

# County of Brant

## Recreation Master Plan – FINAL, July 2017



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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Overview

The County of Brant is a growing urban and rural municipality located along Highway 403 southeast of Highway 401. The current population is approximately 36,000, with the majority residing in Paris, St. George and Burford as the primary urban centres, and the balance distributed among several smaller settlements and rural areas. Continued population growth is anticipated which will produce increasing demands for community services, including parks and recreation.

Parks, trails and recreation facilities and services are increasingly an integral contributor to vibrant, healthy and creative communities. They represent services and participation opportunities that are important to residents from several key benefit perspectives: health and wellness; skills and personal development goals; developing community capacity, affinity, volunteerism and pride; enhancing the design and character of built-up areas; in support of community economic and tourism prospects and initiatives; and conservation of valued natural areas.

The County of Brant initiated a Recreation Master Plan in 2016 as a basis to plan, prioritize, and build community capacity for future parks and recreation facilities, programs and services. A Master Plan is a policy, strategy and implementation framework intended to identify what services are required; where they should be provided and at what levels of quality; and the timing and priority of their development over ten to fifteen years.

## 1.2 Parks, Facilities and Recreation Master Planning Process

The preparation of this Recreation Master Plan is completed in three phases:

Phase 1	Situational Analysis Report (previously prepared – available under separate cover)
Phase 2	Draft Recreation Master Plan
Phase 3	Recreation Master Plan Finalization

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

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

- A population profile, demographic analysis and projections, along with a review of development activity and future growth management planning directions.
- Current parks and recreation facilities inventory, service levels and programming and usage analysis.

- A financial review of the County's investments in parks and recreation services, as well as a Department organizational review, and summary of emerging financing and service delivery models.
- A review of relevant documents and related initiatives, plans, policies, agreements and by-laws.
- Focus groups, interviews and community workshops involving community and organized group representatives to gather their input on the strengths and weaknesses of the parks and recreation services availability and delivery model in the County of Brant, future needs and priorities, and ideas for potential future projects and investments.
- A community survey of the County of Brant residents on participation patterns, services valuation and priorities.
- Mapping of recreation facilities, parks, trails and related resources, as well as thematic mapping of key demographic characteristics that are evolving geographically within the County.
- A summary and analysis of trends and strategies related to parks and recreation services, delivery models, partnerships and other considerations that will shape future use of and involvement in parks and recreation services within the County of Brant.

### **1.3 Recreation Master Plan Context**

The following context emerged from the background research, consultation and review completed through the Situational Analysis Report prepared in support of the Master Plan, providing a basis for the plan and shaping its recommendations:

#### ***Demographics, Community Profile and Urban Form***

The population of the County of Brant is growing and changing:

- The population is expected to increase from a census figure of 36,707 in 2016 growing at 1.6% annually on average to meet the provincial target of 57,000 by 2041.
- The majority of the land area in the County of Brant is rural in nature with average population density of less than 10 persons per hectare. The trend of population migration to the urban areas is anticipated to continue. Population growth will continue to be concentrated in new development areas in Paris and St. George. There are 3 urban areas that comprised 47% of the population in 2016; Paris (2016 population: 12,310), St. George (3,255) and Burford (1,615).
- The growth in the County of Brant's population over the last fifteen years (1996 to 2011) has come primarily from the population aged 55 years and older ('Baby Boomers'). It is expected that going forward there will be small nominal growth in the younger cohorts while the older population will expand rapidly.

- While children and youth (aged 0-19) recreation activities will continue to be a significant need and high priority, aging Baby Boomers and immigration patterns will result in increased demand for older adult and senior recreational activities.
- Two-thirds (67%) of the working population of Brant commute out of the County with half of those (33% of the total) working in Brantford. More than one third (36%) of those working in Brant commute from Brantford suggesting similar cross-municipal patterns in facility usage.

Growth in the County of Brant will continue to be concentrated in the urban areas. This growth will be predominantly in the 55+ age cohort placing pressure on the programs and facilities serving that group. The large amount of commuting traffic with neighbouring municipalities, most particularly Brantford, suggests that a higher degree of coordination and cooperation between the two communities would benefit both.

### ***Parks and Facilities Profile***

- The County of Brant owns and manages 48 parks and over 230,000 square feet of indoor recreation space on approximately 145 hectares of municipal parkland.
- Local schools provide additional access to indoor and outdoor recreational spaces and facilities.
- Trails and cycling routes are provided by the County as well as the Grand River Conservation Authority. The Grand River and Nith River, Pinehurst Conservation Area and natural areas across the County are important recreational resources.
- The agricultural fairgrounds in Paris and Burford are important indoor/outdoor community and special event venues owned and operated by the Paris Agricultural Society and the Burford Agricultural Society, respectively.
- Community groups have organized to deliver programs and services, event-based activities and cultural venues at County-owned facilities, and through the direct provision of parks and facilities.

### **Parkland:**

- County parks are distributed among the settlement areas and reflect a total current County-wide provision level of 3.8 hectares of parkland per 1,000 population, which surpasses the Official Plan standard of 3 hectares of parkland per 1,000 population.
- The type, number and size of parks vary across the County and by community, with the majority of the parks located in the largest population centres including 20 parks in Paris (54.6 ha. or 4 ha./1,000 population), 8 parks in St. George (16.1 ha. or 3.5 ha./1,000) and 6 parks in Burford (33.3 ha. or 9.5 ha./1,000), and additional parks located in the smaller settlements including 3 parks in Oakhill (1.7 ha.), 2 parks in each of Mount Pleasant (13.1 ha.), Harrisburg (2.3 ha.) and Glen Morris (3.0 ha.), and 1 park in each of Oakland (1.7 ha.), Scotland (5.0 ha.), New Durham (1.8 ha.), Cainsville (6.2ha) and Onondaga (0.6 ha.).

- County parks offer diverse facilities and amenities and have varying park roles, functions and services areas that can be defined by the following park categories: Destination Parks (County-wide/regional), Community Parks (serve a specific community or group of residential neighbourhoods), Neighbourhood Parks and sub-types such as Parkettes, Commons and Urban Greens (residential neighbourhood, street or other defined area), and Natural Areas (conservation lands, floodplains, natural corridors, riverside, etc.).
- Based on a walkability assessment, the vast majority of existing residents in Paris, St. George and Burford have convenient access to one or more existing parks or school sites, and residential areas are well-served with local access to associated parkland and/or a new school site. The other settlement areas in the County have a small enough geographic area that convenient access to the local Community Park is available for most residents of these communities.
- Additional parkland has or will be acquired through mandatory land dedications under the Planning Act, as a requirement of new developments, primarily in Paris and St. George where the majority of current and planned development activity is concentrated.

### **Sports Fields:**

- The County of Brant operates 46 sports fields of various sizes and levels of development, comprised of 21 soccer pitches/multi-use fields and 25 ball diamonds. Additional sports fields are available for use at local schools.
- County parks have 9 senior soccer fields, 4 junior and 8 mini soccer fields, all natural turf, and none of them lit. There is one indoor artificial turf field at Syl Apps Community Centre in Paris. The indoor turf and some of the existing outdoor fields are subject to booking/scheduling requirements and user fees for organized programming for soccer and other field sports. Local schools have an additional 4 senior soccer fields, 5 junior and 15 mini soccer fields, none of them lit.
- County parks have 9 lit senior ball diamonds, 8 unlit senior ball diamonds, 4 junior, and 3 other diamonds with natural turf outfields and stone dust or clay in-field surface treatments. Local schools have an additional 5 unlit other/informal ball diamonds
- Of the sports fields that are required to be booked on a fee-basis, the County of Brant soccer fields were used an average of 39% of the available capacity in 2016 while ball diamonds were used an average of 35% of the available capacity during the same period. While these usage levels would appear to reflect underutilized capacity, sports field demands are concentrated in weekday evenings during the playing season and at specific locations based on the size and type of facility available, the total hours booked for use of soccer pitches/multi-use fields nearly doubled from 2012 to 2016, and some facilities are fully booked during peak demand periods. With growth in soccer and baseball participation, market-based facility provision levels have declined and, in the case of soccer fields, is below typical standards in Ontario. In some cases, organized sports groups have reported lack of availability as a key constraint to the continued growth of their programs, and some are reliant on sports fields located on private lands.

- There are opportunities to increase sports field capacities through improvements to existing fields and through new facility development, as well as through potential partnerships. The redevelopment of the existing ball diamonds at Lions Park will contribute to meeting current and future ball diamond needs with upgraded and expanded facilities.

### **Playgrounds:**

- There are 25 playground locations within the County, 9 playgrounds in Paris, 3 in St. George, 3 in Burford, 3 in Oakhill, 2 in Harrisburg, and 1 in each of Mount Pleasant, Glen Morris, Oakland, Scotland and Cainsville. 10 additional play structures are available for community access (after school hours and during the summers) at local schools.
- Review of the current playground locations, including those located at schools and the existing park playgrounds, indicates that the majority of households in Paris, St. George and Burford are within 400m to 800m of one or more existing playgrounds. Four potential gap areas were identified, three in Paris and one in Burford.
- Additional playground developments are planned in new residential development areas in Paris and St. George, while on-going playground maintenance, renewal and replacement will continue to be required to manage these assets, address accessibility and safety standards, and respond to evolving trends in playground design, materials and equipment.

### **Aquatic Facilities:**

- The Paris Community Pool is an outdoor pool located at Lions Park in Paris. Opened in 2012, the pool includes four 25-metre swimming lanes, walk-in entry, tot's play area, diving board and slide, has capacity for up to 240 swimmers, and also has a new change room/washroom and lifeguard/staff building.
- Additionally, there are three splash pads in the County's parks including the Paris Splashpad (built in 2005) adjacent to the pool, the Sunny Hill Park Splashpad (new in 2016) in St. George, and the Burford Optimist & Lions Park Splash Pad (2007). The distribution of these three splash pad locations among the three largest settlement areas provides good geographic access to residents. An additional splash pad is planned.
- There are no public indoor pools in the County of Brant. In larger, concentrated urban centres, provision levels for indoor pools range from 1 facility per 25,000 residents to over 50,000 residents. Most areas of the County including the largest population centres are within a 20-minute driving time to the Wayne Gretzky Sports Centre indoor pools and/or the new YMCA pool (under construction) in the City of Brantford, and some areas are within a similar driving time to indoor pools in Cambridge, Hamilton and Woodstock. A new YMCA indoor pool is under construction in Brantford, and the City of Cambridge is planning to add new indoor aquatic facilities. With the County of Brant's broad geographic area encircling the City of Brantford, population support for an indoor pool is impacted by the proximity of existing and new facilities in the City as well as those in surrounding municipalities.
- The County's Aquatic Needs Assessment and Feasibility Study (2009) recommended that the County should pursue an indoor aquatic facility within the next 5 years (to the year

2014), and acknowledged that the feasibility of building an indoor pool facility in the short-term would depend on access to potential grant funding for up to two-thirds of the capital cost. Ultimately, the construction of an indoor pool did not materialize from the 2009 Aquatic Needs Assessment, and the replacement of the Paris Community Pool with a new outdoor facility has since been completed.

- As the population ages, an ever-growing cohort of seniors with limited mobility, particularly during the winter months, may benefit from regularly scheduled transportation to the Wayne Gretzky Centre to access aquatic programming targeted to this group.

#### **Arenas, Community Centres, Community Halls and Indoor Turf:**

- The County owns and operates four (4) community centres including three (3) arenas with four (4) ice pads: Brant Sports Complex (2 ice pads) in Paris, South Dumfries Community Centre (1 ice pad) in St. George, Burford Community Centre (1 ice pad) and Syl Apps Community Centre (former ice pad converted to indoor turf) in Paris.
- Ice usage at the County arenas is high with 2015 levels averaging 91% of prime time capacity during the fall/winter period and 79% during the spring/summer period. Brant's 4 ice pads equate to a provision level of 1 ice pad per 9,177 residents in 2016, which is above the typical range of 1 ice pad per 10,000 to 20,000 residents for Ontario municipalities, although ice usage remains high. Assuming all four existing ice pads are maintained and no new ice pads are added over the next 25 years, the future provision level would be 1 ice pad per 14,250 people, which is still a strong provision level for arenas. From available information and consultation with user groups, the current number of registered participants in indoor ice sports and programs is estimated to be approximately 3,000 participants, reflecting a current provision level of one ice pad per 750 participants. This level is well within Ontario municipal participant-based provision level standards for arenas which range from 600 to 900 participants per ice pad, although the level is slightly below the recommended target of 1 per 700 participants in the 2000 Master Plan.
- Located in downtown Paris, the Syl Apps Community Centre is a major community hub with a range of multi-use indoor and outdoor facilities and programs available, and is a highly successful example of an arena to indoor turf conversion that is a centre of recreational, community and tourism activity. Usage of the indoor turf at the facility was 38% of capacity in 2016. Through the consultation program, indoor field users indicated that the primary constraints to additional scheduled usage of the indoor turf relate to competing interests for prime time hours (weekday evenings and weekends) and that the size of the field is smaller than Ontario Soccer Association standards for older age groups.
- From the high level review undertaken in support of the Master Plan development, and given the existing supply of one indoor turf field at Syl Apps, there is not sufficient evidence of demand and viability to recommend a full-size seasonally covered artificial turf or year-round indoor turf facility at this time; although, on a regional basis, there is a clear gap and stronger evidence of demand to support this type of municipal facility (i.e. Brant/Brantford).

- In addition there are seven (7) community halls owned by the County including Airport Community Centre (Brant West), Cainsville Community Centre, Mt. Pleasant Community Centre, Pinegrove & Howell Community Hall, Oakland Community Centre and Onondaga Community Hall (Brant/Oakland/Onondaga) and Glen Morris Centennial Hall (South Dumfries). Airport Community Centre is programmed directly by the County while the other halls are volunteer-operated. There are several historic buildings involved. Periodic review and investment will be required to sustain these facilities as well as ongoing community usage, programming and services delivery review.

### **Gymnasiums:**

- As there is no County-owned gymnasium, public access to these facilities is provided through community use of schools and Joint Use of Facilities Agreements with the Grand Erie District School Board and Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board. There is a high level of usage of available school gym times for community programs at 5 school gyms in Paris, and a school gym in each of Burford, Glen Morris and Mt. Pleasant. There was a significant increase in community use of school gymnasiums in 2016, nearly a 25% increase in the usage recorded in the previous year.
- The County utilizes the schools to deliver recreation-oriented after school programs and a range of children's camps, gymnastics, badminton, dance, family gym time, fitness and wellness programs, creative arts, ball hockey, dodgeball, music, and other activities. Some of the challenges with using the school gyms to deliver these programs include: capacity and availability are constrained to after school / evening hours and weekends; advance scheduling and staffing requirements; multiple facility locations and lack of storage requires constant relocation/transit of equipment and limits the size and type of programs; and, lack of available daytime space for seniors programs.
- Municipal provision standards for public gymnasium space vary across the province, and many communities with populations in the range of 50,000 to 100,000 already have one or more municipal gymnasium facilities, and some smaller communities have constructed a municipal gymnasium within the past 10 years. The current volume of community use of school gymnasiums for County recreation programs would support full utilization of the total hours of availability that could be provided at a dedicated community gymnasium.
- The County has identified a municipal gymnasium in its capital forecast. A community gym would not replace the community use of school gyms, but rather would provide more capacity with expanded availability, particularly during school hours, to add to the range of programs that could be offered to the community, accommodating additional segments of the population and in particular the growing population of older adults and seniors. Continued use of school gyms will still be needed to provide geographic access in each of the settlement areas and throughout the County.

