial in the ongoing success of events, and focus on expanding areas of focus in events (e.g., culturally inclusive events).

PE 23: Increase promotion and marketing of events.

PE 24: Work with the Tourism and Community Development Division, Algoma District, and Tourism Sault Ste Marie on tourism-focused events.

PE 25: Develop winter events that maximize use of winter facilities throughout the City and support the year-round availability of events.

PE 26: Provide events designed for adults.

PE 27: Add an Events Assistant.



3.0 Recreation Facilities

3.1 Introduction and Background to the Assessment

The facilities section addresses indoor and outdoor facilities that are programmed by the City or scheduled for organized use by volunteer groups that deliver community programs and services. Section 4.0 of the Master Plan considers needs and opportunities to enhance parks, trails and waterfront access locations with facilities and amenities for self-directed, casual use since these are often tied to the type of space being considered.

Consultation with the community, City representatives, facility supply and use data, forecasted population growth, recreation trends and anticipated financial implications are used to recommend directions that are reasonable and financially judicious in view of the City's overall responsibility for public services. As a high level Master Plan that covers a term of ten



years, this Plan's directions will require additional work on individual capital projects to respond to community needs.

Many of the City's recommendations in its ACTION PLAN 2020-2025 based on the previous Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2019) remain relevant and are still to be implemented. Although not all of the 2019 recommendations are reiterated here,¹ key statements that relate to the current Master Plan's overall directions are referenced, as appropriate.

The following summarizes key themes and requests related to recreation facilities that emerged during consultation with the community, facility user groups, Council and staff.

What We Heard

- 45% (181) of 400 respondents to the telephone survey use parks and recreation services in Sault Ste. Marie
- 13% (54) of the respondents to the random telephone survey indicated additional indoor or outdoor recreation facilities/programs are needed in the City.
- providing indoor over outdoor facilities was a strong theme
- general satisfaction with the number and type of outdoor facilities, although capital improvements are needed (e.g., upgrades to aging infrastructure, tournament-ready fields, turf maintenance, court resurfacing, etc.)

¹ Those that deal with building systems improvements not related to the discussions, for example, are assumed to be incorporated in the City's asset management activities.

- ancillary facilities and amenities need improvements (e.g., more accessible parking, more lighting, more canteens, restaurants, cafés, etc.)
- focus on optimizing year-round use of existing facilities, planning for, and investing in their upkeep, as a priority over building new
- develop new features that would both serve residents and visitors (e.g., indoor climbing wall, indoor roller skating, mini golf, water park)
- a general need for improved maintenance
- more pools (indoor and outdoor)
- most user groups indicated they will need additional facilities in the next five to ten years including a 50-metre competitive pool, rectangular playing fields, ball diamonds and/or arena ice
- strong interest in an indoor pickleball and tennis facility
- dedicate tennis and pickleball courts to separate uses
- full size indoor facilities for competitive sports such as soccer, aquatics
- indoor spaces for off-season sports such as soccer, baseball, tennis
- 64% (7) of the user groups that responded to the survey question indicated the indoor facilities they use are well



suited to their needs and four groups indicated need for improvements

- 71% (10) of the user groups that responded to the survey question indicated the outdoor facilities they use are well suited to their needs and four groups indicated need for improvements
- more arts, culture, heritage facilities are needed

The recreation facilities assessment is presented under the following main headings:

- Comparative analysis of facilities and amenities
- General facility considerations
- Indoor recreation facilities
- Outdoor recreation facilities
- Arts, culture and heritage facilities

Comparative Analysis of Facilities and Amenities

Tables 3-1 and 3-2 compare population-based service provision levels for Sault Ste. Marie to the Cities of Timmins, Thunder Bay, and Sarnia, which are comparable communities in relation to size or a northern Ontario location. It is a cursory review of readily available, web-based information of municipally owned facilities only. The resulting supply levels are comparable on a high level only, for several reasons including:

- Existing facilities may be the result of unique circumstances (e.g., Canada Games Complex in Thunder Bay) that have resulted in a higher service level than might otherwise be the case.
- Municipalities categorize their facilities differently (e.g., counts for tennis, pickleball and dual-use courts vary) or facilities that are totalled as a single type (e.g., soccer fields) in one community, in others might be classed by individual activity (e.g., soccer, football, etc.), as multi-purpose fields, or sub-divided into senior, intermediate, junior, mini and micro fields.
- A lack of designated facilities (e.g., seniors centre) does not equate to a lack of services, which can be provided in other spaces.



Overall, the City of Sault Ste. Marie provides a considerably wider range of municipally owned facilities for specific types of sports and recreation relative to the other municipalities used in the comparison. Although its indoor facility supply does not include a gym or fitness centres, the City has a divisible indoor artificial turf field that accommodates gym-style programming. Municipal provision of full-service fitness centres is also not typical, as it can require considerable investment in equipment purchases and ongoing maintenance and may detract from the viability of commercial operators in the community.

Outdoor facilities in Sault Ste. Marie include a much broader range, and generally better levels of population-based supply, than any of the other municipalities represented. Of note is the City's progressive position in providing facilities that are emerging in municipal supplies because of trends in sport and recreation interests, including cricket pitches, Ultimate Frisbee fields, disc golf courses, and pickleball courts. Typically, dedicated facilities for these pursuits are found - if at all - in large urban communities in southern Ontario. Sault Ste. Marie, however, has recognized the need to diversify its services and to encourage growth in these emerging markets by supporting them with needed facilities, and providing options to the traditional sports of hockey, baseball and soccer.





Table 3-1: Comparative Service Levels for Municipal Indoor Facilities

Facility	Municipality and 2021 Census Population							
	City of Sault Ste. Marie 72,051		City of Timmins 41,145		City of Thunder Bay 110,172		City of Sarnia 72,047	
	#	ratio	#	ratio	#	ratio	#	ratio
Ice pads***	5	1:14,410	4	1:10,286	7	1:15,739	5	1:14,409
Pools (tanks)	3*	-	3**	-	3 see note	1:36,725	1(Y)	1:72,047
Pools (25m, 8-lane)	1	1:72,051	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pools (25m, 6-lane)	-	-	1	1:41,145	1	1:110,172	-	-
Pool (77m)	-	-	-	-	1 see note	1:110,172	-	-
Gymnasiums	0	-	0	-	0	-	1(Y)	1:72,047
Fitness Centres	0	-	0	-	0	-	1(Y)	1:72,047
Tracks	1	1:72,051	0	-	1(proposed)	1:110,172	0	-
Artificial turf fields	2 (divided)	1:36,025	0	-	1(proposed)	1:110,172	0	-
Bocce courts	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
Seniors Centre	2	1:36,025	0	-	2	1:55,086	0	-

*main, lap and beach front (leisure): tanks are not directly comparable in design

**main, diving, hot (electric saunas in changerooms)

***the Rankin and Pee Wee Arenas are also available for Community use, and are within or adjacent to the City.

(Y): YMCA operates on behalf of the City

NOTE: Thunder Bay has a 77-metre pool at the Canada Games Complex, which is typically divided into three separate pools for community programming. In addition to this facility and the 25m 6-lane pool noted in the table, Thunder Bay has a 25m salt water pool with a whirlpool.



Table 3-2: Comparative Service Levels for Municipal Outdoor Facilities

	Municipality and 2021 Census Population							
Facility	City of Sault Ste. Marie 72,051		City of Timmins 41,145		City of Thunder Bay 110,172		City of Sarnia 72,047	
	#	ratio	#	ratio	#	Ratio	#	Ratio
Ball Diamonds	12***	1:6,004	9	1:4,572	45	1:2,448	11 or 12?	
Cricket Pitches	1	1:72,051	0	-	0	-	1	1:72,047
Soccer/Multi-sport Fields (reg./senior)	7	1:10,293	1*	1:41,145	23	1:4,790	9	1:8,005
Football Fields	2	1:36,025	0	-	0	-	0	-
Ultimate Fields	2	1:36,025	0	-	0	-	0	-
Artificial Turf Fields	0	-	0	-	1	1:110,172	1	1:72,047
Tracks	1	1:72,051	0	-	1	1:110,172	0	-
Tennis Courts	8	1:9,006	6**	1:6,858	9	1:12,241	6	1:12,008
Pickleball Courts	8	1:9,006	0	-	5	1:22,034	6	1:12,008
Tennis/pickleball Courts	12	1:6,004	0	-	9	1:12,241	13	1:5,542
Bocce Courts	4	18,013	0	-	0	-	0	-
Pools	2	1:36,025	0	-	2	1:55,086	1	1:72,047

* There are four regulation school fields that are also used by community and booked through Boards.
Algonquin District School Board has an artificial turf field

** There are four school tennis and one school squash court also used by the Timmins Tennis and Squash Club

*** City diamonds are supplemented by those owned and operated by Soo Minor Baseball



3.2 General Facility Considerations

This section discusses service areas relevant to facilities in general, including:

- Accessibility
- Asset management
- Facility planning and evaluation

Accessibility

A separate page on the City's webpage² is dedicated to accessibility, under the Planning and Enterprise Services Division of the Community Development and Enterprises Services Department. It documents the City's commitment to furthering accessibility across all areas of municipal responsibility. More importantly, it provides a single location for links to all related municipal information. Guidance documents include, for example, the Accessibility Plan, Policy, Status Reports, and Design Standards. Beyond these relatively standard items, the page links users to specific initiatives and accessible services including (but not limited to) community resources, the Autism/Neurodiversity Services Inventory, Sledge Skating and a public restroom map. It is noted, however, that the site's Status Reports are not up-to-date.

The City's Multi Year Accessibility Plan 2022-2025 describes specific projects that have been completed or are planned to achieve accessibility standards at parks, recreation facilities, and related equipment and services. Barrier removal projects identified for the years 2023 to 2025 allocate funds each year for 2 accessible swings and 2 instruments for parks, accessible outdoor seating at John Rhodes Community Centre. The JRCC pool change table and lift replacement was completed in 2023. Capital projects focused on accessibility improvements requirements to the City's facilities (both indoor and outdoor) are also itemized in the 2019 ACTION PLAN 2020-2025.

² [https://saultstemarie.ca/Government/City-Departments/Community-Development-Enterprise-Services/Planning-Enterprise-Services/Accessibility.aspx?ext=.](https://saultstemarie.ca/Government/City-Departments/Community-Development-Enterprise-Services/Planning-Enterprise-Services/Accessibility.aspx?ext=)



Providing an accessible viewing area at John Rhodes arena, for example, is in process for 2024.

Postings identifying accessible facilities (e.g., GFL Memorial Gardens) include a description of their many accessible features. This is a valuable service to the community, since 'accessible' alone does not always mean the same thing.

In addition to a relatively strong 'virtual' presence, the City has a staffed, 'bricks-and-mortar' Accessibility Centre at the JRCC, which:

- Provides referral services related to accessibility for persons with disabilities, families and caregivers.
- Offers accessible meeting space.
- Maintains resource information.
- Performs research on identified accessibility issues.
- Houses the Accessibility Advisory Committee.
- Provides shared space that agencies and organizations with mandates related to accessibility can use.

Accessibility centres of the type provided in Sault Ste. Marie are services not typically part of municipal supply. This initiative and the 'virtual' attention provided here, give accessibility a higher profile in the community and promote its greater integration as a matter of course in service provision. This approach should continue to be developed as needs and opportunities arise.

- F 1: Continue to build the profile and integration of accessibility across City services through a strong online presence and the Accessibility Centre at the JRCC.
- F 2: As accessibility projects are implemented, announce their completion on the Accessibility webpage and update status reports.
- F 3: Continue to provide fulsome description of accessible features at individual facilities.



Asset Management

The City has Asset Management Plans (AMP) for roads and bridges, stormwater, wastewater and public utilities, which met Provincial legislative requirements for core services. A July 1, 2024 deadline is set for Asset Management Plans to include other municipal assets including parks and recreation infrastructure, addressing: proposed levels of service, and a lifecycle management and financial strategy covering a minimum of 10 years. This encompasses parks and recreation buildings and land assets such as ball diamonds, tennis courts, playgrounds, basketball courts, and skateboard parks, etc.

The City is preparing a new Asset Management Plan to comply with the legislative requirements for 2024. Recreation building and facility conditions assessments that are not current will be required to inform the 2024 AMP.

In 2020, the City prepared Facility Conditions Assessment of its major indoor facilities, including the Sault Event Centre, which is part of the GFL Memorial Gardens; the John Rhodes Community Center (JRCC); the Northern Community Centre (NCC); the Ermatinger Old Stone House and the Clergue Blockhouse at the Heritage Discovery Centre; the Roberta Bondar Park buildings including the main service building and stage, the tent pavilion; the Beaver Tails and washroom building, and the marina building; Bay Street 55+ Active Living Centre. All facilities were reported to be in good condition, except for a 'fair' rating for the JRCC. None were found to have safety concerns that required immediate expenditures.

Identified capital improvements for all locations totaled approximately \$4m+, the majority of which related to end of lifecycle plant and roof replacements. Capital items for each building were itemized for inclusion in future budgets.

Although the overall findings of the 2020 review indicated facilities are in good to fair condition, community (especially user groups) and staff consultation presents a different perspective in terms of the capacity of aging infrastructure to fulfill an optimal role in service provision. This is a space functionality concern as opposed to the integrity of the structure and building systems.

Collectively, these comments suggest that major infrastructure renewal programs are required in some cases. The JRCC and the NCC were most often noted in this regard (e.g., JRCC outdoor area is in significant need of an update) and a new single storey facility for seniors was suggested to facilitate accessibility. These concerns suggest that future facility conditions assessments include functional evaluations of spaces to determine the extent to which they are meeting intended uses, and how this could be improved through infrastructure changes. Any indicators of need for major changes should be investigated and detailed through studies aimed at comprehensive recommendations on facilities or spaces as whole, concepts plans, estimated costs and phasing.

Many planned capital improvement requirements for the City's facilities (both indoor and outdoor) are itemized in the 2019 ACTION PLAN 2020-2025. The requirements for these (some of which are noted in the following discussions) would need



to be reviewed in relation to possible major facility renewal plans to ensure significant investment is not made to extend the life of a facility that might be reconfigured or replaced. Major investment in roof repairs or replacement, for example, might not be warranted if there is a likelihood of overall facility renewal. Other less major upgrades that, nonetheless, are indicated as being required 'across the board' include, for example, integrating adult change tables in existing single use washrooms and the extent of renovations that will be required. Achieving AODA standards will likely require a detailed facility audit. Washrooms and viewing areas are of highest priority. The results of these reviews also need to be incorporated in plans relating to City assets.

- F 4: Conduct the needed recreation building and facility conditions assessments that are not current will be required to inform the 2024 AMP.
- F 5: Evaluate planned capital improvements against the results of building conditions assessments to identify those that may not be required in view of potential need for facility renewals.
- F 6: Investigate potential need for major facility renewals through studies aimed at comprehensive recommendations on facilities or spaces as whole, concepts plans, estimated costs and phasing.



Facility Planning and Evaluation

The City keeps detailed schedules of facilities used for organized activity and also tracks use of facilities for self-directed activities such as indoor walking. This information is used to develop Key Performance Indicators that provide quantifiable measures of use to evaluate success in meeting service objectives or targets. Wait lists are also kept to establish demand for services that is not being met.

Although demand for additional/new facilities is influenced by factors in addition to use, the assessments in this section sometimes show a considerable discrepancy between scheduled use and user groups' reports on the time available for their use. A clear sense of use during prime and non-prime time could help clarify where these differences occur and contribute to solutions that might not necessarily mean increasing the number of facilities.

In further developing its evaluation function to support confirming the need for facility development, redevelopment or repurposing, the City should consider incorporating the following in its planning process for facilities scheduled for organized community activity:

- including all facilities scheduled/used: although most facilities are currently tracked to inform KPIs, some (e.g., tracks, Ultimate Frisbee fields) are not.

- for major components of recreation complexes, monitor and track use by individual facility (e.g., each pad in arenas, each artificial turf field at the NCC, soccer fields by senior, intermediate, etc.): combining tracked facility use makes it harder to determine when a new one (e.g., one ice pad, one artificial turf field) is required to be added to supply to meet unmet demand and, in the case of playing fields, the level of play to be served.
- establish prime time and non-prime time definitions for all individual facilities, and track use during these 'windows' to be able to confirm use in relation to capacity targets: this is particularly important if decisions to add to facility supply are based on prime time capacity use only vs. use that includes non-prime time.
- in addition to formal waiting lists, record incoming requests for facilities/interests that may collectively indicate new needs.

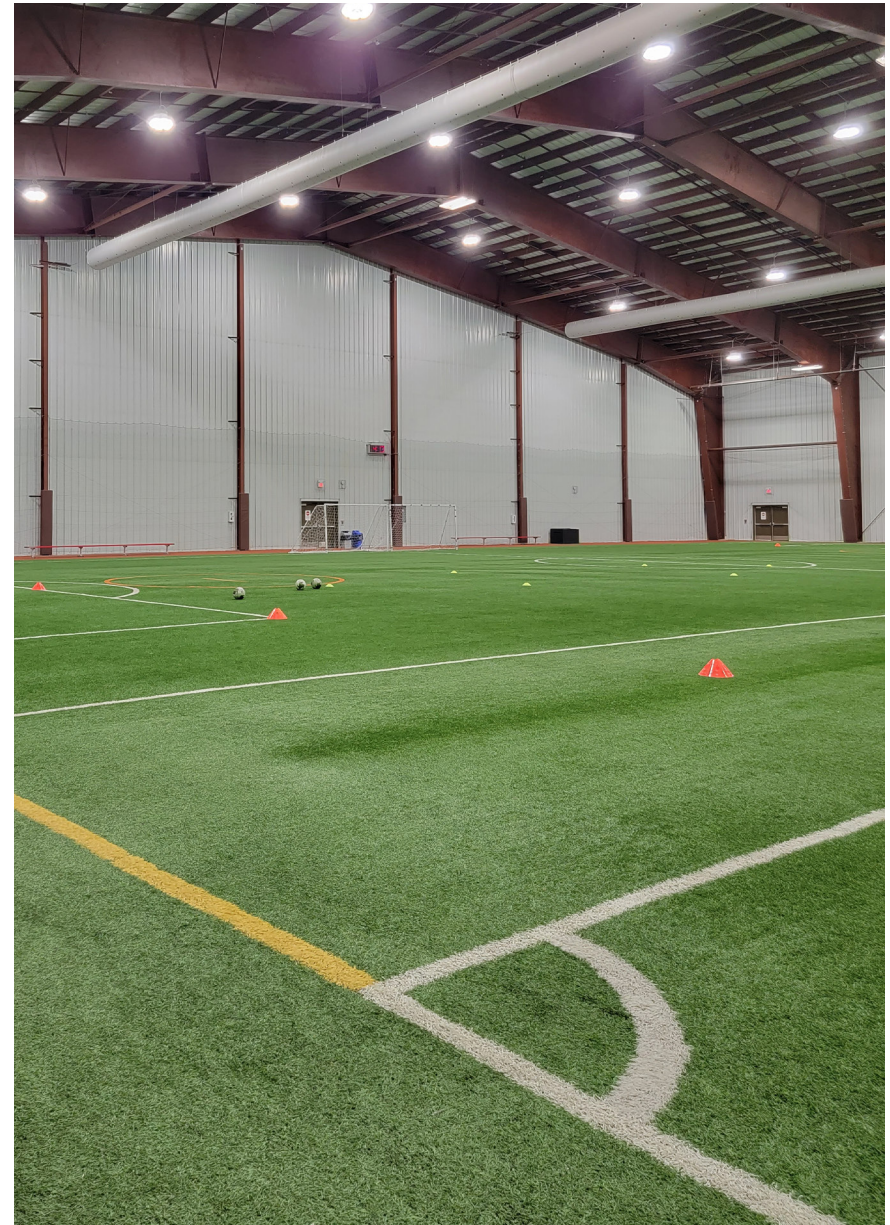
Facilities that are not formally scheduled and available for casual use by the community at large can be monitored/tracked by rotating, periodic visits (e.g., weekdays, weekends, daytimes, evenings) to record use. Since most casual use facilities are outdoor and, therefore, most heavily used in the summer it could be a task assigned to students hired for these months. In recent years, the explosive growth of pickleball has often been accommodated by repurposing tennis courts into dual purpose facilities. In some communities this has caused conflict between the two types of users, even though 'honour system' allocation policies are posted at the courts. Knowing



how casual facilities are being used, therefore, is important to both aligning supply with demand and being aware of potential issues. Section 5.7 is a broader discussion on service planning and evaluation.

These directions align with the 2020 - 2025 Action Plan to “review procedures to ensure long-term financial sustainability through the fiscally responsible and efficient management of resources” by strengthening a direct link between facility supply and demand. In this way, resources can be used to meet verified needs as a priority, over anecdotal indicators of ‘wants.’

F 7: Further develop the facility planning function through performance evaluations based on a finer level of detail in the information collected to verify demand for individual facilities.





3.3 Indoor Recreation Facilities

Ice Pads

Existing Supply and Use

Table 3-3 outlines the supply of City-owned indoor ice pads in Sault Ste. Marie, and those of other providers in the community and area.

Table 3-3: Indoor Ice Pads in Sault Ste. Marie

Location	Facility Description	Other Providers
John Rhodes Community Centre: JRCC (twin pad)	One community ice pad (185' x 85') and an NHL ice sized pad (200' x 85'), both with 300 seating capacity; sports training centre; food and beverage concessions; pro shop; restaurant overlooking both pads	Soo Pee Wee Areana: not-for-profit facility
Northern Community Centre: NCC (twin pad)	Two NHL sized ice pads with spectator seating on both sides of the ice surfaces (750 and 250 seating, respectively); community space for public/user group meetings and gatherings, a pro shop; 10 dressing rooms; two fully accessible change/washrooms/showers	Batchewana First Nation: Rankin Arena The Rink: new commercially operated, lit covered rink with dressing rooms at the Machine Shop; although not indoor it is available for organized activity. (https://machineshopinc.ca/century-21-the-rink)
GFL Memorial Gardens	One NHL ice surface; sports and entertainment centre; amenities to host a wide range of events including concerts, sporting events, family shows, conventions, and trade shows; home to the Soo Greyhounds OHL Hockey Club; Hockey Hall of Fame; seating from 1,000 to 6,000; features an in-house full-service kitchen, restaurant, executive suites, special event and meeting room rentals; five private dressing rooms; ten boxes for private rental contracts	



As shown in Table 3-3, the City owns and operates five indoor ice pads at the following arenas: John Rhodes Community Centre (2 pads), Northern Community Centre (2 pads), GFL (1 pad). Although most of the use at all three arenas comprises community-based recreation, OHL hockey, provincial tournaments, conventions, and entertainment events represent an important component of use, and revenue. In addition to residents, Sault Ste. Marie arenas serve youth and families living in the immediately surrounding area, and regularly hosts regional tournaments for ice sports (hockey, ringette, figure skating etc.).

In terms of community use, the City schedules may organized leagues/clubs, and does not offer its own programs during these times. Community use includes regular weekly programs and tournaments/competitions. While hockey generates the highest demand for ice time, figure skating and ringette need additional time to run their programs.

GFL Memorial Gardens: As a major event arena for both ice sports and entertainment, GFL Memorial Gardens is programmed differently than ice pads at NCC and JRCC. The ice season runs from September through March, and during that time the City's OHL team - the Greyhounds - are the priority facility users, and community use is programmed around the club's schedule. The team has exclusive use areas for dryland training, administration, etc.

Events total about 40 to 45 per year, and include large tournaments (e.g., provincial level hockey) and non-ice season use for conventions, performances, etc. The venue can accommodate several thousand participants / attendees. The arena has ten suites/boxes that are leased to companies from terms of five to ten years, with a waiting list of potential renters. A recent evaluation of the cost-benefit to add more boxes indicated it was not a feasible endeavor.



John Rhodes Community Centre: the JRCC is noted on the City's website as "a first-class facility for hosting sporting competitions and other tourism related activities." It is also used by a number of school and volunteer groups to run their regular programs. The arena includes a sports training centre for dryland training, which is run by a commercial operator. The Centre also has a tournament office. As noted above, it houses the Accessibility Centre.

Northern Community Centre: In the recently opened twin pad at NCC, one sheet replaced the single McMeeken pad. The new arena portion of the building was completed in early 2023. Ancillary arena facilities include 10 changerooms, of which two are fully accessible, a pro shop and two concessions. The NCC renovation and introduction of a new pad allowed a comprehensive review and reallocation of community use across all pads to:

- Consolidate use for groups that were scheduled for short blocks of time at different pads, and assign them a longer block at one facility.
- Better align allocations to the City's policy that gives priority to youth use (18 years of age and younger) followed by adult use (19 years of age and older), and to shift youth groups that were playing late at night to blocks before 9pm.
- Allocate better facilities and times to groups such as Sault College, which has the right to operate men's and women's competitive hockey here.



Future Supply and Demand

Available hours of ice at City rinks totals 9,408 hours annually with the recent addition of the new twin pad at the NCC.

Collectively, the City's five pads provide a total of 255 hours of prime time per week³, which comprises a total of 51 hours per week of prime time per pad (see detailed table in Appendix).

Table 3-4 shows the most recent figures on ice use for each of the City's pads, compared to the peak year between 2017 and 2022.

Table 3-4: Peak Ice Pad Use 2017 to 2022

Facility	Indicator	Peak Year 2017-2022	% used	2023 Target	2023 YTD*
GFL Memorial Gardens: 1 pad	Prime Time Ice Use	2022	89%	85%	77%
	Total Utilization	2022	84%	50%	66%
John Rhodes: 2 pads	Prime Time Ice Use	2022	95%	90%	88%
	Total Utilization	2022	84%	70%	63%
McMeeken: 1 pad	Prime Time Ice Use	2021	90%	90%	90%
	Total Utilization	2022	84%	84%	67%
NCC: 2 pads	Prime Time Ice Use	-	-	85%	75%
	Total Utilization	-	-	70%	50%

*to the end of September 2023

³ Prime-time. Mon-Fri 5pm to 10pm, Sat-Sun 8am to 5pm.



The City targets prime-time use on each pad at 85% to 90% of available time. The table shows that peak years for all arenas met or exceeded the targets. Similarly, overall use, which combines prime and non-prime time hours, was also relatively high at 84%.

Year to date figures (to the end of September 2023) show that prime time use for two of the arenas (the Gardens and JRCC) is approaching their targets. Although NCC is not performing as well numerically, 71% use of prime time on a recently opened facility that introduced an additional pad is high for a 'new' two pad arena. It is also important to note that the last quarter of the year (October through December) is the strongest in terms of ice use and, therefore, will likely add proportionately higher use levels than the previous quarters. Use at all facilities is also notable considering it is still recovering to some degree from COVID-related impacts. Community-based user groups, however, are beginning to see pre-COVID participation/membership numbers return.

These findings suggest that the introduction of the new pad and associated renovations at the JRCC arena have aligned supply and demand well. Expanding capacity has helped serve users that were on wait lists, improved ice allocation according to its priorities, and reduced the City's need to turn away tournaments. Five pads, therefore, have balanced supply and demand and provided sufficient capacity for the City's current population.

A current population-based provision level represents one ice pad per 14,410 people. An anticipated increase in population of 9,679 to 2034 - while increasing demand to some extent - will not generate need for an additional pad.

The user groups anticipate need for additional access to ice over the next five to ten years to serve both population growth and program expansion. Use of the new pad at NCC and its effect on the distribution of use across all five pads, however, requires time to be monitored and evaluated, along with tracking unmet demand. This work will help determine that point at which a sixth pad may need to be considered.

Sault Ste. Marie is also served by two non-municipal arenas and a new covered outdoor rink. The future of other providers' facilities could impact unmet demand for ice time. Although the City has no formal relationship with either the Soo Pee Wee or the Batchewana First Nation Rankin Arenas, these facilities accommodate use that might otherwise increase demand for access to municipal arenas. A new outdoor rink at the Machine Shop provides additional access to winter ice for both sports and public skating. Should any of these facilities be removed from supply, the City may be requested to make up the shortfall.

Need for Improvements

A frequently reported need for older arenas in Ontario is more changerooms for males, females and transgender users to be able to provide them with dedicated spaces. This need was reported in Sault Ste. Marie for both the GFL Memorial Gardens and JRCC, along with quiet rooms and improvements



to lighting and sound systems. The City has been working on the last noted items. LED lighting has been installed at JRCC and GFL, and the sound systems have been replaced. As a new, state-of-the-art facility, the NCC provided ten dressing rooms, and LED lighting. The potential to add dressing rooms at the other pads is limited by space. It is not clear yet how or if the recent Hockey Canada Dressing Room Policy (see Appendix) on wearing a base layer of minimum attire will reduce the need for separate dressing rooms. While the intent of the policy is to promote inclusion, a possible facility outcome could be reconfiguring existing smaller spaces into larger rooms with a limited number of private stalls for those who prefer privacy. If the issue is the number of teams needing rooms concurrently, this approach may not address deficiencies within the existing footprint of the dressing room area.

- F 8: The existing supply of five indoor ice pads will be sufficient to meet demand during the term of the Master Plan.
- F 9: Continue to monitor and evaluate the use of all pads to confirm the effect of the new pad on the distribution of use across all five pads, and future unmet demand.
- F 10: In tracking ice time demand, consider any changes in the contribution of non-municipal providers to supply.
- F 11: Assess the opportunities presented by Hockey Canada's new Dressing Room Policy on the potential to reconfigure dressing rooms to accommodate all genders and larger numbers of players per room.

Pools

Existing Supply and Use

Table 3-5 lists the features of the City’s aquatic facility.

Table 3-5: John Rhodes Community Centre Pool

Location	Facility Description	Other Providers
John Rhodes Community Centre: JRCC	3 tanks: 25 metre 8-lane pool, lap pool, beach front tot pool; spectator viewing for approximately 400; food and beverage concessions; family change rooms; elevator	Full service YMCA: aquatics, gym, health and fitness, personal training, full day child care, before and after school care, day camps, registered child and youth programs

The City’s indoor pool is well used for community programming, private rentals, and meets. Activities are programmed concurrently, when appropriate to do so, given the size and compatibility of uses. The pool is home to the Sault Surge Aquatic Team.





Future Supply and Demand

Limited interest was expressed in adding another community-serving pool to supply, and input suggested that the existing pool is not used to capacity. Wait lists for swim instruction indicate that a key reason for longer lists now than in the past is a lack of instructors as opposed to insufficient facility capacity. As discussed in the programs section of the Plan, aquatic staff shortages are being experienced in municipalities across Ontario and strategies to deal with this concern are being developed. It was also noted in consultation that scheduling the JRCC pool could be improved (e.g., more early weekday lane swims) for more effective use. Collectively, these findings indicate immediate need for a second municipal community pool is not strong.

At the same time, in addition to the John Rhodes Pool, the City relies on the YMCA to meet community need for aquatic facilities. In effect, therefore, the community is currently supplied with two indoor pools. Both pools, however, are at least 25 years old and will likely require either major renovations or replacement within the next ten years to continue serving the community.

As is the case in most communities with a competitive swim team, there is interest in Sault Ste. Marie in a 50m pool. The City's 25-metre pool typically hosts four regional meets per year now. As noted in consultation, "a 50 metre pool [is needed] to serve the Northeastern Ontario Region with [a] regulation size swim facility to host long course meets and to prepare our swimmers for the long course meets."

The scale of this type of investment is too significant to be confirmed in a Master Plan. However, the age of the existing pools and their associated design limitations, and the opportunity to serve the region with a competitive facility, warrants further investigation through a feasibility study. This study would assess the potential to develop a divisible two-tank, 50-metre pool designed to provide community programming, and to host both short and long course meets. It should include a detailed market study and business plan that clearly demonstrates support for a 50-metre competitive pool.

The community-serving component would comprise two 25-metre tanks to accommodate instruction, fitness and recreational swim programs, and include a leisure/play component. Competitive event components would meet design standards for various levels, and require sufficient ancillary facilities to accommodate large numbers of participants, officials, spectators, marshalling, food services, etc. The study could also investigate the cost-benefit of providing a salt water pool instead of a traditional fresh water, chlorinated system. The proposed conceptual design can be used to evaluate site options.