### **Special Event Facilities:**

- Special events in the County of Brant play an important role in generating tourism, economic development and community social activity, involving a wide range of events held in various locations through the County year-round.
- There are no large-scale dedicated County-owned event facilities or grounds, and the County is receiving increasing requests to close parks, roads and facilities for event functions. The fairgrounds in Paris and Burford, owned by the respective Agricultural Societies, are fully booked for several community events. A need for flexible indoor and outdoor spaces and supporting facilities with capacity for a range of special events has been identified to support continued growth in community events and tourism.
- At a smaller scale, available event venues include outdoor picnic facilities in five park locations, as well as the Paris Lions Park Amphitheatre, which are available for community use and can also be booked hourly for private functions. Bookings of the picnic shelters and the Amphitheatre have increased significantly in the past 3 to 4 years but still represent a relatively small fraction of available capacity.

### **Other Recreation Facilities:**

- Additional active and passive recreation facilities that are available in the County at local parks and school sites include tennis courts, lawn bowling greens and clubhouses, skateboard parks, basketball/multi-use playing courts, outdoor ice rinks, beach volleyball courts, a disc golf course, leash-free dog park, picnic/park shelters and a band shell.
- Multi-use pads support a range of outdoor sports and activities including outdoor rinks in the winter months. The current distribution of outdoor basketball / multi-use courts in Paris and among several other settlement areas in the County, provides a good distribution and level of service, and additional basketball nets and hard surface play areas are available at local schools. New facilities should be incorporated in new park developments to service future growth, primarily in Paris and St. George.
- The Paris Tennis Club, and the Paris Lawn Bowling Club (est. 1884), both report growth in membership and interest and to improve or expand upon available facilities. The St. George Lawn Bowling Club is also active and has a 100+ year history.
- Consideration should be given to opportunities to further develop unorganized and extreme sport recreation opportunities (e.g. BMX, mountain biking) at Destination or Community Park locations, and/or as part of the trail system. Some neighbourhood park locations may be appropriate for smaller scale skate features such as rails and ramps that can be incorporated into park designs.

### **River Access and Trails:**

- The Grand River is a significant destination and tourism attraction in the County for a range of on-water and riverside trail activities. Access to the river and trails adjacent to it were identified as important themes during the consultation process. The river is a recreational

destination for a growing number of citizens and visitors to Brant for canoeing, kayaking, and fishing as well as cycling, hiking, snow-shoeing and other activities on adjacent trails and roads.

- There are 4 County-owned river access points along the Grand River, and the County has seen a significant increase in river access permitting and the number of groups and total visits, from 14,245 people in 2015 to 19,489 in 2016, a 37% increase. Formal access is primarily directed to the Penman's Dam access point in Paris and the Eric Tomlinson access point in Glen Morris, with Lions Park also used as an access point and access at Bean Park is limited given the location and characteristics of this park and to minimize impacts to the surrounding residential neighbourhood.
- There are more than 110 kilometres of off-road trails in the County of Brant as well as 18 identified on-road cycling routes. In addition to encouraging tourism and travel to and within the County, trails and cycling routes also serve important recreational and active transportation purposes. The County prepared a Trails Master Plan in 2010 that is being revised and updated as a component of the Recreation Master Plan, in part to better connect it with the County's Transportation Master Plan (2008 and 2016 update). A need for a more connected network of trails that extends into more existing and new developing neighbourhoods and improved cycling trails was noted.
- County-owned natural areas and acquisition of additional natural areas provides opportunities to formalize existing informal trails and expand the overall trail offering in Brant. Some of the natural areas in the County of Brant are managed by the Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA), including Brant and Pinehurst Parks and the App's Mill Nature Centre, and enhanced partnership with the GRCA might be a means to improve the local trail system, particularly with respect to river access points and linkages to the existing municipal trail system.

### ***Community Consultation Process***

The research undertaken in support of the development of this Recreation Master Plan included a multi-dimensional community consultation program. This process included focus groups and interviews with various stakeholders and community organizations involving recreation program providers, service clubs, public agencies and partners, County Council and staff. It also included a community workshop and an online survey to facilitate input from the broader community.

Fifteen (15) stakeholder focus group sessions and interviews with over 50 participants were conducted by GSP Group and F.J. Galloway Associates involving presentations to the Community Services Committee and Senior Management Team, interviews with Council members, focus group meetings with public agencies, facility user groups, program providers, service clubs and County staff, and facility tours with staff.

There was an advertised public workshop held at the Brant Sports Complex on October 6, 2016 where information was presented about the project and input was gathered from members of the community. There was also an online Community Survey posted on the County of Brant website

in October 2016 which received 151 completed responses. The County also completed an earlier community survey to obtain feedback on recreation programs.

The results of the public consultation process and detailed description of the input received are thoroughly documented in the Situational Analysis Report. In general, parks and recreation facilities are highly regarded in the County, based on the input received through the consultation program. Sustaining and improving on existing facilities will be a significant undertaking requiring continued investment and renewal, while new parks and facility development will be required to address the growing and changing population.

A second community workshop was held in June 2017 to obtain feedback on the draft Master Plan and confirm support for the recommended directions. Following a presentation overview of the Master Plan by the consulting team, participants discussed the Master Plan directions in a roundtable format, and shared their perspectives with the larger group.



A wide range of priorities and diverse interests emerged from the discussions, with several common themes, summarized as follows:

- **Communications:** ongoing engagement and consultation with residents, user groups, volunteers, partners and others involved in recreation were identified as critical to the success of the Master Plan and the community development aspect of the future vision. Promotion, marketing, education and awareness of available facilities, resources, supports and services were also identified within this overall theme. Supporting and partnering with community organizations to improve facilities and deliver services were confirmed as important aspects of the County leadership role. Working with the local tennis clubs to improve existing facilities was cited as one example to review further. Similarly, working with available local resources and expertise, such as advisory committees, when planning facilities was identified as a strategy to consider.
- **Children and Youth Facilities and Services:** informal recreation opportunities for youth such as a BMX track and other extreme sports were identified as current and future priorities. Engagement of youth in a discussion of current and future needs and interests was also noted as a strategy to consider. One group emphasized that **children and youth** should be the focus of recreation facilities and services delivery.
- **Seniors Programming:** the changing demographics of the County's population and interests of retirees coming into the community were identified as trends, and discussion about potential facilities and services to meet related programming needs revolved around transportation assistance, potential aquatic facilities specialized for seniors such as hydrotherapy, senior-friendly parks and facilities, and supporting independent, healthy and engaged seniors.
- **Multi-use Parks and Facilities:** expanding multi-use opportunities in larger parks and at the Brant Sports Complex and combined indoor/outdoor opportunities were identified as a

desired approach with positive examples referenced such as Paris Lions Park, Burford Community Centre and South Dumfries Community Centre. Ensuring facilities are designed so that they can be **flexibly used and programmed** for a full range of activities and sports was also identified so that specific facilities do not become too specialized. The incorporation of cricket pitches with multi-field soccer configurations was noted as an example to provide multi-use opportunities while also considering emerging interests and cultural diversity. Noted gaps included availability of ice in multiple locations that can be used for ringette, sledge hockey program, and a multi-use cultural facility. One discussion group emphasized the importance of locating facilities where the people are to support convenient access including by walking and cycling. In broad terms, it was noted that the Master Plan should not focus too heavily on a trending activity or sport, and a desire was expressed to maintain and build upon the **balanced and diverse opportunities** for recreation that are available, across a wide spectrum of interests and based on demonstrated needs.

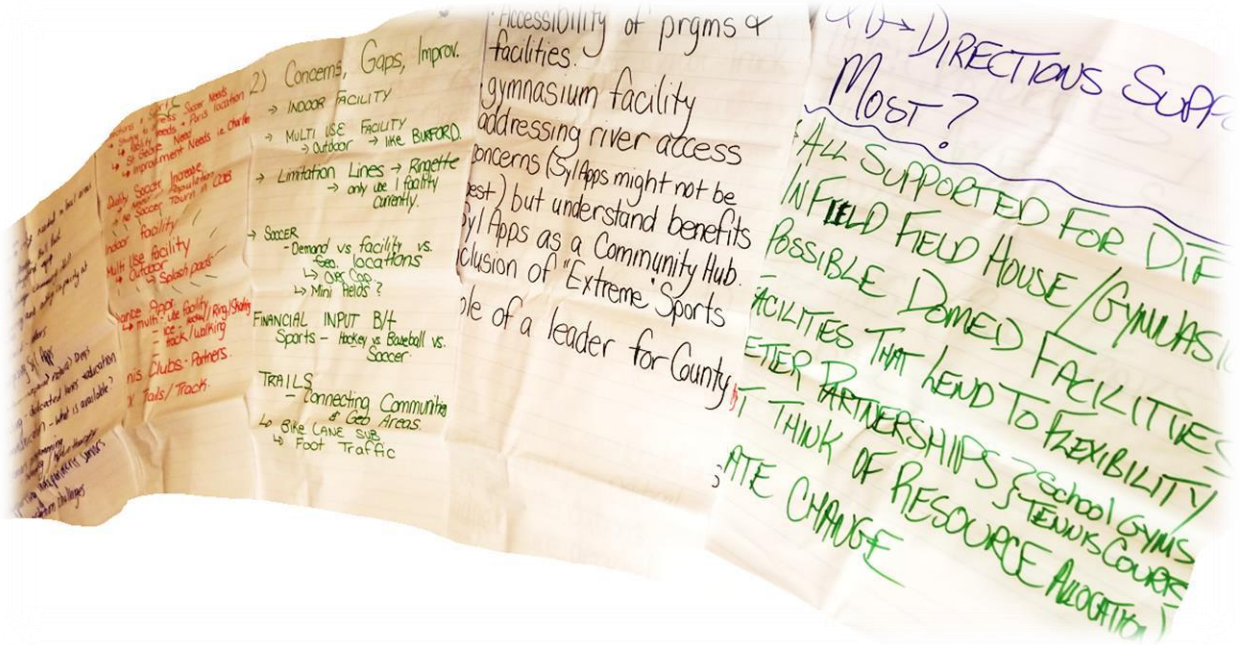
- **Playgrounds and Park Renewal:** continued updating of play equipment as needed and renewal of existing parks were identified as supported directions of the Master Plan. Examples provided included Onondaga Ball Park playground, and general refresh and renewal of Victoria Park and Optimist Park in Paris. Regarding future parkland, it was noted that the County should acquire useable property from development through the mandatory land dedications.
- **Sports Fields:** increasing capacity to resolve current field availability constraints and future needs particularly for soccer and ball diamonds in Paris and St. George, such as through lighting of existing fields, re-purposing existing under-utilized single-facility locations and consolidating field venues in tournament-ready locations with supporting facilities. Potential sports field improvements were noted at Charlton Park. Participants also noted that there are no full-size indoor turf facilities in the Brant/Brantford region and no indoor or outdoor tournament-ready soccer facilities in Brant which puts the area and local groups at a disadvantage to host tournaments and to grow programs and competitive levels. The possibility of a seasonally domed turf facility or year-round indoor field house were discussed.
- **Gymnasiums:** high level of support for the direction to establish a municipal gymnasium, while also recognizing that they are needed in local areas and therefore current programming and community use of schools should be sustained in conjunction with prioritizing the introduction of dedicated municipal gymnasium facilities, potentially in more than one location over the life of the Master Plan. An **indoor walking track** was identified as a desired indoor facility component in conjunction with gymnasium space and/or potentially at other existing facility locations where possible.
- **Syl Apps Community Centre:** re-purposing the existing facility as a new multi-use community hub and special events centre was identified as a widely-supported direction of the Master Plan by workshop participants. There were questions and interests expressed in maintaining the existing outer shell of the building as an important part of this concept. There was some concern about the planned removal of the Two Rivers Stadium ball

diamond and a desire by some to maintain this ball diamond location, while others supported re-purposing the existing ball diamond. Access to multi-use recreational facilities and opportunities were identified as important within and near the downtown area.

- **Community Halls:** working with community groups to sustain community-based operations of community hall facilities was identified as an important strategy, with specific mention of Onondaga Community Hall.
- **Trails and Cycling:** the provision of dedicated bike lanes and education to all road users about these facilities and road safety were identified as key priorities. Connecting the many communities within the County of Brant via continued expansion of on- and off-road trails and cycling was discussed. It was mentioned that partnerships with local groups and organizations should be explored and pursued to support trails. Transportation including active transportation was noted as requiring more emphasis related to access to recreation.
- **Tourism:** river access, trails and cycling, sports tournaments, special events and supporting facilities for all of these opportunities were identified as key tourism elements in the County.
- **River Access:** there was general support among participants for improving river access within the County, as well as working with other agencies such as the GRCA and adjoining municipalities, outfitters and other organizations to promote and facilitate river access opportunities. There were mixed perspectives on the appropriate locations for County-owned river access points with both support and concern for establishing a potential access at Syl Apps. The end of Willow Street was mentioned as an alternative or potential access point. It was noted that river access should be formalized at Paris Lions Park.
- **Natural Areas:** conservation and public access opportunities were seen as important current and future priorities among workshop participants. The quality of the natural environment and diverse recreational opportunities in natural settings were discussed and recognized as defining features and attractions of the County of Brant that should be sustained with improved and enhanced linkages, awareness, wayfinding and facility supports. Environmental sustainability and planning for and mitigating the impacts of climate change were noted as a key related considerations and factors that affect recreation facilities and opportunities. The increasing challenges with natural outdoor ice rinks and severity and frequency of storm events impacting safety and use of the rivers were cited as examples.
- **Implementation:** participants noted that allocation of financial resources and support for implementation of the Master Plan recommendations are needed and investments in recreation should be evidence-based and more standardized and when budgetary decisions are made. One discussion group noted that all of the recommendations of the Master Plan are supported for different evidence-based reasons. Optimizing and maximizing the use of existing facilities were supported and the discussion groups mentioned the fairgrounds in Paris and Burford as well as the existing County-owned lands

and assets for new or expanded recreation opportunities, such as re-purposing former gravel pits.

The Community Workshop input has also assisted in finalizing the Master Plan and establishing the implementation plan.



#### 1.4 Recreation Master Plan Goals

The following goals and outcomes have been established for the 2017 County of Brant Recreation Master Plan.

1. To recommend **policy frameworks and servicing strategies** that will direct the planning, delivery and evaluation of County of Brant Parks and Recreation Services for the next ten to fifteen years.
2. To create the **framework for community engagement, leadership and accountability** in contributing to the planning, delivery and evaluation of the County of Brant Parks and Recreation Services.
3. To recommend the **primary roles, responsibilities and contributions** in the planning, delivery and evaluation of parks and recreation services in Brant.
4. To identify **specific parks and recreation services initiatives** that respond to evolving service organization capacities and regional market and facility perspectives and **resident needs**.
5. To ensure Park and Recreation Services planning, development and evaluation activities **align and integrate with County Strategic Priorities and tourism opportunities**.

6. To provide an **implementation plan and strategies** that will guide community collaboration and development, decision-making and service delivery strategies over the life of the Recreation Master Plan.

## **1.5 Recreation Master Plan Format**

The County of Brant Recreation Master Plan has been developed based on four levels, moving from its strategic foundation through to specific initiatives and then an implementation framework.

- **Level 1 – Plan Foundation** – Section 2.0 provides the philosophical and conceptual basis of the Plan via a Vision, Mission and Principles.
- **Level 2 – Recreation Policies and Delivery Strategies** – Section 3.0 focuses on establishing a policy foundation for the County of Brant's development, delivery and evaluation of parks and recreation services, as well as the various delivery approaches that could be utilized and participated in by the County related to its roles, priorities and structure.
- **Level 3 – Specific Parks and Recreation Initiatives** – Section 4.0 identifies specific actions, investments and approaches that are proposed for consideration by the County of Brant over the next ten plus years related to parks, trails, facilities, recreation and tourism services.
- **Level 4 – Implementation** – Section 5.0 provides an implementation framework and related elements developed to guide the Master Plan's ongoing implementation, updating and positioning.

## **1.6 County of Brant Recreation Master Plan Document**

This document represents the final County of Brant Recreation Master Plan and is intended for ongoing guidance in decision-making and implementation and to be considered at least annually as part of budgeting. A previous draft was reviewed by staff, the community and stakeholders with input opportunities provided to gain resident and stakeholder perspectives on the draft recommendations. As noted earlier, this input has assisted with finalizing the Master Plan.

## 2 Recreation Master Plan Foundation

### 2.1 Vision Statement

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

#### Recommendation #1: Vision

*The County of Brant will offer a diverse array of parks and recreation activities and services that will enrich resident quality of life through improved health and well-being, community development, and ensuring the integrity of the area's significant natural environment.*

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

The second part of the Vision identifies the four key focuses that collectively identify the rationale for these investments, and why residents benefit from participation in park and recreation activities and services.

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

Capacity building is the second dimension of the Vision, involving the opportunity for residents to invest in their community through direct participation, volunteerism, leadership and other roles.

Ensuring the viability of the area's rich natural environment represents a third component of the Vision. A healthy natural environment is fundamental to sustaining the quality of the physical environment in which residents live, which in turn is a major determinant of their lifestyles and overall health. Additionally, parks, trails and natural areas provide people with an opportunity to experience nature, which is essential to our well-being. Third, these natural assets are a vital part of the public infrastructure that contribute to sustaining clean air and water, wildlife habitat and biodiversity, community and environmental resiliency, and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

## 2.2 Mission Statement

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

### Recommendation #2: Mission Statement

The County of Brant Recreation Master Plan directs the achievement of a **balanced array of accessible and distributed parks and recreation opportunities** that effectively supports the evolving interests and needs of the residents.

The Master Plan builds on the depth of the community's recreation facilities, parks and natural resources that collectively contribute to the **enrichment of the quality of life** for residents, through both collaborative and direct service delivery strategies, that:

- **Inspires a true value** for the benefits of parks and recreation participation, and encourages broad-based, active lifestyles that contribute to improved resident health, well-being and personal development;
- Generates a strengthened sense of **community identity, spirit** and **volunteer service**;
- Supports improved **community organization, capacities, unity and economic development**.
- **Conserves and sustains** the quality of the County's valued natural environments.

The primary outcome for the Master Plan is to provide directions and strategies that support continually enriching the quality of life for the County of Brant residents by facilitating access to recreation, sports, trails, park and related services that respond to both their current and evolving interests and needs, and work within the geographic structure of the County.

The first strategy of the Mission Statement is to position the Master Plan and its strategies to focus on residents understanding the benefits of parks and recreation participation. This strategy focuses on parks and recreation benefits enhancing resident health, well-being and personal development. This could involve fitness in terms of physical activity. It could include well-being in terms of reducing stress or being able to socialize and be with others as a means to overcome isolation. It also could involve personal development in terms of advancing one's skills or being involved as a volunteer and contributing back to the community to satisfy their need to be a member of their community and to serve.

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

The third strategy focuses on the growth and vibrancy of the County of Brant via building the leadership, interest and connecting points necessary for all areas of the County to be engaged and sustainable. The Master Plan also needs to be able to provide contributions to the County's community, economic development and tourism initiatives. These can be achieved through parks contributing to the quality of the urban form and the ongoing physical development of the community trail system that connects various nodes within the County of Brant as both a recreation resource and an alternate transportation system. Economically, sports tournaments, cycling routes and facilities, river-based activities, community events, natural areas and other recreational attractions support tourism and other economic activities within the parks and recreation services mandate. This provides value to the community in terms of job creation, economic sustainability and enhancing the revenue generation capacities of key parks and recreation facilities, thus reducing their financial impacts on residents and users.

The fourth strategy focuses on the unique and valued natural features across the County that are a vital and integral part of the County's identity, quality of life and opportunities, whether for residents or tourists. These resources involve rivers, forests, wetlands, and other significant natural areas, which provide a host of essential ecosystem services and benefits to resident and community well-being while also positioning Brant as a recreational hub for "outdoor adventure".

### **2.3 Recreation Master Plan Principles**

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

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

### Recommendation #3: Principles

The County of Brant Recreation Master Plan will contribute to...

***Corporate Strategic Alignment*** Developing parks and recreation services that **align with and support** the County's priorities and initiatives related to resident **health, tourism and economic development, the environment, community development and quality of life.**

***A Balanced Array of Park and Recreation Opportunities*** The provision of a **balanced array of park and recreation opportunities**, involving recreation, parks, sports, river access, trails and other opportunities linked through **partnerships** and involving social, health, education and related public and community services.

***Fairness and Inclusion*** Ensuring **fair and inclusive park** and recreation opportunities that encourage and facilitate participation by all residents in terms of ability, age, culture, economic, geographic and related interests and backgrounds.

***Services Integrity and Evaluation*** Developing and delivering park and recreation services that **operate with integrity**, are **continually evaluated** relative to outcomes and respond to evolving resident needs and community growth.

***Balancing Public Accessibility and Revenue Generation*** Providing park and recreation services that achieve a fair and reasonable balance between facilitating broad-based **public accessibility and benefit** while **generating revenues** at levels that do not result in an undue burden on the County.

***Maximizing Existing Facility Resources*** Achieving **maximum utilization of existing** parks and recreation facilities as a priority before new facility development occurs, along with ensuring **cost effective facilities operations**, and undertaking the ongoing repositioning, integration or closing of facilities to meet evolving market needs and legislative requirements.

<b><i>Municipal Leadership Role</i></b>	Undertaking <b>County leadership roles</b> in the planning, development, facilitation, evaluation and supports for parks and recreation services, using an array of innovative delivery strategies involving partnerships, joint ventures, direct delivery and community-based service provider approaches with volunteer supports.
<b><i>Conservation of Natural Resources</i></b>	Ensuring that the County's parks, open spaces, waterways and trails continue being valued by the community, <b>conserve key environmental resources</b> , are accessible to the public for both programmed and non-programmed activities where feasible, and contribute significantly to a positive urban form and <b>healthy physical environment</b> in the County of Brant.
<b><i>Flexible and Environmentally Responsible</i></b>	Developing parks and recreation services that are flexible and <b>environmentally responsible</b> over the longer term through innovative designs, are <b>adaptable and flexible</b> , facilitate an ease of maintenance and support the inclusion of all residents.

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

### 3 PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICES DELIVERY POLICIES

#### 3.1 Parks and Recreation Services Strategic Policy Framework

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

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

#### Recommendation #4: Parks and Recreation Services Delivery Policy Framework

<b>Service Delivery Approach</b>	That <b>community-based</b> organizations and volunteers continue to represent the principal recreation programs delivery approach in the County of Brant, and represent the primary means for expanding the accessibility, availability, affordability and mix of parks and recreation programming available to residents.
<b>Prioritization Process</b>	That the prioritization process for the County of Brant’s direct participation in parks and recreation services continue to <b>focus on County residents and tourists first as the primary users</b> and beneficiaries, and regional residents, secondarily, within the following decision framework.

## County Servicing Priority Framework

### Supporting Corporate Priorities

Services that are primarily intended to support key **strategic priorities** of the County.

### Broad-Based Resident and Tourist Participation and Benefit

Services that **facilitate and encourage broad-based participation** amongst residents and tourists at recreational participation levels, including local, regional and provincial competitively oriented activities for children and youth.

### Inclusion and Accessibility

Services and accessibility that engage with and **support identifiable groups' participation**, including those with disabilities, seniors, young children, teens, new Canadians and others.

## **Recommendation #5: County Leadership Role**

### County Role

The County of Brant will fulfill its role in the planning, development, delivery and evaluation of parks and recreation services based on the following **hierarchy of County responses and roles**, and within the budgetary priorities and strategies established by Council.

### County Involvement and Priorities / Roles Hierarchy for Parks and Recreation Services

#### 1. Facilitation

To actively work to **facilitate and support community groups and individuals** in the development and delivery of parks and recreation programs and services by providing:

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

<p><b>2. Partnerships</b></p>	<p>To enter into <b>partnerships, joint ventures and related collaborative initiatives</b>, at variable levels of involvement, that result in a shared responsibility for park and recreation programs and services delivery where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The interest of the residents are fully realized;</li> <li>• Need / demand for the service is demonstrated; and</li> <li>• Sustainability exists within acceptable risk parameters.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Direct Delivery by the County</b></p>	<p>To undertake the <b>direct delivery of park and recreation programs and services</b> where need is established and other service delivery strategies are not viable or available, utilizing direct capital investment and annual budget support, as well as County staff operating alone or in partnership with volunteers.</p>

***Recommendation #6: County Recreation Services Involvement Criteria and Evaluation***

<p><b>County Involvement Criteria</b></p>	<p>That any <b>County involvement in park and recreation services delivery</b> should continue to be based on the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of demonstrated need at reasonable participation levels;</li> <li>• Evidence of long term sustainability for the program or service;</li> <li>• Assured public accessibility, participation and affordability;</li> <li>• Involvement by the County at a scale reflective of the benefits to be achieved to both the participants and the community at large;</li> <li>• The use of business case analysis as a basis to support County investments in parks and recreation services initiatives, including tourism integration and potential impacts;</li> <li>• Consistent with County revenue generation strategies; and</li> <li>• A transferability assessment of directly delivered County of Brant programs as to how they might be delivered in the future by an alternate service provider.</li> </ul>
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**County Evaluation of Parks and Recreation Services**

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

- The value of the County’s role in the various service delivery strategies;
- The degree of participation that is being realized; and
- The benefits being achieved through the County’s investments for residents, and from tourism economic impacts.

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

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

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

The third dimension of the delivery hierarchy, is that the County, based on evident need and policy compliance, decides to undertake a direct investment in the development and delivery of a parks and recreation service. This will occur when no other available delivery alternatives exist but need for the services are apparent or required by a policy, standard or legislation. Also, this policy

position is not intended to become a catch all or “saviour” approach for existing services. All direct County of Brant services require evident need, identification as a priority and viability and support within available resources, consistent with Council’s budgetary priorities and strategies.

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

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

### **3.2 Parks and Recreation Division within Operations Department Role**

Currently, the Parks and Recreation Division of the Operations Department has principal responsibility for the County’s role in the delivery of parks and recreation services in the County of Brant. Other departments also have some aligned responsibilities in terms of tourism, finance, legal, information systems and technology, development approvals, planning and other divisions in the overall corporate structure.

Two main services delivery perspectives have emerged:

- The community continuing to have a primary ongoing role and responsibility for recreation program development and delivery in partnership with the County where viable and preferred;
- The County increasingly engaged in community development, capacity building, as well as continuing its parks and facility development and operations roles.

The proposed Parks and Recreation Services Policy for the County of Brant focuses on facilitation and partnerships / joint ventures as the primary means of parks and recreation services delivery. The intent is to assess the County’s role in direct delivery (that is where County staff / contractors provide the program or service directly to the public), where feasible, and to support continued and enhanced community engagement in services development and delivery. The policy recognizes that the County has a significant role, whether partnering in direct initiatives, or providing community and capacity development supports that are necessary to sustain and stabilize community service providers over time.

Community development and capacity building involves both assisting community service providers to achieve their goals and roles, and to develop their current and future organizational capacities in order to ensure recreation program quality, availability and accessibility. This is generally defined to have the following key roles:

- Working with community organizations on a direct basis to support them in their governance, program operations, longer term planning, grants acquisition and related tasks, ultimately their sustainability;
- Providing training and development on governance, volunteer recruitment and development, marketing, program evaluation and other functions;
- Undertaking organizational reviews;
- Facilitating access to information, facilities, funding and other available resources within the County, the community or beyond;
- Working with community groups to undertake orientation and training activities in order to build leadership, succession initiatives, and skills-based capacities within the organization;
- Supporting organizations in understanding how to present proposals, to advocate, etc.;
- Facilitating the development of new community organizations and leadership initiatives that lead to the further development and delivery of existing or new parks and recreation services;
- Respond to organizational issues and challenges that could undermine the availability of a balanced array of accessible parks and recreation services in the County of Brant;
- Other tasks that are helpful to the ongoing sustainability, growth and capacity of community service delivery organizations to grow and remain relevant and capable.

In light of this direction, which focuses programs delivery on community development and capacity building, the County of Brant will also have to continue to examine areas that warrant a direct delivery of services approach and those programs that could be delivered via community organizations or other service sectors in order to align with the policy directions and County priorities. Any potential cost savings realized should be reinvested into the full scope of community development and capacity building resources. This policy direction primarily impacts recreation programming activities. Asset management and parks operations would continue to be sustained as for the most part as County functions due to investment, technical, liability and related perspectives.

#### **Recommendation #7: Parks and Recreation Division within Operations Department Roles and Priorities**

That the Parks and Recreation Division within the Operations Department undertake a **functional assessment initiative** that:

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

- Continues to intensify its efforts at formulating, managing and evaluating partnerships, joint ventures and other **collaborative approaches** to services delivery within the County, and on a broader geographic market basis as appropriate.
- Establishes an organizational model developed based on consultation, best practices and other inputs that support the **multi-dimensional service approach** necessary to effectively develop and implement a community development and capacity building priority.
- That the County pursue periodic discussions and assessments with **community service providers** to assist them in their **ongoing service delivery capacities and viability**, to ensure the continuity of service to residents so that services are not diminished or lost.