Need for Improvements

Required improvements noted in consultation are those commonly reported for facilities that are older and not state-of-the-art. In this instance, they are also largely connected to interest in a competitive pool for both short and long-course meets. Which of these (e.g., support facilities/amenities, acoustics, storage, etc.) that might be addressed to improve the facility for short-course events. As indicated in the City's



2020 - 2025 Action Plan, there are ongoing improvements to common seating and viewing areas at the JRCC, as well as plans to investigate options to replace the slide and to install a climbing wall. To the extent possible, improvements to existing facilities should be deferred until completion of the feasibility study.

F 12: Prepare a detailed feasibility study to determine the potential to support a 50-metre pool to accommodate both community and competitive programming.





Artificial Turf Fields

Existing Supply and Use

There are two 100' x 200' artificial turf fields at the NCC, with a retractable dividing curtain and four change rooms/ washrooms/showers. Schedules for both fields show high levels of use October through May, which includes City programming and rentals. The facility accommodates a wide variety of activities (e.g., soccer, ultimate frisbee, cricket, free community drop-in during non-peak hours, dryland training, party rentals, seniors daytime use, etc.). Prime time for organized community use is 5pm to 11pm on weeknights and on weekends from 8am to 9pm. In the summer, the turf cannot be optimally booked as the structure is not air conditioned and it becomes too hot to safely use this indoor space for active recreation. At the same time, many turf users move outdoors for the summer.

According to Statistics Canada 2020 inventory of municipally owned culture, recreation and sport facilities,⁴ Sault Ste. Marie is one of 38 urban municipalities in Ontario (from a total of 50) with indoor fields. Of the province's total 414 local municipalities (single or lower-tier), Sault Ste. Marie is in the minority 9% that provide one.⁵

4 Statistics Canada. Table 34-10-0067-01 Inventory of municipally owned culture, recreation and sport facilities, by urban and rural, and population size, Infrastructure Canada DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25318/3410006701-eng>

5 25% is likely high: the figures were used to represent one indoor field per municipality as an approximation of relative provision which does not account for communities - like Sault Ste. Marie - that have more than one indoor facility.

Figures on use from 2018 to 2022 show a peak at 59% capacity in 2022; 2018 to 2021 ranged from 25% to 43%. This figure, however, combines high use in fall, winter and spring with limited use in summer. The 2023 target is 50%, which has almost been met with 49% at the end of the 3rd quarter.

Future Supply and Demand

The Greater North Soccer Association (GNSA) reported contributing to the capital fund for the NCC's existing fields with the understanding that a third field would be part of the twin pad arena development. Their concern is the lack of availability of early evening time to field their largest age group, which is 5- to 12-year-olds. It was noted that the only times available are 10 to 11pm, which is too late for young children.

If the GNSA need for earlier times cannot be accommodated by reallocation through scheduling, a third field may be required in the short term. Based on available information on the level of use on existing fields, prime time (early to late evenings and weekends) is heavily used and the facility serves a wide variety of groups. The Sault Ste. Marie Parks and Recreation 2015-2025 Action Plan indicates an assessment of need for a third indoor artificial turf at NCC has been completed. The results indicated there was no need for an additional field at the time it was conducted.

As noted in Section 3.2 on facility planning and evaluation, verifying use in relation to capacity that eliminates non-prime time and the period during which hot weather precludes using the space would provide a stronger indicator of actual prime time use. Whether or not a third field is added in response to



immediate unmet demand, tracking prime time use alone will provide a clearer picture of use. This is particularly important if the intent is to add a field based on this more limited definition of full capacity, since the current figure of 59% gives the impression that the facility is underused.

Assuming prime time is used to capacity, current supply represents one artificial turf field per 36,025 population. A projected population of 81,730 by 2034, therefore, would generate prime-time demand for a total of 2.3 fields or approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ of an additional field. If the City decides to add another field, it would be providing an enhanced level of service to the community. This may be warranted given the expressed interest in more indoor over outdoor facilities, which is understandable in northern climates.

From a strict use perspective, it would be beneficial to be able to use the facility year-round. While air conditioning would likely be too cost-prohibitive, if a third field is added at NCC there may be ways to incorporate interior cooling features in building design and construction to safely allow increased use during the summer months. It was noted that storage space is currently lacking and portable storage will be added to address this need. In the event of a third field addition, sufficient indoor storage to meet both current and future needs should be included in its provision.

- F 13: If the GNSA need for earlier times cannot be accommodated by reallocation through scheduling, a third field may be required in the short term.
- F 14: Track use of artificial turf fields in relation to capacity that eliminates non-prime time and the period during which hot weather precludes using the space.
- F 15: Clarify target to provide a new artificial turf field as an enhanced level of service to the community, as opposed to capacity use of existing fields, given relatively greater expressed interest in more indoor facilities.
- F 16: If another turf is added to the NCC, explore ways to incorporate interior cooling features in its provision to increase usable hours, and address current and future storage needs.



Tracks

The community can access two locations for indoor walking at no cost. An elevated rubberized walking track was added at the NCC to one of the pads in redeveloping the arena into a twin pad facility. It is open for general community use Monday through Friday (8:30 am to 4:30 pm), except for statutory holidays. GFL's concourse level is open Monday to Friday (9am to 4pm) for walking, and typically generates over 10,000 visits per year (9,397 in 2019, the last full year before COVID).

According to Statistics Canada 2020 inventory of municipally owned culture, recreation and sport facilities,⁶ Sault Ste. Marie is one of 66 urban municipalities in Ontario (from a total of 105) with indoor walking/jogging tracks. Of the province's total 414 local municipalities (single or lower-tier), Sault Ste. Marie is in the minority 16% that provide one.⁷

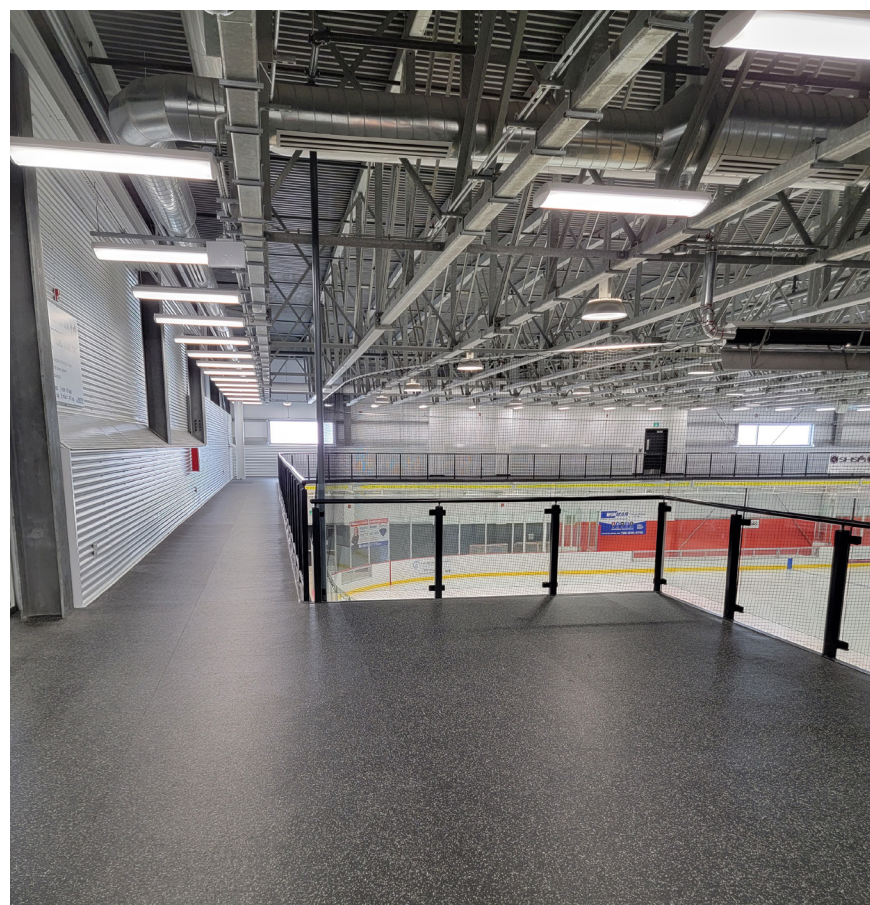
Two locations for indoor walking should be sufficient to meet community needs during the term of the Plan. It also responds to expressed interest in more indoor opportunities for recreation.

As a new facility, the track use at the NCC will be monitored with the City's Key Performance Indicators to determine its success in meeting community interest in participation.

⁶ Statistics Canada. Table 34-10-0067-01 Inventory of municipally owned culture, recreation and sport facilities, by urban and rural, and population size, Infrastructure Canada DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25318/3410006701-eng>

⁷ 25% is likely high: the figures were used to represent one indoor track per municipality as an approximation of relative provision, which does not account for communities that have more than one facility.

F 17: Continue to monitor indoor walking participation at NCC and the GFL concourse as part of KPIs in relation to targeted service levels.





Tennis and Pickleball Facility

Existing Supply and Use

The City of Sault Ste. Marie does not own indoor tennis and/or pickleball courts. The Sault Ste. Marie Tennis Association uses the court at the George Leach Centre at Algoma University. Soo Pickleball uses school gyms and the arena pad at the JRCC, at which it hosted a 4-day Provincial Championship. The University also has pickleball facilities.

Future Supply and Demand

This discussion is tied to that for outdoor courts in Section 3.4.

Tennis

Tennis Canada notes,

Participation in tennis and the popularity of our sport was growing rapidly in Canada prior to the pandemic. The results of a nationwide independent study on the health of the sport done at the end of the 2018 season had demonstrated that, during that year, nearly 6.6M Canadians had played tennis at least once, which represented 18% of the population. In addition, 4.5M Canadians had played the sport at least four times throughout the course of the year, which represented an increase of 15% compared to 2016 [and that] tennis clubs recovered well over the final months of 2021.⁸

⁸ https://www.tenniscanada.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Rebuilding-a-tennis-nation_EN.pdf

The report notes that “demand remains high for under 12 participation and greater accessibility to affordable year-round tennis courts across the country.”

Historically, the RYTAC (formerly the YMCA) has provided eight outdoor tennis courts. Over time, four of these courts were repurposed to provide: two pickleball courts and two beach volleyball courts. Four remained tennis courts, of which two are no longer usable.

In 2012, the tennis club that was based at this location had 600 active members, which has since declined to about 80.⁹ There is currently only one indoor court at Algoma University. One or two courts (whether indoor or outdoor) does not provide the basis for a strong community tennis program.

Pickleball

Participation in pickleball across North America is strong, and still growing: “a recent Ipsos survey indicates there are around 900,000 households in Canada playing the sport, up from an estimated 350,000 two years ago.”¹⁰

There are a number of factors that will likely support continued growth in pickleball participation,¹¹ including:

⁹ estimate from City; number not provided in group survey

¹⁰ <https://www.msn.com/en-ca/news/canada/pickleball-is-one-of-canadas-fastest-growing-sports-but-the-paddle-and-ball-can-make-a-racket/ar-AAU7GoR> (February 2022).

¹¹ <https://www.selkirk.com/pickleballs-growth>



- its recognition as a legitimate sport, with both recreational and competitive categories
- play, in terms of rules and physical intensity, is relatively easy
- an all-ages appeal
- national organizational commitment to growing participation
- it can be played year-round indoors and outdoors, with appropriate facilities
- participants report that it is fun as well as physically beneficial

As is the case nationwide, pickleball is thriving in Sault Ste. Marie with 450 members in Soo Pickleball. As noted above, and like the situation with tennis, there are limited formal facilities for indoor activity. As is the case locally, the experience of other municipalities indicates that pickleball courts are currently among the most requested new facilities in Ontario communities.

Indoor Facilities

The former RYTAC property, which was the original site of tennis courts in the City, is now owned by Sault College and is called the Waterfront Adventure Centre. The Sault Tennis Association's website indicates it is partnering with the College to develop an indoor centre on this site and that fundraising has commenced for its development. Commentary provided in the survey for the Master Plan reports interest in collaboration among all owners of tennis courts in the City and determining a site where a 4-court tennis facility can be established.

Other northern communities, including Sudbury and Thunder Bay, provide indoor tennis courts in bubble structures. Thunder Bay is developing a 6-court, \$4 million facility. The project is being financed with over \$3 million in funding from the City (including land), FedNor, and the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund, which is being supplemented by a fundraising campaign and individual donations. Completion is scheduled for 2023/24.¹² The project is also being supported through a program jointly funded by Tennis Canada and Rogers. The \$5.6m program aims to build 160 indoor courts in up to 30 facilities by 2029.¹³ Thunder Bay is among four communities being funded in the program's second year.¹⁴

The City has proposed facilitating tennis and pickleball interests in developing a dual-purpose indoor facility in partnership with YNCU Curling Centre. The Tennis Association,

¹² <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/indoor-tennis-thunder-bay-1.6448075>

¹³ tenniscanada.com

¹⁴ Ibid.



however, does not view dual-purpose courts as a successful venture. Pickleball groups are also often not interested in sharing courts.

However, facility development should be determined in a detailed feasibility study to establish the extent of need for each type of court, an appropriate combination of dedicated and dual-use courts (e.g., for tournaments for either sport), and a business plan outlining capital and operating costs, and cost sharing among the parties.

In many communities, the courts are operated by a community-based association for 'club' activities. If the courts have been funded from the tax base (including land contributions), the operating agreement with the association includes designated times for free, casual use by the general public in both prime and non-prime time periods. In this way, the community at large can enjoy access to good quality courts for recreational tennis.

Given these considerations, it is recommended that the City encourage the pickleball, tennis and curling clubs to prepare a detailed feasibility study, seek support from Tennis Canada for this work, and include municipal representation on the project Steering Committee. Other factors to consider in the study could include:

- opportunities to share common areas and ancillary facilities
- siting/design for future courts, if required;

- seasonal vs. permanent bubbles/domes to double as outdoor venues in the summer and to preclude the need for cooling during the hot months¹⁵

F 18: Encourage the pickleball, tennis and curling clubs to prepare a feasibility study and seek support from Tennis Canada for this work, with municipal representation on the project Steering Committee.

¹⁵ If funding from the Tennis Canada program is to be sought, variables such as a seasonal dome and sharing a building envelope with pickleball may affect eligibility.



Seniors Facilities

Existing Supply and Use

There are two centres that provide a focus for programs and activities for older adults in Sault Ste. Marie: the Bay Street Active Living Centre (55+) and the 55+ Active Living Centre in the NCC. The former is a fully accessible facility that serves seniors exclusively. Spaces include an auditorium, kitchen, lounge, craft room, games room, computer room, HAM radio room and two multi-purpose rooms. At the NCC, the Steelton Room is the focus of seniors' programming/use, although it is also available for rentals at other times.

A review of recent schedules show there are multiple spaces available at both locations throughout the day for seniors programming, and particularly at the Bay Street Active Living Centre.

Future Supply and Demand

Interest in providing more space in existing facilities, a new centre for seniors in the east end of the City, and/or a new single storey facility came primarily from staff. While it was noted that inadequate program staff is the primary obstacle to expanding programming, space limitations were noted as the second issue. At the same time, as noted above, facility schedules do not reflect full capacity use. Reported limitations,

therefore, could reflect inadequacies in the type of spaces available as opposed to unused time.

In determining the need for additional space to provide expanded/new programs for seniors, therefore, the potential to grow services to optimize use of existing space is the first step. As part of this initiative, opportunities to reallocate existing spaces and/or improve them to be able to introduce additional - and particularly new types - of programs should be assessed through an audit of current use of individual spaces. The asset management recommendations above with respect to updated facility condition assessments should include a functional analysis, which should inform potential to better use available space.

The program section of the Master Plan, for example, points to the need for more fitness programming for seniors (and adults). Repurposing an existing space for fitness should be investigated. A fitness studio with a sprung floor and mirrors, and an area with limited equipment for workouts (e.g., free weights) could occupy a space that is not now well used for its intended purposes. Any activities in existing spaces could be shifted to other rooms that have available capacity. This approach can minimize investment in capital upgrades and equipment costs, thereby keeping user fees at a minimum. The Steelton Room at the NCC, for example, is used for Active 55+ on weekdays from 10am to 5pm. At other times it is available for public rentals. Foregoing rentals and considering repurposing this room as a fitness studio could meet the needs for both expanded seniors and adult fitness programming throughout the week. Its redesign for fitness would allow new programs to



be offered, while not precluding it from being used for other 55+ activities. Other community uses of this space could be relocated, possibly to the GFL Memorial Gardens.

The reported need for another seniors' centre in the east end and/or a new one storey building could be considered at the point where improved use of the two existing locations results in demand than can no longer be accommodated. Another consideration is a trend to limit the provision of dedicated seniors' facilities to those specifically requiring segregation (e.g., services for older senior cohorts, games rooms, etc.) and using multi-purpose spaces within the same building to offer age-specific through scheduling, or offering all ages programming, where appropriate. The 55+ Active Living Centre at the NCC is an example of this approach in Sault Ste. Marie.

Need for Improvements

Two noted improvement requirements at the Bay Street 55+ Active Living Centre were a recurring roof leak and issues with accessing the second floor, both of which should be covered in updated building conditions assessments.

Other improvements to these spaces will be identified as shifts in programming/use are determined and required upgrades to accommodate changes are itemized for inclusion in capital budgets.

- F 19: Conduct an audit of current use of individual spaces, to be informed by facility conditions assessment, to identify opportunities to make better use of existing spaces for seniors' programming.
- F 20: Determine scheduling related changes needed to achieve better overall space allocations.
- F 21: Determine capital upgrades required to support changes in use for expanded/new programs.
- F 22: Consider opportunities for seniors and adult programming to share the same spaces at different times.

General Activity Space

Existing Supply and Use

Table 3-7 summarizes general activity space in Sault Ste. Marie that is used for City programming, events and/or used by other providers such as SOO gymnastics, the Algoma District School Board, etc.

Table 3-6: Municipal Activity Space in Sault Ste. Marie¹⁶

Location	Facility Description
John Rhodes Community Centre: JRCC	Two multi-purpose classrooms: in pool viewing areas; capacity 50 people each Special function/meeting room
Northern Community Centre: NCC	Steelton community rental available when not being used for seniors Multi-purpose Rooms A, B, and C
GFL Memorial Gardens	Angelo Bumbacco Room: 100' x 20', approx. capacity 156; divisible into two smaller spaces; sound system, projector and screen; also referred to as Breakout Rooms (3) under general event space in the GFL Memorial Gardens Multi-purpose room: 30' x 20', approx. capacity 70; divisible into two smaller spaces; also referred to as Multi-purpose Rooms 1 and 2 under general event space in the GFL Memorial Gardens VIP room: 25' x 25' at suite level for viewing concerts, games, etc.; approx. capacity 96

¹⁶ The assessment does not include the contributions of other providers to general community space.

For the most part, space at GFL Memorial Gardens is used for major ice and non-ice events, as well as other private rentals (e.g., local corporate events, staff parties, birthday celebrations). These spaces, most of which appear to be divisible should be reviewed to determine their capacity to accommodate community programming when not in use for Gardens' events. The program section discusses the potential to develop short-duration programs, which often only comprise one-day or one-afternoon sessions on a topic of interest (e.g., watercolor painting workshop) and do not require repeat space bookings for an extended period of time.

Space at both NCC and JRCC is used for City programming and by other organizations, and rentals. The Algoma District School Board uses the John Rhodes and Northern Community Centre upstairs rooms for secondary school classes on a regular weekly basis, in conjunction with use of the arenas. The former library at the NCC, which was converted to community space, is used for seniors' programming during the day and becomes a youth drop-in centre after 5pm on weeknights, and is staffed from 3 to 5 times per week. The program section of the Master Plan recommends adding a second drop-in youth space or increasing the hours at the NCC space and opening at 2pm instead of 5pm. If feasible, extending hours is likely preferable as an initial step to providing a youth drop-in that is available immediately after school. The possibility of adding a second similar space in an existing facility could be considered at a later date, if needed. Alternatively, and as suggested in consultation, options to convert vacant churches into community social space could be investigated depending



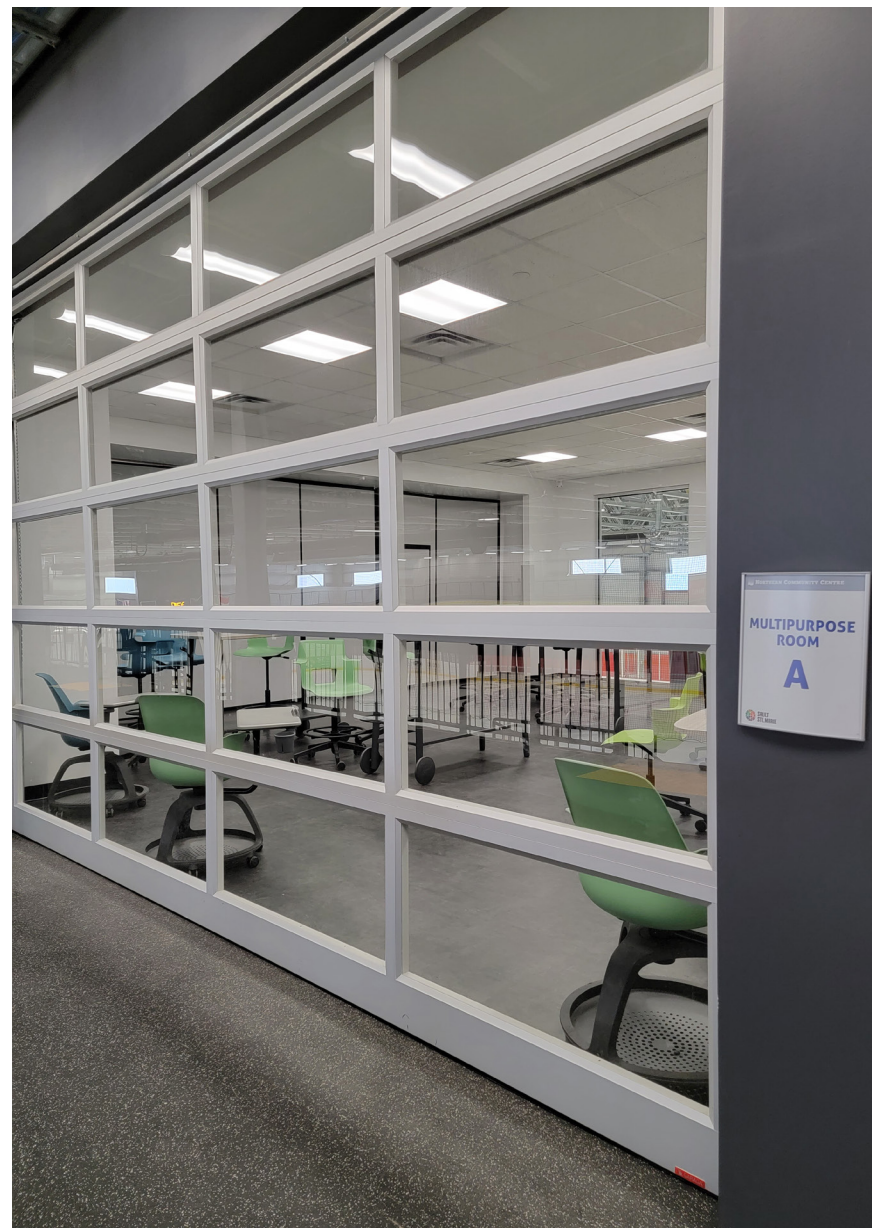
on their location in relation to areas where services are needed and acquisition/reburishment costs.

All of these possibilities will depend on a review of existing uses by facility or space and findings on opportunities to consolidate programs/uses in terms of aligning those that are compatible while maintaining an appropriate geographic and scheduling distribution. This exercise will also be tied to the above-note review of seniors program spaces.

Need for Improvements

Improvements to these spaces will be identified as shifts in programming/use are determined and required upgrades to accommodate changes are itemized for inclusion in capital budgets.

- F 23: Review all existing uses of general program space by facility to identify opportunities to consolidate programs/uses in terms of aligning those that are compatible while maintaining an appropriate geographic and scheduling distribution of services.
- F 24: Determine capital upgrades required to support changes in use.





3.4 Outdoor Recreation Facilities

Ball Diamonds

Existing Supply and Use

Table 3-8 outlines the supply of ball diamonds in Sault Ste. Marie:

Table 3-7: Ball Diamonds in Sault Ste. Marie.

Location	# of Diamonds		Notes	Other Providers
	lit	unlit		
Strathclair Sports Complex	1	4	batting cages; diamond 'A' recently lit and netting installed	elementary, secondary and post secondary schools; field at Tarentorus Sports Club
Elliott Sports Complex		5	3 senior; 2 junior	
Queen Elizabeth Sports Complex		1	regulation size but no fence, poor condition; 3 - 4 regular	
			user groups	
North Street Park Sport Complex	1		high quality diamond; LEDs to be added	
totals	2	10		
Sinclair Yards	1	6	property leased by Soo Minor Baseball from City and operated exclusively by the Association; not scheduled by	



The City owns 12 ball diamonds of which 2 are lit. Municipal diamonds are supplemented by those on property leased to Soo Minor Baseball Association (SMBA) at Sinclair Yards, which are owned, operated and maintained by SMBA, as exclusive users.¹⁷

Table 3-89 shows total prime time hours available for the months used in 2023 at Strathclair, North Street and Queen Elizabeth.. All diamonds were scheduled from June through August. Strathclair was also used in May.¹⁸ For the assessment, prime time is based on use patterns and is defined as:

- weeknights: 5 hours on lit diamonds (6pm to 11pm) and 2 hours on unlit diamonds (6pm to 8pm)
- weekends: 14 hours on lit diamonds (9am to 11pm) and 11 hours on unlit diamonds (9am to 8pm)

Table 3-8: Total Prime Time May through August for 2023 Season

Location	Lit Diamonds		Unlit Diamonds	
	weeknights	weekends	weeknights	weekends
Strathclair (4 months)	440	462	704	1,452
North Street (3 months)	330	350	-	-
Queen Elizabeth (3 months)	-	-	132	275
Totals	770	812	836	1,727

Table 3-10 shows total prime time scheduled use for each location. It notes the peak month of use for weeknights and weekends, and associated hours and proportion of monthly capacity. Total seasonal use on weeknights and weekends is also shown.

The five (5) diamonds at the Elliott Sports complex include three (3) senior and two (2) junior fields. The senior fields are programming for league and tournament use. The junior fields are not used. In 2023, these fields were used exclusively by the Model Airplane Club as a temporary location for their activities. The Club has moved back to its home site for the 2024 season. For this reason, Table 3-10 does not include hours of use at the Elliott Diamonds.

¹⁷ Google maps shows 7 diamonds: https://sooball.com/Pages/1152/Sinclair_Yards/

¹⁸ September bookings were limited to the Strathclair diamonds and are not shown since all use was for a BBQ.



Table 3-9: Prime Time Scheduled Diamond Use by Location from May
Through August 2023

Location/# of Diamonds	Peak Month Weeknights	# of Hours/% of Capacity	Peak Month Weekends	# of Hours/% of Capacity	# Weeknight Hours per Season / % Capacity	# of Weekend Hours per Season / % Capacity
Strathclair (5, 1 lit)	July	263 / 96%	August	166.5 / 36%	609 / 53%	341.5 / 18%
North Street (1, lit)	July	72 / 69%	June	22.5 / 20%	190.5 / 58%	22.5 / 6.4%
Queen Elizabeth (1)	July	35.25 / 84%	-	0	90 / 68%	-



These findings show that, except for the diamonds at Strathclair and the Queen Elizabeth diamond, which reach over 80% capacity on July weeknights, use is low – particularly on weekends. This is reasonable, however, given the focus of league activity at Sinclair Yards, which has been the home of the SMBA for over 25 years. Soo Minor Baseball offers recreational and competitive baseball in Junior T-Ball, T-Ball, Junior 9U, 9U, 11U, 13U, 16U, 18U and Open 18+ throughout the summer.

The seven diamonds at the Yards are sponsored by local companies and are named for these sponsors (e.g., Jeep Field, Superior Custom & Detailing Field, IDA Park). A Soo Today article from April, 2022 describes a recent sponsorship project on its main diamond: “In keeping with their ongoing support within our local community, IDA Pharmacy/Drug Mart and the Soo Minor Baseball Association would like to announce a joint venture down at Sinclair Yards Baseball Complex. IDA has committed \$36,000 (or \$2,400/year for the next 15 years) to place a new LED scoreboard on the main diamond down at the complex.”¹⁹ The complex also has a 5,600 sq. ft. amenities building with washrooms, a concession stand, pop machines, a conference room, locker room, umpire’s change room, and an office. The Yards, therefore, are well suited for both a full regular season program and tournament hosting.

¹⁹ <https://www.sootoday.com/local-sports/new-partnership-means-new-scoreboard-for-soo-minor-baseball-5257670#:~:text=In%20keeping%20with%20their%20ongoing%20support%20within%20our,on%20the%20main%20diamond%20down%20at%20the%20complex.>

Future Supply and Demand

Strathclair Sports Complex is immediately adjacent to Sinclair Yards and is the most heavily used location among all those scheduled by the City. Whether or not this is a result of its proximity to the Yards is unclear. Essentially, however, both properties provide a total of 12 diamonds, 2 of which are lit, in a single location. Future investment in ball diamonds, therefore, should be directed to optimizing the potential of the Strathclair site to provide a major hub for community league use, and for tournament activity (e.g., by lighting additional diamonds).

In terms of overall supply related to use, the City has excess capacity on existing fields, which supports the possibility of repurposing the two junior diamonds at Elliott Sports Complex for other recreation uses. Future need for additional access to diamonds could be met by improvements and additional scheduling to the City’s remaining facilities, including North Street, Queen Elizabeth and John Rhodes diamonds.



Need for Improvements

As noted in the 2022-2025 ACTION PLAN, dugouts have been recently installed at slo-pitch diamonds, in partnership with Sault Ste. Marie Slo-Pitch League. It is anticipated that required future improvements will be part of annual maintenance budget planning. Scheduling and monitoring community use of the Jo Forman track will help inform this evaluation.

- F 25: Future investment in ball diamonds should be directed to optimizing the potential of the Strathclair site to provide a major hub for community league use, and for tournament activity.
- F 26: Consider decommissioning the two junior diamonds Elliott Sports Complex and repurposing the space for other recreation uses.

Rectangular Sports Fields and Tracks

Existing Supply and Use

Table 3-11 outlines the supply of City-owned rectangular sports fields in Sault Ste. Marie, including soccer, football, and ultimate frisbee fields and a perimeter track. The City owns 31 fields, of which 4 are lit. Of this total, 27 are used exclusively for soccer, two are football fields and two are dedicated Ultimate Frisbee fields.



Table 3-10: Municipal Sports Fields in Sault Ste. Marie

Type	Location					Notes	Other Providers
	Strathclair Sports Complex		Queen Elizabeth Sports Complex		Elliot Park	Rosedale Park	
	lit	unlit	lit	unlit			elementary, secondary and post secondary
senior soccer	2	3			2		
intermediate soccer		3			1		
junior soccer		7					
mini soccer				9			
football			2				
Ultimate Frisbee						2	
track			1				

For the assessment, prime time is based on use patterns and is defined as:

- weeknights: 6 hours on lit fields and 4 hours on unlit fields
- weekends: 15 hours on lit fields and 14 hours on unlit fields²⁰

²⁰ Use patterns showed Saturday weekend use of 14 hours on unlit fields and 15 hours on lit fields. Since Sunday use totaled 8 hours only, Sundays were not included in prime time calculations.



Table 3-12 shows total peak prime time scheduled use for soccer and football fields by location. It notes the peak month of use for weeknights and weekends, associated hours and the proportion of monthly capacity. Peak use is shown by level of field for Strathclair. All fields are used May through August. The football fields at Queen Elizabeth are also used in September and October for a total of 45 hours on weeknights and 35 hours on weekends; Strathclair and Elliott Park fields are used in September.