### 3.3 Community and Volunteer Capacity Development

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

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

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

#### Recommendation #8: Voluntary Sector Services Delivery

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

- That the County of Brant continue to support the voluntary service delivery sector including the **provision of common supports**, such as marketing, research and related perspectives that will result in benefits to these groups that they likely could not achieve within their own resources.
- That the County of Brant undertake a **multi-tiered recognition program**, potentially in collaboration with partners, for volunteers and voluntary organizations with respect to longevity of service, special initiatives and benefits they achieve so that the community is aware of the important contributions volunteers make to the quality of life in Brant.
- That the County of Brant host **community services provider forums** and sustain an **online resources library** that focus on:
  - Sharing and networking opportunities amongst forum participants;
  - Overview trends and strategic directions emerging relative to parks and recreation services within municipal and other environments;
  - Identifying and disseminating broader sources of available information and resources online through provincial and national organizations and other sources;
  - Providing theme specific training and development opportunities relevant to participants;
  - Supporting and providing guidance on corporate sponsorships, Trillium grants and other sources of capital and operational financial support;
  - Providing workshops on strategic planning, governance, program evaluation, tourism opportunities integration, volunteer recognition and recruitment and other topics of interest; and
  - Undertaking consultation on and / or delivery of strategic directions, policy initiatives and related considerations that the County of Brant is engaged in and which could influence this service area.
- That the County should consider **establishing a working group of staff and community service provider representatives** to review and determine appropriate communications/awareness methodologies and tools, timing/ frequency, format, including consideration of in-person and online consultation formats, participants, roles and responsibilities and other details of these forums and online resources library.

### 3.4 Customer Service and Services Planning

The County of Brant has established important capacities in enhancing customer service and for facilitating access. In an era of online transactions, a need exists to continue to explore and implement increasingly user friendly registration, payment, information gathering and market research processes that enhance both customer service and services planning and evaluation. In addition, service planning would be enhanced by increased market research activities and customer program evaluations, both of which could be undertaken through online surveys, data collection and analytical software programs.

#### Recommendation #9: Customer Service and Services Planning

- That the County of Brant incorporate parks and recreation services needs into its **Corporate Technology Plans** to support and continue to build upon the full development of online registration, payment, program evaluation and related services.
- That the County of Brant continually upgrade and develop new electronic information points of access and **social media that support the marketing and promotion** of both the County of Brant and community service providers' programs, including opportunities for market research and program evaluation analysis, and support a comprehensive, one stop web information portal for all parks and recreation information in the County of Brant.
- That the County of Brant investigate, on an on-going and periodic basis, **available data sources and online feedback** that can be used as services evaluation and monitoring tools such as: usage of the County website and information available through partner websites regarding frequently searched parks and recreation facilities, programs and services; travel and visitor review websites and forums; social media responses and trending topics on parks and recreation opportunities in the County of Brant; and, other available data an information.

### 3.5 Financial and Funding Initiatives

A number of financial and funding perspectives were identified through the research and consultation program for the Master Plan. They range from community groups understanding, particularly related to user fees; to fundraising, corporate sponsorship and related funding sources. The County of Brant has been engaged on a long-term basis with fundraising as a particularly important capital funding component for major recreation facilities. Fundraising will continue to be important on a long-term basis, especially related to the pressures on parks and recreation capital development funds availability and the overall capital funding capacity of the County.

## Recommendation #10: Financial and Funding Strategies

That the County of Brant require **community fundraising, corporate sponsorship** and related community investments for the development of new recreation facilities, major facilities expansions or major facility renewals (not rehabilitation or systems replacement), particularly for projects above a threshold cost of \$1 million, with a guideline target of 25% of total project costs.

### 3.6 User Fees

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

In the Situational Analysis Report some comments on user fees were received as to increases in user fees. In summary, these are as follows:

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

Overall, the technical assessment of the County's user fees policy and rates was found to be comprehensive, competitive and contemporary.

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

## Recommendation #11: User Fees

- That the **User Fee Policy** framework be based on the following key principles:
  - Fair and equitable user fees;
  - Maximum utilization of facilities;
  - Maximum revenue generation from ancillary income sources;
  - Direct benefits realized and the cost of delivery;
  - Transparent and simple to understand; and
  - Cost effective facilities and program operations by the County.
- That the overall user fee policy development program ensure periodic **stakeholder consultation** in regards to the development of its key principles and approaches.
- That the user fee strategies continue to reflect **market-based strategies**, such as multiple price points to balance utilization levels and to maximize income in high demand categories.
- That the user fees be **reviewed annually**, and comprehensively **assessed at a minimum every five years** as to the cost inputs to the approved formula that emerges from this recommendation.
- That policies on organizational and individual participant financial support related to user fees be **aligned with** and considered as per the **specific recommendations** on these topics in Section 3.10 of the Master Plan.

Fairness and equity are key principles for User Fee Policy development. Also, these terms are intended to ensure all residents as taxpayers have access to, can participate in and realize the benefits of recreation activities no matter their ability, background or other considerations.

### 3.7 Policy Development Initiatives

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

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

## Recommendation #12: Policy Development Initiatives

### 1. Balancing Public Accessibility and Revenue Generation Goals

- That a policy be developed related to integrating and balancing the competing perspectives of **public accessibility and maximizing revenue generation** from major recreation facilities, focusing on the following components:
  - Ensuring **public accessibility at viable times** in support of non-programmed activities, such as public skating, unstructured sports field utilization and related uses;
  - Giving preference to **minor sports, youth and other special needs** groups within selected timeframes for regularly scheduled and program-based activities;
  - Developing a **tournament, shows, event and festivals** component that supports program diversification / variety and fundraising, but within limits that do not displace key points of accessibility, such as for public skating, and has clear displacement parameters on other regularly scheduled uses / users;
  - Developing the context of the **financial coverage targets** established annually and as approved by Council for its recreation facilities, programs and parks;
  - Ensuring **evident linkages** are made between the user fee, fairness and equity, special populations and other key County of Brant policies;
  - Developing policy using **best practices analyses, community organization consultation and technical assessments** on utilization, revenue generation and related profiles and inputs; and
  - Developing a **corporate sponsorship and naming policy** for the County's physical facilities, programs (such as public skating and outdoor swims) and special events that balance potential revenue opportunities with important public principles.

### 2. Facilities Allocation

- That current policies, particularly the **facilities allocation policies**, be reviewed periodically to ensure the following key value considerations are incorporated and effectively put into practice:

- **Fairness and equity** amongst all user populations;
- **Inclusion and transparency**;
- **Support** of emerging parks and recreation services, and for less developed or known programs and services that are evolving; and
- **Enhancing participation** involvement for new Canadians, residents with physical and other challenges and other populations who require integrated supports to facilitate equitable participation.

### 3. Policy Format

- That consideration be given to developing policies based on the following framework in order to establish a consistency of format, presentation and understanding:
  - Policy rationale and need;
  - Policy principles and foundation;
  - Policy statement and content;
  - Operational procedures and standards;
  - Linkages to all regulatory and / or statutory acts or legislation, regulations and other County of Brant policies;
  - Implementation and monitoring procedures;
  - Mandatory policy review, potentially every five years; and
  - An amendments tracking capacity.

### 3.8 Data Collection, Analysis, Evaluation and Performance Measurement Program

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

This latter consideration becomes increasingly important as non-profit organizations become more invested in facilities, service delivery leadership and other considerations. Also, in order for the

County of Brant to fulfill its service sector planning and integration role, it needs quality data and analytical tools to support these tasks.

### **Recommendation #13: Data Collection, Analysis, Evaluation and Performance Measurement**

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

The data collection and evaluation initiatives need to reflect both operational and strategic level analyses.

### **3.9 Partnerships / Joint Ventures**

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

pressures on a municipality and provide other benefits. However, they also require the development of new skills in terms of contract management, partnership evaluation and supervision and other inputs, along with enhanced risk taking and other change perspectives.

#### **Recommendation #14: Partnerships and Joint Ventures**

- That the County of Brant actively continue to **lead and / or support partnership, joint venture** and related initiatives where:
  - Need is identified and demonstrated;
  - Public access and affordability are assured;
  - The partnership arrangement is financially sound and sustainable; and
  - The scope of County investment is reflective of the benefits to be realized by the County of Brant residents.

#### **3.10 Individual Participant Financial Support**

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

#### **Recommendation #15: Individual Participant Financial Support**

- That the County of Brant offer **individual participant financial support** to access parks and recreation programs based on the following principles:
  - Evident benefit to qualifying participants;
  - A reasonable assessment of the financial or other limitations that are barriers to participation; and
  - Selective tracking of financially supported participation to ensure engagement and to assess the benefits realized.

- That the **individual participant financial support program** be positioned outside the County User Fee Policy of the County of Brant in order to separate participant financial subsidies from revenue generation targets.
- That financial support offered to individual participants be **aligned with their assessed capacity** to fund portions of the fees applicable.
- That the financial support program be positioned within formats and strategies that **ensure awareness** of this opportunity and be subject to budgetary approval.
- That an **annual report**, consistent with Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act requirements, be provided to Council on the level of participant financial support provided by:
  - Program and / or service;
  - Full or partial fee contributions; and
  - Individuals, families and age profiles.
- That through the recommended community development role for the Department **actively promote**, where appropriate and possible, by providing proposed **advice and direction** to community service providing organizations to develop their policy frameworks and the resources necessary, i.e. Jump Start, etc., to facilitate the participation of individuals or families who have limited financial capacity and who would otherwise benefit from program participation.

### 3.11 Facilities Project Development

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

A Recreation Master Plan is a process that brings together significant amounts of research to identify priorities, needs and strategies over an extended period of time, in some cases up to twenty years. It identifies not only facilities but also criteria, strategies, etc. However, Master Plans do not, in and of themselves, typically deal with the policy development and Business Plans for individualized parks and recreation facility initiatives due to the changing characteristics of the market and demand over time, community growth patterns, trends, the County's financial resources and commitments, etc. The Master Plan sets the overarching facilities development framework for parks and recreation services and priorities. Then, individual Business Plans may

be undertaken based on timelines established within the Master Plan and the County's business case template. A Business Plan should focus on:

- Assessment of partnerships, joint ventures and community-based development and delivery opportunities;
- Location considerations, principles and evaluation;
- Connections to County and Department strategic priorities, policies, objectives, etc.;
- Alternative development strategies in terms of redeveloping existing facilities, building new facilities, undertaking additions, etc.;
- Need and demand profiles, marketing requirements, etc. and related feasibility assessment components;
- Determining competitive market profiles, etc.;
- Identification of space and size needs and special equipment, often involving conceptual / simplified floor plans;
- Identification of the total square footage as a basis to develop more detailed capital costs and funding sources;
- Three year operating pro formas in order to identify annual revenues, expenses, staffing requirements, etc.;
- Governance and management plans.

These and other elements are developed to focus on a specific facility. This is an excellent strategy in order to ensure these major capital investments are targeted with clear outcomes, sound capital cost projections and other key outcomes.

#### **Recommendation #16: Business Plan Development Applications**

- That the County of Brant continue to require a **Business Plan for all capital parks and recreation service proposals** as follows:
  - That any new facility or servicing initiative or major addition to an existing parks and recreation resource with a potential **capital cost of over \$250,000 be supported by a comprehensive Business Plan;**
  - That the County of Brant direct the undertaking of the Business Plans, **seeking broad-based public consultation, and working within partnerships** where appropriate with community proponents and participants;

- That the Business Plan identify and assess the broadest range of **capital revenue sources**, such as corporate sponsorships and naming, foundations, senior government grants, and related opportunities;
- That the results of the Business Plan, when finalized and accepted, become the basis for a new or expanded parks and recreation service being incorporated into the multi-year **capital budget forecast** for the County related to timing, capital cost projections, County's role / involvement, etc.; and
- That the capital cost projections should be **reviewed annually, recalibrated as necessary and used in** the County's multi-year capital cost forecast program in order to respond to:
  - The potential impact of inflation that may not be predictable or certain over time; and
  - Any subsequent alterations in a proposed facility's design or use which should be approved by Council first as to rationale and need for the changes.

### 3.12 Multi-Use / Multi-Partner Facility Development / Community Hubs

There has been a significant move towards the development of parks and recreation facilities on a multi-use / multi-partner basis. The key rationales for this strategy are as follows:

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

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

In 2015, the Government of Ontario released a strategy entitled *Community Hubs in Ontario: A Strategic Framework and Action Plan* for developing community hubs by bringing together services to be co-located within public spaces. While the concept of community hubs is not new

to municipalities or other service providers, the Provincial strategy was developed partly in response to school closures and consolidations to provide a framework for re-purposing these and other surplus public spaces to provide a range of integrated services such as education, health and social services. Examples of community hubs near the County of Brant include Langs Hub in Cambridge, which integrates a health centre, early years centre, youth and teen centre, adult and seniors programs and resource centre, and in Brantford neighbourhood hub was opened in 2016 at Major Ballachey School, developed in partnership with the Grand Erie School Board, as well as a Community Innovation Hub that has recently opened in 2017 at Wilfred Laurier University providing spaces for student, faculty and community use and engagement in innovation and entrepreneurial activities. The City of Brantford's neighbourhood hubs program also includes a Learning Series offered at three community centres.

### **Recommendation #17: Multi-Use / Multi-Partner Approaches and Community Hubs**

- That the County of Brant, for all major parks and recreation facility renewal and new facility development initiatives, investigate in depth, the potential for a **wide range of multiple use opportunities** within a single facility venue, as well as **multi-partner** participation as viable.
- That the County of Brant work with other agencies and service providers to explore the potential establishment of one or more **community hubs with co-located and integrated services** as a consideration in future community recreation facilities planning, including new facility development and/or as part of the future re-development and/or re-purposing of existing facilities, and in the event of a planned school closure or if other public property is deemed surplus and becomes available.

### **3.13 Community Use of Schools**

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

Relative to outdoor recreation facilities, school venues can offer sports fields, playgrounds and open spaces. In some older neighbourhoods and local areas, school sites are sometimes the principal source of parkland and green space, and therefore, have added value and importance.

Sports fields and playgrounds on school sites can augment facilities often found in park areas. Such a strategy can reduce travel times/distances for users. Also, using existing resources can potentially reduce the need for additional publicly-developed facilities. Efforts should be made to maximize the use of existing school-based sports fields where feasible, to provide additional capacity. However, such a strategy also needs to recognize the limitations of such sports fields related to maintenance, field quality, neighbouring land use conflicts (lights, noise, ball intrusion) and the preference of some sports field organizations to consolidate use on a few venues.

The County of Brant has taken leadership in exploring with the local school boards, the opportunity for local services providers and the Department to access publically funded schools in order to provide more local recreation and leisure facility capacity, and to reduce the pressures and the need for additional long term County investments in standalone parks and recreation facilities.