Peak Prime Time Scheduled Field Use by Location from May Through August 2023

Location/# of Fields	Peak Month Weeknights	# of Hours/% of Capacity	Peak Month Weekends	# of Hours/% of Capacity
Soccer				
Strathclair				
Intermediate (3)	July	204 / 81%	July	42 / 11%
Junior (4)	July	166 / 49%	July	56 / 11%
Senior (5, 2 lit)	July	345.5 / 69%	July	43.5 / 6.7%
Queen E Mini	July	51 / 61%	May	8.5 / 8%
Elliott Park (2 sr., 1 int.)	July	140.5 / 55.8%	August	16.0 / 7.6%
Football				
Queen E (2, lit)	July	118 / 47%	June	49 / 20%

As the focus of soccer activity, Strathclair is by far the most heavily used facility. At the same time, maximum peak weeknight use in July is 81%. All other fields range from 47% to 69% capacity use during prime time. Collectively, July use at Strathclair comprises approximately 60% of the season's total, meaning that the remaining 40% is distributed over four



months (May, June, August and September). Peak weekend use in terms of capacity occurs at the Queen Elizabeth football fields in June. Other fields range from 7% to 11% capacity use during weekend prime time.

Collectively, July is the peak month for field use – especially on weeknights. Assuming 75% capacity use on playing fields is reasonable as a target, to permit some rotation for resting the turf while they are in play, only the intermediate fields at Strathclair are above this limit. All other fields can accommodate more prime time use. To some extent, pressure on fields during the peak month of July is addressed by lengthening the season.

Future Supply and Demand

As population increases over the term of the Master Plan, existing fields will meet additional unmet demand to some extent. Tracking prime time use by type of field, however, will better verify it across senior, intermediate, junior and mini soccer fields and the point at which capacity use is reached and will require additional facilities.

Sault Ultimate Players Association reported that City facilities are often not available when needed. Information provided by the City shows that the Rosedale fields are used exclusively by the Association, scheduled at the outset of each season, and that additional time is available, if needed.

Sault Minor Football indicated need for more space for practice than is currently available on City fields, and that fields are often not available when needed. As noted in Table 3-12, prime

time use in relation to capacity on these fields suggests time is available.

Sault College expressed interest in exploring a potential partnership with the City to develop a new turf field and an 8-lane running track. At the same time, there appears to be community interest in pursuing upgrades at the Jo Forman track. The need for a high quality, state-of-the-art facility to host NOSSA events was noted several times.

The 2019 ACTION PLAN contains a recommendation to review and assess the Jo Forman Track surfacing needs and costs related to improvements. Needed investment was previously estimated at \$1.5m. These figures should be updated and the School Boards, as continuing facility users, encouraged to contribute to costs. Potential new collaborations and agreements are discussed in section 5.0 on Service Delivery.

Need for Improvements

City plans include adding an additional washroom facility and water bottle filling station at the Strathclair soccer complex to improve accessibility. The Greater Northern Soccer Association have contributed capital funds for the installation of lights at Strathclair #1 and #2 fields, paid for installing the irrigation system, and contribute 50% to hydro and water consumption costs. The Association is interested in further improvements to the turf to facilitate play.



The Ultimate Association reported poor/hazardous field conditions because of hard pack terrain with many ruts/divots, and inadequate storage. The City should assess the field conditions for required improvements.

- F 27: Clarify capacity target(s) for prime time use on rectangular sports fields by type and the need to rest natural turf.
- F 28: Schedule all existing fields to achieve capacity use.
- F 29: As part of ongoing consultation, clarify user groups' concerns about lack of field availability and needed improvements..
- F 30: Review and update costs to resurface/upgrade the Jo Forman Track, and encourage School Boards to contribute to costs of improvements.

Cricket Pitches

The City owns one cricket pitch at Queen Elizabeth Sports Complex, which was built seven years ago to increase the diversity of sport opportunities in the community. Although the field is not heavily used, the City has a team that travels to play in other communities and hosts northern events at the Queen Elizabeth Complex.

Cricket Canada notes there are 820 clubs in the country, and the largest concentrations are in southern Ontario and greater Vancouver. Growth in participation is being driven by an increasingly multi-cultural national population and shortened versions of the game. The Twenty20 (T20) format, for example, has shortened the time to complete a match from the traditional six to eight hours to three. Table 3-13 shows total and introductory level growth in participation from 2012 to 2016.

Table 3-11: Participation in Cricket in Canada from 2012 to 2016²¹

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Introductory (% total)	49,649 (85.2%)	60,084 (87.0%)	82,816 (85.5%)	95,640 (87.1%)	111,366 (87.6%)
Other levels	8,610	8,940	11,039	14,292	15,705
Totals	58,259	69,024	93,855	109,832	127,071

²¹ Source: <https://cricketcanada.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/STRATEGIC-PLAN-1.pdf>



During this period, the introductory program (Junior Kids) comprised a consistently large majority of participants. Figures for 2014 show the introduction of Modified Cricket as the next level up from introductory involvement. 2016 is the first year that a figure for Junior Players appears between Modified and Senior Players, which may reflect the progressive development of the younger levels over the five-year period. The figures also show very low participation at the senior women's level in all five years, which held steady at 60 players. Should cricket follow the route of other traditionally male-dominated sports, there appears to be considerable potential for growth in female participation.

The Cricket Canada Strategic Plan 2018-2020 Summary and Highlights²² suggests a continuing focus on developmental programming through the following initiatives:

- developing a city-based youth program
- strengthening/expanding the school program
- community/recreational coach recruitment and development

The City of Sault Ste. Marie appears to have been 'ahead of the curve' in expanding its facility supply to include a cricket pitch. Some communities in areas where demand exists have not yet developed facilities. Others are finding it difficult to keep up with demand. The City of Toronto, for example, notes cricket is one of three sports for which there is unmet demand

for facilities. It is both strong and growing in child and adult involvement, and its extent has been unexpected.²³

Sault Ste. Marie, therefore, is well set to accommodate growth in cricket at all levels and support growth among younger age groups. The 2019 ACTION PLAN indicates the pitch comprises an official size facility with storage shed and batting cage in a shared field model.

Although current use levels suggest another cricket pitch will not be required during the term of the Master Plan, continuing to monitor and track facility use will be important to long term planning and identifying changes in participation levels generated beyond population growth.

F 31: Continue to support the development of cricket as part of community sport through asset maintenance and tracking facility use.

²² Source: <https://cricketcanada.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/STRATEGIC-PLAN-1.pdf>

²³ Matt Gurney, Jan 9, 2020. (<https://www.tvo.org/article/end-of-an-ice-age-part-3-why-youthhockey-can-still-besaved>)



Courts: Tennis, Pickleball and Bocce

Existing Supply and Use

Table 3-14 outlines the supply of City-owned courts in Sault Ste. Marie, including tennis, pickleball, dual tennis/pickleball, and bocce. The City owns eight tennis, eight pickleball, 12 tennis/pickleball, and four bocce courts. The Elliott courts are scheduled by Soo Pickleball. The remaining courts are available for casual play.





Table 3-12: Municipal Courts in Sault Ste. Marie

Location	Type					Other Providers
	tennis	pickleball	dual T/PB*	bocce		Marconi Multi-Cultural Event Centre (3 indoor bocce)
North Street Sports Complex	2				home to club; do not want dual courts	The Rink: new commercially operated, covered 3+ pickleball courts in summer at the Machine Shop
Manzo Park			2	2	Manzo bocce both lit; planned for upgrades	
Elliott Sports Complex		8		2	potential hub for bocce	
Snowden Park			2			(https://machineshopinc.ca/century-21-the-rink)
Merrifield Park			2			
Wilcox Park			2			
Birchwood Park	2					Algoma University: 2 outdoor tennis courts Sault College: 2 outdoor tennis courts
Sutton Park	2					
Boston Park			2			
Penhorwood Park	2					
Lasalle Park			2			
totals	8	8	12	4		

*2 dual = 2 tennis courts and 2 pickleball courts on the same court surface



The eight pickleball courts at the Elliot Sports Complex is home to Soo Pickleball and provides a focus for organized activity. Elliot Sports Complex should continue to be the location for formal pickleball activity through scheduling either by the City or Soo Pickleball. It was noted in the user group survey that the courts are not properly surfaced, and there is no shaded seating.

The Tennis Association uses outdoor courts at Algoma University and Sault College. It was noted that the City's courts are not conducive to organized use as they cannot be booked, are not well maintained, and only one site has washrooms. It was also noted that tennis has lost courts to meet the rapidly growing demand for pickleball facilities.

Tennis courts, therefore, should remain designated as such, be assigned priority for improvements needed to accommodate organized activity and begin to be scheduled - either by the City or through the Tennis Association. The 2019 ACTION PLAN indicates that the City has evaluated its inventory and use of public tennis courts with the objective of preparing a plan for resurfacing and lining. This program will fit with the interests of organized tennis in accessing and scheduling good quality facilities. Scheduling for all types of courts should also allocate designated times for casual use by the community, in both prime and non-prime time periods.

Future Supply and Demand

After courts are ready to be allocated for organized use and scheduling is instituted, use can be monitored and tracked to determine future need to add to supply. Demand will be driven by a combination of population growth and participation levels in relation to the ability of existing courts to accommodate more use.

Whether or not bocce courts are formally scheduled or casual use only, activity should be monitored to determine the potential need to provide additional courts in response to growth that might be the result of City and partner efforts to regenerate participation. As noted in the discussion on service planning and evaluation, periodic, rotating checks on unscheduled facilities should be made to document use at different times. It is not anticipated that population growth alone will result in the need for more courts.

Need for Improvements

As noted above, there are improvement needs reported for all courts before the three sports - tennis, pickleball and bocce - can better thrive in Sault Ste. Marie. The City is in the process of attending to these as opportunities for collaboration and budget are available. In the interests of equity, priority should be assigned to improving some courts for each type of sport in the short-term, where it is feasible to do so from a cost perspective. Required improvements to remaining courts can be addressed once a 'basic' level of service is established.



- F 32: Provide facilities for organized tennis and pickleball to support formal community-based programming by the Tennis Association and Soo Pickleball, while ensuring court scheduling includes designated times for casual use by the community, in both prime and non-prime time periods.
- F 33: Provide equitable support for organized tennis, pickleball and bocce activity by assigning priority to improvements to some courts for each type of sport in the short-term and addressing improvements to remaining courts once a 'basic' level of service is established.
- F 34: Monitor and track all court use to determine use in relation to capacity and the need for future additions to supply.

3.5 Arts, Culture and Heritage Facilities

Supply and Use

Sault Ste. Marie is home to a wealth of assets related to the arts, culture and heritage. The City-owned Roberta Bondar event Pavilion, the Sault Ste. Marie Museum and its Public Libraries are part of a network of facilities and sites including the Art Gallery of Algoma²⁴, the Sault Community Theatre Centre, Downtown Plaza, the Canadian Bushplane Heritage Centre, and the Sault Canal Lock and Ermatinger Clergue the last two of which are National Historic Sites. The municipality is responsible for the latter of the two National Historic Sites. The City has a total of 39 designated heritage properties for which it is responsible, either through ownership or by support through grants and rebates to property owners.

The Roberta Bondar Pavilion is an outdoor venue accommodates a variety of special events including concerts, festivals, fundraising activities, ceremonies and wedding receptions. The Tent Pavilion facility can be booked on a part-day or full-day basis by individuals and not-for-profit and commercial groups. The Pavilion structure provides 14,000 square feet of covered open space that can seat up to 1,750 people. The facility is equipped with a stage, dressing rooms,

²⁴ The Art Gallery of Algoma is in the process of preparing a plan to build a new, larger state-of-the-art facility.



storage space, warming kitchen, public address system, tables and chairs and an outdoor amphitheatre.

Between 2017 and 2022, 2019 accommodated the largest number of events (96) at the Bondar Pavilion. The first year post-COVID (2022) hosted the second highest number at 86, which was much closer to that of 2019 than either the 48 or 62 events in the previous two years. The 2023 targeted number of events is 80 and, while this number is below both totals for 2019 and 2022, the number of people who have attended events so far this year 73,244. This figure considerably exceeds that which was targeted for the whole of 2023 and is also higher than total attendance numbers in 2019 and 2022 – 61,925 and 64,981, respectively.

The Ermatinger Clergue National Historic Site (ECNHS) is a cultural feature and attraction in Sault Ste. Marie. It operates year-round and comprises an interactive Heritage Discovery Centre and two of the oldest stone buildings, located northwest of Toronto – the Ermatinger Old Stone House and the Clergue Blockhouse. Between 2017 and 2022, visits to the Ermatinger Clergue National Historic Site (ECNHS) peaked in 2019 at 31,065. Visits to date in 2023, at 26,708, have already exceeded targets and are considerably higher than either 2017 or 2018 totals – 21,107 and 22,517, respectively. Understandably, trends in numbers of tours and programs delivered were similar.

The Sault Ste. Marie Museum houses five permanent galleries, an exhibition gallery, program space, and a gift shop. It is owned by the City and governed by a not-for-profit Board, which is allocated about \$200,000 annually for operations

and programming. Consultation with staff indicated that the Museum is well used for programs and visits, and the Board submits an annual report to Council on programs, participation levels, visitors, income and expenses.

Future Supply and Demand

While available information shows a definite post-COVID rebound and growth in visitors/participation at both the Roberta Bondar Pavilion and the ECNHS, it is not clear whether these facilities and associated programs could accommodate increases in events, visits or participants – both from physical capacity and staffing perspectives. Service monitoring and evaluation practices will help inform the potential to optimize use of these assets.

Many of these features, which are unique to Sault Ste. Marie, are located in the downtown core and/or along the waterfront (i.e., ECHNS, Museum, Art Gallery, Bondar Pavilion and Bushplane Heritage Centre). This is beneficial to serving both residents and visitors within an identifiable 'arts, culture and heritage district' by making visits to several attractions easy. In this way, 'demand' is facilitated by proximity. It might be further encouraged by several attractions being bundled in 'packages' at a collective, reduced entry fee, a 'passport' purchase to all attractions or discounted tickets if purchased online in advance of visits.

Another opportunity that was mentioned in consultation was using the bandshell at Bellevue Park to provide more events. It was noted that it appears to be underused in relation to pre-



COVID activity. It was also noted that this has also been the case at the SOO market site (now adjacent to the Downtown Plaza) since COVID shut-downs. As a new facility, however, use will increase over time.

In early December 2023, it was announced that Algoma University will be the location of the Makwa Waakaa'igan centre of cultural excellence, Truth and Reconciliation, learning and healing. The University has been awarded \$5m in funding from the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund. "The \$43.3 million project to be built on the Algoma campus through the leadership of the Children of Shingwauk Alumni Association (CSAA), a community of Residential School Survivors and their descendants...The facility will serve as a centre of excellence for sharing global Indigenous practices. Makwa Waakaa'igan is expected to draw more than 35,000 visitors annually and contribute to the education of 15,000 post-secondary and high school students. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2024 with a grand opening slated for 2026."²⁵

The Centre will be a significant new cultural resource in northern Ontario and may offer opportunities to collaborate and increase the contribution of Indigenous culture and knowledge to City programs and events.

Need for Improvements

As with other City facilities, these assets would be included in ongoing asset management work.

- F 35: Include all City-operated arts, culture and heritage facilities that are programmed in service monitoring and evaluation to establish use in relation to capacity and determine the potential to grow activity at these locations.
- F 36: Initiate the concept of an Art, Culture and Heritage District in the downtown core and along the waterfront as a focus for promotion and attraction.
- F 37: Continue to build local events programming at the Bellevue Park bandshell.

²⁵ <https://www.sootoday.com/local-news/algoma-u-receives-major-funding-boost-for-new-indigenous-cultural-centre-7937755>

This page was intentionally left blank



4.0 Parks and Trails

4.1 Introduction and Background to the Assessment

This section of the Plan focuses on parks, trails and park amenities for unstructured use, for example, playgrounds, picnic areas, skate parks, outdoor rinks, and splash pads etc. Outdoor facilities used for organized sports (such as ball diamonds, soccer fields, tennis and pickleball courts), are discussed in section 3.0, Recreation Facilities. The section is organized into three parts:

1. Introduction, including overview of what we heard and inventory
2. General Park and Trail Recommendations, which provide strategic, overarching direction for the delivery of parks and trails, and recommendations that apply to all spaces in general
3. Parks and Trails Site-specific Recommendations, which provides recommendations for specific park and trails



What We Heard

The following bullets summarize key, overarching feedback related to parks and trails received from consultations with Council, staff, user groups, partners, and the community.

General

- Overall, there is an adequate number and quality of parks and trails
- Need to refresh and add new equipment, painting, etc. to maintain aesthetics
- Playgrounds and neighbourhood parks need attention (multiple comments)
- Winter maintenance of trails at Bellevue park
- Parks, trails, and outdoor facilities had the greatest levels of satisfaction (compared to indoor facilities and programs and events) with a total of 71% of online survey respondents selecting satisfied or somewhat satisfied
- Interest in acquiring Kinsmen Park
- Increase and improve signage at parks
- Increase accessibility for all ages
- When asked to what extent respondents think the City should focus on when developing and providing future parks

and recreation services, waterfront spaces/access (71%), indoor facilities/programs (51%), and neighbourhood parks (40%) were in the top three selected responses (random resident survey)

- Sixty-two percent (62%) do not use outdoor parks and facilities (random resident survey)
- Eighty-six percent (86%) do not think additional indoor or outdoor recreation facilities are needed (random resident survey)
- Eighty-one percent (81%) do not use trails (random resident survey)
- Online mini survey: 71% (largest group) prefer self-directed activities (e.g., cycling, running, swimming etc.); 62% use trails, 57% spend time at waterfront

Specific Amenity Requests

- Dog park in west end
- Splash pad needed downtown and in west end
- Camping at Hiawatha and/or Point Des Chenes
- Trail amenities like canteens, washrooms
- Park features that can be used by a variety of ages



Inventory

Table 4-1 contains a summary of key park amenities in the City for unstructured use.

Table 4-1: Summary of key park amenities for unstructured use in the City

Amenity Type	Quantity
Playground	63
BMX pump track	1
Skate Park	2
Basketball court	7
Splash pad	3
Ultimate Frisbee/Disc golf courses	3
Dog park	1
Outdoor ice rink	6
Outdoor pool	2
Beach	1
Total number of parks	80





The provision levels of these park amenities was compared against comparable municipalities, in Table 4-2. Park amenity provision varies widely depending on the specific context of any municipality, and there are no hard standards/best practices, so these numbers are provided only to give an idea of what is provided by somewhat comparable municipalities. Overall the amenities in Sault are in line with others.

Table 4-2: Comparison of selected park amenity provision in Sault Ste. Marie

	Municipality and 2021 Census Population							
Facility	City of Sault Ste. Marie 72,051		City of Timmins 41,145		City of Thunder Bay 110,172		City of Sarnia 72,047	
	#	ratio	#	ratio	#	Ratio	#	Ratio
Disc Golf	2	1:36,025	0	-	1	1:110,172	1	1:72,047
Outdoor Rinks	6	1:12,008	4 (1 is loop)	1:10,286	40	1:2,754	0	-
Playgrounds	63	1:1,144	42	1:914	UN*	-	UN*	-
Splash Pads	3	1:24,017	1**	1:41,145	5	1:22,034	1	1:72,047
Basketball/Multi-sport Courts	7	1:10,293	0	-	0	-	0	-
Skateparks	2	1:36,025	2	1:20,573	6	1:18,326	0	-
BMX Pump Tracks	1	1:72,051	0	-	1	-	0	-
Leash-free dog parks	1	1:72,051	0	-	0	-	0	-

** also one in Conservation authority property

UN* undetermined



4.2 General Park and Trail Considerations

This section discusses focus areas to be prioritized, for the parks and trails systems as a whole.

The focus areas discussed include:

- Parkland Classification and Provision
- Implementing the Park Revitalization Plan
- Providing ample free, unstructured outdoor recreation opportunities
- Improving accessibility
- Horticulture and community gardens
- General (overall) trail priorities

Parkland Classification and Provision

Classification

The 2022 DRAFT Official Plan provides a basic parkland classification system, which has been adapted in Table 4-3 with approximate size guidelines and examples of existing parks that fall within each category. The classification system is a guide rather than a set of rules. For example, typical sizes are provided based on best practices among municipalities, and consideration for the sizes of existing parks in the Sault. For example, the size range provided for neighbourhood parks takes into account the small size of the majority of the parks in the Sault (42 parks under 1.0 hectare, half of which are under 0.5 Ha). The majority of the parks that are less than 0.5 hectares function as neighborhood parks, rather than parkettes. Going forward however, new parks should meet or exceed the typical sizes provided here for their type.



Table 4-3: City of Sault Ste. Marie parkland classification system

Park Type	Typical Size	Description of Park Type per Draft Official Plan, 2022, section 6.1 Parks and Recreation	Examples
Community Park/Trail	2.0 Ha or greater	• Serve as destinations for active recreation and become focal points for the City • Provide a range of built and natural facilities for organized and unorganized recreational activities and accommodate a wide variety of social and cultural activities • Be designed and maintained to be easily accessible from all parts of the City and beyond by: ◦ Ensuring easy access to public transit ◦ Adequate on-site parking ◦ Appropriate pedestrian facilities • Incorporate natural or cultural heritage features, as appropriate • Provide opportunities catering to the local neighbourhood and community	• Bellevue • Pointe Des Chenes • Elliott Sports Complex • Waterfront Boardwalk • Strathclair Sports Complex • Manzo Pool



Park Type	Typical Size	Description of Park Type per Draft Official Plan, 2022, section 6.1 Parks and Recreation	Examples
Neighbourhood Park/ Trail	0.6 - 2.0 Ha	• Provide a range of opportunities and experiences for youth recreational needs as well as a broader demographic, including but is not limited to play structures, pathways, gathering areas, sports fields, community gardens and multi-use pads/courts • Have a safe walkable service radius about 800m, without the need to cross major barriers, such as non-signalized intersections at arterial streets • Include amenities that attract residents from beyond the 800m safe walkable service area where appropriate • Incorporate natural or cultural heritage features as appropriate. • Are generally not provided in the rural area or required as part of any rural estate subdivisions	• Lasalle • Drake St. • Wilcox
Parkette	0.5 Ha or less	• Parkettes primarily exist and will be developed in the Downtown core, providing small scale recreational, cultural, and social interaction opportunities • Parkettes may also be developed as a temporary use until such time that a property is developed or redeveloped	• Korah • Bruce St. • John St.
Linear Parks	Undefined	• Off-road wherever possible and supported by on-road links where necessary • Facilitate accessibility and safety by providing multi-use pathways through and to residential areas • Incorporate the trail system with other recreational components such as parks	• John Rowswell Hub Trail



Provision and Distribution of Parkland

The City has 80 parks in total (including the new Downtown Plaza opening winter 2023), which are evenly distributed across the five wards, both in terms of number of parks and geographic distribution. Figure 4-11 from the Official Plan Background Report (2021) shows the 800m safe walking distance from each park. The safe walking areas almost completely cover the map, indicating almost all residential areas have safe, close access to a park. Figures 4-2 to 4-6 provide a closer view of the locations of each park.

It should also be noted that there are areas where subdivisions are in various stages of approval/development, and parkland has not yet been dedicated and/or not yet developed. This is the case east of Dacey Road where two subdivisions will have neighbourhood parks in the future.

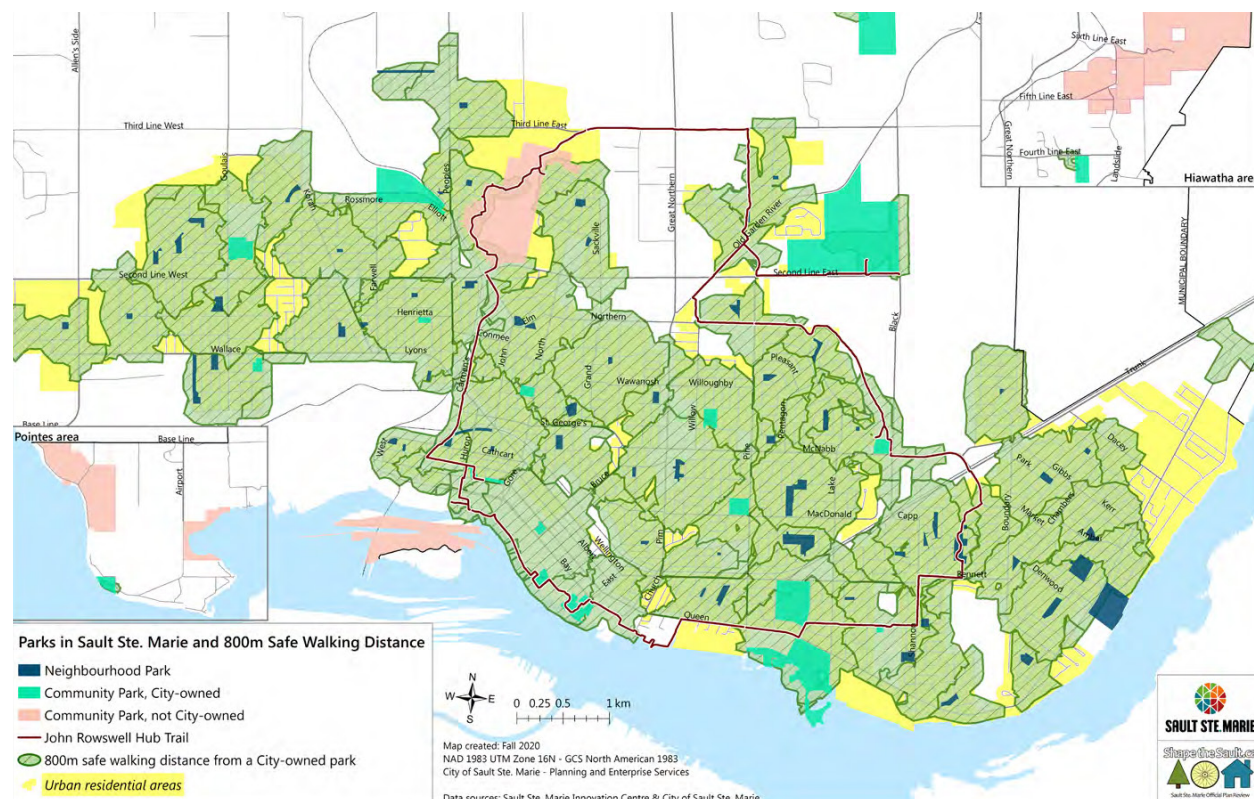
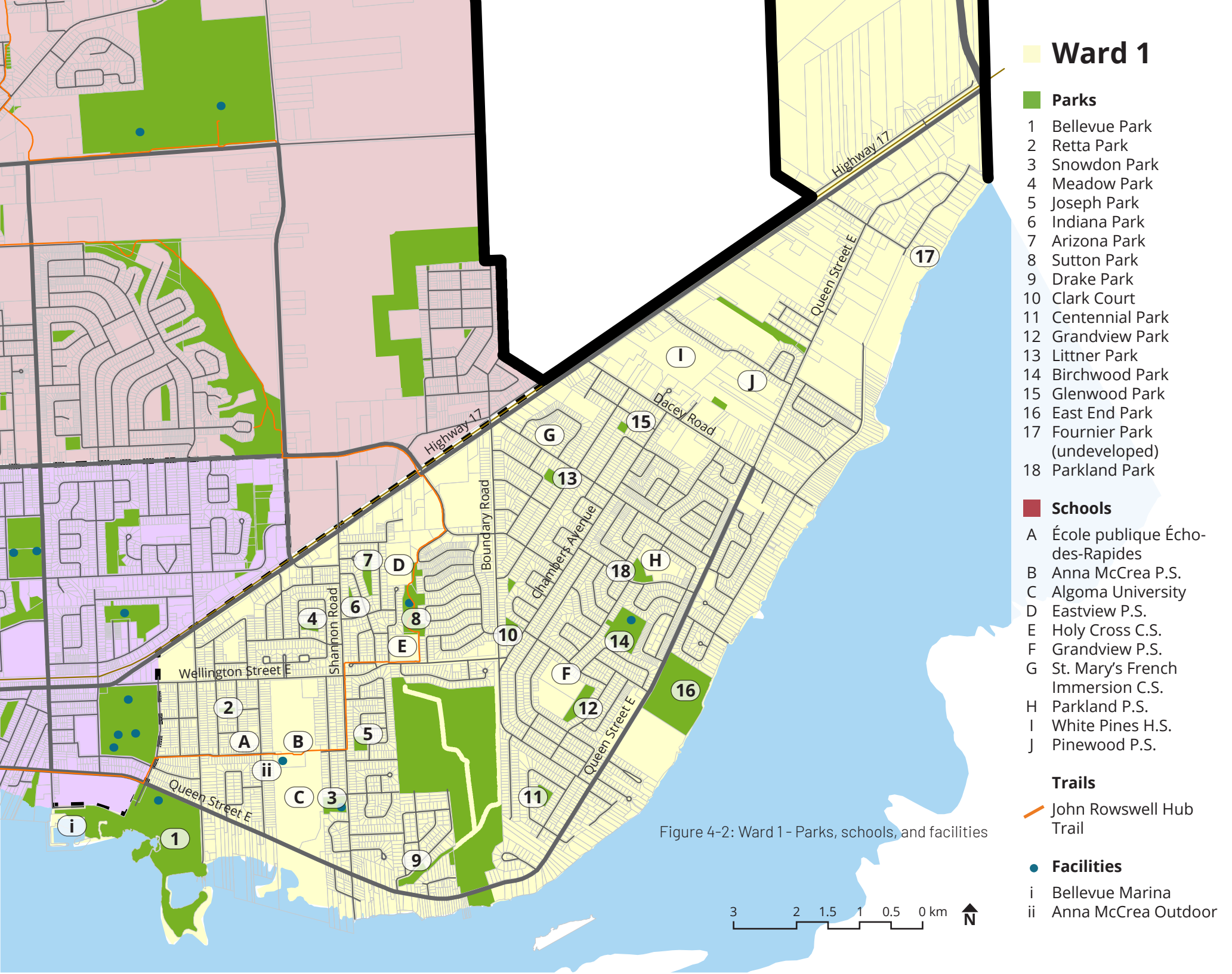


Figure 4-1: Safe walking distance (800m) from each park*

* Sault Ste. Marie Official Plan Review Background Report, 2021, p137





Ward 3

Parks

- 1 St Patrick Park
- 2 Greenfield Park
- 3 Fort Creek CA
- 4 LaSalle Park
- 5 Superior Park
- 6 Rosedale Park
- 7 Prince Charles Park (undeveloped)
- 8 Eric Nystedt Park
- 9 Pelican Park
- 10 Forest Heights Park
- 11 Windsor Farm Park
- 12 Strathclair Park
- 13 Cambrian Heights
- 14 Forest Glen Park
- 15 Sunrise Ridge Park
- 16 Wishart Park
- 17 Manitou Park

Schools

- A Kiwedon P.S.
B Superior Hights H.S.
C Sault College
D Prince Charles School H.S.
E St. Paul C.S.
F Tarentorus School P.S.
G St. Mary's College H.S.
H Ben R. McMullin P.S.

Trails

- John Rowswell Hub Trail

Facilities

- i Strathclair Sports Complex

Figure 4-4: Ward 3 - Parks, schools, and facilities

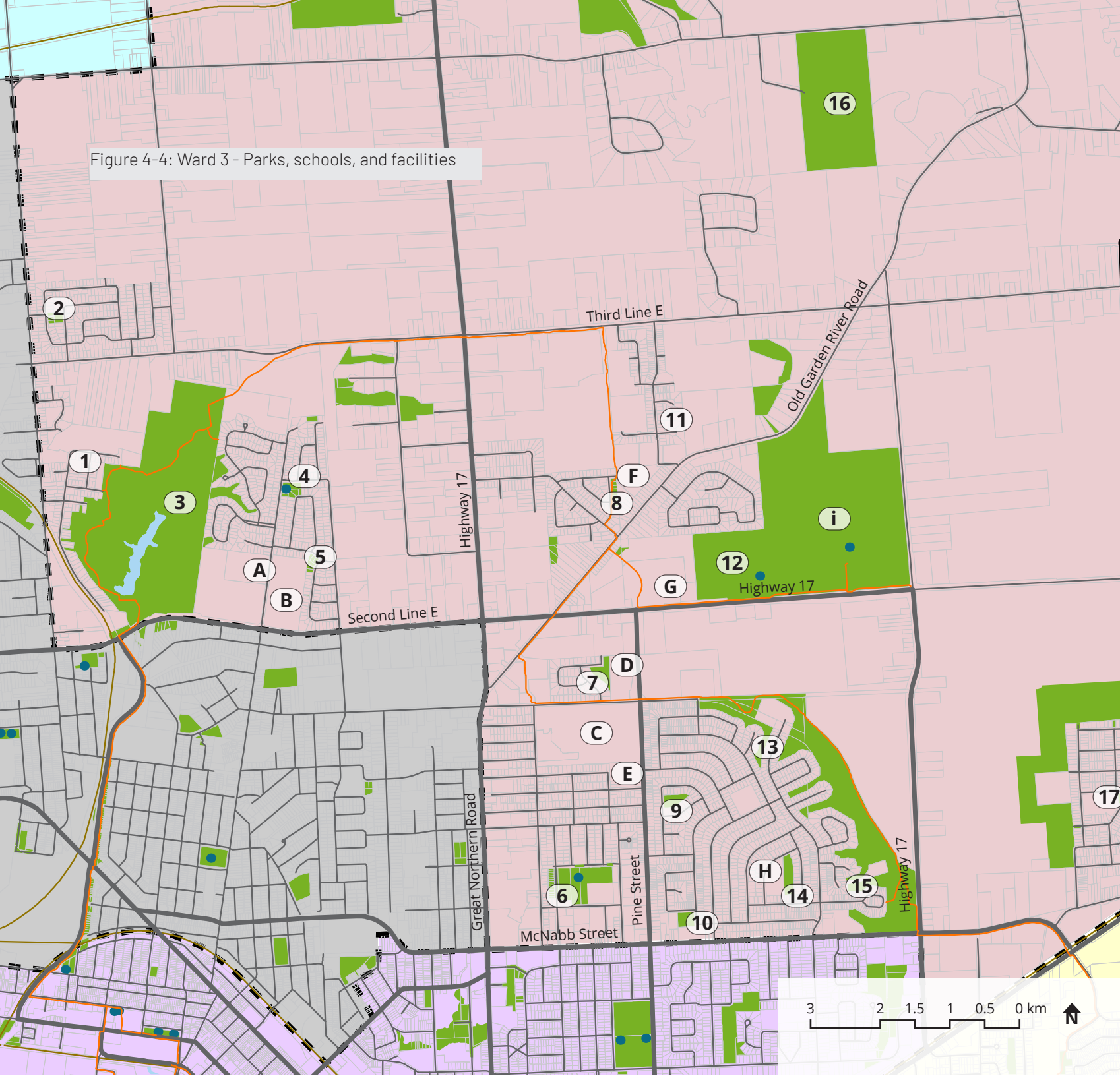


Figure 4-5: Ward 4 - Parks, schools, and facilities

Ward 4

Parks

- 1 Donna Park
- 2 Laurentian Park
- 3 Sussex Park
- 4 Korah Park
- 5 Green Acres Park
- 6 Ruth Park
- 7 William Merrifield Park
- 8 Patrick Park
- 9 Hillside Park
- 10 Lennox Park
- 11 James Lyons Park
- 12 Elm Park
- 13 North St. Park
- 14 Wilcox Park
- 15 Moffley Park
- 16 Northern Heights
- 17 Highland Park

Schools

- A Korah Collegiate H.S.
- B Isabel Fletcher P.S.
- C Our Lady of Lourdes C.S.
- D Thrive Child Development
- E Northland Adult Learning Centre
- F École Notre-Dame-du-Sault
- G St. Basil C.S.
- H Northern Heights P.S.
- I Boreal P.S.

Trails

- John Rowswell Hub Trail

Facilities

- i Northern Community Centre
- ii Elliott Sports Complex
- iii Pee Wee Arena

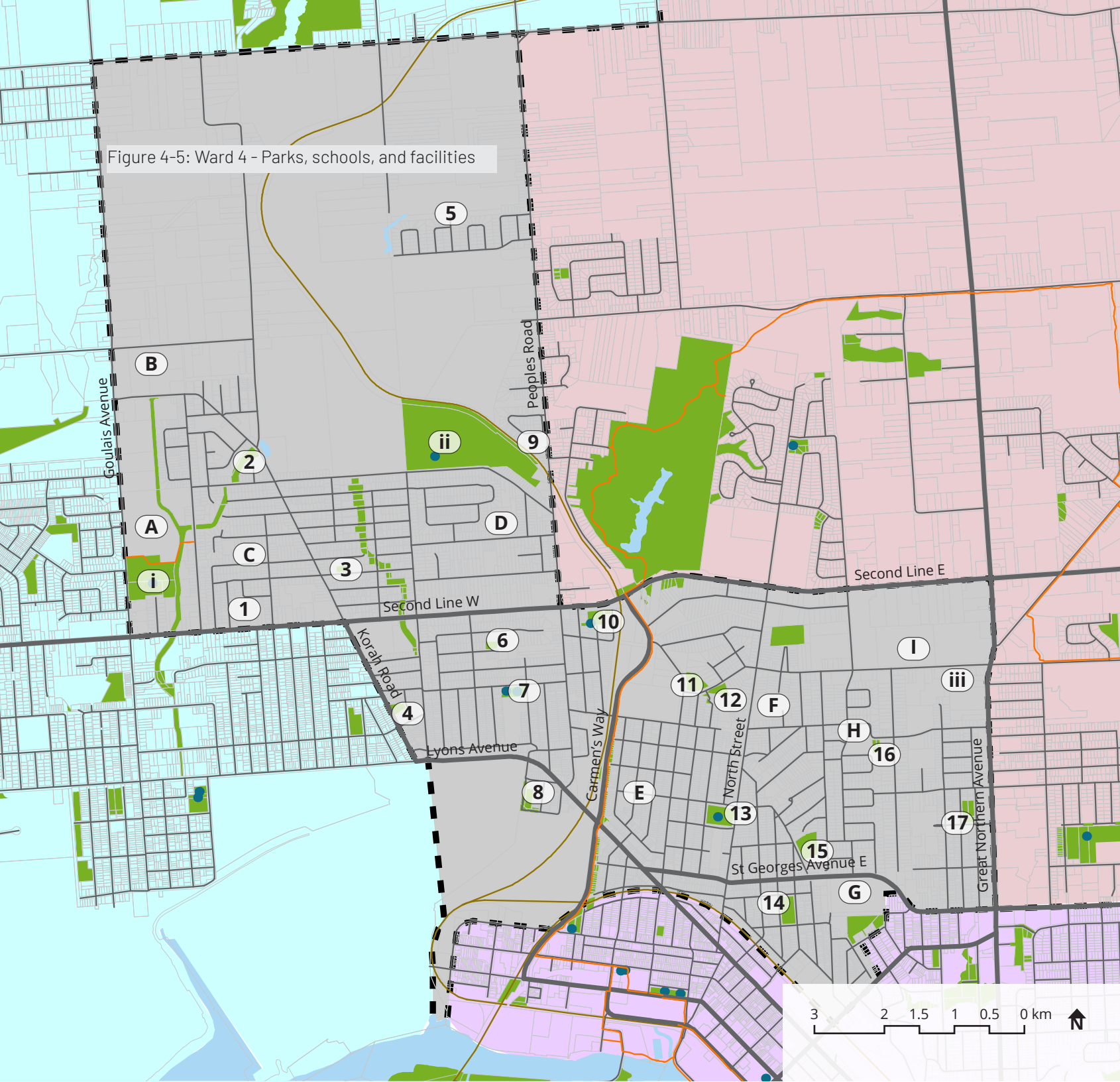
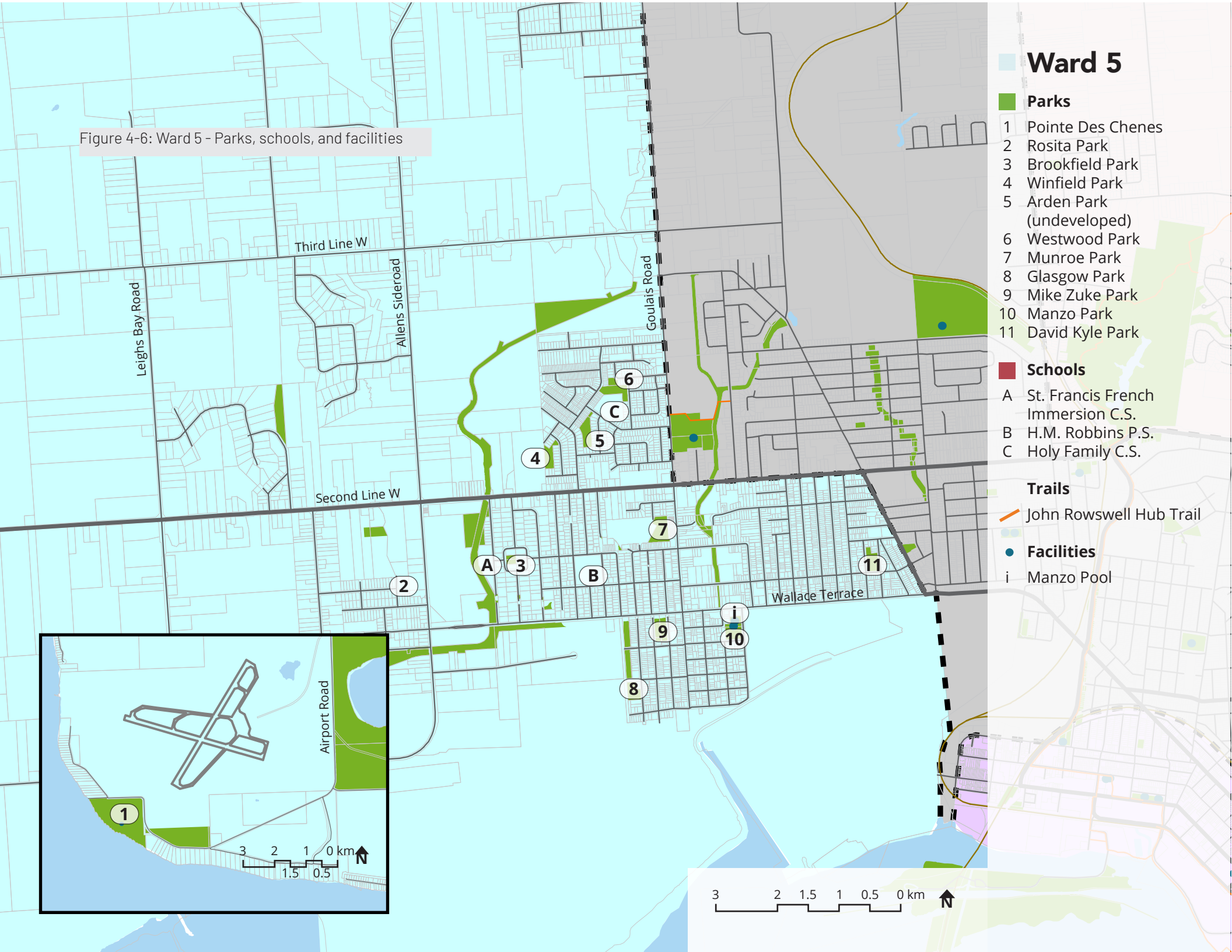


Figure 4-6: Ward 5 - Parks, schools, and facilities





The City has succeeded in providing ample access to parks to residents, in terms of amount, but more importantly in terms of close access. This was illustrated in Figure 4-1 that showed most residents are in safe walking distance to parks, and was further enforced through consultations with Council, staff and residents, who indicated consistent agreement that the City does not need to add to park supply, but rather needs to focus on improving existing parks, amenities, and facilities.

In addition to the numerous municipal parks, residents of the Sault have access to extensive natural spaces for recreation within and beyond the City limits (including Hiawatha Highlands, and Fort Creek Conservation Area).

In order to support the community's priority of improving existing parks, the City should adopt the new Parkland Dedication By-law that was developed alongside this Plan. The proposed By-law suggests that parkland dedication should be applied to most forms of development, not only to new lot creation (as is the case now). In addition to this, the City should consider accepting cash-in-lieu for new developments except in cases where a new residential subdivision is further than 800 – 1000m from an existing park. In those cases, the City should accept parkland, and the parkland should be large enough (e.g., greater than 1.0 ha), and suitable for recreation purposes. This means that leftover landscaped spaces such as awkward slivers of land, sensitive environmental features, boulevard medians, roundabout centers, or traffic island gateway features should not qualify as park space as part of parkland dedication from developers.

- PT 1: Adopt the updated parkland classification system.
- PT 2: Leftover landscaped spaces such as awkward slivers of land, environmentally sensitive features, boulevard medians, roundabout centers, or traffic island gateway features should not qualify as park space as part of parkland dedication from developers.
- PT 3: New parkland should be located with consideration of the access map (Figure 4-1), to provide parks or trails to those in areas who are not currently within 800-1000m of an existing park.
- PT 4: New subdivisions that are not within 800-1000m of an existing park should require parkland, and ideally a parcel greater than 1.0ha for maximum benefit to the community.
- PT 5: Infill and smaller developments in the urban area may accept cash-in-lieu if there are parks, trails, natural spaces, or recreation facilities relatively nearby (up to 1,000m away).



Park Revitalization Plan

In 2019 City staff conducted an analysis of all parks, focusing on play equipment, and applied scores based on the population demographics in the area (including age and income), walkability, and age of playground equipment (Table 4-5). The analysis resulted in a prioritized list of park equipment requiring updates, with three parks identified per year from 2021 to 2025, and a single park for the first year of the program in 2020 (Table 4-4). Since that time, funding has only been granted for the first park in 2020, Anna Marinelli Park, which was upgraded. A second park, Rosedale, was upgraded through a fundraiser initiated by Kiwanis Club, which was matched by City in-kind service.

Table 4-4: Neighbourhood Park Revitalization Timeline

Planned Year of revitalization	Parks to be revitalized
2020	• Anna Marinelli
2021	• Rosedale Park • Parkland Park • Downey Park
2022	• Wilcox Park • Westwood Park • Manitou Park
2023	• David Kyle Park • Mike Zuke Park • Ruth Street Park
2024	• Esposito Park • Laurentian Park • Sutton Park
2025	• Sussex Park • John Street Park • Boston Park

The current Park Revitalization Plan focuses on playground equipment. Indeed the City's inventory of play equipment



Table 4-5: Park analysis form used to rank and identify parks in need of revitalization

Criteria	5	4	3	2	1
Size (area)	Under 1 ha	up to 2 ha	to 3 ha	to 4ha	above 5ha
Playground Equipment/or Amenities (benches/paths or other features) & Age	open green space (no equipment/ benches)	3 play pieces Equipment age prior to 1990's	2 play pieces Equipment age between Year 1990 & 2000	Scott creative + swings Equipment age between 2000 -2005	5=5 play components Equipment age after 2005
Total Population (500 meter of park)	Over 1000 people	750 to 1000 people	750 to 500 people	250 to 500 people	Under 250 people
Household Median Income	Under \$35,000	\$35,000 to \$55,00	\$55,000 to \$75,000	\$75,000 to \$100,000	Over \$100,000
Neighborhood Walkability 1km- To another park	1 other location	2 locations	3 locations	4 locations	Over 4 location
Low Income Household Status %	Above 50%	Above 40%	Above 30%	Above 20%	Above 10%
Total					

Notes:

- Park analysis is applied to each municipally owned developed, undeveloped and naturalized park in parallel with the neighborhood it services.
- Each park area will be scored on a 1 to 5 scale using the measurables as identified below. (1 is low need and 5 is high need).
- In 1990's all wooden play structures were removed and replaced with Scott Packs. This revitalization was the last major playground equipment replacement.
- Parks with the highest total scores (Maximum 30) are locations that show evidence of consideration for revitalization.



includes some very aged pieces, and this should be a top priority for investment. In addition to the play equipment, when a park is being revitalized this should also include updates to accessibility (see below), pathways/trail connections, signage, seating, and plantings (e.g., trees, gardens, addition of naturalized areas, etc)(if applicable).

City staff applied a strong analysis to determine the needs and priorities of park revitalization, and this project should be supported and funded. Funding has been allocated for upgrades to three parks per year in the implementation strategy of this Plan (this funding could come from, for example, cash received in lieu of parkland dedication). The parks selected per year should be in accordance with the prioritized list of the Park Revitalization Plan. As the City grows and demographics shift, the prioritized list should be revisited periodically and scores re-assessed to ensure they still reflect the demographics and needs of each community. As the original list was created based on 2016 census data, it is due to be updated with 2021 data.





- PT 6: Incorporate improvements to pathways/trail connections, accessibility, beautification, signage, naturalization, tree planting, etc. into the Park Revitalization Plan.
- PT 7: Provide funding for implementation of the Park Revitalization Plan, aiming for at minimum three parks improved per year.
- PT 8: Update the Park Revitalization Plan based on 2021 census data, and reassess the scores applied to each park every two to four years (as asset management needs dictate and as new census data becomes available), and adjust the prioritized list of parks as needed.

Accessibility and Comfort

Accessibility is often discussed as a standalone issue, with the focus on meeting minimum requirements – usually this means complying with Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) standards. However, the general improvements discussed here have multiple, overlapping benefits that not only address accessibility, but serve to support public health and make the spaces safer, more comfortable, and more usable (e.g. in different seasons, and for different activities). Together, the following improvements will make parks accessible to users of all ages and ability levels, encourage residents to spend time outdoors year-round, and convene different communities and cultures to come together through recreation.

Accessibility

Parks need to be upgraded over time to ensure infrastructure meets Design of Public Spaces (DOPS) and AODA standard requirements regarding seating (benches and picnic tables), playground equipment, playground safety surface, and pavement surface/path of travel (including tactile warning strips, handrails, and ramps). Safe and accessible paths of travel should be provided through parks with connections to amenities. Pathways to Recreation Accessible Outdoor Spaces is a well written guide staff can use as a reference.

The City should conduct an audit of its parks to determine the degree of compliance with AODA and DOPS standards (this can be incorporated as part of the Park Revitalization Plan), and update its internal inventories and public web directories



accordingly. Completing the audit will allow the City to have a clear picture of the status of accessibility in each park, and will help to then develop a prioritized plan for upgrades based on need. This audit should be completed in consultation with the City's Accessibility Advisory Committee.

The City should incorporate changes to meet accessibility standards as part of routine upgrades and repairs as park amenities reach their end of life cycle. Examples of upgrades to playground accessibility include:

- Poured in place rubber or rubber tile safety/fall surface
- Cast in place flush concrete curb around perimeter of playground to retain safety surface and allow for barrier free access
- Playground design that meets minimum accessibility requirements as per CAN/CSA Z614-07 Annex H: Children's Playspaces and equipment that are accessible to persons with disabilities

Another key accessibility consideration for parks and trails is providing rest areas at regular intervals. There is no single agreed-upon standard for this, as it is dependent on the particular situation, and many municipalities decide on their own standard. The Illustrated Technical Guide to the Design of Public Spaces suggests every 30m, though this may not be applicable in every space - this may be more suitable for smaller urban parks, rather than long trail segments. As another example, the York Region standard for accessible trails

is every 350m apart, and this is referring to longer, natural trails.

Further, all new development parks should incorporate accessibility in the design phase.

Shelter from Sun and Rain

As a matter of community health and safety, and to support use of parks and trails in all weather, adequate shelter needs to be provided in each park, or at key trail locations, either through the tree canopy or a built structure. This is particularly important in playgrounds, picnic areas, and sport fields where people often spend considerable time exposed to the sun, especially vulnerable populations such as children and seniors. Given the importance of providing shade in parks, shade structures and/or additional tree planting should be incorporated into all parks. The same consideration should be made for trail segments that have long stretches that lack rest areas and/or shade. Strategic tree planting should be a priority for the myriad benefits provided (e.g., shade, carbon sequestration, stormwater management, etc.). In the immediate and short term, however, shade structures and pavilions should also be provided, as trees will take years before reaching maturity and offering the benefits of shade. Larger pavilions intended for rentals for groups/special events can both encourage use of parks and help offset costs of providing shade structures.

The New South Wales Health Department and Cancer Society of New Zealand Inc. developed a comprehensive and helpful guide to sun protection entitled "Under Cover: Guidelines



for Shade Planning and Design.” It is a technical guide that describes how different structures (different built structures as well different tree types) provide shade, how to conduct a shade audit of a park, site-specific considerations (e.g., for sports fields and for parks) and more.

The National Program for Playground Safety at the University of Northern Iowa also prepared a study for the Standards Council of Canada on this subject, entitled “Thermally Comfortable Playgrounds: A Review of Literature and Survey of Experts” (2020). This study contains valuable background research and provides guidelines for design of playgrounds, water features,



Figure 4-7: [Example of warming station, design and image by Susan Drysdale for the Toronto Beaches Winter Stations Design Competition](#)



Figure 4-8: Urban Blu self-cleaning washroom in Fort Francis, ON



and shade provision. Both guides can be valuable resources for the City.

Warming Stations

A warming station is a partially or completely enclosed space that is available for people to escape the elements and warm up for a brief time. These can be as large or as small as a site allows and can be heated if connected to hydro. An energy efficient option is to equip the shelter with buttons to turn on a heat source for a set period of time, as has been done with some GO Transit shelters. This ensures the heat is only running when people are using it. In Sault, warming stations would be suitable at outdoor rinks, and at any major park in which year-round use is the focus of future improvements and programming (e.g., the Downtown Plaza, Esposito Park, Clergue Park, Wishart Park etc.).

Washroom Access

Washrooms are currently provided at most of Sault's larger destination parks open in the summer months, where park use and activity supports the larger community. Washrooms should also be provided at busy community parks and trail heads, which may be accomplished through the provision of portable toilets, especially when water and sanitary service is not available. Where feasible, washrooms should remain available year-round, particularly at parks/trails with outdoor rinks or other winter uses. For built facilities that are not winterized, portable toilets (i.e., "Porta Potties") can be provided during winter. As discussed previously, parks should be audited for AODA and DOPS accessibility and this extends to washrooms as well. Washrooms should follow universal design, provide adult

change tables, and gender neutral options. Urban Blu provides fully accessible, self-cleaning washroom facilities that would be an ideal option for the City to consider (Figure 4-8).

Drinking Water Sources

Providing a source of drinking water at parks allows people to increase the length of time they stay and can help prevent heat-related illnesses in hot weather. Drinking water is especially important in parks with sports and other active facilities that people use for more than an hour or two at a time (e.g., soccer fields, splash pads, picnic areas, etc.). If a park is in an unserviced area, the City could assess the feasibility of installing a water tank or connecting to well water in order to provide drinking water.

Lighting

At this latitude, winter days can be fully dark by 5:00 pm. In order to encourage use of parks, trails, and facilities in winter months, this should be taken into account to ensure selected parks and facilities targeted for winter/shoulder season use are sufficiently lit (e.g., including sport fields/courts, outdoor rinks, etc.).

Sustainable lighting options such as LED or solar should be used. A challenge associated with solar lights has been that the lights lack the ability to retain their full intensity for the duration of the night. This may not be an issue for parks and facilities that are officially open/used until 11:00 pm. However, if the purpose of the lights is for safety and they need to remain bright all night, it may be problematic. Solar technology is evolving quickly, and it is now possible to address this issue by



setting lighting profiles: pre-set schedules that dictate when the lights operate and the extent of their brightness, and the ability to switch to a motion sensor setting during the least used hours of the night.

CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design)

An important component of keeping spaces safe and free of vandalism is fostering a strong sense of belonging as well as the belief that parks and recreation facilities are owned and cared for by all members of the community.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is a multi-disciplinary crime prevention approach that uses architecture, urban planning, and facility management to reduce crime opportunities and fear of crime through strategies intended to build a sense of community.¹ The principles of First Generation CPTED include:

Territoriality/territorial control: Locate public spaces near residential areas where residents already come to associate the spaces around their homes as their own.

Natural surveillance: Encourage the ability for onlookers to casually observe activity in public spaces through clear sightlines, lighting, landscaping (i.e., clearing bushes, shrubs, and overgrowth). Holding activities and programming in public spaces also increases natural surveillance.

Image and milieu: Support residents in getting to know their neighbours, and maintain a positive image of an area (e.g., beautification, litter clean-ups).

Access control: Introduce road barriers or landscaping to control frontage in the creation of mini-neighbourhoods.

The principles of Second Generation CPTED include:

Social cohesion: Enhance positive social relations/groups between residents of a neighbourhood focused on solving local problems (e.g., promote activities, interaction, collaboration).

Community culture: Convene people to create a common sense of purpose and form a strong bond (e.g., cultural events, art and music festival, placemaking and placekeeping activities).

Connectivity: Promote inclusivity among all neighbourhoods and groups regardless of ethnicity, income, gender, age, ability (e.g., communication, linked walkways, events shared by multiple neighbourhoods)

Threshold capacity: Embrace genuine diversity in the range of community uses (e.g., parks, amenities, food outlets, recreation buildings).

Employing CPTED in parks, facilities, and trails will both foster safety, and discourage vandalism.

¹ <https://www.cpted.net/Primer-in-CPTED>



Seating

Seating should be provided at all parks, in line with the type of use, and along trails. If picnic tables are fixed to the ground to prevent theft, they should be placed in a variety of formations to allow smaller and larger groups to sit together as needed.

It is occasionally the practice to remove seating and picnic tables during winter months to protect them from the elements, but seating should be selected and placed so that it can be used year-round to allow people to sit and socialize outdoors. As winters become milder due to climate change, the need for all-season seating will be greater as people will walk and gather outdoors more often in the winter months.

The recommended level of services discussed in this section related to accessibility, safety and comfort would result in an increase of required staff time. For example, more time spent clearing trails, cleaning/checking washrooms, and the general maintenance and upkeep of additional amenities such as lighting, fountains, seating etc. As the level of service is increased, the City should add staff sufficient for maintenance and operation.

- PT 9: Ensure that all playgrounds are maintained to CSA standards and within the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.
- PT 10: Conduct an accessibility audit to determine the current degree of accessibility within each park/ playground, and trail segment, and update the City website and parks inventory accordingly (this can be integrated into the Park Revitalization Plan).
- PT 11: Incorporate accessible seating, play equipment, and pathway design in the design phase of future parks and trails.
- PT 12: Employ the principles of CPTED in parks, trails, and facilities.
- PT 13: Provide shelter (in the form of structures and tree planting), seating (preferably picnic tables), and lighting at all parks and trails that is adequate for the amount, season, and type of use.
- PT 14: Install washroom access and a drinking water source in high-traffic parks and trail heads. Accessible washrooms (including adult change tables) should be provided.
- PT 15: Increase staffing as needed to provide an increased level of service related to accessibility, safety, and comfort.



Horticulture and Community Gardens

The City has invested significantly in beautification, trees, and gardens throughout the City. The Horticulture team is housed at Bellevue Park and uses the greenhouses to grow all the plants used in City gardens – approximately 100,000 plants per year. In addition, staff started a pilot to grow fresh vegetables for local food banks during winter months. The pilot was very successful, growing a significant amount of food for donation, while on average taking less than an hour of staff time per day, so the City has decided to continue the project. In addition to the greenhouses and gardens throughout the City, the Horticulture team maintains a tulip garden, educational forest with labeled trees indicating the species, a cedar hedge maze at Bellevue Park, and numerous naturalized areas and pollinator gardens throughout the City. Working with the City's Environmental Sustainability Committee (including staff, Council, and members of the public), the horticulture team has been planting approximately two new pollinator gardens per year.

A local organization, Entomica, has approached the City with a request to set up a butterfly conservatory on City land. This would complement the existing greenhouses and pollinator gardens that the City are already providing. The City should work with Entomica to bring a butterfly conservatory to the

City. Bellevue Park may be the ideal location as the resources are already in place for the greenhouses.

The Draft Official Plan (2022) states that the City should “provide a range of opportunities and experiences for youth recreational needs as well as a broader demographic, including but is not limited to play structures, pathways, gathering areas, sports fields, community gardens and multi-use pads/courts.” There are a number of these amenities in the community, including three community gardens and one orchard: a garden and orchard at Kina Awiiya Secondary Program (next to V.E. Greco Pool/Capt. Nichola Goddard Park), and two community gardens at the Bay Street Active Living Centre and Forest Heights Park. There are also a small number of church-run community gardens. The community garden and orchard are on school board property, and are operated under a partnership with the School, City, Clean North, and the Police. Likewise, the community garden at the Bay St. Seniors Centre is a partnership, with the supplies provided by the City, and operated by a group of seniors. Locating community gardens next to schools and facilities is ideal as they present many opportunities to tie into the curriculum, programming, and reinforces healthy habits.

The City recently passed a resolution to plant mini-orchards throughout the City. Since the resolution, the City has planted a number of varieties of pear and plum trees in mini-orchards around the City. Unlike community gardens, fruit trees/ orchards require certain expertise and care to ensure the health and longevity of the trees to fruition, and as such, typically rely more on municipal staff than on volunteer groups.



Community gardens are often provided through a partnership with the municipality and community organizations (or other partners such as schools), whereby the municipality provides the land (free of charge), planter frames, soil, fencing around the site, and a shed with basic supplies. The community group in turn takes on the administration and operation of the site. Maintenance can be shared between the two partners, typically with the municipality providing grass cutting and taking care of larger repairs.

The City should consider developing a policy for community gardens that outlines, at minimum, qualifications of the operating group, site selection criteria, and roles and responsibilities pertaining to supplies, construction, operations, maintenance, and programming. The policy may include a contract to be signed by relevant parties to ensure that gardens are properly cared for.

As part of the Park Revitalization program, City staff identified parks with the highest proportion of low income households nearby. As is the case with the existing community gardens, these parks would also be ideal locations for additional community gardens to help alleviate food insecurity for residents.

- PT 16: Continue to support the Horticulture team, greenhouses, the winter foodbank vegetable growing program, and mini-orchards/fruit tree plantings.
- PT 17: Continue to work with the Environmental Sustainability Committee, planting pollinator gardens throughout the City.
- PT 18: Work with local organizations to introduce a butterfly conservatory.
- PT 19: Develop a Community Garden Policy.



Free, Unstructured Outdoor Activities

The programming and events section discussed the importance of providing free, unstructured recreation opportunities for all. Consultations for this Plan confirmed that these activities are preferred among residents, for example, in the online mini survey, 71% prefer to engage in self-directed activities (e.g., cycling, running, swimming etc.); 62% use trails, and 57% spend time at the waterfront. Unstructured, free activities can include:

- Using trails
- “Pick-up” or drop-in sports (e.g., shinny, basketball, intramural sports, ultimate frisbee)
- Skating at outdoor rinks
- Visiting lounges or centres (Seniors centre, Youth centre)
- Visiting playgrounds, obstacle courses, splash pads, pools, etc.

Free unstructured activities can occur indoors (e.g., at a Youth Drop-in Centre), but they more frequently take place outdoors. In recent years, many people have developed new interests in spending time outdoors, and it is likely these interests will remain high. Coupled with increased awareness and concern about climate change, it is likely that interest in outdoor

programming and self-guided activities will continue to rise as people, particularly youth, seek to reconnect with nature and obtain a better understanding of ecology and the environment. Organizations dedicated to parks and outdoor recreation such as [Outdoor Play Canada](#) and [Park People](#) regularly share resources and funding opportunities to support Canadian communities in their efforts to foster more outdoor play and recreation.

During consultations, the need for youth participation in recreation was mentioned frequently. The [ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth](#) (2020) recommends promoting and supporting “outdoor – and, when possible, nature-based – play opportunities given their association with both increased physical activity levels and improved mental health outcomes” (p. 48)(also see Mood Walks sidebar). Among others, the report’s recommendations for governments include promoting healthy movement by increasing access to recreation centres and public spaces





outside of school hours, supporting families' participation in sport and recreation activities and investing in no-charge active play spaces (especially outdoors) for families with children of all ages.

Mood Walks is a province-wide initiative that promotes physical activity in nature, or "green exercise," as a way to improve both physical and mental health. Led by the Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario, in partnership with Hike Ontario and Conservation Ontario, Mood Walks provides training and support for community mental health agencies, social service organizations and other community partners to launch educational hiking programs, connect with local resources, and explore nearby trails and green spaces. In 2016, the Mood Walks for Youth in Transition project supported 41 organizations across Ontario to launch new hiking groups for youth who are at risk of, or experiencing, mental health issues. Programs like Mood Walks also align with getting active outdoors in nature, which is the experiential link necessary to developing an appreciation for the natural environment and a conservation-minded perspective, which appeals to youth today.

The City already supports many free activities (e.g., at the Greco and Manzo pools, splash pads, playgrounds, outdoor rinks, etc), and can continue to support free, unstructured activities in a number of ways: through implementing the Park Revitalization program discussed above, maintaining and improving the trail system as discussed below, and by prioritizing amenity and facility projects that will contribute to free, unstructured recreation opportunities.