As summarized in the Situational Analysis Report, the County has Joint Use of Facilities Agreements with both the Grand Erie District School Board and the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board. The agreements provide that the County and the School Boards can use the joint facilities controlled by the other in a manner which does not interfere with the programs of the other and establishes related procedures for notice. School facilities available for County use vary by school and include several gymnasiums and outdoor recreation facilities (i.e. sports fields), one school cafeteria, certain school libraries, kitchens and other facilities as defined the agreements. County facilities available for School use include arenas, indoor turf, certain community rooms and halls, the outdoor pool, sports fields and other indoor and outdoor facilities specified in the agreements.

Advantages related to the public use of schools include:

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

### **Recommendation #18: Community Use of Schools**

- That the County of Brant continue its Joint Use of Facilities Agreements with the Grand Erie District School Board and the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board and to expand these agreement, where mutually beneficial, related to the strategies and protocols that would effectively increase community accessibility to publicly funded **schools for recreation uses** as a key support and service to both community service provider organizations and for County services.
- That the County of Brant continue to seek opportunities to work with the school boards to **maximize available opportunities for community use** of school facilities pursuant to the Joint Use of Facilities Agreements.
- That the County of Brant continue to explore **potential partnership opportunities** in improvements in existing facilities and new facility development and services delivery as a strategy to maximize capacity and utilization of available recreational assets and programs in the County.

### 3.14 Tourism Integration

Many park and recreation resources have unique opportunities to support tourism: whether ice rinks, sports fields, cultural venues, trail systems or unique natural areas, all have the ability to attract tourists to an area, and potentially to extend their stay times. Tourism continues to grow as one of the more significant economic drivers in Canada and Ontario and within local communities like the County of Brant. It is vitally important that the County in planning all its parks and recreation policies, strategies and facilities and services, ensure that the tourism perspective and opportunities are fully assessed and integrated where beneficial. Several key resources and opportunities exist within the County of Brant for tourism engagement within parks and recreation activities:

- The multiple waterways, particularly the Grand River, represent unique and growing tourism resources in attracting people to river tours, boating, fishing and related activities. The large natural areas along the river support extensive hiking, nature interpretation and related activities.
- The trail system and cycling routes, including the off-road trails along river corridors and former rail corridors and in other locations in the County of Brant, as well as the on-road cycling routes, have high quality opportunities for hikers and cyclists, whether using the trail system as an individual, family or in organized groups.
- The arena facilities, particularly the Brant Sports Complex, can support hockey tournaments, figure skating events, ice shows and related activities that can draw regional and broader audiences, both as participants and spectators.
- The ongoing development of higher quality sports fields can support tourism initiatives during the summer season for tournaments or program development initiatives.
- The County of Brant, being located directly adjacent to the City of Brantford, may be able to both capture spinoffs as well as be fully integrated into the significant efforts of the City in sport tourism where it has branded itself as the Tournament Capital of Canada.
- The Paris urban centre with its commercial services, the widely known Mary Maxim wool facility, along with other commercial supports in Burford and St. George provide servicing opportunities to support tourism.
- The wide range and high volume of community special events and activities hosted throughout the both on a County-wide basis and in individual communities.

There are a range of unique activities, resources and facilities that can draw tourists and a range of services to support visitors. One area that could be lacking in the County of Brant is commercial accommodation, especially for tournaments and large sporting activities such as the Ontario Winter or Summer Games or related sport tourism events. The proximity to accommodations available in Brantford helps to overcome this constraint.

Tourism can be a unique partner with parks and recreation services which needs to be fully realized in all the facility and service planning, development and evaluation.

## Recommendation #19: Tourism Integration

- That the County of Brant ensure that the tourism potential of any existing park and recreation resource or service, or any planned park and recreation service or facility fully considers the potential of that facility or service to **enhance the attraction of and supports to tourists**.
- That the Parks and Recreation Division within the Operations Department, in its annual forums and support activities with community organizations, ensure the groups are aware of the potential for and **benefits of sport tourism and related tourism activities** within their recreation programs and operations.
- That all business cases developed for parks and recreation initiatives **ensure a tourism assessment component** that identifies the tourism potential of the initiative, and whether **enhancing the capital cost** of the initiative would improve its tourism potential and have a **positive cost benefit outcome**.
- That County and Department communication programs ensure the **identification of tourism opportunities** for all parks and recreation services and venues.
- That the planning, design and development of parks and recreation facilities **incorporate flexibility and functionality to support special events** and a wide range of activities, where appropriate;
- That all scheduling of park and recreation facilities ensure reasonable **time allocations for sport tourism uses and / or special events**.
- That within the Department's community develop function, it **actively work with community organizations and private special event operators**, to maximize special events within Brant as to visitor attraction, facility and site utilization and **positive economic impacts** for both not-for-profit and private organizations.

### 3.15 Affiliation Policy

The County of Brant currently has an Affiliation Policy that is an historical agreement that evolved from some contributions from service clubs and others towards community facilities. However, over the years, the affiliation status has become primarily focused on groups that wished to access school facilities, as previous Joint Use of Facilities Agreements required affiliation with the County of Brant in order for these groups to qualify for access to school facilities via those agreements. However, this is no longer in practice.

The County needs to update and create a more meaningful and focused Affiliation Policy in support of community, not-for-profit service providers based on identified eligibility criteria and distinct benefits for those eligible organizations. In addition, to assist in supporting continued and increased community-based programs and services delivery the policy should recognize and support emerging groups with additional benefits.

#### **Recommendation #20: Affiliation Policy**

- That the County of Brant **amend its Affiliation Policy** to include the following **eligibility criteria** for Affiliation:
  - Must be a not-for-profit organization with a volunteer Board of Directors.
  - A minimum of 50% or more of the Board of Directors and the program participants must be residents of the County of Brant.
  - Must have liability and other insurance coverage(s) acceptable to the County for use of County and / or school facilities.
  - The programs and services provided must be aligned with recreation, arts and culture, older adult, children and youth, tourism or relevant service sectors.
- That the benefits to be received under the County's Affiliation Policy can include:
  - One free use of a County operated meeting room per month;
  - Free rental of a County facility for a special event or fundraising activity where a minimum of 50% of the net financial proceeds go towards supporting a County facility, program or sponsored event;
  - Discounted advertising fees for County delivered digital/print media, with the fee discount to be determined annually within the County's annually approved User Fee Schedule.
- That **emerging / new service providers** that qualify for the Affiliation Policy will be provided additional benefits for up to three years, involving:
  - Discounts on Affiliation rental and other County of Brant fees and rates for facility or park spaces they use, for a pre-determined period of time;
  - Best efforts by the County to facilitate their use of County facilities, fields and spaces within the annual scheduling for such resources in balance with the needs of existing groups and other service providers;
  - Free advertising in relevant County of Brant parks and recreation digital / print media.

### 3.16 Advisory Committees

Four Advisory Committees have been established for parks and recreation activities, and one for tourism. There are challenges finding an adequate number of volunteers to participate on some of the Committees, the role and purpose of these bodies is sometimes not clear, and many of the initiatives discussed need to be part of broader policy, capital funding and related initiatives at a County-wide level.

From a tourism perspective, there is an Advisory Committee and it has a County-wide focus. It is seen as making important contributions in regards to the planning for tourism promotion, development, business planning and other initiatives.

The trend in some areas is to move towards task- and project-oriented groups to provide a greater focus and well-defined mandate that can make better use of the committee or task force members' and staff time, administrative and other resources and contributions of these groups. This Master Plan should also provide greater focus to concentrate efforts to identified priorities and initiatives.

In light of these factors related to staffing resource needs and more strategic County-wide perspectives, trends in the orientation of advisory groups and committees, and development of this Master Plan which will help to focus energies and investments, and also to ensure that there is local input and discussions on key topics, a revamping of the Advisory Committee structure for Parks and Recreation should be considered.

#### Recommendation #21: Advisory Committees

- That the County of Brant consider **integrating its Parks and Recreation Advisory Committees** from four to one Advisory Committee for the whole County with representatives from each Ward, and consideration to youth representation, and/or review the potential for re-orienting and focusing the mandate of the Advisory Committee(s) in a local **'Task Force' role** towards implementation of the Master Plan across the communities and geographic areas of the County, as set out below.
- That a **terms of reference** be developed for the Committee(s) to clarify their **role and purposes** in consideration of a task force orientation to the policy and specific initiative directions of this Master Plan, and that it meet at least four times per year providing advice and recommendations for both ward and community-wide parks and recreation perspectives and initiatives.
- That the **Tourism Advisory Committee be sustained** as currently configured.
- That the **terms of reference** for these two Advisory Committees **be reviewed at a minimum of every two years** to ensure the relevancy, appropriate application and clarity of their work aligned with changing services and community requirements and needs.

### 3.17 Parks, Open Space and Trails Policies

#### ***Acquisition of Land for Parks, Open Spaces and Trails***

The County primarily acquires new parkland through the land dedication or cash-in-lieu of parkland requirements of the Ontario Planning Act to facilitate the provision of new parks within new developments. The Planning Act enables municipalities to require the conveyance land for park or other public recreational purposes as a requirement of land division or development. The Act also provides that municipalities may alternatively require the payment of cash in lieu of parkland that is otherwise required to be dedicated. The Planning Act also requires municipalities to develop a Parks Plan (Master Plan) that examines the need for parkland, in order to use the alternative parkland dedication requirements set out in the Act.

As detailed in the Situational Analysis Report, the County Official Plan establishes parkland dedication policies and an overall provision level target of 3 hectares per 1,000 population, directs that the County shall secure the maximum benefit provided by the Planning Act with respect to parkland dedication, and seeks to ensure that adequate opportunities for recreation land uses and facilities are provided in order to meet the anticipated demand based on the population and housing projections.

Also outlined in the Situational Analysis Report is a Parkland Classification System based on the review of the inventory of existing parks in the County, as well as future parkland proposals, and an assessment of the role and function of the various park typologies identified. The Parkland Classification is recommended to establish service area and provision level targets to sustain provision levels with continued population growth and to guide planning for future parkland acquisition, design, development, and use/programming. A number of related policies and strategies are recommended to direct the acquisition of land for parks, trails and natural areas.

#### **Recommendation #22: Land Acquisition Policies**

- That the County of Brant adopt the **Parkland Classification System** in Figure 1 as a basis for planning for and acquiring, designing, developing and programming parkland.
- That the County of Brant should **maximize the supply of available parkland** in new development areas by acquisition through dedication from development, donations, accessing grants, land trusts, conservation easements, land exchange, partnerships, agreements and direct purchase. Where land acquired through dedication by development is insufficient in size or shape for their intended park function, the County should consider acquisition of additional parkland by other means.
- That the **acquisition of parkland through dedication** by development in accordance with the Planning Act should continue to be governed by the County Official Plan, with consideration to amending the Official Plan to incorporate the related recommendations of this Master Plan, and as per a Parkland Dedication and Cash-in-Lieu of Parkland Dedication By-law, as follows:

- 2% of the area of the lot where development/redevelopment is for commercial or industrial purposes;
  - 5% of the area of the lot where development/redevelopment is for residential purposes;
  - 33.3 square metres per dwelling unit where development is for residential purposes at a density exceeding 15 dwelling units per hectare;
  - For mixed use development, parkland dedication should be calculated based on the proportionate ratios above for each use and added together to determine the sum of total parkland required.
- That, in order to promote and facilitate **residential intensification** at higher densities in appropriate areas of Paris and St. George through redevelopment and new development within the maximum density provisions of the County Official Plan:
  - A cap be considered whereby the required parkland dedication will not exceed 25% of the lot area and whereby the required cash-in-lieu of parkland dedication will not exceed 25% of the value of the lot;
  - Policies should be considered that provide for potential reductions in the amount of cash-in-lieu of parkland required for redevelopment projects that meet sustainability criteria, in accordance with Subsection 42(6.2) of the Planning Act;

as may be governed by the County Official Plan and Parkland Dedication and Cash-in-Lieu of Parkland Dedication By-law.
- That the circumstances where **cash-in-lieu of the dedication of parkland** by development may be accepted by the County, as well as the determination of the value of the land that would otherwise be dedicated as the basis for the payment amount, should continue to be governed by the County Official Plan and Parkland Dedication and Cash-in-Lieu of Parkland Dedication By-law, and in accordance with the Planning Act. Pursuant to the Planning Act, where the alternative dedication rate is applied to residential development, the required cash-in-lieu payment is to be calculated at a rate of **1 hectare for each 500 dwelling units** proposed **or at such lesser rate** as may be specified in the Cash-in-Lieu of Parkland Dedication By-law.
- That the use of **cash in-lieu of parkland funds** should continue to be governed by the County Official Plan and Parkland Dedication and Cash-in-Lieu of Parkland Dedication By-law and in accordance with the Planning Act. The County should consider **prioritizing the use of these funds** as follows:
  - First – Acquiring new parkland and/or improving existing Neighbourhood Park(s) accessible to the local area being developed;
  - Second – Acquiring new parkland and/or improving existing Community or Destination Park(s) accessible to the local area being developed;

(continued on page 3-27)

**Figure 1: County of Brant Parkland Classification System**

Park Category	Access / Location	Service Area	Optimal Size	Provision Level Target	Potential Facilities
<b>Destination Parks</b>	Accessible to pedestrians, cyclists, highly visible locations, major roads, street frontage; may be co-located with indoor recreation facilities and/or adjacent to secondary schools	County-wide/ regional	Min. 3 ha / varies	Maintain existing (1.0 ha / 1,000 population)	Multiple sports fields, multi-courts, play structures, open space, outdoor pool, splash pads, dog park, pathways, skate park, special event facilities, river access, visitor /tourism facilities and information, lighting, parking, bike racks, washrooms, shelters, etc.
<b>Community Parks</b>	Central to service area, accessible to pedestrians, cyclists, major/collector roads, frontage, may be co-located with indoor recreation facilities and/or adjacent to schools	Community / multiple neighbourhoods	1 to 3 ha except for some existing locations	Maintain existing (1.2 ha / 1,000 population)	Sports field(s), paved court(s), play structure(s), splash pad, dog park, open space, pathways, local scale skate park community-scale event facilities, river access, lighting, washroom(s), shelter(s), parking, bike racks
<b>Neighbourhood Parks</b>  Subcategories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Parkettes</li> <li>▪ Commons / Urban Greens</li> </ul> <small>(see Situational Analysis Report)</small>	Central to service area, accessible to pedestrians, prominent local street intersections with frontage, may be adjacent to schools	Local neighbourhood, 400m-800m (5-10 min. walking)	0.5 - 1 ha except for some existing parkette locations	0.5 ha / 1,000 population	Informal sports field(s), paved court(s), play structure(s), open space, pathways, lighting (not sports fields), small-scale skate facilities, splash pad, bike racks
<b>Natural Areas</b>	Protected natural features, areas, linkages; valley lands/riverside lands	Varies	Feature size and buffers	Maintain existing, acquire if possible	Passive open space, trails, interpretive signage, benches
<b>Trails</b>	Varies by trail type – walking/ hiking trails, multi-use trails, cycling route	Varies	Based on trail type and location	Maintain existing, acquire based on Trails Plan	Trails and supports – benches, signage, mapping, lighting, bike racks, fitness stations, trailheads