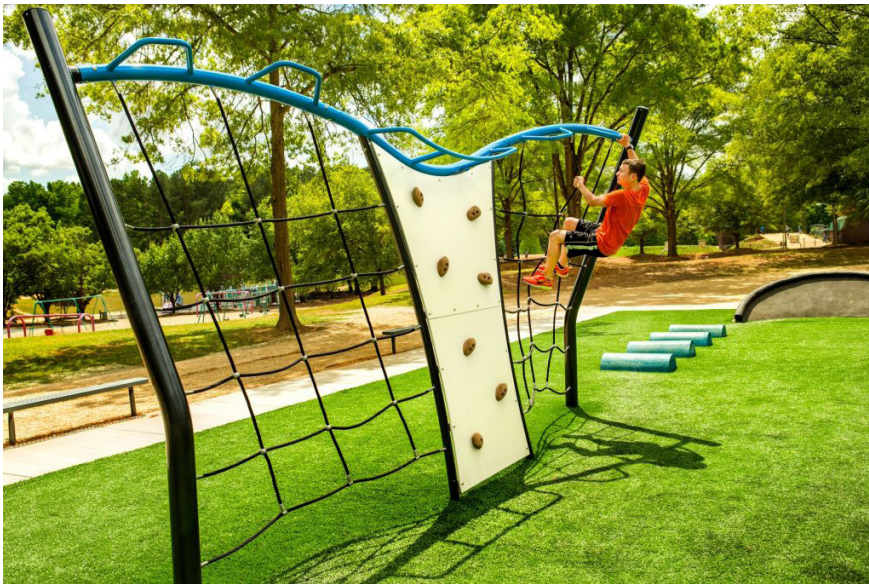
As a facility, skate parks and pump tracks reach many ages and demographics, and can be used for free unstructured play as well as programs, camps, and events. The City currently has two skate parks at Queen Elizabeth (QE) Sports Complex, and Anna Marinelli Park and one pump track at Esposito Park. The QE Sports Complex skate park is phase one of a planned two phase project and the City should plan to complete the second phase of the park within the term of this Plan. Skate parks and pump tracks are popular amenities, and the existing appear to be highly used. Additional demand will be at least partially met by the completion of the second phase of the QE Sports Complex skate park. The City should continue to monitor demand for skate parks and pump tracks to determine need for any additional in the mid or late term of this Plan.

Outdoor obstacle course-type equipment is another option the City can consider to encourage and support free, outdoor recreation. A key benefit of obstacle courses is that they appeal to a broader age range than typical playgrounds, including youth and adults, and it represents a new type of facility not currently offered in the City..



As with youth centres, the same considerations should be made when choosing a location for an obstacle course or similar amenity, such as high children/youth populations nearby, proximity to middle and high schools, proximity to/availability of public transit, and distance to existing comparable amenities.

- PT 20: Give preference to projects/amenities/initiatives etc. that will increase the opportunities for free, unstructured outdoor recreation activities.
- PT 21: Add obstacle course type play equipment that has components that are appealing to children, youth and adults, and selecting a location based on the criteria discussed herein.
- PT 22: Continue to monitor demand for additional skate parks and pump tracks.





Outdoor Ice Rinks

Outdoor skating facilities provide the opportunity for free, unstructured recreation in the winter months. Ice skating also provides health and wellness benefits including cardiovascular/muscular fitness, flexibility, balance, and coordination². Furthermore, recent research (see sidebar) has shown the social and community building benefits of these facilities.



² <https://sportsmedicineweekly.com/blog/how-ice-skating-can-enhance-health-and-wellness/>

Outdoor Rinks Build Community

A study on non-hockey outdoor rinks from the University of Guelph found that:

“These rinks afford ready sociable interactions between strangers. Ice surfaces are open to all, attract a diverse array of users and are generally relaxed and playful settings. Strangers engaged in brief but frequent and spontaneous conversations. ‘No one gender or generation dominates the ice,’ [Prof. Mervyn] Horgan said. ‘People can hang around without having to spend money, and people move between skating and sitting around the edges sharing small talk with strangers.’

‘Outdoor winter activity is important for physical health, but for us the social benefits are just as important. People get to have free access to a rink, skates are relatively cheap to buy or rent, and at the rink there are constant unpanicked convivial encounters between people across a range of social differences.’

Encounters between people of many backgrounds in public, non-commercial spaces are especially important in multicultural societies, he added.

‘As cities become bigger, more diverse and increasingly dense, we need to work together to cultivate these sorts of ordinary spaces for everyday sociability between strangers.’³

³ <https://news.uoguelph.ca/2020/12/outdoor-skating-rinks-improve-social-life-of-cities-u-of-g-researchers-find/#:~:text=The%20study%20found%20these%20rinks,but%20frequent%20and%20spontaneous%20conversations>



The Parks and Recreation Action Plan 2020 - 2025 noted the value that outdoor rinks provide, and directed staff to determine the feasibility of converting outdoor rinks to plant operated, multi-season, multi-sport facilities to add to their year-round value. In addition to that, lighting the rinks, providing shelters (see previous discussion on Accessibility and Comfort for additional details), and power connections (for playing music) all contribute to increasing the quality of the space, and encourage use. The City currently has six outdoor rinks/loops:

- Esposito: Rink with boards, lights and change shack. Passive green space in summer months
- Anna McCrea: Rink with boards, lights and change shack erected on School Board property. Passive green space in summer months. Adjacent to Hub Trail
- William Merrifield Park: Rink with boards, lights and change shack. Passive green space in summer months



- Clergue Park: Skating loop erected throughout the park for winter use. Passive green space in summer months
- Downtown Plaza: New facility 2023/2024, refrigerated rink that converts to a water play area in the summer
- Queen Elizabeth Sports Complex: Speed skating oval erected on the football field (used for sports during summer)

It is difficult to compare the number of outdoor rinks between communities, as they are often heavily dependent on the existence of volunteer groups to create and maintain them. This is likely the case in Thunder Bay, which reports 40 outdoor rinks (1 per 2,754 people). Another northern example that more closely aligns with Sault Ste. Marie, is Timmins which has 1 per 10,286 people. With six rinks, Sault Ste. Marie has 1 rink per 12,008 people, which is slightly less than Timmins, and far fewer than Thunder Bay.

With respect to the existing rinks, Esposito, Anna McCrea and William Merrifield would be candidates for the Action Plan 2020-2025's directive to convert to plant operated, multi-season, multi-sport facilities as doing so at Clergue or QE would interfere with summer uses (the Downtown Plaza rink is already refrigerated). Converting a rink to a multisport facility could mean for example, having permanent boards, nets/goal posts, and a surface with lines that can be used for sports (e.g. basketball or ball hockey) in summer months without damaging the surface/cooling equipment for winter ice use.



The City has plans to rebuild the skate shack at Esposito Park, to include storage, a heated change room, accessible bathroom, and outdoor sheltered area. The new building will serve both summer and winter needs. Given these plans to improve the rink's supporting amenities, Esposito rink should be the first candidate for consideration of adding a cooling system. Consideration should also be made for adding a roof to the rink to further protect the ice from the elements. This is a relatively cost-effective measure that can also be taken at other rinks (such as Anna McCrea and William Merrifield) to improve ice formation and longevity.

- PT 23: Continue to provide the six existing outdoor skating rinks/loops.
- PT 24: Rebuild the skate shack at Esposito to include accessible washrooms, heated changerooms, and plan for it to be operational year-round.
- PT 25: Assess the feasibility of converting Esposito Rink to a plant operated, multi-season, multi-sport facility.
- PT 26: Consider adding a roof to Esposito, William Merrifield and/or Anna McCrea (in partnership with School Board) rinks.

New Dog Park

Leash-free areas are most important for dog owners living in medium and high-density residential areas where units have little to no outdoor yard space, however, many dog owners with large properties still see the value of dog parks for exercising and socializing their dogs. The City has one existing dog park, at Strathclair Sports Complex, and community consultation showed notable interest for additional dog parks.

Off-leash areas have their own unique design and maintenance considerations to ensure a safe, attractive, and practical space for dogs and dog owners. While each space is unique and must be assessed for its own merits in regard to its ability to successfully host an off-leash area, the following key considerations in the development of off-leash areas are based on best practices employed worldwide:

- Appropriate selection of surfacing is critical from a number of perspectives including maintenance, drainage, health, dog and human comfort, accessibility, safety, and cost. Ideally an off-leash area will use more than one surface and will be selected based on site characteristics
- Water should be provided for drinking (both dogs and humans), play for dogs, and irrigation (surface dependent). There must be access to water service and installation of gravel/concrete pad at the water source to prevent puddling and erosion



- Shade is important for both dogs and humans by way of trees and/or shade structures, with special consideration required for long-term tree health
- Not all off-leash areas need fencing. However, for leash-free areas in more urban or high-activity parks, a double-gated system should be considered at all entrances and exits with an adequate height (e.g., 1.5m/5ft high steel fencing)
- Lighting increases safety and extends the hours when off-leash areas can be used in the winter. Lighting should address issues regarding access, safety, environmental impacts and community concerns
- A wide number of amenities should be considered in off-leash areas to improve accessibility and the experience for both dogs and their owners, such as dog agility equipment, a small/shy dog area, accessible seating for humans, and waste receptacles

Four parks were suggested during consultations as possible locations for additional dog parks: Downey Park, East End Park, Wilcox Park, and a parcel of unused school board land across from Bruce St. Park. Downey was noted in particular because the existing fences around the retired bocce courts could be repurposed for the dog park. We also received multiple requests for a dog park in the west end, without indicating a specific park. These, and any other sites for consideration, should be evaluated based on their suitability with the best practices listed above, as well as availability of parking, distance to existing dog parks, and local neighbourhood demand.

- PT 27: Add at least one dog park within the term of this Plan, monitoring for additional demand, and select the site based on the factors discussed herein.
- PT 28: Explore adding lights to dog parks to extend hours of safe operation.

Trail Recommendations

As mentioned previously, trails were a top community interest during consultations for this Plan, both in terms of how the community currently recreates, and in terms of where they would like to see investment and growth in the future. This interest has been apparent in the community for some time, with noted benefits:

The 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.



Since that time, ongoing signage improvements have been undertaken, and a map developed. The City is currently undertaking an Active Transportation Master Plan that will also address trails. The 2015 Master Plan had direction to improve amenities along the Hub Trail, such as benches, signs, shelters, etc. and the Parks and Recreation Action Plan 2020 – 2025 contained an action to assess the direct and indirect costs of a 3km mountain bike trail and skills at the Finn Hill section of the Hub Trail. This action has been addressed through the addition of a single track trail with some skills areas by the Sault Cycling Club. The addition of a mountain bike skills area is supported by directions in this Plan to expand recreation opportunities that are free, unstructured, outdoors, and suitable for children, youth and adults. Further to these directions, the City's Official Plan states that the City shall:

- Expand and maintain the multi-use John Rowswell Hub Trail network on public lands
- Develop a comprehensive trail system that connects people and places through a network that is off-road wherever possible and supported by on-road links where necessary
- Facilitate accessibility and safety by providing multi-use pathways through and to residential areas
- Incorporate the trail system with other recreational components such as parks

Regarding the latter three points, these goals can be met in two main ways. The first would be to encourage and accept trail systems as parkland dedication in new subdivision

developments. These trail systems should connect with parks, facilities and other trails within and outside of the subdivision. The second would be to provide new on and off-road connections between trail systems, parks and facilities in the existing developed urban area. Given the area is already developed, the City may choose to use bike lanes, or new trails that run parallel to road systems, borrowing space from the road, sidewalk and/or right of way. Trees and other plantings are important along these urban paths in order to provide shade, improve air quality, and visual and auditory relief from the road.

A prominent request during consultations was for more winter maintenance of trails to facilitate outdoor physical activity all year round. The City already maintains approximately six trails during the winter including trails at Bellevue, Strathclair, John Rhodes, Elliott Park, and North St. Sports Complex. Clearing of winter trails is not only beneficial for recreation purposes, but facilitates active transportation, and provides accessible pathways for all mobilities. It is particularly important to clear trails near areas with high seniors populations, commercial centres, and areas near schools. The City should continue clearing winter trails, adding more segments where possible in alignment with these focus areas. It was also noted that residents appreciated the addition of security staff on some trail segments for added safety. The City should continue with deploying security staff in areas where it may be needed.



- PT 29: In new subdivision developments, encourage parkland dedication in the form of trail networks, which connect the neighbourhood to other trails, facilities, and shops.
- PT 30: In urbanized areas, seek opportunities to provide separated active transportation boulevards along road ways to add connections to the trail network.
- PT 31: Winterise trails which are: near to seniors residences, near to schools, near to shopping areas, and/or act as connectors between key locations.
- PT 32: Continue to provide security personnel at trail segments where needed.





4.3 Site-specific Recommendations

Bellevue Park and Marina

Bellevue Park is the City's signature park. It is a sprawling green space with many amenities:

- Well-tended gardens
- Approximately 3km of walking trails (the Friendship Trail, which connects to the Hub Trail)
- Waterfront access
- Six play structures (one new, accessible playground)
- Two shade structures
- A splash pad (provided with funding from various community groups)
- A bandshell
- Washrooms, changerooms, and concessions
- Four greenhouses, one of which is open to the public
- Marina with docks, boat launch, and kayak launch

The playground situation at Bellevue Park is unique. When the park was being developed a number of service clubs donated funds for playgrounds, and the result is a series of six differently themed playgrounds steps from each other at the park. One of the playgrounds has been recently upgraded, and the others vary in age, with three or four being quite old. The congregation of playgrounds makes for an exciting destination for children, and is beloved by the community. As the aged playgrounds are replaced, consideration should be made for providing playgrounds that are accessible, cater to all ages, and offer different activities and play types (e.g., restful, active, musical, etc.). As a signature park that is visited by residents across the City, it is also a suitable location for 'premium' level play structures, that go beyond a typical neighbourhood park structure. Figure 4-9 provides one example of a creative, unique, premium play structure.





A number of requests for winter maintenance of trails at Bellevue Park were received during consultations for this Plan. The City already clears the trails in the winter, so it is unclear what segments specifically the requests were referring to, but they could be referring to ice build up in general. The City should ensure that all connections from main roads, parking lots, and seniors residences nearby are cleared and/or salted regularly to allow unimpeded access to the trails.

Adjacent to the Park is the Bellevue Marina, which largely hosts local boaters, as well as the Sailing Club. The Marina offers fuel services, a kiosk, and washrooms. The marina docks have been undergoing upgrades, with docks A, F, and G still pending; the launch also requires some improvements. The City also added

a kayak launch near the marina, with plans to add an accessible pathway to the launch. It was also noted that a railing is needed on the ramp for safety and accessibility. The parking lot is undergoing upgrades with the addition of lighting and large, treed islands to discourage stunt driving.

In addition to these upgrades at the Marina and parking lot, the City has also been considering adding a fat bike trail to Bellevue Park, and is considering options to improve/change the duck pond. Community requests were also received for barbecue stations at this park, which are a low cost addition, that add a lot of value for casual use and events. With these potential changes, the updating of three playgrounds, and the number of other amenities at the park, the City should prepare an updated Master Plan for the Park. A Master Plan would



Figure 4-9: Unique custom wood playground made by Earthscape Playgrounds



Splash pad, playground and greenhouse seating at Bellevue park



carefully consider all of the amenities (including the Marina), a plan for the playgrounds, connections required, parking needs, pathways and circulation, signage, accessibility, compatible and incompatible uses, etc. to create a thoughtful and cohesive plan for the Park.

- PT 33: Continue to maintain the trails, and all connections to the trails, in Bellevue Park for winter use.
- PT 34: Complete the accessible pathway to the kayak launch, and add a railing to the ramp.
- PT 35: Prepare an updated Master Plan for Bellevue Park and Marina that considers at minimum: all of the existing amenities; a plan for the playgrounds; new amenities such as a fat bike trail, cedar hedge maze, barbecue stations and any others that arise through consultations; connections required within and to the site; parking needs; pathways and circulation; signage; accessibility; compatible and incompatible uses, etc.

Clergue Park

Clergue park is a very busy, centrally located park adjacent to the Civic Centre, Art Gallery, and Library. The Park has outdoor exercise equipment, many picnic tables, the Hub Trail, and in the winter, a 750m skating trail. The City has kept visit statistics on the skating trail, indicating a very high level of use. With the high amount of traffic at the park, this would be an ideal location to offer skate and helmet rentals.

Given the location of the park, improvements/additions to the park should focus on supporting events, and year-round use. For events, this would include adding a large pavilion with power connection. Shade shelters with seating and heating capability for the winter would be beneficial around the skating trail, and/or the addition of a warming hut/change room with optional concessions stand. The concessions stand could operate year round (possibly just for events), and the changerooms could double as event support space in the summer.

The addition of a playground at Clergue Park would also support unstructured play opportunities and entertainment for children during events. With the Art Gallery and Library nearby, a playground could support children's programs and camps throughout the year. Given the number of potential recommendations here, and the fact that the City is undertaking a Waterfront Master Plan that may impact the site, the City should undertake a Master Plan for Clergue Park to



combine the directives from the two Master Plans and develop a cohesive design and program for the site.

PT 36: Complete a Master Plan for Clergue Park that includes consideration for adding a playground, heated shelters, and/or a heated changeroom building with concessions stand and skate rentals.





Elliott Outdoor Sports Complex

Elliott Outdoor Sports Complex has a number of sport facilities including pickleball courts, soccer fields, softball fields, and bocce courts. Recommendations for these programmed facilities are discussed in section 3.0 Facilities. The park also has a 1.5km walking trail (maintained in winter), a toboggan hill, and a washroom/changeroom building. As discussed in section 4.2, any updates to the washroom/changeroom should be designed to support multiple uses in multiple seasons.

While the primary concern of the City is upgrading existing playgrounds, this is one location that would benefit from the addition of a playground to provide activities for children and siblings while families are using the sport fields. In addition, there is the possibility of residential development nearby. If a playground is added here, the park could better serve those residents as a neighbourhood park.

PT 37: Add a playground to Elliott Outdoor Sports Complex.





Esposito Park

Esposito Park has a pump track that was a joint initiative between the City and the Sault Cycling Club. The pump track provides an important, free outdoor activity for youth in the neighbourhood, and across the City. As outlined in the City's Action Plan 2020 - 2025, lights should be added to the pump track area to improve safety, and allow the park to be used for longer periods of time. In addition, the skate shack, which is planned to be updated, should be designed such that it supports summer needs as well, including potential space for camp or program use and storage. The ice rink and skate shack are discussed further in section 4.2, under Outdoor Rinks.

PT 38: Add lighting to the pump track at Esposito Park.





V.E. Greco Pool/Capt. Nichola Goddard Park

This Park is located beside the Kina Awiiya Secondary Program and has an outdoor pool which is available for free to the community (discussed further in section 2.0 Programs and events), a playground, two full basketball courts, and a community garden and orchard.

The pool building has staff space, male/female washrooms, changerooms, and a water fountain. In order to increase accessibility, the City should aim to update this building to include accessible, universal washrooms and change rooms. For additional safety and comfort, shade structures should be added near the pool.

PT 39: Add accessible, universal washrooms and change rooms to V.E. Greco Pool.

PT 40: Add shade structures near the pool at V.E. Greco Pool.





Kinsmen Park, Hiawatha Highlands, and Wishart Park

These parks contain hiking trails, ski trails, a fish hatchery, and the Crystal Creek that runs through the area. Kinsmen Park also has play equipment, a scrub diamond, and permanent outhouses/prives. Kinsmen Park and Hiawatha Highlands are owned primarily by the Kinsmen Club, Sault Ste. Marie Regional Conservation Authority, and Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry and Wishart Park is City-owned.

The Sault Finnish Nordic Ski Club runs the ski trails that traverse Hiawatha Highlands, Kinsmen Park, and Wishart Park, as well as private properties along the site. The Sault Cycling Club is also active at these parks, having developed a mountain bike network, and a connection to the Hub Trail.

These clubs are active groups that have been successfully operating the site for a number of years. The Ski Club has a large membership base, charging for access to the trails and rentals, with a set of volunteers for grooming trails. The Kinsmen Club also recently received a community development funding award to put towards their initiatives.

As a whole, this group of parks provides significant recreation and tourism value for Sault Ste. Marie. The City should continue to provide the Adventure Bus to facilitate access to the site for residents who may not have a vehicle (discussed previously in section 2.0). In addition, the City should look for tourism

opportunities to explore in partnership with Tourism Sault Ste. Marie, the Kinsmen, Sault Finnish Nordic Ski Club, Sault Cycling Club, and the Conservation Authority. One example could be a visitors tour package that includes a visit to the ski trails, in combination with other attractions like the Locks, an event at the new downtown plaza, a meal at a local restaurant, etc.

PT 41: Work with Tourism Sault Ste. Marie and other partners involved in Kinsmen Park and Hiawatha Highlands to develop tourism initiatives to encourage visits to the Parks and other sites in the City.





Manzo Pool and Splash Pad

This Park has an outdoor pool which is available for free to the community (discussed further in section 2.0 Programs and events), tennis/pickleball courts (discussed further in section 3.0 Facilities), a playground, a splash pad and changeroom building (under construction), and a toboggan hill (under construction). The City applied for a grant for an accessible bathroom, but was not successful.

The pool building has staff space, male/female washrooms, and a water fountain. In order to increase accessibility, the City should aim to update this building to include accessible, universal washrooms and change rooms. For additional safety and comfort, shade structures should be added near the pool and splash pad.

PT 42: Add accessible, universal washrooms and change rooms to Manzo Pool and Splash pad.

PT 43: Add shade structures near the pool and splash pad at Manzo Park.





Pointe Des Chenes

Pointe Des Chenes park offers a long sandy beach, disc golf course, picnic areas, a playground and parking lot. It is located at the western edge of the City, on the shore of Lake Superior, in a rural area of the City. As mentioned in the Programs Section, the City facilitates access to the park for residents by providing a Beach Bus during the summer months. For many years the Lions Club operated a camping site at Point Des Chenes, which closed during the pandemic and has not re-opened.

If the City is keen on developing tourism-supporting facilities, a campground at Point Des Chenes would be ideal for the other existing activities at the park for campers to enjoy. Some key considerations concerning the development of a campground include:

- Completion of a market feasibility study to determine if a campground at this site would fill a need in the region
- Preparation of a business case for the operation and management of the campground. This may include a consideration of operation models (municipal owned and operated; municipal ownership, non-municipal operator; private owner/operators, etc.)

Action Plan 2020-2025 indicated a need to replace the picnic shelter at this Park, and to expand accessible pathways through the Park. The shelter should be replaced for community use,

and additional shelters added for camp ground users (if a campground is developed).

PT 44: Conduct a market feasibility study to determine the suitability of a campground at Point Des Chenes, and the preferred operation model.





Queen Elizabeth Sports Complex

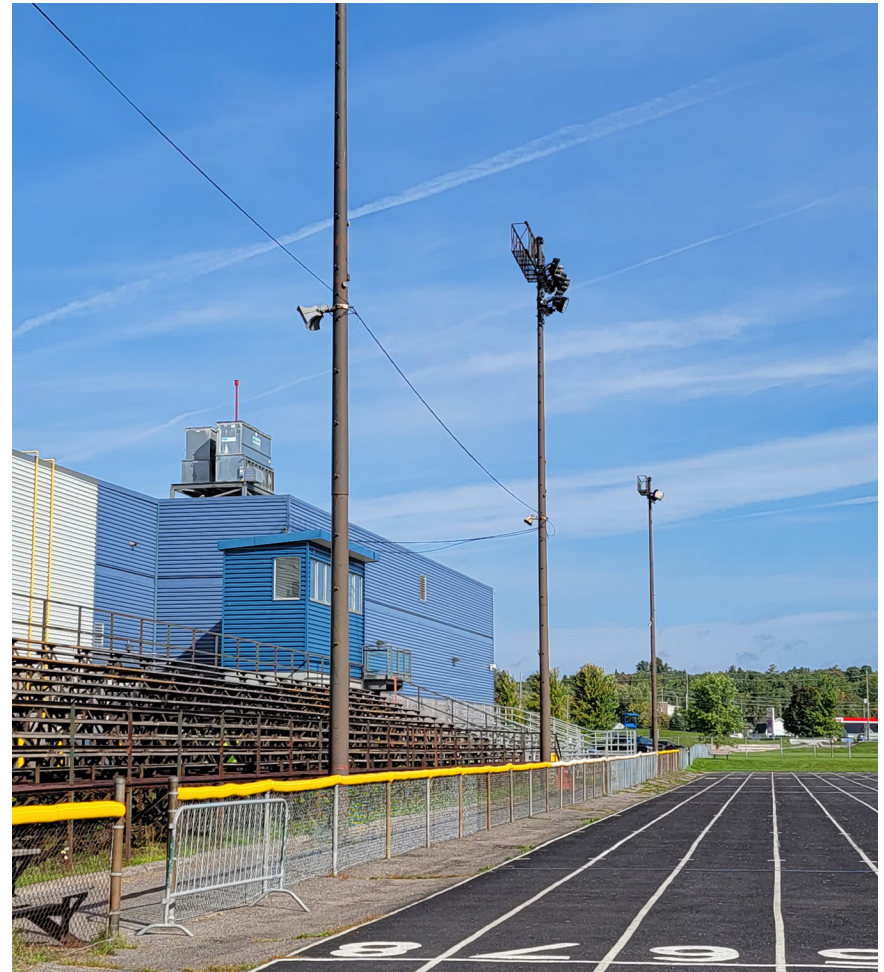
Queen Elizabeth Sports Complex includes a cricket field, track and field area and eight lane Joe Forman track, soccer/football fields, a ball diamond, a skate park, and in the winter, a speed skating oval erected on one of the fields. All of these facilities, except for the skate park are discussed in more detail in Section 3.0 Facilities.

This park is the main site for track and field events in the Sault, as there are no comparable tracks available. As such, the track should be resurfaced, selecting a material that balances the needs for track uses, and minimizes cost and maintenance for the City. The Facilities section suggests this may be done in partnership with Sault College (see recommendation F#?)

Action Plan 2020-2025 identified two key priorities for Queen Elizabeth. The first is to improve the bleachers and lighting at the Rocky DiPietro field, and this should be completed to support use by sport groups. The second is to develop phase 2 of the skateboard park. While the skateboard park should be completed, the City should first invest in a skate park at a second location in the City (see discussion on free unstructured activities in section 4.2 as well).

PT 45: Resurface the Jo Forman track.

PT 46: Develop the second phase of the skateboard park at Queen Elizabeth Sports Complex.





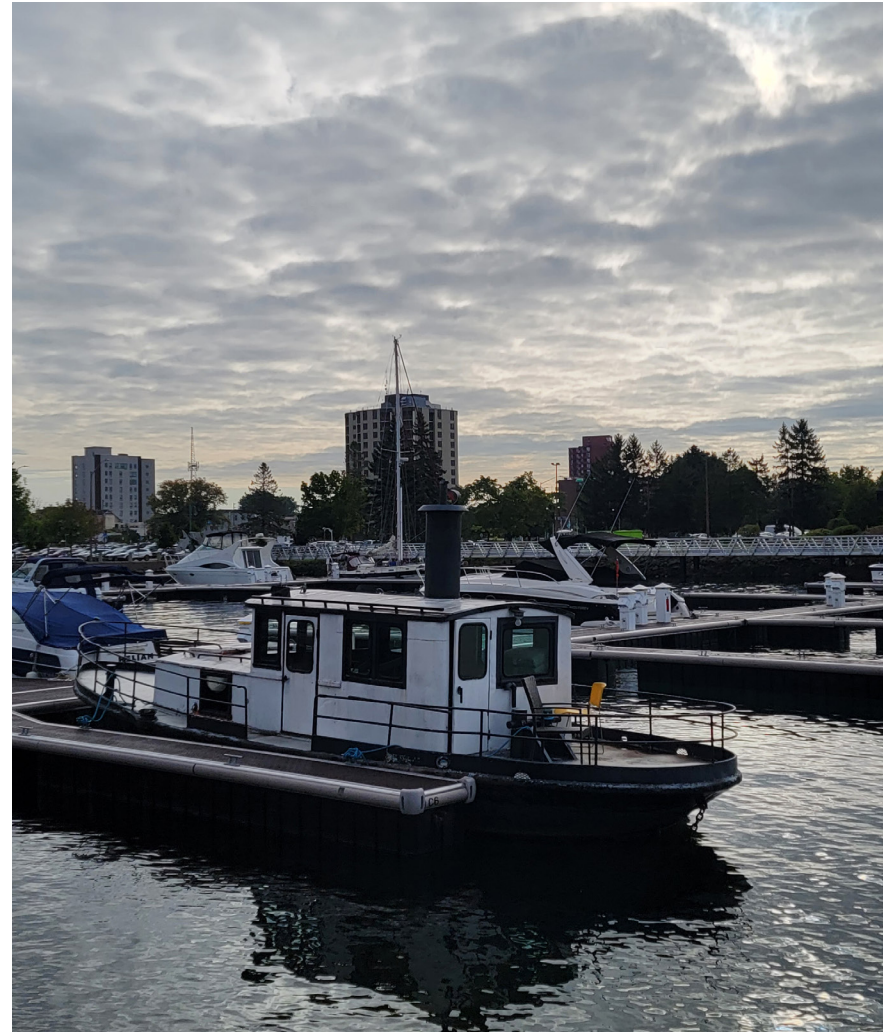
Roberta Bondar Park and Marina

Roberta Bondar Park is an event space on the waterfront, with a tent capable of hosting large events (up to 1,750 people), a stage, green room/changeroom area for performers, washrooms, and a Beaver Tails snack stand. The Beaver Tails company also operates a boat tour that leaves from the Roberta Bondar Marina, adjacent to the tent.

The Marina is more focused on transient slips and docking for cruise ships (including a Canadian customs check-in point), as opposed to the Bellevue Marina which is focused on local permanent use. The Marina recently added a new boardwalk and new slips, and the City has plans for upgrading the dock and the port fender system for cruise ships, as well as adding new siding for marina building. As an important landing spot for tourists, the City should partner with Tourism Sault Ste. Marie on further improvements or initiatives to attract cruise ship visits.

As an example of this, the City is offering bike rentals, operating out of the Marina office. With the concentration of various activity types, location on the waterfront with cruise ships docking, Roberta Bondar Park is an ideal location for activities that go beyond the typical. Mini-putt would be an excellent addition to this park. It could operate in summer months, with rentals housed in the Marina office. Designing the golf course is an opportunity for the community and local

artists to contribute designs, and could be an exciting and engaging initiative for the City. Once built with artificial turf, the course itself will likely be inexpensive/simple to maintain, and some revenue may be garnered through its use.





- PT 47: Upgrade the dock, port fender system for cruise ships, and marina building at Roberta Bondar Marina.
- PT 48: Partner with Tourism Sault Ste. Marie on further improvements or initiatives to attract cruise ship visits.
- PT 49: Consider adding a mini-putt course at Roberta Bondar Park.

Strathclair Sports Complex

Strathclair Sports Complex is a major park in the City, and is frequently used by ball and soccer teams. The Park also has City-run concessions, a playground, accessible walking trails (cleared during winter), batting cages (privately run), newly-added ice skating area, and the City's only dog park, which has separate large and small dog spaces.

Given the number of facilities and amenities at the park, and its location, it is well used by both residents and visitors. Use of the park is focused on physical activity (team sports, skating, walking, dog play), and use continues after dark - in the summer for sport games, and in the winter because the sun sets quite early, and people may still want to use the skating area and dog park.

Improvements to this park should focus on increasing user safety and comfort, especially given the physical activity focus of the park, and that it is likely used after sun-down. Lighting is very important for the parking lot, skating area, trails, dog park, and sport fields. Drinking water would also be ideal, for both people and dogs, however, the site is on well water. The City could consider researching options for a water tank that can reliably maintain water safety, and provide one at the park if possible. This would allow the addition of water fountains for humans and pets. Shade from the sun is also very important at this park, and the City should support this by tree planting, and providing shade shelters at various locations around the park. Shelters with wind walls can also be provided near the skating



area to double as rest areas during the winter months. These shelters can also be fitted with timed heaters to provide additional warmth.

- PT 50: Conduct a lighting audit to identify priority areas (e.g., parking lot, skating area, dog park), and add lighting at Strathclair Park.
- PT 51: Investigate the possibility of adding potable water tanks, and if possible, provide drinking water fountains for people and pets at Strathclair Park.
- PT 52: Provide shade by way of tree planting and shade structures throughout Strathclair Park.
- PT 53: Provide a warming shelter with wind protection and timed heaters near the skating area at Strathclair Park.



This page was intentionally left blank



5.0 Service Delivery

5.1 Introduction and Background to the Assessment

Service delivery addresses the need for additional or redirected resources to ensure the successful implementation of the Master Plan's recommendations in each of the foregoing service areas.

What We Heard

- institute regular review and update of policies and agreements
- enhanced communications, internally and with other service providers



- more marketing, promotion of specific programs/events and recreation assets generally
- greater access and inclusion in various areas (e.g., operating hours, service pricing, AODA accessibility, transportation)
- increased staffing to meet programming development and delivery needs, and ongoing parks and facilities maintenance
- assign priority to aging facility updates
- access new/more sources of funding
- need to reduce the 'red tape' that deters community members and groups from providing programs and events

The assessment and recommendations for the City of Sault Ste. Marie are presented under the following topics:

- municipal role and staffing
- policy requirements
- revenue generating programs
- collaborations and agreements with non-municipal parties
- service marketing, communications, and promotions
- service planning and evaluation





5.2 Municipal Role and Staffing

The City of Sault Ste. Marie engages in both direct and indirect recreation services provision. In direct provision, City staff deliver programs and services. Indirect provision occurs when the City works with other non-municipal agencies and organizations to deliver programs and services. Indirect provision can comprise support to community volunteer groups to deliver sports and recreation programs, which is a long-standing tradition in municipal recreation. In more recent years, the trend to formalize collaborations and partnerships with other public or not-for-profit agencies, and the commercial sector, has helped make better use of limited resources to enhance services. Collaborations and agreements are discussed below.

Council and Committees

There are three committees with mandates that are relevant to the Master Plan. The Park and Recreation Advisory Committee (PRAC) advises, assists and make recommendations to Council in the provision of parks and recreation services, programs and facilities for citizens of Sault Ste. Marie. The Cultural Vitality Committee oversees and implements the City of Sault Ste. Marie Cultural Policy and the Community Cultural Plan and provides advice to City Council on issues, policies and

strategies related to cultural enterprises and activities in the city. The Mayor's Youth Advisory Council administers the Youth Fund, which is a micro-grant program that provides financial support to programs, activities and events that benefit youth in the community. Each body has a formal Terms of Reference that details its purpose, objectives, responsibilities, and structure.

The PRAC would be the appropriate committee to advise Council and assist staff in implementing the Master Plan. The implementation section (6.0) of the Master Plan groups all recommendations into short, medium, and long-term timeframes. Within these three categories, annual priorities will need to be set in relation to available resources and their relationship to other City initiatives, which is essentially a continuation of the existing 2019 ACTION PLAN objectives, which are detailed for implementation through the budgeting process.

Staffing

Consultation with the City indicated that staffing levels – and particularly full-time positions – are insufficient to meet responsibilities and community expectations both generally, and specifically with respect to programming and facility/parks maintenance. General budget limits to hiring are now being exacerbated by widespread labour shortages in recreation. Shortages exist in all program areas that require certified staff. The problem is attributed to several factors including the disruptive effects of the pandemic in ongoing training and



keeping qualified staff, and the pay for this work, which is not as attractive now as in the past.

In addition to resolving overall staff shortages, higher wages will continue to be required to remain competitive in the labour market. As discussed in the Program section of the Master Plan, in addition to prioritizing adding programmers for age-specific services, the City should explore other potential labour pools for aquatics including adults living in the community. Residents with specific interests and skills are also a potential pool for other types of programming and are the focus of short-duration programs. Other avenues to investigate include sharing part-time instructors with other agencies such as the local YMCA.

Sault College has a Sports Administration program that includes mandatory practicums, and placements with the City might be of interest to these students. Another program at the College – Adventure Recreation Parks Technician – is unique to Canada. It “concentrates on three main areas of study: parks operations, interpretation and protection; adventure recreation and recreation planning; and, ecotourism and adventure expeditions. All while keeping a broad focus on natural resource management and sustainability.”¹ Although adventure recreation is not the focus of municipal services, there are common areas of practice across all parks that students from the program could benefit from in employment with the City. Both the College and Algoma University have

competitive sports programs, which could be canvassed for potential instructors.

In addition to current staff shortages, increases in workload due to implementing the Master Plan will require sufficient staffing levels to ensure success. Areas where additional work will occur are process-related items such as services planning and evaluation, partnership development, research, etc. If the existing staff complement cannot reasonably absorb this work (either singly or split across several positions), additional hires will be needed.

An initial step, however, is establishing a minimum complement of staff required to accommodate the current workload, and how many more staff are required to do this, including current shortages. A formal review of operations and staffing would be the best way to determine a ‘baseline’ of staffing needs to meet all areas and optimal levels of service provision now. This baseline can be used to project future staffing requirements related to expansion/growth.

¹ <https://www.saultcollege.ca/programs/school-natural-environment/adventure-recreation-and-parks-technician>



- SD 1: Continue direct and indirect service provision, as appropriate, in best serving community recreation needs.
- SD 2: Assign the PRAC to advise Council and assist staff in implementing the Master Plan.
- SD 3: Explore other potential labour pools to offset labour shortage and for new programs including residents with specific interests and skills sharing part-time instructors with other agencies, and engaging post secondary students from relevant programs.
- SD 4: Conduct a formal review of operations and staffing to determine a 'baseline' of staffing needs to meet all areas and optimal levels of service provision.

5.3 Policy Requirements

Policy supports clear and consistent application of City and community interests in day-to-day service management and operations. The City has a number of parks and recreation policies in place, which appear to be working well. There is potential for additional policies to support implementing the Master Plan. Areas recommended for development are discussed below. Table 5-1 lists existing and proposed municipal policies related to parks and recreation and indicates those that are identified for development in the City's 2019 ACTION PLAN.



Table 5-1: Existing and Proposed Parks and Recreation Policy

Existing	Proposed	2019 ACTION PLAN Directions
Cultural Policy	Service Pricing	Develop a pricing strategy
Allocation Policy: Ice; John Rhodes Community Centre Pool Time	Affordable Access	Develop a pricing strategy, as well as a financial assistance program for those who cannot afford to participate in programs and services through partnerships
Strategic Asset Management	Inclusion	
Accessibility (under AODA)	Community Group Affiliation	
Public Art	Grants to Non-profit Community Groups	
Youth Fund Policy	Municipal Event Support	
Financial Assistance Policy	Revenue Generation (see Section 5.4)	Update Commemorative Bench program to expand locations Develop a memorial tree program
Monetary Donation Policy	Park/Facility Naming Policy (see Section 5.4)	
Municipal Alcohol Policy		Under review to develop a streamlined guide for individuals hosting alcohol events at city recreation facilities and parks
	Collaborations and Partnerships Policy	
Adopt A Park Policy		
Service Animal Policy for Indoor Facilities		



Service Pricing and Affordable Access

Service Pricing

The primary goal of pricing policy is to ensure consistency in the relative proportions of service costs to be financed through the tax base or user fees, based on targeted cost recovery objectives. The recovery objectives are based on the financial capacity of the municipality to provide all the services within its mandate, given available budgets and the need for judicious spending. Pricing for parks and recreation services would be part of a corporate-wide policy. The following discussion is limited to parks and recreation services.

As noted in Table 5-1, the City intends to develop a pricing strategy. While municipal recreation services are typically subsidized to some degree, the extent of cost recovery in various areas of service should be rationalized in terms of cost-benefit. There are currently no parameters in place to identify the point at which programs and services should be charged at higher fees or are not viable to operate. For programs, for example, it is important to be able to determine minimum levels of enrollment/registration needed to offer a program, based on the costs to deliver it in relation to pre-determined recovery rates.

For all services, there is a finite pool of municipal funds to provide them.² Decisions on how services are financed,

² While grants are available from time to time, they cannot be relied upon to meet the

therefore, always represent opportunity-costs. Consequently, focusing on providing a limited number of costly services restricts the municipality's ability to diversify supply in other areas of community need or interest and to direct investment to improving/upgrading existing services.

The goal of developing a pricing strategy is to arrive at a policy that relates pricing to both service objectives and the costs of provision. The detail and complexity of this work suggests the need to contract a professional to assist the City with:

- detailed accounting on the full cost of providing services by type³
- confirming the City's service objectives
- establishing the types and proportions of costs that should be targeted for recovery through user fees, based on the City's service objectives (i.e., where services fall on a 'continuum' ranging from fully subsidized to cost recovery +), a simple example of which is outlined in Table 5-2.
- setting fees to recover targeted costs
- allocating services by type to recovery categories
- establishing a timetable for incrementally introducing changes to the pricing structure

City's responsibility for ongoing financial obligations.

³ In the Town of Cobourg Study, this was called Full Cost Assessment and included: the direct costs of providing services such as resource costs of Town staff involved, materials and supplies, and operating costs of equipment and facilities used in service delivery; indirect costs from supporting Town departments (e.g., IT); capital costs such as those to rehabilitate and replace facilities being used to provide services (<https://engagecobourg.ca/town-of-cobourg-comprehensive-user-fee-study>)

Table 5-2: Example of Service Pricing Categories⁴

Category	Pricing	Service Example
Cost recovery +	priced to cover costs and generate net revenue	private skating lessons private ice rental
Full cost recovery	priced to cover costs	group skating lessons not-for-profit agency ice rental
Subsidized	no or low cost	open, community public skate volunteer community organizations providing child/youth programming

An example of how this approach might apply would be to increase user fees for private ice uses and redirect some of the revenues generated from this to subsidizing public skating at no cost. This could support service objectives related to affordable access and inclusion, policy needs for which are discussed below.

In arriving at a pricing policy for Sault Ste. Marie, the City may choose to consult with the community to determine the service objectives to be reflected in the policy, which would inform the ultimate allocation of services to each category. Consultation

⁴ Based on Greenplay's Pyramid Model for Resource Allocation/Cost Recovery© in pricing parks and recreation services: <https://greenplayllc.com>

with the community would also promote understanding of the true costs of service provision.

Affordable Access

A pricing policy designed as noted above will redistribute costs to users and increase fees in some areas to offset costs in others, possibly making services less affordable for some residents. A parallel affordable access program will support equity in service provision.

Ensuring access to services regardless of means could be a key service objective to be implemented by the City and could be pursued in various ways.⁵ An annual budget allocation for direct financial support for program participation, with an associated qualification guide, could be introduced. More, fully subsidized, no-cost services that are open to all in the community could also be introduced. In this way, the potential stigma of 'applying' for assistance is removed.

Inclusion

Parks and Recreation Ontario's audit of the 2015 Framework for Recreation in Canada⁶ references several policy areas for consideration by municipalities. These encompass the need to address concerns regarding affordability, diversity, and

⁵ City initiatives may be supplemented by outside programs such as Jumpstart, which are not discussed here.

⁶ <https://www.prontario.org/public/policy/Framework%20Audit%20Tool%20V%201.pdf>



inclusion. While attention may be paid in practice to some or all of these concerns, interest in documented policy is becoming more apparent. The City, therefore, should consider developing one that fits the needs and aspirations of its community.

Inclusion policy can be corporate-wide or specific to recreation services. The latter focuses on the topics addressed in the Framework:

- affordable access (discussed above)
- enabling people of all ages to participate in recreation
- actively engaging persons of diverse and racialized backgrounds in developing, leading, and evaluating recreation and park activities
- working with Indigenous communities in pursuit of all five goals in the Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015
- applying a gender equity lens when developing and monitoring policies, programs, and practices to facilitate full participation of women and girls in all types of recreation
- ensuring non-discrimination of, and providing a welcoming and safe environment for, people of all sexual orientations and sexual identities
- working with persons with disabilities to facilitate their full participation in recreation across all settings by removing physical and emotional barriers

This policy would look to build on legislated requirements of the AODA. It could also be used to link efforts on inclusion that the City pursues in the areas of facilities and programs. For example, the City enrolled in the Easter Seals 'Access 2' program to provide support workers free access to open swims and public skating.

Working with persons with disabilities in auditing infrastructure will help specify need for improvements such as FM systems for event centres and meeting spaces, updated washroom equipment to include things like, pull down grab bars, appropriate heights for amenities in washrooms, and adult change tables in universal washrooms.

Inclusion can be narrowly or broadly defined. In formulating relevant policy, therefore, the meaning of 'inclusion' and what it will encompass is important to clarify as it represents a promise to the community. It should, therefore, be tied to the capacity of the municipality to realize stated goals and objectives and specify where this will require assistance from other public or not-for-profit agencies to achieve.



Community Group Affiliation

The volunteer organizations that participated in the Master Plan survey provide a range of sport/recreation programming and periodic special events. Of 22 user groups that responded to the Master Plan survey, 59% (13) indicated the City of Sault Ste. Marie could better assist their organization in developing and providing its programs, activities or events; 36% (8) were uncertain and one reported no need for assistance.

While the majorities indicated need for assistance with funding applications and/or funding (62% or 8 groups), and digital marketing and promotion (54% or 7 groups), Table 5-3 shows that all items listed solicited interest in some level of assistance.

Table 5-3: Areas of Interest for Additional Municipal Support to Volunteer Groups

Areas of Interest for Support	% (#) of Groups
assistance with funding applications	62% (8)
fundraising	62% (8)
digital marketing and promotion	54% (7)
communicating with the City	46% (6)
print marketing and promotion	39% (5)
facilitating partnerships among service providers	39% (5)
volunteer recruitment	39% (5)

volunteer training	31% (4)
insurance (securing, cost, etc.)	31% (4)
volunteer recognition	23% (3)
service planning and evaluation	8% (1)

The City should engage all volunteer recreation groups to better understand their support requirements, and to inform the appropriate municipal response. The objective of the process would be to develop a Community Group Affiliation Policy, which will establish equity and consistency in the assistance provided.

A Community Group Affiliation Policy describes the services available from the municipality to registered (affiliated) community groups in providing their program and services in relation to the capacity of the municipality to provide them. Although not-for-profit community groups or organizations must be registered to receive municipal assistance, registration does not guarantee support. A standard, typically annual, registration/ application process for eligible groups interested in municipal assistance “affiliates” them with the municipality and establishes a formal, consistent process for reviewing requests and monitoring policy effectiveness. Municipal staff review the applications and make recommendations to Council for approval. The support provided is typically in-kind, with any major funding provided through a separate mechanism.

The policy specifies criteria for affiliation and the services available to affiliated groups. Requirements for affiliation



include items such as delivering programs and services that align with municipal goals/objectives in, for example, the Parks and Recreation Master Plan; being an incorporated not-for-profit group operated by a volunteer board or executive committee; ensuring membership/ participation in the group is available to all residents in the community; meeting criteria to measure the merit of the group's programs/services (e.g., does not duplicate existing programs/services, fosters physical activity/healthy lifestyles, etc.); the group primarily serves Sault Ste. Marie residents (e.g., a stipulated proportion of members/participants are from Sault Ste. Marie).

While several of the benefits to be considered may already be provided (informally if not through policy) to local volunteer groups in Sault Ste. Marie, it may be useful to bring these - and others identified through consultation - into a single policy. It can be used to provide clarity and consistency in terms of the range of support services available to volunteer groups and what they must do to be eligible to be, and remain, affiliated. Benefits to affiliated groups might include:

- facilities and equipment: free or proportionate discounted fees for use of facilities, spaces, equipment
- marketing and promotion: distribution of approved promotional materials at municipal facilities and assistance with contacts for the local media; free listing in a Parks and Recreation Guide
- grants and insurance: assistance from municipality in securing liability insurance, sourcing potential grants, and/or completing applications for non-municipal grant

programs (e.g., Ontario Trillium Foundation, private sector, FedNor, etc.)

- in-house workshops sponsored by the City on topics of interest to volunteer group development and programming
- leadership training and development: external course rebates for community volunteer development to a maximum amount/person/ course (e.g., \$50/year) to a maximum amount per group/organization (e.g., \$200/year), provided the course is a core component of the organization/group's mandate, with priority being given to certain courses; workshops on preparing grant applications, etc.
- assistance with program planning and operations, registration, fees processing, evaluation, etc.



Grants to Non-profit Community Groups

Table 5-1 notes an existing Financial Assistance Policy. This is directed to individuals or teams attending international/national sports and other similar competitions. The City should introduce a policy for grants to non-profit community groups providing parks and recreation services to the community, and funding it in the annual budget. The policy's scope and application should be delineated in terms of:

- purpose/role of the grant in implementing municipal service objectives
- group/initiative qualifications/criteria for eligibility
- use of funds (i.e., capital, program/service seeding)
- expectations regarding group contributions to funded initiative (e.g., matching for capital projects) and ceiling on the amount (e.g., maximum \$5,000)
- intent that operating grants are directed to promoting self-sustaining services after a pre-determined period (e.g., two years) and will not be eligible for continued support
- distinguishing from benefits provided through Community Group Affiliation
- reporting requirements on accountability for funds spent, and evaluation of benefit to the community
- annual application, review, and selection process





Collaborations and Partnerships

A policy on collaborations and partnerships can provide guidance on the circumstances that prompt agreements with non-municipal agencies/organizations in service delivery, and the purpose, scope and terms of the City's involvement. It should cover items related to:

- why the municipality is interested in, and encourages these relationships
- the types of relationships it envisions
- the need to align with the City's image, values and standards, and its goals, objectives, policies and by-laws
- a framework that describes the types of collaborations/partnerships to be considered and that align with the agreements that will support them (e.g., program/service contracts, license or lease, reciprocal use, corporate sponsorship /advertising, joint facility development and/or joint operating/use agreement) and the relevant agencies/organizations (e.g., other public, not-for-profit, small commercial, corporate)
- requisite compliances (e.g., statutes, by-laws, standards, no conflict of interest, etc.)
- non-eligible potential partners (e.g., businesses in tobacco manufacturing or sales; alcoholic beverages in services directed to those under legal drinking age; weapons production, distribution, sales)

Although successful collaborations must be mutually beneficial to all parties involved, the City must consider community benefit as a priority in entering these arrangements. Each collaboration or partnership should be supported by a formal agreement, as discussed below.



Policy Documentation and Review

It is important to regularly review and, as required, update policy to incorporate evaluation findings and/or relevant changes in the corporate environment that need to be reflected in scope and application.

- SD 5: Conduct a service pricing study as the basis for setting recreation services fees in relation to cost recovery targets, and to inform a pricing policy and considering affordable access.
- SD 6: Consider developing an inclusion policy to support and promote equitable access to parks and recreation services.
- SD 7: Develop a community group affiliation policy to provide clarity and consistency in terms of the range of support services available to all volunteer groups and what they must do to be eligible to be, and remain, affiliated.
- SD 8: Consult with volunteer recreation groups to confirm the type and extent of required assistance to sustain/grow their programs/ events, and to inform development of the policy within the capacity of the City to provide support.
- SD 9: Develop a policy for grants to non-profit community groups as distinct from the community group affiliation policy.
- SD 10: Develop a collaborations and partnerships policy to guide the City in working with other providers to delivery parks and recreation services.
- SD 11: Regularly review and update policies to reflect relevant changes.



5.4 Revenue Generating Programs and Services

GFL Memorial Gardens and Community Centre Food Services

A major source of revenue for the City is food services, which range from full-service restaurants to temporary concessions.

John Rhodes has a 210-seat lounge/restaurant. GFL Memorial Gardens has a number of food services, in addition to concessions including:

- full-service restaurant (Molson Canadian Hockey House), which is open 1 to 1.5 hours prior to each Soo Greyhounds game
- small restaurant (The Dog House) serving hot dogs and sausages
- the Coffee House
- a full commercial kitchen with catering services

All arenas/community centres have concessions, which are operated by the City. NCC and John Rhodes each have one

or more. GFL has five permanent concessions, which are augmented by additional temporary locations during games to serve large numbers of patrons faster. Up to seven additional locations result in increased food sale revenues of between 25% and 30%. The OHL game concessions are run by 120+ part time staff. Food sale proceeds are shared between the City and the Greyhounds. Profit-sharing reflects the Greyhounds' role in generating high levels of attendance, and represents a lucrative revenue source for both parties. In the pre-COVID years from 2013 to 2019, GFL Memorial Gardens generated between \$850,000 and \$1.15m in food and beverage sales.

To some degree, attendance at events are still recovering from COVID-related impacts. Season's ticket holders for the Gardens, for example, are approaching pre-COVID numbers, and on track to normalizing. Events such as concerts and conferences that are accommodated at these venues were cancelled for two to three years and are not yet back to pre-COVID levels bookings but are also increasing.

The revenue generated at the GFL Memorial Gardens is unique to communities with major event venues and sports teams with a large local fan base. Maintaining - and ideally growing - this source of income will continue to be key to financing other parks and recreation services. Other potential sources of revenue, although not as lucrative, are discussed below.



Last Minute Ice

Last minute ice rentals can help generate revenue to offset arena operating costs. The City of Owen Sound⁷ lists these parameters for its program:

- Last minute ice is considered within 24 hours of the time of booking
- Will not apply to statutory holidays unless the facility is scheduled to be open
- Is not and cannot be used to replace regular bookings
- Regular bookings cannot be cancelled to book Last Minute Ice. All requirements of the City's Ice Allocation Policy will apply (e.g., conditions of use, insurance)
- A rental contract provided by the City must be signed and proof of insurance must be provided prior to use
- Bookings are final and are non-refundable
- Bookings are for minimum of one hour
- One hour rental is equivalent to 50 minutes of ice time and 10 minutes for ice resurfacing
- City reserves the right to limit last minute ice bookings where it is considered to be used for profit or gain or is being abused to replace or in the place of a regular ice booking
- Booked on a first come, first served basis

- City reserves the right to cancel or amend the implementation of last-minute ice at any time at its discretion

In Owen Sound, fees for last minute ice are discounted and reservations are made online for each available pad through its recreation management software. The schedules for the Sault Ste. Marie arenas indicate there are hours available during already staffed 'downtimes' that could generate additional revenues through this type of program.

Commercial Kitchen Rentals

Commercial kitchens within municipal facilities are increasingly being used to generate new revenue streams. A Health Unit certified kitchen can be used for a variety of food and nutrition programs, as well as projects/activities related to communal and/or commercial use of the kitchen. The Township of North Glengarry has embarked on this type of initiative. Their website notes,

"Now accepting bookings: The Township of North Glengarry has partnered with the Eastern Ontario Health Unit to launch the new "North Glengarry Community Kitchen" pilot project. This initiative will enable food producers to rent time at the North Glengarry Community Kitchen, located at the Maxville & District Sports Complex (25 Fair Street, Maxville) so that they can produce food items for resale. The cost is \$50 per day and food

⁷ <https://www.owensound.ca/en/exploring/ice-rental.aspx>



producers are required to have their Food Handlers Certificate and have their recipe validated by the EOHU.”⁸

The City has a number of kitchen facilities it could consider for rentals, assuming these uses could be seamlessly incorporated in venue schedules.

Community Capital Campaigns

Capital campaigns can be used to raise funds for large building projects, as well as for smaller, community-supported initiatives that contribute to parks and recreation infrastructure. Key elements of this approach to planned fundraising include: a predetermined monetary goal attached to providing a concrete project, sufficient lead time to raise funds, a timeframe for closing the campaign, broad-based community involvement in the effort, and ongoing communications about its progress. Incentives are sometimes provided to motivate contributions (e.g., matching funds, public recognition of donors, etc.). Where possible, these campaigns should be coordinated with other similar initiatives in the community to minimize the negative impact of concurrent requests for monetary contributions. For major campaigns, professional services may be required to plan and implement the initiative.

⁸ <https://www.northglengarry.ca/en/things-to-do/community-kitchens-program.aspx>

Commemorative Amenities Program

The 2019 ACTION PLAN notes the City’s intention to update its Commemorative Bench program to expand locations and to develop a memorial tree program. The City is encouraged to consider both combining the policies and expanding the scope of eligible donations.

These types of programs are designed to encourage citizens to commemorate people or events through donations that ‘purchase’ parks-based amenities, some of which are eligible for charitable tax receipts. A sample of municipal programs reveals some that encompass a broad scope for community support, while others are more specific. The City of Greater Sudbury’s Parks Services Donation and Memorial Program allows the public to “make donations to commemorate a special person, a momentous occasion or simply donate as a philanthropic gesture to beautify a community park. Donations towards the purchase of park enhancements or memorial gifts can include park benches, trees (hardwood and conifers), bike racks, picnic tables, sun shelters, sports equipment (basketball standards, tennis nets, soccer goals, etc.), playground structures, other options to be discussed with Parks Services.”⁹ The policy also notes that donations for parks are guided by site-specific plans.

⁹ <https://agendasonline.greatersudbury.ca/?pg=feed&action=file&attachment=5992.pdf>



Strathcona County's (Alberta) Parkland Memorial Program notes: "The Parkland Memorial Program provides individuals, groups, and organizations with the opportunity to beautify Parkland in Strathcona County by planting trees or installing Parkland Amenities in remembrance, observance or acknowledgment of an appropriate event, occasion or individual. Approval of applications will be based on aesthetic considerations, improvements to the level of service to our Parkland users and with the intention of facilitating planned development in our Parkland. "Amenity" means any bench, table, park furnishing or other structure or development that increases the physical or material comfort of the park. It may include a memorial plaque."¹⁰

As Strathcona stipulates, these types of programs should note that the selection of donated amenities is to be guided by master plans for the parks or other locations where they are requested for installation.

Advertising and Sponsorship

The City's website lists opportunities to advertise at GFL Memorial Gardens, John Rhodes Community Centre, Northern Community Centre (NCC), Peter G. Manzo Pool and V.E. Greco Pool. At the same time, is a policy related to advertising in parks. Collectively, advertising revenues from municipal facilities is an important source of income. At the same time, there does not appear to be an overarching policy that outlines

¹⁰ https://storagecdn.strathcona.ca/files/files/lls-ser-011-023_parkland_memorial_program.pdf

the content, types, and process for advertising space in municipal buildings/parks properties or for sponsoring projects and events.

These policies are designed to generate revenue for the corporation while ensuring acceptability from various perspectives: legal, appropriate content/images/messages, etc. The fees charged for advertising and sponsorship should be set within policy that details their purpose and parameters, including a process for setting rates, and reviewing them on a regular basis.

Park/Facility Naming Rights

Financial support can be recognized by naming a park or facility after the donor. A policy to guide this practice would be required. In recent years, the practice of naming places after individuals has become controversial as public pressure emerges to rename institutions, streets, and other public spaces when the namesake's worthiness is called into question - whether this is an individual or a business / commercial enterprise.

A way to preclude this possible eventuality is to provide a highly visible plaque in the park or facility that acknowledges the individual or business that contributed to its development, while choosing a formal name that is not tied to a specific donor(s). In addition to the benefit noted above, a plaque permits multiple donors to be recognized for their contributions, which opens the door for a wider reaching



campaign and possibly various levels of support. In the event that an individual or organization is considered for sole naming rights, however, a minimum contribution level could be set based on the relative cost of providing the asset and/or a contracted period for the right could be specified.

- SD 12: Institute revenue generating programs to help offset the costs of service provision.
- SD 13: Assign priority to revenue generating programs according to ease of implementation.
- SD 14: Consider conducting capital campaigns for facility and park development.
- SD 15: Develop an Advertising and Sponsorship Policy and a Park/Facility Naming Policy.

5.5 Collaborations and Agreements with Non-municipal Providers

Existing Collaborations and Agreements

The City collaborates with many non-municipal service providers in delivering parks and recreation services to the community. These agreements range in type and complexity. Any lease or license of occupation is vetted through the City's legal department. Some examples are listed below by type of agreement.

Leases

- shipping containers: commercial vendors at SOO Market
- John Rhodes CC: Soo Gymnastics, pro shop, restaurant, sports training centre
- Northern Community Centre: pro shop; Algoma District School Board uses upstairs rooms for secondary school classes
- John Rhodes Community Centre: Algoma District School Board uses upstairs rooms for secondary school classes



- GFL Memorial Gardens: Sault Major Hockey Association uses rooms; Soo Greyhounds
- Sinclair Yards: Sault Minor Ball Association has had exclusive use for 20 years
- Strathclair animal shelter: Humane Society
- Strathclair batting cages: commercial operator
- City land: Horse and Pony Club since 1969
- Bellevue Park: Algoma Sailing Club
- Bay Street 55+ Active Living Centre: City has 50-year lease with District of Algoma Social Services

Licenses

- Northern Community Centre: Sault College has standing agreement to use for men's and women's competitive hockey programs
- Captain Nichola/Goddard Park: Clean North and Police for community garden

Programs/Services

- Best for Kids Program: Manzo and Greco Pool summer program
- 'Kids Being Kids': access to indoor space at Northern Community Centre during inclement weather
- City is one of approximately ten collaborators in the new Algoma Region Youth Wellness Hub, which will provide a range of health, wellness and support services to the City's young people; contributions are largely through in-kind services

Potential New Collaborations and Agreements

Sault College and Algoma University

As noted in the Facilities discussion, Sault College is interested in exploring a potential partnership with the City to develop a new turf field and an 8-lane running track. The City and the College have a well established working relationship. The assessments for the Master Plan do not confirm need for an outdoor turf field or an additional track. Costs to upgrade the Jo Forman track, however, need to be reviewed and updated, and potential School Board contributions to this work investigated. Therefore, the possibility of an agreement for joint development and operation or an annual contribution to operating costs for a College track should be kept in mind.

Although details are not provided, Algoma University's Campus Master Plan (2020) delineates a 'Sports and Recreation Zone.'

The Zone includes the George Leach Centre (GLC) and associated open spaces that can support sports programs and activities. The existing GLC could be expanded and renovated to support additional outdoor and sports related activities taking place within its immediate vicinity, as well as in other areas within the University campus. Further partnership discussion should be explored to enhance and expand field space. The area located south of the existing GLC could be considered for a future addition to



the building that can provide amenities and support to the Shingwauk Plaza, and other public spaces proposed in the Core Zone. Possible uses to be considered in the immediate areas of the GLC can include skating, game areas, winter sports, bike rental, among other outdoor activities.¹¹

Opportunities for the City to collaborate with the University may emerge as the Master Plan is implemented over time, and will depend on community needs being appropriately accommodated in the design and operation of the facilities provided.

Key factors to consider in any partnership assessment would include the calibre/level of proposed facilities in relation to needs for community sport and recreation, and the extent of guaranteed community access.

School Boards

It was noted in consultation that community groups are required to negotiate use of school facilities each year, and that an agreement to guarantee access to facilities such as gyms for pickleball could be investigated. The Algoma District School Board currently rents facilities/space in the City's Community Centres. Both the Catholic and Public School Boards are available for community rentals through the Boards' offices. Since the City does not have a municipal gym, and school facilities are distributed throughout the municipality,

working with the Board to improve community access to gyms could help diversify options to participate in recreation.

Program/Service Agreements

Indirect service provision by the City requires agreements with non-municipal providers for program delivery. These comprise short-term agreements for municipal asset use (facilities, park space, etc.) for programs or events. In collaborating with organizations such as Best For Kids and 'Kids Being Kids', the City brings a wider range of community programs into supply that it could not easily do alone. Future program development will require outreach to new organizations. To this end, a consistent approach to formulating agreements is preferred, while recognizing potential variations in specific cases. Generally, the form of agreement should be a template that addresses the following items:

- legal names of parties involved
- type of collaborating organization: community-based volunteer group, public agency, not-for-profit agency, commercial enterprise
- type of service (e.g., sessional program, special event)
- City's purpose/objective for entering the agreement for the program/service, which should align with short-term program planning objectives
- description of program/service to be provided
- each party's responsibilities for identified deliverables, including evaluation tasks

¹¹ <https://algomau.ca/about/our-campuses-overview/sault-ste-marie/sault-ste-marie-campus-master-plan/>



- details on program/service (e.g., location(s), program sections, as appropriate, age groups, number/length of sessions, etc.)