- Third – Investing in recreation buildings/indoor recreational facilities or acquisition of machinery for park or other public recreational purposes.
- That, where parkland is identified and **deemed surplus to the needs of the community** based on overlapping service areas, duplication of available parkland and resources or other factors that result in evidence of limited usage, any proposed disposition of the surplus land should be evaluated based on the following:
  - Potential for re-allocating the land for other County purposes;
  - The land use policies and objectives of the Official Plan as it pertains to the property and surrounding area, and the applicable zoning;
  - That any revenue to be generated from a proposed sale of the surplus land should be allocated to investments in parks and recreational facilities and programs.
- That the County's **minimum standards for acceptance of land as parkland** should continue to be governed by the County Official Plan and Parkland Dedication By-law, and based on the following criteria as a guide:
  - The land should be generally flat, well-drained developable land of a suitable shape with no constraints to active park use;
  - Hazard lands and sensitive natural features should not be accepted as part of the minimum mandatory parkland dedication except where it can be demonstrated that the parkland needs of the area can be met by existing local parks and/or the acquisition of these marginal lands provides opportunities to enhance access to an existing and sufficient supply of available parks and open spaces in the area;
  - The conveyance of natural areas and hazard lands should be considered over and above the minimum parkland dedication requirements.
- That the County of Brant continue to **pursue the acquisition of natural areas**, and in particular land adjoining the Grand River and/or Nith River, through the development process and other means of securement to provide opportunities for enhanced conservation, compatible public access and linkages to the parks, trails, open spaces and waterways. Available means of acquisition, management objectives, public use opportunities and related operating/resource requirements for natural areas should be identified in considering whether acquisition is required. The County should continue to require that conservation land dedicated to the County through the development process should be conveyed in a satisfactory condition and with sufficient area for proper maintenance, in accordance with the Official Plan.
- That the County of Brant should support **community fundraising, joint ventures and other initiatives to acquire additional parkland**, and engage the community in any significant parkland acquisition decision-making process. Acquisition of property should be considered only when there is a demonstrated community need and benefits, a fit with one or more categories of parks in the Parkland Classification

System, and a financial strategy that addresses the capital, operating and long-term maintenance costs. Preparation of a Business Plan should be considered as a basis to support investments in parkland acquisition where appropriate.

- That the County of Brant should continue to **coordinate the acquisition of parks with the appropriate school board to maximize integration** between facilities and joint use opportunities, where possible. The County should also consider acquisition of school sites in the event that the closure of school facilities is contemplated by the school board(s) in the future, to ensure that local access to parks and open space can be maintained based on the service area and provision level targets of this Master Plan.
- That, as part of the County's next Official Plan review, the County should consider identifying **future pedestrian pathways and bicycle pathways** (known and/or conceptual routes) as part of a new transportation map schedule with related policies to require the dedication of land for pedestrian and bicycle pathways as a condition of the subdivision of land, as provided for under the Planning Act (s. 51(25)(b)).
- That the County of Brant should require the identification and provision of **walkways and other means of pedestrian access, accessibility supports as well as bicycle parking** facilities and other sustainable design elements on municipal streets, as may be required for site plan approvals and developments in accordance with the Planning Act (s. 41(4) #2(e), s. 41(7)(a)(4)).

### ***Design and Development of Parks, Open Spaces and Trails***

The design and development of parks is led by the County and design resourcing is also generated through development proposals with a policy in the County Official Plan requiring park designs as a requirement of planning approvals where new parkland is to be dedicated to the County. Certain park projects and specific facility development also involve community volunteer service and contributions to fundraising and resourcing for the design and construction of specific park projects. This has been undertaken primarily on a park-by-park and project-by-project basis as new parkland is acquired, existing parks are identified for renewal and/or changes involving the introduction of new facilities or replacement/improvement of existing facilities within the parks, and as new projects have come forward as a result of County or community initiatives, proposals, requests and funding opportunities. Projects typically require outsourcing to provide the required specialized expertise involving landscape architecture, engineering, geotechnical, lighting and other advisors to complete the design and to prepare for and manage the construction which is also typically undertaken by external contractors under contract with the County.

As documented in the Situational Analysis report, there are a number of trends and practices that will influence the design and development of parks in the future. These relate to accessibility standards, safety, crime prevention, sustainability, connectivity, operational considerations, flexible and multi-use spaces, choice of materials and surfacing, landscape treatments and use of native plantings, “place-making” and other trends.

The County Official Plan provides some overall direction related to parks, open space and trails design and development in the context of broader community design objectives: promote the improvement of the physical character, appearance and safety of streetscapes, civic spaces, and parks; encourage community and development design patterns that promote pedestrian movement through pedestrian friendly design, such as pedestrian-scaled streets, sidewalks, trails and a well-connected street network; encourage cycling through the provision of bicycle lanes and cycling trails, where appropriate; encourage the provision of facilities that promote cycling and walkability, specifically within the County’s Urban Settlement Areas; encourage tree retention or tree replacement; a high quality of park and open space design shall be strongly encouraged; and, barrier-free design shall be applied to outdoor parks and public spaces, new recreational structures, public buildings/facilities, walkways, and trails.

## Recommendation #23: Design & Development Policies and Strategies for Parks, Open Spaces and Trails

- That the County of Brant should consider adopting the following steps to guide the **Design and Development Process** for new parks and for any significant changes, renewal, replacement or new facilities in existing parks:

### 1. Design

**1.1 Project Initiation** - define work plan, schedule, roles, consulting services required, coordinate with project partners, notify community

**1.2 Site Investigation** - review and document existing conditions, survey, topo, surface/subsurface, drainage, surroundings/interface, demographics, linkages, servicing

**1.3 Concept Development** - develop optional park layouts, facilities/amenities (based on Parkland Classification System), preliminary costing of options, review operational requirements/resources

**1.4 Concept Evaluation** - review and consultation with community and stakeholders/advisory committee(s), confirm needs/preferences

**1.5 Finalize Concept** - adjust preferred option(s) to develop final concept based on selected components, refine preliminary costing, obtain approvals to proceed with detailed design and construction

**1.6 Detailed Design** - prepare landscape, grading/drainage/storm-water management, servicing, lighting and other plans and details as required, with detailed cost estimates, finalize as a basis for construction quotes

### 2. Development

**2.1 Construction Contract** - prepare and issue construction tender/ RFP, evaluation of submissions, selection and award of contract

**2.2 Pre-Construction** - establish communication protocols and project management roles/structure, review detailed design and construction requirements, confirm schedule, scope, provisional items, notification

**2.3 Site Preparation** - ensure erosion/sediment controls, staging areas, security/safety measures, on-site notifications are in place

**2.4 Construction** - hold regular progress meetings with designers and contractor(s), record changes/instructions, monitor, etc.

**2.5 Inspections** - review certifications and as-built information, on-site inspection and testing of constructed works, deficiency list, etc.

**2.6 Acceptance** - ensure rectification of any deficiencies, commence maintenance /warranty period, monitoring, final site inspections, as-built documents, safety/compliance certificates, County take-over.

- That, for each of the steps identified in the Parks Design and Development Process, the County should identify related **staff/departmental roles, organizational protocols and detailed procedures** to further map out this process.
- That the County of Brant should continue to **encourage and facilitate the community's participation in park design, development and renewal projects** by obtaining public input during the planning and design process, fostering partnerships and joint ventures in park development/renewal, and promoting awareness of park projects and initiatives through effective public communications. Consideration should be given to formally establishing staff/departmental roles, responsibilities, procedures and protocols for community engagement in park projects in further mapping out the recommended Park Design and Development Process.
- That the County of Brant should continue to pursue **high quality and innovative park designs** that balance functional use, urban form and aesthetic benefits, community safety, accessibility, integration with nature and operational requirements to ensure long term sustainability. Parks should be designed and developed to support the design policies set out in the County Official Plan.
- That the County of Brant should pursue and support park designs that include Low Impact Development (LID) standards and other measures to **reduce energy, water use and environmental impacts**, and that integrate recycled/environmentally-friendly materials and landscape treatments that support **reduced maintenance requirements and sustainable operations**. To encourage the increased use of green technologies and sustainability features in the development of new communities and in redevelopment areas, the County may want to consider incentives such as enhanced park designs and developments to assist projects in meeting LID and other emerging sustainability standards such as Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design for Neighbourhood Development (LEED-ND) certification, subject to further policies and criteria as may be established in the Official Plan.
- That the County of Brant should, as a basis for park design and development, define current and future needs for parks, open spaces and trails **based on a range of influencing factors**, including:
  - Historic and forecast population growth, demographic characteristics and planned development within the service area;
  - Current parkland and facility supply/provision levels and available land supply in the service area;
  - Evolving demographic, recreational and design trends;
  - Current demand and forecast growth in participation in sports and other programmed activities;

- Partnership opportunities and the role of other service/facility providers (e.g. school boards);
  - Input from the public, stakeholders and County departmental staff;
  - Geographic deficiencies and gaps/overlaps in facility and service provision.
- That the County of Brant should, where possible, consider agreements providing for Development Charge credits in exchange for **developer-build parks and trails** as a strategy to support the earlier development of parks and trails in new development areas. The recommended guidelines, standards and procedures for park design and development in the Recreation Master Plan should be applied.
  - That the County of Brant should, in support of local food production, urban agriculture and related health benefits, continue to work with local community groups to explore opportunities to **integrate community gardens** in existing and new local parks. Potential partners for community gardens may include the local school board(s), local churches and the local Food Bank.
  - That the County of Brant should continue to work with and support the local Horticultural Societies, Garden Clubs and similar groups for their contributions to **community beautification and stewardship** tending public gardens and through other initiatives.
  - That the County of Brant should, in **support of the arts and related culture and tourism benefits** and the role of parks, open spaces and trails in **contributing to place-making, urban design and community identity**, consider the following guidelines in the design and development of parks:
    - Park designs should integrate a balance of active and passive facilities and flexible spaces that can support special events and a wide range of cultural activities;
    - Opportunities for including public art in parks based on early site selection and integration with park design and development and consideration of appropriate forms of public art for parks such as:
      - Functional art pieces that support the park use;
      - Civic landmarks, memorials and monuments that recognize and celebrate local heritage and culture and honour local achievements; and,
      - Inspirational art reflecting the shared vision for the community and the parks system (e.g. nature, health, sustainability, active living, etc.);
 with priority to locally- or regionally-sourced art works.
  - That the County of Brant should continue to apply the principles of **Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)** in the design of park resources to

maximize public safety and prevent undesired behaviour by the elimination or modification of design features that potentially contribute to crime and disorder, through natural surveillance. Park spaces should be visible from the street frontage/entrances and/or parking areas.

- That the County of Brant should continue to further develop and incorporate **physical accessibility features and operational standards in parks, open spaces and trails** and to ensure a balance of **seasonal and year-round** recreational opportunities are available to support the widest possible **range of users, ages, abilities and interests**. The County should also monitor and assess existing and proposed accessibility standards of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and identify related impacts on park design, development and renewal/rehabilitation requirements.

### ***Operations and Maintenance of Parks, Opens Spaces and Trails***

Service delivery for parks and recreation facilities is primarily through the County's Operations Department involving the administration, operation and maintenance of the parks and facilities. The organizational structure of the Department is summarized in the Situational Analysis Report.

Service delivery requirements will continue to change and grow within the community and the continued expansion and diversification of parks and facilities related to staffing and resourcing, operational management needs and administration of park policies, by-laws, reservations, budgets and other aspects. The County will need to take on a greater role with the conservation of more natural areas involving an increasing stewardship role in the protection, conservation and day-to-day management of a variety of environmental areas. In addition, trails will become an increasingly important resource that will need continuing investment, maintenance and management to sustain their value and effective use and benefits. There is also significant growing trends and expectations related to facilities and operations being environmentally friendly and reducing the environmental impacts from day-to-day parks and recreation operations.

Another trend that will continue to impact parks management and operations relates to the changing roles, interests and capacities of volunteers which are becoming more project-focused rather than engaging in longer-term or ongoing involvement in maintenance activities. With strong community service and contributions to parks capital projects and the continued expansion of park and facility offerings, there are increasing operational resource requirements.

In order to ensure long-term sustainability, there is a need for increased emphasis on opportunities for operational savings and efficiencies in new capital projects and allocation of sufficient operational resources to address ongoing maintenance as well as lifecycle needs.

The following policies and strategies are recommended to guide the administration, management, operations and maintenance of park resources.

## **Recommendation #24: Management and Operations Policies and Strategies for Parks, Open Spaces and Trails**

- That the County of Brant should continuously **assess and monitor operational resources needs** to address the following:
  - The continued growth, expansion and diversification of parks and facilities and related quality and maintenance standards;
  - Environmental services to address the horticultural, forestry and aligned specialty services related to restoring, enhancing and sustaining the health of County-owned natural areas.

For all parks-related capital projects, the County should define related staffing, equipment and other resource requirements for parks management and operations based on a graduated increase of existing operating requirements on a per unit basis and an assessment of opportunities for efficiencies and reduced operational requirements to ensure that sufficient resources are allocated to sustain new parks and facilities.

- That the County of Brant should review and consider environmentally-friendly technologies that contribute to the **sustainability and reduced environmental impact of parks operations and maintenance**. As examples, this could include selective reduction of mowing and use of low-to-no maintenance landscape treatments, energy efficient lighting/heating, snow removal approaches, and fleet fuel efficiency strategies.
- That the County of Brant should review opportunities to better **integrate park management and operational considerations** in the processing of planning applications, parkland acquisition/dedication and park design stages. Where necessary, process improvements should be developed and documented to ensure effective operations and management decision support for park planning and design activities.

### ***Programming and Use of Parks, Open Spaces and Trails***

Parks and open spaces in the County of Brant support a range of structured and informal activities, and related programs provide opportunities for participation in organized and unorganized sports and other recreational pursuits. This includes traditional and emerging sports such as softball, soccer and other field sports, tennis, basketball, lawn bowling, disc golf, skateboarding, outdoor skating and ice hockey. Other active uses of parks, open spaces and trails include cycling and mountain biking, walking, running and hiking, river access for non-motorized boating, outdoor fitness activities, and creative play at playgrounds and splash pads. More passive uses include activities such as social gatherings, picnicking, community gardening, fishing, bird-watching, interpretation and appreciation of nature, outdoor education and casual walking and cycling.

The programming dimension of parks is currently undertaken through non-profit, community organizations for softball, soccer, tennis, lawn bowling, special events and other uses. The County supports the programming and use of parks through the provision and maintenance of the parks and facilities, providing information about available park locations, facilities and community-based program offerings, and administration of park and facility bookings and allocation of time to specific activities and users for reserved facilities. Certain facilities reserved for organized programs such as soccer fields and ball diamonds are subject to user fees.