This general outline of agreement content may vary depending on the collaborator and the form of service (e.g., event, sessional program, three-hour workshop, etc.). In the case of other public or not-for-profit agencies, the engaged organization will have its own agreement requirements, which will also need to be met. If the program/service is being delivered by a commercial enterprise, net revenue-sharing between the provider and the City could be part of the agreement. The City should take the lead in preparing paperwork and executing agreements to ease the administrative obstacles to engaging program/service providers, especially when dealing with community volunteer organizations and individual program providers.

Non-Facility Based Service Providers

There are regional or provincial organizations that work with municipalities to provide programs/services using local facilities. Reaching out to these organizations to determine the possibilities for collaboration with the City could meet the needs and support the objectives of the parties involved.

Through its program development function, Special Olympics Ontario (SOO) is seeking to partner with municipal recreation departments to develop and provide programs for people with intellectual disabilities. SOO helps in the areas of volunteer and coach training courses, athlete and volunteer recruitment for the program, support for promotion, and competition opportunities. Municipal contribution to the partnership may include facilitating/running the program as part of its regular roster; providing facilities, equipment, etc.; setting the price for participation; providing necessary coaching, staff and volunteers; providing SOO with limited feedback on participant profile (e.g., age and gender); encouraging all involved with the program to register with SOO; abiding by SOO policies and procedures; paying relevant expenses (as agreed upon between the parties); providing insurance coverage for events/programs. The municipality retains all income from the program. Sault Ste. Marie is in SOO's Northern District.¹²

¹² <https://www1.specialolympicsontario.com/our-communities-2/>
Facilitating the use of City facilities by organizations such as Special Olympics Ontario will also diversify program supply and build inclusion into service delivery.



Agreement Review

As with policy, it is important to regularly review agreements to incorporate required updates/amendments. Reviews should be done in consultation with collaborators/partners to the agreements.

- SD 16: Potential collaborations in facility provision with post secondary institutions will require assessments of cost-benefits to the City in relation to community needs and guaranteed access for use.
- SD 17: Facilitate and enter service agreements with non-municipal providers for short-term program provision using municipal facilities.
- SD 18: Reach out to regional and provincial sport and recreation organizations to determine the potential to facilitate their use of City facilities.
- SD 19: In consultation with collaborators/partners, regularly review and, as required, update agreements.

5.6 Service Marketing, Communication and Promotions

The City would benefit from a marketing plan that clearly establishes its business objectives in parks and recreation services and develops a comprehensive strategy to achieve them. The long-standing 4Ps of marketing are product, price, place and promotion.

While pricing public services differs from that of the private sector, the other aspects of marketing are important to shaping the municipal role in service delivery in the face of increasing demands / expectations and fiscal constraints to responding to these.

Of particular importance in Sault Ste. Marie is the promotions/communications component of service delivery. This emerged as a key area for improvement in consultation, and the 2019 ACTION PLAN notes a number of initiatives the City has completed or will implement related to internal and external communications:

- Internal directives focus on optimizing the use of technology to provide the community with quick, easy access to information and program/facility booking, as well as training appropriate staff on new systems/procedures and implementing a formal internal policy on using electronic communications.



- External directives include improving search features on the City's website, viewing facility availability and making bookings online, developing a consistent design for recreation and culture activity guides and packages, providing information and opportunities for youth focused use of municipal parks and recreation services, and generally improving City communication with community members, groups and partners in terms of all available leisure opportunities.

There are a variety of distinct, yet related objectives here, some of which have already been implemented. For example, the City is currently developing a new website, which will present opportunities to improve its use for promotion purposes. Once fully operational, the City can monitor and evaluate its effectiveness in generating wider awareness, and more use, of its parks and recreation services.

Further to the website work, and to develop the full range of functions/products needed in marketing, communications and promotion, the City should prepare a marketing strategy, including the scope of responsibilities to be assigned to a staff position with an allocated budget. It should also provide guidance on a suite of communications and promotion methods/tools to be used by the City in a program designed to deliver comprehensive coverage in real time. As shown in Table 5-4, social media is by far the most frequently used information source about parks and recreation services.

Table 5-4: Use of Information Sources About Recreation Services

Communication Method	% (#) of 400 respondents
social media (Instagram, Facebook)	63% (251)
word of mouth	35% (138)
local online news	27% (108)
City website/Tourism Guide	22% (89)
local newspaper	18% (71)
local radio/TV	17% (67)
City press releases	16% (63)

The City can also take the lead role in facilitating awareness and promotion of all parks, culture and recreation services in the community – City, other public, not-for-profit and private sector, as appropriate. A marketing strategy can outline the networking process(es) to encompass both municipal and non-municipal service providers in promotion activities.

Communications channels can also be used by the City to promote its work in parks and recreation services. The Municipality of Port Hope, for example, produces an annual graphically portrayed Parks, Recreation and Culture Year-in-Review¹³ that summarizes the past year's work in developing, operating, and maintaining these services. Much of this information is already available or would be captured in monitoring activities and could be used to produce an 'annual report' to City residents.

¹³ <https://www.porthope.ca/en/your-municipal-government/prc-year-in-review.aspx>



SD 20: Prepare a marketing, communications strategy for parks and recreation services to provide direction on effective processes and tools for these functions, and budgeted staffing requirements.

SD 21: Prepare and post an annual services 'year-in-review' that summarizes and informs the community about the City's achievements in parks and recreation services.

5.7 Service Planning and Evaluation

Process and Information Requirements

The overarching goal of planning, monitoring and evaluating parks and recreation services is to contribute to informed decision-making. The process works to distinguish between community 'needs' and 'wants', to respond to 'needs' in the most judicious way, and to monitor the success of the response. The overall process is illustrated in Figure 5-1:

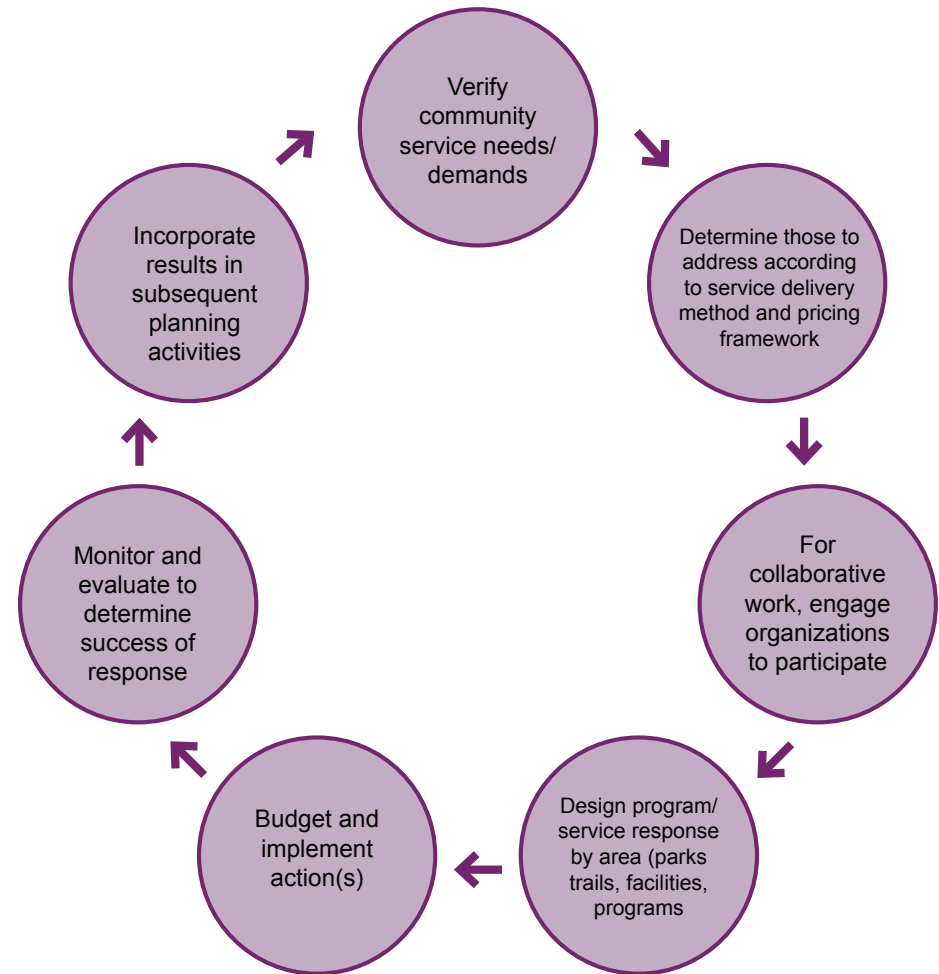


Figure 5-1: Planning and evaluation process



The focus of this discussion is areas of information collection and application. The remaining components of the planning process outlined in Figure 5-1 are the topics of other Master Plan discussions (e.g., collaborative work) and/or are ongoing City functions (e.g., budgeting and implementing actions).

Table 5-5 summarizes the key components of information collection and use in needs-based services planning to:

- verify community service needs
- monitor and evaluate the success of the service response
- incorporate results in subsequent planning activities

Although it deals with both facilities and programs/services under the same headings, it is noted that facility (infrastructure) planning is typically a longer-term endeavor than program planning, which is annual or even seasonal. The relationship between programs/services and facility needs is an iterative process, which is not conveyed in the distinction the table makes for the purposes of this discussion. Facilities planning is also touched on in Section 3.2 under Asset Management. The table includes tasks that may already be conducted by the City to show where they fit in relation to other activities.



Table 5-5: Services Planning Information Requirements and Application

Verify community service needs		
Facilities		Programs/Services
Maintain a Single, Comprehensive Inventory	Document and regularly update an inventory of all facilities and relevant information by type. Ideally, all facilities now or potentially available for community use in the City should be included in a single, integrated data base	Document and regularly update an inventory of all programs and relevant information by type. Ideally, all programs/services available either directly or indirectly through collaborations with the City should be included.
Document Data on Use Related to Capacity	Track actual hours of facility use in relation to capacity (within total prime and non- prime time hours, where applicable). ¹⁴ Institute periodic, rotating checks on unscheduled facilities to document use at different times	Track program/service fill rates in instances with a capacity limit or simple counts of participants / users / attendees when no limit on capacity.
Develop Indicators of Unmet Demand	Document information on unmet demand for facilities, programs and services from organized users, community engagement via Have Your Say, resident inquiries/requests to the City, and formal market research.	
Monitor and evaluate to determine success of response		
Measure Service Performance Against Targets	Using tools noted above to gather feedback, evaluate success of individual facilities and programs/services on an ongoing basis with organized and casual users, program participants and instructors, in relation to pre-determined performance targets.	
Incorporate results in subsequent planning activities		
Adjust Service Plans According to Evaluation Findings	As a cyclical activity covering both short and long-term service provision, the findings on evaluation can be used to maintain alignment between the supply/delivery of services and community needs.	

¹⁴ Actual use is the same as scheduled use if all schedules use occurs.



Recreation management software enables information collection on service use and trends in performance to inform the planning and evaluation process. The City has software it uses for recreation services management functions. In expanding its planning and evaluation capacity, staff can develop a comprehensive menu of information requirements – based on needed indicators in all service areas.

Incorporating Data in Service Planning

The results of this work will reveal patterns of use/participation over time, available facility/program capacity that is not being used, and measures of outstanding demand. The City can determine if the response to unmet demand will be adding more facilities/programs to supply or improving the performance of existing services. Facility options to this might include lighting unlit fields, repurposing facilities, reallocating use, financial incentives to push use to less preferred times, etc. Program/service options might be adding more sessions of particularly popular programs or adding new programs.

For underused services, feedback through evaluations might reveal a range of factors leading to offering fewer times or locations for the same program, rescheduling to more convenient times, or discontinuing the service. Facility implications might include consolidation of similar facilities, relocation or removal from supply.

The results of monitoring and evaluation will also inform annual planning and budgeting and can be used to update relevant components of the Master Plan. The extent that these measures can be used to project into the future will also assist in confirming longer-term facility requirements. At the same time, long-term projections must be subject to ongoing monitoring, verification and, if required, adjusted to reflect changing levels of participation and use. A sport or activity that shows high growth in participation today may level off or decline in future years and initially projected facility needs might require adjustment.

Engaging Other Service Providers

The City works with many other non-municipal providers. Joint service planning by all key providers in the community should occur on a regular basis, with a view to integrating the efforts of all in developing facilities, programs and services. The municipality can take a leadership role in facilitating joint planning activities. This will help ensure a comprehensive, whole community approach to service planning and provision, especially as Sault Ste. Marie grows and services expand.

The number of sessions per year in which all participants should engage can be determined collectively. At least one full group session per year, however, would be required. Ideally, it should be scheduled to align with both service and budget planning but this might not be possible with multiple participants. In some cases, smaller group planning sessions,



by specific service area may be more reasonable in terms of accommodating other organizations, with the City then feeding this information into internal planning activities.

Engagement in major project planning/development or one-time events can be more narrowly defined in terms of the parties involved and the number of 'sessions' needed. Periodic joint sessions may also be needed to address new/unforeseen topics of relevance to the parties involved. A process that works for the City and other providers, therefore, should be developed and implemented in the short-term and it can grow over time, as needed.

- SD 22: Develop an enhanced data base to apply in a formal recreation facilities and programs/services planning to: verify community service needs, monitor and evaluate the success of the service response, and incorporate results in subsequent planning activities.
- SD 23: Take the lead in developing and implementing regularly occurring joint services planning sessions with all key non-municipal providers in Sault Ste. Marie.
- SD 24: Conduct project, program or service specific planning sessions with other providers, as required.

This page was intentionally left blank



6.0 Implementation Strategy

6.1 Introduction

This section outlines the proposed implementation strategy for the Plan's recommendations. Following a discussion of key considerations, the recommendations are presented by the service areas of the Plan: Programs and Events (PE), Recreation Facilities (RF), Parks and Trails (PT), and Service Delivery (SD). Recommendations are accompanied by anticipated costs and timelines for completion of discrete tasks. For a more complete explanation of each recommendation, please refer to the corresponding discussion in the preceding sections of this Plan. Table 6-1 provides a summary of total estimated costs per service area, per time period of the implementation Plan.



Table 6-6: Summary of total estimated costs per service area from 2024-2034

	Total Estimated Costs			
Service area	Short term (2024-2026)	Medium term (2027-2030)	Late term (2031-2034)	Total
Programs and Events	\$1,119,615	\$1,119,615	\$1,492,820	\$3,732,050
Recreation Facilities	\$10,000	\$40,000	\$80,000	\$130,000
Parks and Trails	\$5,484,600	\$4,599,000	\$5,630,000	\$15,713,600
Service Delivery	\$165,000	\$0	\$0	\$165,000
Total	\$6,779,215	\$5,838,615	\$6,322,820	\$18,940,650

This implementation strategy should be considered part of a living document. Progress on implementation should be tracked, and the impact of completed projects on outstanding recommendations evaluated. Recommendations should then be tweaked as necessary, in terms of direction, timing, cost, etc. and reflected in annual work plans and budgets.

6.2 Considerations

The proposed roll-out of recommendations is based on the information available at the time of Plan development and includes the following considerations.

Operations vs. Capital Projects

Of the 142 recommendations, 100 are operational in nature. This means the implementation of these recommendations would be undertaken by staff as part of their day-to-day activities. The remaining 27 capital recommendations and 15 recommendations to undertake supplementary studies require discrete budget allocations for execution. This includes both improvements/repairs to existing facilities, as well as the design and construction of new facilities and amenities. The capital cost estimates for parks and trails include design fees, initial project start-up permits, insurance, protection fencing, construction signage, contingency and cost allowance.



Dependencies and Efficiencies

While recommendations are described as individual initiatives, many are interrelated and need to be considered in the larger context of achieving efficiencies in implementation. Some recommendations must be initiated and completed before other recommendations can begin, while others may benefit from being undertaken simultaneously in terms of process efficiency and providing a more fulsome approach to physical improvements. We have attempted to reflect this in the implementation strategy through indicating if a recommendation should occur in the short, medium or late term.

Budget Considerations

The implementation sequence attempts to evenly distribute the costs of recommendations over the Plan's 10-year time frame. This includes costs associated with operations, planning/design and implementation. The total cost allowance of all recommendations is \$17,440,650.

It should also be noted that costs for some recommendations are not available and are yet to be determined. These have been noted in the forecast and would be in addition to the numbers provided in the strategy. Another factor to consider are cost premiums/fluctuations due to the current rate of inflation.

The current situation makes it especially difficult to attach estimates to recommendations, especially for the medium and later term items.

Staff Considerations

The need for staff resources to do the work requires both a distribution of tasks over time and, in some cases, hiring additional staff to take responsibility for implementation. It will also require coordinated efforts both internally and externally.

Flexibility

The proposed schedule reflects a reasonable roll-out, assuming no major obstacles to activation. However, it is expected that some projects may need to be delayed due to unforeseen circumstances. There may also be opportunities to "fast-track" other initiatives.

Ongoing initiatives are to be carried through each year to the end of the Plan's term. Their applicability throughout the entire period, however, will depend on evolving needs in relation to service development. For example, program expansion for specific interests may be sufficient to meet demand in considerably less than 10 years (subject to potential changes based on continuation of monitoring and verification needs). The point at which this will happen, however, is unknown and thus not identified as an "end-date" in implementation.



The recommendations shown as time-limited endeavors may also extend beyond the years shown. It may take longer to complete the identified activities and/or the completion of a recommendation may result in a new system component or procedure. Recommendations to establish formal agreements or contracts, for example, are shown as time-limited for negotiating arrangements that will create new, ongoing relationships between the municipality and other providers (e.g., volunteers, agencies, businesses, etc.).

6.3 Bill 23 Implications and Financing Considerations

In 2022, the provincial government passed Bill 23, the “More Homes Built Faster Act,” to increase the supply of Ontario’s market housing over the next ten years. The legislation revised ten provincial Acts including but not limited to the Conservation Authorities Act, Development Charges Act, and Planning Act, which resulted in significant implications for Ontario’s land use planning regime. Bill 23 overrides zoning by-laws to increase density but simultaneously limits municipalities’ ability to use development charges and parkland requirements toward concurrent infrastructure and services that support that density. For municipalities experiencing residential growth, adherence to Bill 23 has a disproportionate impact on finances.

Specifically, parkland dedication caps have been altered under Bill 23 such that the maximum alternative rate was cut in half from 1 hectare per 300 dwelling units to 1 hectare per 600 net residential units; likewise, the cash-in-lieu parkland rate for medium- and high-density developments was cut in half from 1 hectare per 500 dwelling units to 1 hectare per 1,000 net residential units. Sites of five hectares or larger are now capped at 15% parkland dedication, while sites less than five hectares are capped at 10% parkland dedication. Municipalities



must also accept encumbered lands (e.g., land with below-grade infrastructure) or privately-owned publicly-accessible open spaces (POPS) as parkland conveyance.

Similarly, Bill 23 reduces the amount of development charges permitted under municipalities' existing and future development charges by-laws. Development charges for rental housing units have been further reduced. Municipalities can no longer use development charges to purchase land for growth-related infrastructure or fund planning studies or assessments. In addition, a variety of new housing units – affordable, attainable, non-profit, and inclusionary zoning housing units, as well as gentle density (up to three units per lot) and rental buildings with four or more units – are exempt from development charges and parkland dedication fees. Revised definitions of these housing typologies may result in larger proportions of housing supply considered eligible for these exemptions.

Consequently, the revenue shortfalls resulting from Bill 23 present significant challenges to delivering current, planned, and future infrastructure necessary in residential communities. The quality and location of new parkland and facilities will be compromised, with fewer amenities, pressure to collaborate on shared space, and more reliance placed on the existing parks system. Other revenue-generating tools, innovative financing, and collaborative partnerships will be crucial for Sault to address financial deficiencies and create complete communities with sufficient park and recreation amenities and facilities. Appendix X contains further discussion of potential revenue generating avenues, including:

- Taxation initiative
- Community benefit charges
- Use of other public budgets
- Cost sharing
- Volunteer contributions
- Bonds
- Private partnerships



6.4 Implementation Strategy

The table on the following pages outlines the anticipated costs and timeframe for implementing each of the Plan's 142 recommendations.

Operations

Capital

Studies



#	Recommendation	Short-Term (1-3 years)	Mid-Term (4-6 years)	Long-Term (7-10 years)	Total Cost	Notes
Programs & Events						
Free and Low Cost Options						
PE 1	Continue to provide free access to both Manzo and Greco outdoor pools, free summer drop-in programs, and free breakfast programs for children.					
PE 2	Seek partnerships and collaborations with other agencies, community organizations and businesses to help fund/subsidize free and low-cost recreation.					
PE 3	Consider use of an app to facilitate pick-up play at sport facilities.					
PE 4	Introduce new free events/pop-up programs at parks and facilities.					



#	Recommendation	Short-Term (1-3 years)	Mid-Term (4-6 years)	Long-Term (7-10 years)	Total Cost	Notes
Youth						
PE 5	Add another drop-in youth space during the term of this plan and in the interim, and/or adjust availability at NCC to be open to Youth from 2:00 pm onwards.		TBD based on partnerships			
PE 6	Consult with T.A.G, MYAC, and local high schools to develop youth programs.					
PE 7	Add a full-time Youth Programmer to lead youth outreach and program development.	\$208,500	\$208,500	\$278,000	\$695,000	based on an annual salary of \$69,500, not including benefits
Adults						
PE 8	Add a full-time Recreation Programmer to develop adult-specific programming and activities.	\$221,115	\$221,115	\$294,820	\$737,050	based on an annual salary of \$73,705, not including benefits
PE 9	Expand adult programming, including registered and drop-in options.					
Seniors						
PE 10	Consider providing intergenerational programs and/or joint use of space from 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm for youth and seniors programs that appeal to youth and seniors to optimize scheduling times at the 55+ Active Living Centre in the NCC.					
PE 11	Seek new spaces to hold seniors programs, including multi-purpose rooms and outdoor spaces.					
PE 12	Expand seniors programs and activities, particularly active, health and wellness programs (based on current demand).					
Aquatics						
PE 13	Expand targeted lifeguard/instructor recruitment efforts beyond students, to include retirees, stay-at-home parents, and newcomers.					



#	Recommendation	Short-Term (1-3 years)	Mid-Term (4-6 years)	Long-Term (7-10 years)	Total Cost	Notes
PE 14	Expand opportunities for swimming lessons, public swims, and aquafit.					
PE15	Explore and offer new, alternative, aquatic activities.					
Accessibility						
PE16	Employ an inclusivity lens at the outset of program and event development, as well as recreation marketing and promotions so that services are accessible and welcoming to people of all ages, abilities, ethnic/cultural backgrounds, gender identities, etc.					
PE17	Continue to provide the Adventure Bus service, and seek opportunities to expand the service.					
Arts, Culture, & Heritage						
PE18	Work with the local Indigenous community to increase Indigenous-focused events, programs, and initiatives in the City.					
PE19	Work with local arts, culture, Indigenous, and heritage organizations, and artists to integrate public art into public spaces such as park design, signage, and amenity design.					
PE20	Work with Algoma University and the future Makwa Waakaa'igan Centre to collaborate and increase the contribution of Indigenous culture and knowledge to City programs and events.					
PE21	Integrate newcomer cultural practices and interests in community events, in consultation with local communities.					



#	Recommendation	Short-Term (1-3 years)	Mid-Term (4-6 years)	Long-Term (7-10 years)	Total Cost	Notes
PE22	Allocate funding dedicated to arts, culture and heritage related initiatives.	\$481,500	\$481,500	\$642,000	\$1,605,000	Based on previously approved funding that used a calculation of \$5 per capita/annually for arts and culture funding
Events						
PE23	Increase promotion and marketing of events.					
PE24	Work with the Tourism and Community Development Division, Algoma District, and Tourism Sault Ste Marie on tourism-focused events.					
PE25	Develop winter events that maximize use of winter facilities throughout the City and support the year-round availability of events.					
PE26	Provide events designed for adults.					
PE27	Add an Events Assistant.	\$208,500	\$208,500	\$278,000	\$695,000	based on an annual salary of \$69,500, not including benefits
	Total Cost Programs and Events	\$1,119,615	\$1,119,615	\$1,492,820	\$3,732,050	
Facilities						
General Facility Considerations						
F1	Continue to build the profile and integration of accessibility across City services through a strong online presence and the Accessibility Centre at the JRCC.					
F2	As accessibility projects are implemented, announce their completion on the Accessibility webpage and update status reports.					
F3	Continue to provide fulsome description of accessible features at individual facilities.					



#	Recommendation	Short-Term (1-3 years)	Mid-Term (4-6 years)	Long-Term (7-10 years)	Total Cost	Notes
F4	Conduct the needed recreation building and facility conditions assessments that are not current will be required to inform the 2024 AMP.	TBD				as required for individual facilities; professional services to be hired
F5	Evaluate planned capital improvements against the results of building conditions assessments to identify those that may not be required in view of potential need for facility renewals.					
F6	Investigate potential need for major facility renewals through studies aimed at comprehensive recommendations on facilities or spaces as whole, concepts plans, estimated costs and phasing.	TBD	TBD	TBD		costs to be determined based on proposed renewal projects
F7	Further develop the facility planning function through performance evaluations based on a finer level of detail in the information collected to verify demand for individual facilities.					
Indoor Recreation Facilities						
F8	The existing supply of five indoor ice pads will be sufficient to meet demand during the term of the Master Plan.					
F9	Continue to monitor and evaluate the use of all pads to confirm the effect of the new pad on the distribution of use across all five pads, and future unmet demand.					
F10	In tracking ice time demand, consider any changes in the contribution of non-municipal providers to supply.					
F11	Assess the opportunities presented by Hockey Canada's new Dressing Room Policy on the potential to reconfigure dressing rooms to accommodate all genders and larger numbers of players per room.	\$10,000			\$10,000	building specialist to be hired to provide direction on options (does not include drawings)



#	Recommendation	Short-Term (1-3 years)	Mid-Term (4-6 years)	Long-Term (7-10 years)	Total Cost	Notes
F12	Prepare a detailed feasibility study to determine the potential to support a 50-metre pool to accommodate both community and competitive programming.		\$80,000		\$80,000	professional services for feasibility study
F13	If the GNSA need for earlier times cannot be accommodated by reallocation through scheduling, a third field may be required in the short term.					need recent assessment on need for an additional turf field; cost might be part of assessment and could be added here
F14	Track use of artificial turf fields in relation to capacity that eliminates non-prime time and the period during which hot weather precludes using the space.					
F15	Clarify target to provide a new artificial turf field as an enhanced level of service to the community, as opposed to capacity use of existing fields, given relatively greater expressed interest in more indoor facilities.					
F16	If another turf is added to the NCC, explore ways to incorporate interior cooling features in its provision to increase usable hours, and address current and future storage needs.					Depends on F14 confirmation by City
F17	Continue to monitor indoor walking participation at NCC and the GFL concourse as part of KPIs in relation to targeted service levels.					
F18	Encourage the pickleball, tennis and curling clubs to prepare a feasibility study and seek support from Tennis Canada for this work, with municipal representation on the project Steering Committee.					study cost to be carried by the clubs
F19	Determine scheduling related changes needed to achieve better overall space allocations		cost included in F23			could be done in-house or twinned with F23



#	Recommendation	Short-Term (1-3 years)	Mid-Term (4-6 years)	Long-Term (7-10 years)	Total Cost	Notes
F20	Determine scheduling related changes needed to achieve better overall space allocations.					
F21	Determine capital upgrades required to support changes in use for expanded/new programs.		\$10,000		\$10,000	this would be an architectural assessment based on F21; does not include drawings; capital costs to upgrade will depend on required work
F22	Consider opportunities for seniors and adult programming to share the same spaces at different times.					
F23	Review all existing uses of general program space by facility to identify opportunities to consolidate programs/uses in terms of aligning those that are compatible while maintaining an appropriate geographic and scheduling distribution of services.					
F24	Determine capital upgrades required to support changes in use.		\$30,000		\$30,000	to be done in conjunction with seniors' space at NCC; does not include drawings; capital costs to upgrade will depend on required work
Outdoor Recreation Facilities						
F25	Future investment in ball diamonds should be directed to optimizing the potential of the Strathclair site to provide a major hub for community league use, and for tournament activity.	TBD	TBD	TBD		costs as required
F26	Consider decommissioning the two junior diamonds Elliott Sports Complex and repurposing the space for other recreation uses.	TBD				cost to decommission
F27	Schedule all existing fields to achieve capacity use.					



#	Recommendation	Short-Term (1-3 years)	Mid-Term (4-6 years)	Long-Term (7-10 years)	Total Cost	Notes
F28	Schedule all existing fields to achieve capacity use.					
F29	As part of ongoing consultation, clarify user groups' concerns about lack of field availability and needed improvements..					
F30	Review and update costs to resurface/upgrade the Jo Forman Track, and encourage School Boards to contribute to costs of improvements.	TBD	TBD	TBD		jointly funded study, capital and operating costs to be determined in negotiations with College
F31	Continue to support the development of cricket as part of community sport through asset maintenance and tracking facility use.					
F32	Provide facilities for organized tennis and pickleball to support formal community-based programming by the Tennis Association and Soo Pickleball, while ensuring court scheduling includes designated times for casual use by the community, in both prime and non-prime time periods.					
F33	Provide equitable support for organized tennis, pickleball and bocce activity by assigning priority to improvements to some courts for each type of sport in the short-term and addressing improvements to remaining courts once a 'basic' level of service is established.					
F34	Monitor and track all court use to determine use in relation to capacity and the need for future additions to supply.					
Arts, Culture and Heritage Facilities						
F35	Include all City-operated arts, culture and heritage facilities that are programmed in service monitoring and evaluation to establish use in relation to capacity and determine the potential to grow activity at these locations.					



#	Recommendation	Short-Term (1-3 years)	Mid-Term (4-6 years)	Long-Term (7-10 years)	Total Cost	Notes
F36	Initiate the concept of an Art, Culture and Heritage District in the downtown core and along the waterfront as a focus for promotion and attraction.					part of marketing and promotions
F37	Continue to build local events programming at the Bellevue Park bandshell.	TBD				costs as required
	Total Cost Facilities	\$10,000	\$40,000	\$80,000	\$130,000	

Parks & Trails

General Park and Trail Considerations

Parkland Classification and Provision

PT 1	Adopt the updated parkland classification system.					
PT2	Leftover landscaped spaces such as awkward slivers of land, environmentally sensitive features, boulevard medians, roundabout centers, or traffic island gateway features should not qualify as park space as part of parkland dedication from developers.					
PT3	New parkland should be located with consideration of the access map (Figure 4-1), to provide parks or trails to those in areas who are not currently within 800-1000m of an existing park.					
PT4	New subdivisions that are not within 800-1000m of an existing park should require parkland, and ideally a parcel greater than 1.0ha for maximum benefit to the community.					
PT5	Infill and smaller developments in the urban area may accept cash-in-lieu if there are parks, trails, natural spaces, or recreation facilities relatively nearby (up to 1,000m away).					



#	Recommendation	Short-Term (1-3 years)	Mid-Term (4-6 years)	Long-Term (7-10 years)	Total Cost	Notes
Park Revitalization Plan						
PT6	Incorporate improvements to pathways/trail connections, accessibility, beautification, signage, naturalization, tree planting, etc. into the Park Revitalization Plan.					
PT7	Provide funding for implementation of the Park Revitalization Plan, aiming for at minimum three parks improved per year.	\$900,000	\$900,000	\$1,200,000	\$3,000,000	\$300,000 per year
PT8	Update the Park Revitalization Plan based on 2021 census data, and reassess the scores applied to each park every two to four years (as asset management needs dictate and as new census data becomes available), and adjust the prioritized list of parks as needed.					
Accessibility and Comfort						
PT9	Ensure that all playgrounds are maintained to CSA standards and within the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.					
PT10	Conduct an accessibility audit to determine the current degree of accessibility within each park/ playground, and trail segment, and update the City website and parks inventory accordingly (this can be integrated into the Park Revitalization Plan).					
PT11	Incorporate accessible seating, play equipment, and pathway design in the design phase of future parks and trails.	Project dependant	Project dependant	Project dependant		
PT12	Employ the principles of CPTED in parks, trails, and facilities.					



#	Recommendation	Short-Term (1-3 years)	Mid-Term (4-6 years)	Long-Term (7-10 years)	Total Cost	Notes
PT13	Provide shelter (in the form of structures and tree planting), seating (preferably picnic tables), and lighting at all parks and trails that is adequate for the amount, season, and type of use.	\$1,863,000	\$1,863,000	\$2,484,000	\$6,210,000	based on \$150,000 allowance for each district/community park and \$60,000 for each neighborhood park
PT14	Install washroom access and a drinking water source in high-traffic parks and trail heads. Accessible washrooms (including adult change tables) should be provided.	\$616,000	\$616,000	\$616,000	\$1,848,000	based on \$300,000 per winterized washroom and \$8,000 for water fountain for two parks per time period
PT15	Increase staffing as needed to provide an increased level of service related to accessibility, safety, and comfort.	TBD based on need	TBD based on need	TBD based on need		
Horticulture and Community Gardens						
PT16	Continue to support the Horticulture team, greenhouses, the winter foodbank vegetable growing program, and mini-orchards/fruit tree plantings.					
PT17	Continue to work with the Environmental Sustainability Committee, planting pollinator gardens throughout the City.					
PT18	Work with local organizations to introduce a butterfly conservatory.					
PT19	Develop a Community Garden Policy.					
Free, Unstructured Outdoor Activities						
PT20	Give preference to projects/amenities/initiatives etc. that will increase the opportunities for free, unstructured outdoor recreation activities.					
PT21	Add obstacle course type play equipment that has components that are appealing to children, youth and adults, and selecting a location based on the criteria discussed herein.		\$350,000		\$350,000	



#	Recommendation	Short-Term (1-3 years)	Mid-Term (4-6 years)	Long-Term (7-10 years)	Total Cost	Notes
PT22	Continue to monitor demand for additional skate parks and pump tracks.					
Outdoor Ice Rinks						
PT23	Continue to provide the six existing outdoor skating rinks/loops.					
PT24	Rebuild the skate shack at Esposito to include accessible washrooms, heated changerooms, and plan for it to be operational year-round.	\$300,000			\$300,000	
PT25	Assess the feasibility of converting Esposito Rink to a plant operated, multi-season, multi-sport facility.	\$20,000	TBD (based on study)		\$20,000	
PT26	Consider adding a roof to Esposito, William Merrifield and/or Anna McCrea (in partnership with School Board) rinks.		\$150,000		\$150,000	
New Dog Park						
PT27	Add at least one dog park within the term of this Plan, monitoring for additional demand, and select the site based on the factors discussed herein.	\$250,000			\$250,000	
PT28	Explore adding lights to dog parks to extend hours of safe operation.	\$20,000			\$20,000	
Trail Recommendations						
PT29	In new subdivision developments, encourage parkland dedication in the form of trail networks, which connect the neighbourhood to other trails, facilities, and shops.					
PT30	In urbanized areas, seek opportunities to provide separated active transportation boulevards along road ways to add connections to the trail network.	TBD	TBD	TBD		seek partnership with public works and engineering
PT31	Winterise trails which are: near to seniors residences, near to schools, near to shopping areas, and/or act as connectors between key locations.					



#	Recommendation	Short-Term (1-3 years)	Mid-Term (4-6 years)	Long-Term (7-10 years)	Total Cost	Notes
PT32	Continue to provide security personnel at trail segments where needed.					
Site-Specific Recommendations						
Bellevue Park and Marina						
PT33	Continue to maintain the trails, and all connections to the trails, in Bellevue Park for winter use.					
PT34	Complete the accessible pathway to the kayak launch, and add a railing to the ramp.	\$50,000			\$50,000	
PT35	Prepare an updated Master Plan for Bellevue Park and Marina that considers at minimum: all of the existing amenities; a plan for the playgrounds; new amenities such as a fat bike trail, cedar hedge maze, barbecue stations and any others that arise through consultations; connections required within and to the site; parking needs; pathways and circulation; signage; accessibility; compatible and incompatible uses, etc.		\$120,000	TBD (based on study)	\$120,000	
Clergue Park						
PT36	Complete a Master Plan for Clergue Park that includes consideration for adding a playground, heated shelters, and/or a heated changeroom building with concessions stand and skate rentals.	\$80,000	TBD (based on study)		\$80,000	
Elliott Outdoor Sports Complex						
PT37	Add a playground to Elliott Outdoor Sports Complex.		\$200,000		\$200,000	
Esposito Park						
PT38	Add lighting to the pump track at Esposito Park.	\$30,000			\$30,000	
V.E. Greco Pool/Capt. Nichola Goddard Park						
PT39	Add accessible, universal washrooms and change rooms to V.E. Greco Pool.	\$300,000			\$300,000	



#	Recommendation	Short-Term (1-3 years)	Mid-Term (4-6 years)	Long-Term (7-10 years)	Total Cost	Notes
PT40	Add shade structures near the pool at V.E. Greco Pool.	\$150,000			\$150,000	
Kinsmen Park, Hiawatha Highlands, and Wishart Park						
PT41	Work with Tourism Sault Ste. Marie and other partners involved in Kinsmen Park and Hiawatha Highlands to develop tourism initiatives to encourage visits to the Parks and other sites in the City.					
Manzo Pool and Splash Pad						
PT42	Add accessible, universal washrooms and change rooms to Manzo Pool and Splash pad.	\$300,000			\$300,000	
PT43	Add shade structures near the pool and splash pad at Manzo Park.	\$150,000			\$150,000	
Point Des Chenes						
PT44	Conduct a market feasibility study to determine the suitability of a campground at Point Des Chenes, and the preferred operation model.	\$50,000			\$50,000	
Queen Elizabeth Sports Complex						
PT45	Resurface the Jo Forman track.	TBD (based on partnership)				
PT46	Develop the second phase of the skateboard park at Queen Elizabeth Sports Complex.			\$180,000	\$180,000	
Roberta Bondar Park and Marina						
PT47	Upgrade the dock, port fender system for cruise ships, and marina building at Roberta Bondar Marina.	\$255,600				
PT48	Partner with Tourism Sault Ste. Marie on further improvements or initiatives to attract cruise ship visits.	TBD (based on partnership)	TBD (based on partnership)			



#	Recommendation	Short-Term (1-3 years)	Mid-Term (4-6 years)	Long-Term (7-10 years)	Total Cost	Notes
PT49	Consider adding a mini-putt course at Roberta Bondar Park.			\$200,000	\$200,000	
Strathclair Sports Complex						
PT50	Conduct a lighting audit to identify priority areas (e.g., parking lot, skating area, dog park), and add lighting at Strathclair Park.		TBD (based on audit)			
PT51	Investigate the possibility of adding potable water tanks, and if possible, provide drinking water fountains for people and pets at Strathclair Park.	TBD (based on partnership)				
PT52	Provide shade by way of tree planting and shade structures throughout Strathclair Park.	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$450,000	Based on three built shade structures at \$150,000 each. Cost of trees varies, and planting could be absorbed as an operational cost
PT53	Provide a warming shelter with wind protection and timed heaters near the skating area at Strathclair Park.		\$250,000		\$250,000	
	Total Cost Parks & Trails	\$5,484,600	\$4,599,000	\$4,830,000	\$14,913,600	
Service Delivery						
Role of the Municipality in Service Delivery						
SD1	Continue direct and indirect service provision, as appropriate, in best serving community recreation needs.					
SD2	Assign the PRAC to advise Council and assist staff in implementing the Master Plan.					
SD3	Explore other potential labour pools to offset labour shortage and for new programs including residents with specific interests and skills sharing part-time instructors with other agencies, and engaging post secondary students from relevant programs.					



#	Recommendation	Short-Term (1-3 years)	Mid-Term (4-6 years)	Long-Term (7-10 years)	Total Cost	Notes
SD4	Conduct a formal review of operations and staffing to determine a 'baseline' of staffing needs to meet all areas and optimal levels of service provision.	\$50,000			\$50,000	likely too much work to be conducted in-house but, if it can, cost can be removed.
Policy Requirements						
SD5	Conduct a service pricing study as the basis for setting recreation services fees in relation to cost recovery targets, and to inform a pricing policy and considering affordable access.	\$45,000			\$45,000	professional services to be hired; cost is for parks and recreation services only; a corporate wide study would increase the cost
SD6	Consider developing an inclusion policy to support and promote equitable access to parks and recreation services.					
SD7	Develop a community group affiliation policy to provide clarity and consistency in terms of the range of support services available to all volunteer groups and what they must do to be eligible to be, and remain, affiliated.					
SD8	Consult with volunteer recreation groups to confirm the type and extent of required assistance to sustain/grow their programs/ events, and to inform development of the policy within the capacity of the City to provide support.					
SD9	Develop a policy for grants to non-profit community groups as distinct from the community group affiliation policy.	annual operating budget				
SD10	Develop a collaborations and partnerships policy to guide the City in working with other providers to delivery parks and recreation services.					
SD11	Regularly review and update policies to reflect relevant changes.					



#	Recommendation	Short-Term (1-3 years)	Mid-Term (4-6 years)	Long-Term (7-10 years)	Total Cost	Notes
Revenue Generating Programs and Services						
SD12	Institute revenue generating programs to help offset the costs of service provision.					
SD13	Assign priority to revenue generating programs according to ease of implementation.					
SD14	Consider conducting capital campaigns for facility and park development.					
SD15	Develop an Advertising and Sponsorship Policy and a Park/Facility Naming Policy.					
Collaborations and Agreements with Non-munipal Providers						
SD16	Potential collaborations in facility provision with post secondary institutions will require assessments of cost-benefits to the City in relation to community needs and guaranteed access for use.					
SD17	Facilitate and enter service agreements with non-municipal providers for short-term program provision using municipal facilities.					
SD18	Reach out to regional and provincial sport and recreation organizations to determine the potential to facilitate their use of City facilities.					
SD19	In consultation with collaborators/partners, regularly review and, as required, update agreements.					
Service Marketing, Communications and Promotion						
SD20	Prepare a marketing, communications strategy for parks and recreation services to provide direction on effective processes and tools for these functions, and budgeted staffing requirements.	\$70,000			\$70,000	



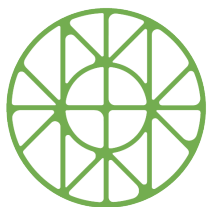
#	Recommendation	Short-Term (1-3 years)	Mid-Term (4-6 years)	Long-Term (7-10 years)	Total Cost	Notes
SD21	Prepare and post an annual services 'year-in-review' that summarizes and informs the community about the City's achievements in parks and recreation services.					
Service Planning and Evaluation						
SD22	Develop an enhanced data base to apply in a formal recreation facilities and programs/services planning to: verify community service needs, monitor and evaluate the success of the service response, and incorporate results in subsequent planning activities.					
SD23	Take the lead in developing and implementing regularly occurring joint services planning sessions with all key non-municipal providers in Sault Ste. Marie.					
SD24	Conduct project, program or service specific planning sessions with other providers, as required.					
	Total Cost Service Delivery	\$165,000	\$0	\$0	\$165,000	

This page was intentionally left blank



Appendix

Soo Prime time Hours at Indoor Ice Pads
Hockey Canada Dressing Room Policy



**Parks and
Recreation
Master Plan**



Prime time Hours at Indoor Ice Pads

Pad	Days	Prime Hours	# hrs	Non Prime Hours	# hrs	Non Prime Hours	# hrs	Totals	totals per day		total per week
									Prime Hours	on Prime Hou	Prime Hours
JR 1	Weekday	5:00pm - 10:00pm	5	7:00am -5:00pm	10	10:00pm-11:00pm	1	16	5	11	25
JR2	Weekday	5:00pm - 10:00pm	5	7:00am -5:00pm	10	10:00pm-11:00pm	1	16	5	11	25
JR1	Weekend	9:00am - 10:00pm	13	7:00am -9:00am	2	10:00pm-11:00pm	1	16	13	3	26
JR2	Weekend	9:00am - 10:00pm	13	7:00am -9:00am	2	10:00pm-11:00pm	1	16	13	3	26
McM (NC 1)	Weekday	5:00pm - 10:00pm	5	4:00pm-5:00pm	1	10:00pm-11:00pm	1	7	5	2	25
McM (NC 2)	Weekday	5:00pm - 10:00pm	5	4:00pm-5:00pm	1	10:00pm-11:00pm	1	7	5	2	25
McM (NC1)	Weekend	9:00am - 10:00pm	13	7:00am -9:00am	2	10:00pm-11:00pm	1	16	13	3	26
McM (NC2)	Weekend	9:00am - 10:00pm	13	7:00am -9:00am	2	10:00pm-11:00pm	1	16	13	3	26
Gardens	Weekday	5:00pm - 10:00pm	5	2:00noon - 5:00pm	5	10:00pm-11:00pm	1	11	5	6	25
Gardens	Weekend	9:00am - 10:00pm	13	7:00am -9:00am	2	10:00pm-11:00pm	1	16	13	3	26
			90		37		10	137	90	47	255



Classification:	OPERATIONS		
Policy Section/Contact:	Sport Safety	Approved By:	ELT
Effective Date:	September 12, 2023	Next Review Date:	September 12, 2026

PURPOSE

Hockey Canada firmly believes all participants (athletes, officials, coaches, team staff, etc.) have a right to access safe, inclusive, and equitable dressing spaces. In this regard, all participants have the right to utilize the dressing room or appropriate and equivalent dressing environment based on their gender identity, religious beliefs, body image concerns and/or other reasons related to their individual needs.

Hockey Canada believes in balancing the safety, privacy, modesty and wishes of our participants without compromising the aspects of camaraderie, social integration and bonding inherent in a team sport. This Policy attempts to meet these goals while providing a safe and respectful environment for participants.

This Policy represents a shift in philosophy from previous dressing room regulations. As will be further explained below, this new model is based upon creating safe, inclusive and equitable dressing room environments that are designated team spaces for everyone, while providing proper supervision.

SCOPE

The Dressing Room Policy applies to all minor hockey teams sanctioned by Hockey Canada and its Members.

DEFINITIONS

- **“Dressing rooms”** – officially designated spaces for changing in and out of gear. Mostly, these are men’s and women’s, multi-stall spaces and occasionally can be all-gender, multi-stall spaces.
- **“Dressing environments”** – spaces beyond dressing rooms (in close proximity to them) that can be temporarily repurposed to provide a space for a small number of participants to change in and out of their gear (e.g., official’s room, multi-purpose room, meeting rooms, single-unit washrooms).
- **“Policy”** – means this Dressing Room Policy.

PROCEDURE

The Minimum Attire Rule

To best promote inclusion and to respect the privacy of all participants on a team, Hockey Canada requires all participants to wear ‘minimum attire’ at all times in a dressing room or in dressing environments where more than one participant is present. This means that participants should arrive at the rink wearing a base layer (e.g., shorts and t-shirt, compression shorts and shirt or sports bra). A participant not arriving at the rink wearing their base layer can use an appropriate private space (e.g., private restroom stalls or empty/unused dressing rooms) to change into the base layer and then enter the team dressing room with the other participants.



DRESSING ROOM POLICY

It is the responsibility of all coaches and team staff to instruct players regarding the minimum attire rule and ensure that players are complying with this Policy.

Hockey Canada recognizes the physical limitations of some facilities and encourages associations to work creatively and proactively, using an athlete-focused, ethical, and values-based approach, with local facility management to ensure that appropriate and equivalent dressing environments are available to all participants who would prefer not to get dressed in the team dressing room.

Team Talks

Hockey Canada stresses the importance that all participants are treated as valued members of a team. Therefore, coaches and team staff should only engage in pre- and post-game talks when all athletes are present in the dressing room.

Use of Showers – Recommended Best Practice

As outlined in the purpose section, there are many reasons why athletes may require privacy (religious reasons, chronic conditions, body image, gender). The following guidance around the use of showers, is an additional step in creating environments within which athletes feel safe and secure. It is recommended that when showers are not private stalls, that these be used in a manner that respects the privacy of all participants. When in open concept showers, it is encouraged that all athletes wear certain “minimum attire” at all times, including swimwear. In order to facilitate this, participants could use a private restroom stall to change out of their base layer and into their swimwear prior to using the shower. Similarly, they could dress in a private restroom stall after they have completed their shower. Coaches and/or team staff should ensure they are able to supervise the dressing room while participants are showering, following ‘Rule of Two’ guidelines below.

Officials Dressing Rooms

Given that dressing room spaces for officials and officiating teams are often shared by officials of a wide variety of ages and genders and may be used by different sports at the same time, safety and privacy are of the utmost importance. To create a safe and welcoming environment for everyone who uses an officials dressing room space, the minimum attire rule and shower recommendations described should be applied.

Applicable Laws

Hockey Canada Members that have mediated human rights settlements within their Province/Territory with respect to specific dressing room parameters are exempted from this Policy within their jurisdictions, but solely to the extent required so that they may continue to adhere to such settlements.



Rule of Two

To best ensure safety for all participants, all minor hockey programs sanctioned by Hockey Canada and its Members are required to implement the 'Rule of Two' for all dressing rooms. The 'Rule of Two' requires two trained and screened adults to be present in the dressing room or immediately outside the dressing room with the door propped open to monitor the environment and ensure it is free of any discrimination, harassment, bullying, or other forms of maltreatment. The Rule of Two remains in place when showers are in use.

Prohibition on Violent Activities in Dressing Rooms

To ensure the safety of all participants in the dressing room, no type of violent conduct of any kind (including locker room boxing) bullying, or hazing is permitted. It is the responsibility of coaches and team staff to ensure that no such violent behaviour is taking place in dressing rooms or dressing environments. Should anyone experience maltreatment in violation of this section of the Policy, a complaint may be submitted to Hockey Canada's Independent Third Party.

Prohibition on Recording in Dressing Rooms or Dressing Environments

To respect the privacy of participants, no videos, still photos, or voice recordings of any kind may be taken using any device with recording capabilities in a dressing room or dressing environment. Cell phones are only permitted to be used in a dressing room or dressing environment for the purposes of controlling music played in those spaces.

RELATED POLICIES & DOCUMENTS:

Hockey Canada Dressing Policy FAQ (Located on Hockey Canada Website)

Hockey Canada Dressing Room Implementation Guide (Located on Hockey Canada Website)

Hockey Canada Gender Expression / Identity Policy (Located on Hockey Canada Website)

Hockey Canada Gender Expression / Identity Policy FAQ (Located on Hockey Canada Website)

Hockey Canada Screening Policy (Located on Hockey Canada Website)

Hockey Canada Maltreatment Complaint Management Policy (Located on Hockey Canada Website)

Revision History

<i>Date</i>	<i>Version #</i>	<i>Change</i>
Sept. 12, 2023	2.1	Updated language regarding use of shower section from required to recommended.
June 19, 2023	2.0	Major revisions and updates
Mar. 29, 2021	1.1	Updated to new template and reflect new age categories.
Jan. 1, 2010	1.0	New



DRESSING ROOM POLICY

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE





INTRODUCTION

The Hockey Canada Dressing Room Policy is a guiding document intended to provide the standards and guidelines necessary to ensure the safe, inclusive and equitable participation of all participants. This implementation guide, directed toward team officials, functions as a practical accompaniment to the Dressing Room Policy and should additionally be read with the Hockey Canada Gender Expression/Identity Policy. The implementation guide is divided into preparation and application steps to safety, equity and inclusivity.

RESPECT AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All participants of Hockey Canada member associations have the right to be respected and be equal participants in their member organization. Respecting the rights of athletes, staff and the parents/guardians of participants to inclusion and equal treatment (including the removal of any discriminatory requirement, factor or other barrier), may need no accommodation at all. However, if a participant has a human rights-related need (such as requesting separate changing facilities due to religious reasons or gender identity), then every attempt will be made to accommodate, limited only by undue hardship. Additional information on human rights, protected grounds, duty to accommodate and undue hardship can be found on the [Canadian Human Rights Commission website](#).

HOW TO ACCOMMODATE

A participant on a team may request accommodation assistance with respect to the dressing room for a number of reasons, including but not limited to:

- Gender identity
- Need for privacy
- Body image concerns
- Religious reasons
- A combination of any of these reasons

Knowing the reason(s) behind an accommodation request is not necessary for providing accommodations and respect. It is the choice of the participant as to whether or not they disclose the reasons for the accommodation request.



Preparation	Application
Anticipate barriers to inclusion and equity and take actions to address them to the best of your ability, such as: • Create or amend any team codes of conduct that includes information on the Hockey Canada Dressing Room Policy and the process required request an accommodation. • Inquire about empty dressing rooms available with the facilities manager before the season begins. • Inquire about appropriate and equivalent changing areas, such as meeting rooms, all-purpose rooms, officials' rooms, etc., before the season begins. Raise Awareness about the Policy • Speak with parents/guardians during a pre-season talk to discuss the Dressing Room Policy • Speak with all participants during the pre-season talk about the Dressing Room Policy when discussing respect and anti-bullying/hazing. • Communicate alternative options available and how to access them.	Responding to request for accommodation such as: • Offer alternative options explored in preparatory steps. • Design an equitable dressing schedule, if necessary.

STEPS TO PREPARE

1. Increase awareness and understanding.

- In pre-season meetings, ensure participants and parents/guardians are aware of and understand the Dressing Room Policy. It is crucial that all team staff across the country take opportunities to affirm their commitment to dressing room safety, equity and inclusion.
 - Discuss with participants and parents/guardians the Dressing Room Policy and the Rule of Two.*
 - Discuss with participants and parents/guardians the Dressing Room Policy when discussing respect and anti-bullying/hazing.*





2. Provide information to participants and parents/guardians about how to request dressing room accommodation.

- a. Communicate in writing to all participants how to request dressing room accommodation; an example of a process is below:
 - I. *Participant or their parent(s)/guardian(s) submitting the request on their behalf to provide a written request to their local hockey association (LHA)*
 - II. *The individual(s) requesting dressing room accommodation are entitled to the following:*
 1. A confidential meeting, with date, time and space relayed in advance to discuss the accommodation request with an LHA representative.
 2. Bring a support person (parent/guardian or supportive adult) to the meeting.

3. LHAs should work with their local facilities each season to understand what alternative and equivalent dressing room options are available to be best prepared should an accommodation request come from their program or a visiting program.

STEPS TO APPLY

If a participant requests a dressing room accommodation regardless of the reason, some options, although not the only options, include:

1. Offering alternative and equivalent dressing room options.

- a. During the timeslot needed, inquire if an empty dressing room is available.
- b. If there is no empty dressing room, inquire about appropriate and equivalent dressing room areas that are available and take into consideration the distance to the ice surface. These may include:
 - I. *Officials' rooms*
 - II. *Meeting rooms*
 - III. *Another team's currently unused dressing room*

2. Implementing an equitable dressing room schedule.

- a. An equitable dressing room schedule must ensure all participants have access to dressing rooms by designing a schedule with an order that reflects that all participants have access to using the dressing room space first and in a timely fashion in alternating manner.
- b. Team staff must ensure no pre- or post-game team activities occur in the dressing room without all participants of the team present.
- c. Examples of equitable dressing room schedules could reflect the schedules below:



2 nd Shift	Individual/ Private	Shared/ Group	Shared/ Group	Individual / Private
-----------------------	---------------------	---------------	---------------	----------------------

	Pre-Game	Post-Game	Next Pre-Game	Next Post-Game
1 st Shift	Girls'/Women' Shared	Boys' / Men Shared	Individual / Private	Girls'/Women' Shared
2 nd Shift	Individual / Private	Girls'/ Women' Shared	Boys' / Men Shared	Individual/ Private
3 rd Shift	Boys' / Men Shared	Individual / Private	Girls' / Women' Shared	Boys' / Men Shared

PROVIDING ACCOMMODATIONS

Hockey Canada recommends all organizations that become engaged in an accommodation process follow the below principles:

1. Ensure the participant who is requesting the accommodation is allowed to share their concerns and the need for the request.
2. Summarize what the participant discussed in reference to their accommodation request and ask for confirmation of the accuracy of what has been understood.
3. Confirm with the participant that an accommodation will allow them to feel safe and be able to participate fully.
4. Ensure the participant is engaged in brainstorming potential solutions.
5. Ensure the participant is comfortable with all potential solutions, and if not work with them to continue brainstorming additional solution options.
6. Set up a mutually agreeable time with the participant to present and brainstorm accommodation options.
7. Allow the participant to choose which option is most comfortable for them.
8. Allow the participant to decide which team official(s) may need to be notified of the decision, who will help secure changing spaces and the logistics of any accommodation.
9. Ensure the participant knows that if the accommodation needs adaptation or additional needs present that they can re-engage in the accommodation.

ADVOCACY

A participant may require their LHA or team official(s) to assist in advocating on their behalf to ensure an appropriate and equivalent accommodation request is implemented in a timely and confidential manner. Advocacy can take many forms, including but not limited to the following:

1. Speaking with facility management on the participant's behalf, respecting the confidentiality of the participant.
2. Speaking with a tournament or league organizer to discuss the availability of additional dressing room options and/or appropriate and equivalent changing spaces.
3. Upon the participant's request, disclose private information about the participant to authorized individuals approved by the participant and/or their parent/guardian, only when necessary.



April 2024



DRESSING ROOM POLICY

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS GUIDE





POLICY RATIONALE

1. Why is Hockey Canada updating its Dressing Room Policy?

- a. The Dressing Room Policy is focused on enhancing inclusion and safety for all participants on any team or officiating team across the country. Dressing rooms are designated team spaces for all team participants to use and interact in on a welcoming, equitable, inclusive and safe basis. In addition, in an effort to minimize occurrences of maltreatment, bullying, and harassment in the dressing room these spaces now come with minimum attire and supervision requirements, and a requirement to accommodate individuals if they require additional measures or supports.

RULE OF TWO & ENHANCING DRESSING ROOM SUPERVISION

2. What is the Rule of Two?

- a. The [Rule of Two](#) replaces the Two Deep principle. What this means is that all interactions with athletes need to be conducted in open, observable and justifiable environments, which applies to dressing rooms. More information on the Rule of Two is available in the Hockey Canada Screening Policy.

3. What are open, observable and justifiable environments?

- a. Sport environments that are open, observable and justifiable refer to those that occur that are normal to a sport environment (i.e. arena, workout facilities, dressing rooms, bench, ice surface) that allow individuals to view the environment and do not typically occur behind closed doors. The idea is that all interactions with athletes occur in a location that someone could interrupt if necessary.

4. How does the Rule of Two work within a dressing room environment?

- a. Fundamentally, the Rule of Two is designed for all communication and interaction to be conducted in an open, observable and justifiable environment. The dressing room by its design is not always open or observable, but the environment is justifiable in the sport context. To abide by the principles of the Rule of Two, interaction with participants can occur within the dressing room if two screened and trained team officials, volunteers or parents/guardians are present with the dressing room.

5. What is a trained and screened individual?

- a. [Trained and screened](#) is defined by the Coaching Association of Canada (CAC) as individuals who have completed ethics education (Respect in Sport or CAC Safe Sport Training) and have passed a thorough background check, which can include items like interviews, criminal record checks and reference checks.

6. Why should the Rule of Two be implemented?

- a. The Rule of Two is designed to provide greater protection to both athletes and team staff/coaches by never leaving two individuals where there is a [power imbalance](#) present alone.





7. Doesn't the Rule of Two require more work of our coaches, team officials and volunteers?

- a. This Rule of Two will potentially require an additional individual to be present in situations where they were previously not present. Although there is an increase in the number of individuals, it is imperative to have this second person to increase the safety of the environment, especially in situations where individuals may be vulnerable and environments where sensitivity is needed. In hockey – this means the dressing room.
- b. In situations where teams may be using multiple dressing rooms, dressing room supervision and the Rule of Two still applies. Teams should endeavour to have coverage for all dressing room spaces.

8. I am concerned that the Rule of Two is difficult to learn and implement, is there any education available on this subject?

- a. Yes, the Coaching Association of Canada (CAC) has developed a bilingual e-learning module that is free and takes approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. The link for the training module is [here](#). For coaches who need to collect Professional Development (PD) points to maintain their certification, the Rule of Two module awards one PD point for completion.

DRESSING ROOM MANAGEMENT

9. What are examples of what could be an appropriate alternative dressing room?

- a. Appropriate alternative dressing room arrangements will differ in every arena across Canada. These arrangements will be determined by the physical layout of different facilities.
- b. In the most ideal scenario – a changing area that is equidistant to the ice surface as the team dressing room, with a washroom and shower is the best option. However, this may not always be available, so other options may include an officials' room, meeting room or staff room.
- c. If your program requires an alternative dressing room, team officials or local hockey associations should be proactive in contacting facilities (once schedules are determined) they will play in to discuss what options are available and how to gain access to those spaces, should the need to use them arise.

10. The team I coach is multi-gendered, and the team uses one dressing room. What should I do if I have athletes who show up to the rink not wearing their base layer?

- a. If this situation occurs on a multi-gendered team, team officials should instruct the athlete to use the washroom or a private changing area to put their base layer on before joining the team to put on their remaining hockey equipment. A reminder of the base layer requirements should be sent to the parents/guardians.



11. The team I coach is multi-gendered, and the team uses one dressing room. We have an athlete that does not use a base layer under their equipment, how should I proceed?

- a. In the event this occurs, team officials should instruct the athlete to put their equipment (including pelvic-area protective gear) in the private washroom stall within their dressing room (if one is available) before putting their remaining equipment on with the rest of the team. A reminder of the base layer requirements should be sent to the parents/guardians.

12. I coach a multi-gendered team and the athletes prefer to shower at the arena after practices and games, how can I create an equitable schedule for use of the showers?

- a. Please refer to the Hockey Canada Dressing Room Policy Implementation Guide for examples of equitable dressing room schedules. An information sharing session with all parents/guardians and athletes surrounding this topic should be conducted pre-season to ensure all stakeholders are informed. This could be run by each team, or a local hockey association could hold this session for all its programs.

13. An athlete on my team is a transgender girl and wants to dress in the room that aligns with their gender identity. I have heard concerns from individuals around the team that there will be a “boy” in the girls’ dressing room and the girls will be “unsafe.” How do I address this?

- a. Hockey Canada mandates that every participant has the right to use the dressing room that is most congruent with their gender identity, as per the Hockey Canada Gender Expression/Identity Policy, and by provincial human rights legislation and the duty to accommodate protected grounds.
- b. Furthermore, this example perpetuates the myth that trans girls/women are actually boys and men who transition to gain access to girls’/women’s-only spaces for their own gratification. Additional information can be found in the Hockey Canada Gender Expression/Identity Policy FAQ.

14. A team has an athlete that requires an alternative dressing room arrangement. How can I best support the athlete so they are welcomed and included?

- a. Speak with the athlete and/or their parents/guardians (if the athlete wants their parents/guardians involved) and ask how to best include them. Listen to them and respect their needs, even if you do not fully understand them. All requests for accommodation are to remain confidential.
- b. Teams and associations should attempt to be proactive in finding solutions or alternative dressing room arrangements before a request for accommodation is made, in order to simplify and expediate the process.
- c. Conduct periodic check-ins to see how the accommodation is working for them and if any adjustments need to be made.
- d. Ensure that no pre- or post-game meetings in the dressing room occur without the athlete.





- e. Ask the athlete and/or their parents/guardians (if the athlete wants their parents/guardians involved) if they require support for alternative dressing room arrangements when playing in away facilities. However, it is preferable to have information available about away facilities to share in advance of travel, if possible.
- f. There may be situations in which teams will need to develop tailored solutions with the participant using an athlete/participant-focused, ethical, and values-based approach to guide them to a common sense and inclusive resolution.

15. What is a base layer? Do I or my child need to wear full body coverage or show up to the rink fully dressed?

- a. A base layer is intended to cover an individual's pelvic region and torso, and includes items such as shorts, compression shorts, a t-shirt or sports bra, similar to the type of coverage on a body that would be acceptable for the participant at a fitness centre/gym. There is no requirement that an individual must show up fully dressed in their equipment. Additionally, there is no need for an individual to be covered under their equipment from wrist to ankle. The baseline level of attire in the common area of dressing rooms should be similar to the minimum standard of what would be acceptable in a public area of the arena.

16. Do I or my child need to wear their wet equipment or base layer home?

- a. Everyone may get changed out of their equipment after practices and/or games, there is no requirement that equipment must be changed at home. Athletes may change out of their wet base layer into new clothes or clothes that they wore to the rink. The Dressing Room Policy requires that changing if the need to get fully undressed in a private area, like a washroom stall.

17. Can you still shower at the rink?

- a. Yes. We recognize that participants may wish to shower at the rink, which they are still allowed to do. The policy includes a recommendation for a base layer when using open concept showers.



This page was intentionally left blank