The following policies and strategies are recommended to support the continued and enhanced community use and programming of the parks and related facilities.

#### **Recommendation #25: Parks Programming and Use Policies and Strategies**

- That the County of Brant should use the Parkland Classification System provided in this Master Plan to **guide potential park uses and activities** for each category of park as a basis for planning and development of parks and outdoor recreation facilities. The safe and permissible use of the County's parks will continue to be governed by the County's Parks Use By-law and related by-laws and policies (e.g. Permits for sports field bookings).
- That the County of Brant should continue to provide **a balance of park facilities to support both informal and structured activities** supporting spontaneous, casual and self-directed recreational, social and educational activities, along with scheduled programming and formal uses that may be revenue generating to offset the costs of providing and maintaining facilities for specific or specialized uses.
- That the County of Brant should continue to **pursue expanded park use and programming by promoting community awareness** of available park resources, facilities and services through information delivery and availability, coordinating special events and festivals, assisting program providers with marketing, and other initiatives.
- That the County of Brant should support and encourage both **seasonal and year-round use of parks** by ensuring that, where possible and appropriate, park facilities are maintained and equipped to support both warm and cold weather activities.

## **4 PARKS AND RECREATION SPECIFIC INITIATIVES**

### **4.1 Overview**

Specific initiatives and capital projects arising from this Recreation Master Plan process are outlined in this section, organized by the themes identified in the Situational Analysis Report.

### **4.2 Parkland**

To support the development of the Master Plan, a review of the County's existing inventory of 48 parks and related facilities and amenities was completed. As documented in the Situational Analysis Report, the review considered:

- The types, sizes, locations and services areas/geographic distribution of existing parks;
- The number, type and arrangement/distribution of outdoor recreation facilities, amenities and supports within the existing parks;
- Neighbourhood and community access to the parks based on walking route analysis for the surrounding area and pathways and other supports available within the parks;
- Overall age and condition of the parks and related facilities; and,
- Connectivity of the parks and related public open spaces and trails.

This review was supplemented by community and stakeholder consultation which provided local perspectives regarding current strengths, opportunities for improvement and ideas for the future to increase and enhance the usage, quality or other aspects of specific parks and the combined inventory of park resources as a whole. A plan is needed to guide renewal and rehabilitation needs and potential improvements to existing parks.

In addition, a community demographic and development profile was prepared and also documented in the Situational Analysis Report. As part of this process, active and proposed housing developments were reviewed and related implications for future parkland needs were assessed. The parkland distribution analysis and future parkland summary indicate that the vast majority of existing residents in Paris, St. George and Burford have convenient access to one or more existing parks or school sites, and that new residential areas are also well-served.

In order to maintain the current level of parkland provision and geographic access in new development areas with the forecast population and housing growth, and based on the recommended parkland provision standards of this Master Plan, an additional 24 hectares of parkland will be required over the next 10 years. The forecasts indicate that the rate of growth is expected to increase after 2026, generating a need for a further 22 hectares by the year 2031, for a total of 46 hectares in the next 15 years, or a 33% increase in the total supply. In 25 years, to the year 2041, a total of 76 hectares of new parkland will be required to achieve the target provision levels. Mandatory parkland dedication requirements will achieve approximately one quarter to one third of this future parkland need, depending on development densities. Acquisition of natural areas that are severed from development lands will be a key acquisition strategy and priority.

The following projects and initiatives are recommended for to guide the renewal and rehabilitation of existing parks and development of new parks.

### **Recommendation #26: Parks Inventory and Renewal/Rehabilitation Program**

- That the County of Brant should create and maintain a **Parks Inventory Database** as a record and mapping of parks, open spaces and trails and related facilities, to be developed from the current inventory and mapping provided in the Situational Analysis Report and consisting of the following information where and when available:
  - **Geographic Information System** (GIS) based mapping of parks, open spaces and trails with inventory attribute data identifying park name, address, size, frontage and the number, type and age of facilities – this could also be integrated with protocols and schedules for maintenance and inspections, usage and programming schedules and data, etc.;
  - A record of **as-built documentation**, boundary and topographic surveys, existing conditions and approved plans and budgets for park properties, inspection reports, asset management information such as replacement costs, life expectancy and anticipated timing of replacements; and
  - A **public information map and inventory** identifying available parks, locations, facilities and trails and related programs, building on the mapping, inventory and program information included in the Situational Analysis Report.

The Parks Inventory Database should be applied and maintained as a resource to review and plan for future parks and facilities management and operational resource needs, lifecycle replacement and renewal requirements, maintenance schedules and protocols, and related administrative functions, and to identify potential efficiencies in service delivery. Reporting on the status of the parks inventory and specific park assets, usage, and their maintenance costs should be documented and reviewed annually to assist in budgeting and decision-making.

- That the County of Brant should establish a comprehensive **Park Renewal and Rehabilitation Program** addressing lifecycle requirements, evolving standards and trends across the full range of parks, open spaces, trails and related facilities with the objective of sustaining the ability of these resources to effectively support and facilitate enhanced community use, programming and operational requirements. Related investments should be aligned and tracked with the County's overall Asset Management Plan.
- That the County of Brant should complete a **Parks Tree Inventory** and establish and implement an ongoing **Parks Tree Planting and Replacement Program** within County parks, supportive of expanding urban forest cover with urbanized settlement areas and providing shade opportunities, and in keeping with the County's tree maintenance and tree conservation by-laws.

## Recommendation #27: Specific Park Improvements and Guidelines

- That the County of Brant should consider the following **park-specific improvements and guidelines** as part of park renewal and rehabilitation planning, design and investment, in consideration of the park role(s), function(s) and potential facilities identified in the Parkland Classification System and the following:

#	Park Name & Location	Guidelines & Potential Improvements
<b>Destination Parks</b>		
8	Penman's Dam Park, Paris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>See River Access Recommendation #37.</i></li> </ul>
11	Two Rivers Stadium, Paris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>See Sports Fields Recommendation #29, River Access Recommendation #37 and Syl Apps Community Centre Recommendation #33.</i></li> </ul>
12	Lions Park / Paris Pool & Pete Lavoie Ball Park, Paris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete the Pete Lavoie Ball Park redevelopment as planned and designed.</li> <li>• Plan for the redevelopment and improvement of the existing Lions Park Splashpad.</li> <li>• Consider opportunities for increased year-round facilities such as an outdoor rink / multi-use pad.</li> <li>• <i>See also: River Access Recommendation #37 and Sports Fields Recommendation #29.</i></li> </ul>
20	Green Lane Sports Complex & Simply Grand Dog Park, Paris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider development of active transportation on- and off-road connections to the park along Green Lane and Willow Street (Paris) and County Roads 5 and 35 (to St. George) and Cambridge to Paris Rail Trail connection into the park, potential trailhead opportunity with available facilities already existing in the park.</li> <li>• <i>See also: Sports Fields Recommendation #29, and updated Trails Plan.</i></li> </ul>
26	Lions Centennial Park, Burford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review condition of existing facilities and define lifecycle replacement and renewal requirements and opportunities for potential additional facility development within the park primarily to support passive recreation and event-based functions.</li> <li>• <i>See also: updated Trails Plan.</i></li> </ul>

#	Park Name & Location	Guidelines & Potential Improvements
<b>Community Parks</b>		
4	Charlton Park, Paris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See Sports Fields Recommendation #29.</li> </ul>
16	Optimist Park, Paris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See Sports Fields Recommendation #29.</li> <li>• See Playground Recommendation #30.</li> </ul>
14	Victoria Park, Paris	
41	Arena Park, St. George	
37	Centennial Park, St. George	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review potential for development of active park uses or surplus/disposition options.</li> <li>• See also Sports Fields Recommendation #29.</li> </ul>
38	Elliot Field, St. George	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See Sports Fields Recommendation #29.</li> </ul>
44	King William Park, St. George	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider development of a picnic pavilion or similar shelter structure to provide an area for social gatherings, support the ball diamond use and events.</li> <li>• See also Sports Fields Recommendation #29.</li> <li>• See also Playground Recommendation #30.</li> </ul>
40	Sunny Hill Park, St. George	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See also Sports Fields Recommendation #29.</li> <li>• See also Playground Recommendation #30.</li> </ul>
6	Burford Optimist & Lions Park / BCC, Burford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growth constrained due to septic restructure.</li> <li>• Review potential for re-development or re-purposing of existing tennis courts (e.g. pickleball) located on adjoining school property, in consultation with Grand Erie District School Board.</li> <li>• See also Sports Fields Recommendation #29.</li> </ul>
30	Park Ave. Soccer Park, Burford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See also Sports Fields Recommendation #29.</li> </ul>
35	Mount Pleasant Park, Mount Pleasant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review community demographics and local interest in potential for splash pad development.</li> <li>• In conjunction with the above, consider development of a trailhead and amenities for the L.E. &amp; N. and T.H. &amp; B. Trails.</li> <li>• See also Sports Fields Recommendation #29.</li> <li>• See also Playground Recommendation #30.</li> </ul>

#	Park Name & Location	Guidelines & Potential Improvements
24	Harrisburg Ball Park, Harrisburg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See Sports Fields Recommendation #29.</li> <li>• See Playground Recommendation #30.</li> </ul>
21	Glen Morris Ball Park (Rising Park), Glen Morris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See Playground Recommendation #30.</li> </ul>
47	Oakland Community Centre Park, Oakland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See Sports Fields Recommendation #29.</li> <li>• See Playground Recommendation #30.</li> </ul>
46	Optimist Park, Scotland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See Sports Fields Recommendation #29.</li> <li>• See Playground Recommendation #30.</li> </ul>
23	New Durham Ball Park, New Durham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review potential repurposing or surplus/disposition options.</li> <li>• See also Sports Fields Recommendation #30.</li> </ul>
45	Brant/Onondaga Park, Cainsville	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See Sports Fields Recommendation #29.</li> </ul>
34	Onondaga Ball Park, Onondaga	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review potential repurposing options for ball diamond (e.g. community event space and/or trailhead facilities for access to Grand Valley Trail).</li> <li>• See also Sports Fields Recommendation #29.</li> <li>• See also Playground Recommendation #30.</li> </ul>
<b>Neighbourhood Parks, Commons and Urban Greens</b>		
1	Axton Park, Paris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See Neighbourhood Park Guidelines.</li> <li>• See also Playground Recommendation #30.</li> </ul>
17	Bean Park, Paris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain current role and function as passive park space with limited use river access.</li> <li>• See also River Access Recommendation #37.</li> </ul>
2	Bemrose Park, Paris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain current role and function as passive open space / small toboggan hill for local neighbourhood.</li> </ul>
9	Cenotaph War Memorial, Paris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See Guidelines for Commons / Urban Greens.</li> </ul>
10	Cobblestone Common, Paris	

#	Park Name & Location	Guidelines & Potential Improvements
3	Forest Drive Park, Paris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See <i>Neighbourhood Park Guidelines</i>.</li> <li>• See also <i>Sports Fields Recommendation #29</i>.</li> <li>• See also <i>Playground Recommendation #30</i>.</li> </ul>
7	Garden of Hope, Paris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See <i>Guidelines for Commons / Urban Greens</i>.</li> </ul>
18	Gilston Park, Paris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider new playground development based on identified need to resolve gap in distribution.</li> <li>• See also <i>Neighbourhood Park Guidelines</i>.</li> <li>• See also <i>Playground Recommendation #30</i>.</li> </ul>
19	Grandville Park, Paris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preserve as passive/informal open space play area if other uses constrained by stormwater management functions/requirements.</li> <li>• See also <i>Playground Recommendation #30</i>.</li> </ul>
5	Jury Street Park, Paris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See <i>Neighbourhood Park Guidelines</i>.</li> <li>• See also <i>Playground Recommendation #30</i>.</li> </ul>
6	Kings Ward Park, Paris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See <i>Guidelines for Commons / Urban Greens</i>.</li> </ul>
15	Rest Acres Ridge Park, Paris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See <i>Neighbourhood Park Guidelines</i>.</li> <li>• See also <i>Playground Recommendation #30</i>.</li> <li>• Retain current role.</li> </ul>
13	Willow Street Park, Paris	
43	Cenotaph Park, St. George	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See <i>Guidelines for Commons / Urban Greens</i>.</li> </ul>
42	Snowball Park, St. George	
28	Broadview Park, Burford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain current role and function as passive park space and infiltration area given water ponding.</li> </ul>
27	Janice Hunt Memorial Park, Burford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See <i>Neighbourhood Park Guidelines</i>.</li> <li>• See also <i>Playground Recommendation #30</i>.</li> </ul>
29	John Street Park, Burford	
32	Foxhill Heights Park, Oakhill	
33	Oakhill Heights Park, Oakhill	
31	Poplar Hills Park, Oakhill	

#	Park Name & Location	Guidelines & Potential Improvements
<b>Natural Areas</b>		
12	Lions Park, Paris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acquire additional natural areas in Nith Peninsula area to create linkage from Lions Park along the river bank and related trail opportunities.</li> <li>• <i>See also Destination Park, River Access Recommendation #37, Natural Areas Management Recommendation #38 and updated Trails Plan.</i></li> </ul>
39	Jacob's Woods, St. George	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider acquisition of adjoining land and hiking/nature trail development, leash-free dog area or trail, and/or mountain biking/BMX trail, with level of facility and type of trail development based on environmental sensitivity and depending on access from other than the adjoining residential streets.</li> <li>• <i>See also Natural Areas Management Recommendation #38 and Trails Plan.</i></li> </ul>
36	Mount Pleasant Nature Park, Mount Pleasant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review condition of existing facilities and define asset renewal needs and priorities.</li> <li>• Consider potential equestrian trailhead development based on re-confirmation of identified interest and benefit to equestrian participants.</li> <li>• <i>See also Natural Areas Management Recommendation #38 and Trails Plan.</i></li> </ul>
22	Eric Tomlinson Access Point / Wray and Marilyn Cline Park, Glen Morris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>See River Access Recommendation #37 and Natural Areas Management Recommendation #38.</i></li> </ul>
45	Brant/Onondaga Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>See also Community Park, and Natural Areas Management Recommendation #38.</i></li> </ul>

## Recommendation #28: New Park Development

- That the County of Brant should continue to **review and monitor per capita parkland provision levels** based on the service level targets established in the Parkland Classification System, as a planning and performance indicator and to assess how that changes over time with the growing population. Future parkland acquisition should also be guided by the following:
  - Geographic distribution and proximity of access by the population, particularly local access to neighbourhood-level parks;
  - Providing a balance of active and passive parkland;
  - Opportunity-based and strategic acquisition of:
    - Parkland to facilitate the expansion of existing destination parks and community parks;
    - Land for urban greenspaces, public squares, parkettes, civic and event spaces in the downtown core areas;
    - Riverside lands, natural corridors and other natural areas and open spaces;
    - Key linkages and connections to create and expand a linked parks, open space and trails system, and;
    - Land required for specialized facilities that support local or regional events, tourism, or specific recreational programs.
  - The following estimates of the cumulative amount of parkland needs by type in order to maintain the current and recommended provision level standards:

Year	2016	2021	2026	2031	2036	2041
<b>Population</b>	36,707	39,748	43,042	49,000	53,000	57,000
<b>Households</b>	13,687	14,721	16,121	18,421	19,925	21,429
<b>Total Parkland (ha)</b>	<b>138.2</b>	<b>149.6</b> <b>(+11.4)</b>	<b>162.1</b> <b>(+23.9)</b>	<b>184.5</b> <b>(+46.3)</b>	<b>199.5</b> <b>(+61.3)</b>	<b>214.6</b> <b>(+76.4)</b>
<b>Destination Parks (ha)</b>	37.6	39.7 (+2.1)	43.0 (5.4)	49.0 (+11.4)	53.0 (+15.4)	57.0 (+19.4)
<b>Community Parks (ha)</b>	43.4	47.7 (+4.3)	51.7 (+8.3)	58.8 (+15.4)	63.6 (+20.2)	68.4 (+25.0)
<b>Neighbourhood Parks (ha)</b>	14.3	19.9 (+5.6)	21.5 (+7.2)	24.5 (+10.2)	26.5 (+12.2)	28.5 (+14.2)
<b>Natural Areas (ha)</b>	42.9	<i>Acquisition as lands become available and targeted acquisition of priority areas. See also Natural Areas Management Recommendation #.</i>				

- That the County of Brant should review and monitor options to **acquire land for expanded Destination Parks** and the potential development of one (1) or two (2) **new Destination Parks** to secure a land base for new outdoor recreation facility development and/or re-positioning and consolidation of existing facilities such as sports fields, and to provide special event spaces, and service the significant growth that is planned in the County's urban settlement areas. Locational considerations should focus on expansion opportunities at existing sites where feasible, if adjoining land can be acquired, including the Green Lane Sports Complex and Paris Lions Park. Potential future location opportunities should also be determined for new outdoor recreation facility complexes, such as co-located sports fields with the Brant Sports Complex and, in the longer term, a new multi-use and multi-sports field park venue in the St. George area where planned or proposed developments could more than double the size of the community.
- That the County of Brant should **acquire and develop new Community and Neighbourhood Parks**, primarily in Paris and St. George and other areas where parkland can be acquired through dedication requirements as needs dictate in new developments and based on Area Plans and the *Neighbourhood Park Guidelines*, including but not limited to the following development areas:
  - Paris – North West Paris Area Plan – Brookfield-Pinehurst (Watt's Pond Road/Pinehurst Road): 2 Neighbourhood Parks (Phases 1 & 2) and Natural Area development (Open Space Blocks);
  - Paris – Rest Acres Road/Powerline Road – 2 Neighbourhood Parks with future parks to be determined;
  - Paris – Grandville Estates – 2 Neighbourhood Parks (west & east) with potential development at Grandville Park (see also Recommendation #27);
  - Paris – Nith Peninsula – improvements to Victoria Park (Phases 1 & 4), 1 new park, linkage trail to Lions Park, acquisition of parkland to link Nith River Trail between pedestrian bridges;
  - Paris – Paris Grand – future parks to be determined;
  - Paris – Village on the Grand-Willow Street – cash-in-lieu of parkland;
  - Paris – South West Paris – Highway 2/Cleaver Road – future parks to be determined;
  - St. George – North West St. George – future Neighbourhood Park and future Parkette;
  - St. George – St. George Road/German School Road & Beverly Street West-Losani – future Neighbourhood Park;
  - St. George – Beverly Street West-Riverview Highlands – future park and trails to be determined.

### 4.3 Sports Fields

As detailed in the Situational Analysis Report, there are over 40 sports fields available in the County's parks, including ball diamonds and soccer pitches / multi-use fields, and additional sports fields are available at local schools. The County's sports fields vary in size and level of facility development.

An assessment of sports fields utilization over the past 5 years and participant-based provisioning standards was undertaken to evaluate current and future capacity needs. Sports field facility booking data for local schools, as provided by the Grand Erie District School Board, was also analyzed. In addition, sports field user groups and organizations participated in the consultation program and provided input on the current facility availability, quality and overall capacity relative to program delivery, scheduling dimensions and growth and change in participation.

From the review of the current inventory of County-operated sports fields and the capacity utilization and needs assessments, the following key observations and opportunities have been identified:

- Current provisioning of soccer/multi-use sports fields has fallen well below participant-based standards, and growth of soccer and other field sport programs is constrained to some degree by lack of capacity. In some cases, programming capacity has become reliant on sports fields that are privately owned as well as the use of school fields
- Opportunities to create additional field capacity for soccer programs through improvements and supporting facilities such as lighting at some existing field locations, and/or the future retrofitting of one or more natural turf fields to artificial turf, and/or building a new artificial turf facility in an expanded and consolidated multi-field location such as the Green Lane Sports Complex.
- The sports field needs assessment indicates a clear, immediate need for additional soccer/multi-use sports field capacity particularly mini pitches (and/or senior pitches with cross-field mini field configurations) in the St. George area.
- Planned replacement and upgrading of two existing ball diamonds at Paris Lion's Park / Pete Lavoie Ball Park will assist in meeting growing participation in youth baseball in Paris.
- Usage of ball diamonds located in the larger population centres has increased while the ball diamonds in smaller communities has remained low or in some cases there is no scheduled program use of certain ball diamonds. There are growing capacity needs at Green Lane Sports Complex which will further increase with the planned re-purposing of Two Rivers Stadium to other functions.
- Development of parking and/or washroom facilities at Forest Drive Park could support more regularly scheduled use of the junior soccer pitch.
- Limited parking within the park at Sunny Hill Park in St. George resulting in sports field users parking along the roadside (County Road 13 / St. George Road) has been raised as a safety concern.

## Recommendation #29: Sports Fields

- That the County of Brant should **monitor and assess sports field utilization and capacity** on an on-going and periodic basis, as a key input to facilities planning and points of investment, including consideration of the following:
  - For each sports field that is programmed on a scheduled and fee basis, **define and track** the maximum weekly **availability** and total seasonal hours for sports fields and continue to **track usage** to enable **monitoring of capacity utilization** on an annual basis, tied to the level of facility development and maintenance, and to **optimize scheduling**;
  - Registration data for each sport association reserving sports fields should be acquired and tracked year-to-year and evaluated relative to **participant-based service standards** and to help **anticipate local trends and changes in outdoor sports participation**; and,
  - Undertake periodic reviews of scheduling and participation in **consultation with user groups** to monitor facility performance and capacity and to assist in identifying facility improvements and future needs.
- Strategies to address the needs for additional sports field capacity should continue to **focus on opportunities to improve existing facilities**, lighting existing sports fields and a review of scheduling should be undertaken **prior to adding new sports fields**.
- That the County of Brant should work towards achieving and maintaining target service level standards in the range of **one (1) full-size equivalent soccer/multi-use sports field per 90 to 100 participants** in related programs and activities, and maintaining the current provision level of **one (1) full-size equivalent ball diamond per 90 to 100 participants** in related programs and activities.
- That the County of Brant should **develop additional soccer/multi-use sports field capacity** to address the current shortfall of two (2) to four (4) full-size field equivalents and address anticipated ten-year future growth needs of four (4) or more additional full-size field equivalents, including:
  - Two (2) to four (4) additional mini pitches (and/or senior pitches with cross-field mini field configurations) in the St. George area, plus long-term securement or replacement of existing available capacity at Elliot Field (1 senior and 3 mini fields) which is subject to a land lease, and review of potential upgrading of Sunny Hill Park soccer field to address sizing requirements for all users;
  - Two (2) lit full-size fields, including consideration of an artificial turf facility as a new field and/or by retrofitting existing field(s) with lighting, and upgrades to address field sizing requirements for the full range of uses at Green Lane Sports Complex;

- Charlton Park potential re-configuration and re-purposing of existing soccer field as mini fields, with supporting facilities (washrooms, parking) or agreement for access to adjoining school for supporting facilities;
- Consider washroom facilities and expanded parking at Forest Drive Park to support more regularly scheduled use of the existing junior soccer pitch;
- Consideration of grading improvements at Oakland Park to address slope issues so that the overlapping ball diamond outfields can also be used non-concurrently for soccer;
- Consolidate soccer/multi-use fields to support tournaments (e.g. more use at Forest Drive Park, Optimist Park, etc.).
- That the County of Brant should **develop additional ball diamond capacity** where local needs are evident, while continuing to **reposition and re-purpose existing ball diamonds** that are underutilized and single facility locations, including:
  - Completion of the planned replacement and upgrading of the existing ball diamonds at Paris Lions Park to serve growing participation in youth baseball in Paris;
  - Lighting of two (2) additional existing ball diamonds at Green Lane Sports Complex, to address current capacity needs and help to offset the softball programming and capacity impact of re-purposing Two Rivers Stadium;
  - Review of opportunities for re-purposing the existing ball diamond at Onondaga Park and re-purposing or disposition of the existing ball diamond at New Durham Ball Park;
  - Replacement of ball diamond lighting at Mount Peasant Park.
- That the County of Brant should review and **consider opportunities to develop a combined sports field complex** when warranted for soccer, ball and indoor/outdoor activities;
- That the County of Brant should **work with sports organizations** to develop capital financing plans to expedite sports field development when applicable;
- That the County of Brant **develop additional operational resource capacity** for sports fields turf maintenance to address current needs with consideration to increasing facility quality expectations and capital investments in upgraded and new sports fields that require corresponding growth and investment in operations.

## 4.4 Playgrounds

A review of the County's current inventory of playground locations has been completed and is summarized in the Situational Analysis Report along with an assessment of trends in playground design, development and standards.

Currently, there are 25 locations in County Parks, and additional playgrounds at some local schools. A GIS-based walkability analysis was performed to evaluate the current distribution. From this review and analysis, it is evident that the majority of households in urban residential areas and in many of the smaller communities in the County have convenient access to one or more playground locations. Potential gap areas have been identified for further, more detailed review. Ongoing monitoring and periodic auditing of existing playgrounds relative to safety and accessibility standards, and in consideration of evolving design and development trends, will continue to be required to guide maintenance and repair activities and lifecycle replacements and renewal of the inventory. Several new playgrounds are also planned within new Neighbourhood Parks and Parkettes in new development areas.

### Recommendation #30: Playgrounds

- That Brant Count should **adopt a service-level target** in new residential development areas, to ensure convenient access for residents and in particular households with children, of 1 playground location accessible within a **400m to 800m** walking distance of residential dwellings.
- That the County of Brant should update the **Asset Management Plan to include playgrounds** and other park facilities with identified age and replacement values to facilitate planning for capital maintenance and lifecycle replacement. Playground equipment repair and replacement needs should be monitored on an ongoing basis.
- That the County of Brant should **continue to address current standards for safety and accessibility of play structures** through ongoing renewal/replacement of existing structures and new installations.
- That the County of Brant should **further review the following gap areas** that are possibly underserved with respect to playgrounds:
  - The existing residential area between Washington Street and Chapel Street south of Dundas Street West in Paris, may offer an opportunity to establish a new neighbourhood park or parkette with a playground, if there is demand;
  - Race Street / Gilston Parkway / Hillside Avenue / Mile Hill Road area in Paris where the local neighbourhood park (Gilston Park) does not include a playground;
  - Cedar Street west of Rest Acres Road and Laurie Ann Lane area is beyond an 800m walking distance to Cobblestone Elementary School and Grandville Park.

- That the County of Brant should consider the installation of new or additional **playground equipment designed for older children at Oakland Park.**
- That the County of Brant should **develop additional playgrounds on newly acquired parklands** as part of future Community Parks, Neighbourhood Parks and Parkettes, where appropriate based on the Parkland Classification System, guidelines and recommended standards of this Master Plan.
- That the County of Brant review and consider **current and emerging trends in playground designs and developments**, including those documented in the Situational Analysis Report and any new and relevant information.
- That the County of Brant should **coordinate playground locations in parks with those available or planned at local schools** to maximize access, variety and appeal to children of all ages.

#### 4.5 Aquatic Facilities

The Paris Community Pool and Lions Park is well used and highly regarded, and will continue to be a significant recreational and educational resource for seasonal outdoor aquatics through the life of this Master Plan. Operational maintenance activities and programming resource capacity for this facility will require continued annual investments to sustain facility quality, capacity and high levels of community use. Program participation and interest should continue to be monitored to ensure that services delivery responds to community needs, expectations and trends.

Indoor aquatic facilities are among the most capital-intensive investments among municipal recreation facilities, and are also typically the most operationally-intensive in relation to staffing, heating and energy requirements, and related maintenance activities. Therefore, the introduction of indoor aquatics into the recreation facility offering is one of the most significant evolutions in any municipal recreation department. With multiple points of investment needs associated with the parks and recreation facilities and services that are already provided, establishing capital and operating funding sources for major facilities that are new to the area is a significant challenge. Growth-related development fees are often a key part of the solution, but can take several years to amount to any significant part of the total funding requirement after a determination has been made to include such a facility development in the municipal capital forecast.

As summarized in the Situational Analysis Report, the County has most recently completed a detailed assessment and planning to investigate the development of an indoor pool in 2009, and has reported on related activities since then. The feasibility of the indoor pool facility recommended at that time was acknowledged to be dependent on external funding sources for up to two-thirds of the capital cost, and like the funding the facility did not evolve from that study. Since then, the replacement of the former Paris Community Pool with the current new outdoor facility has been completed.

From the research and consultation undertaken for this Master Plan, there is evidence of continued interest in establishing an indoor aquatics facility in the County of Brant, although it is not universal.

The Situational Analysis Report also notes the current and planned investments in indoor pools in adjoining communities and the geographic access dynamic that will continue to impact how indoor pool facilities are used by County residents. Most of the County's population lives within a 20-minute driving time of an existing indoor pool and additional facilities are under construction or planned in some adjacent communities. The existing indoor pool facility in the City of Brantford was identified as the most commonly used indoor recreation facility by County residents who participated in the online survey completed in October 2016 for the Master Plan.

With the dynamic of the County's broad population distribution geographically, proximity to existing and new/planned facilities in adjoining communities, the range of facility types and alternative services delivery options and partnership models, and the significant capital and operating resource needs, the establishment of an indoor pool facility in the County of Brant within the life of this Master Plan should be opportunity-based through an updated feasibility study and business case addressing all of these factors.

### **Recommendation #31: Aquatic Facilities**

- That the County of Brant should continue to track and **monitor program participation, pool usage and user feedback** regarding the Paris Community Pool to adapt the program offering and operations/maintenance activities to respond to community needs, expectations and experiences and related trends and **sustain the quality and maximized community access and use** of the outdoor pool.
- That the County of Brant should consider the addition of **bike racks** for bicycle parking at the Paris Community Pool.
- That the County of Brant should review and consider the potential establishment of a regularly scheduled **transportation service** for County residents to the Wayne Gretzky Centre in Brantford to access aquatic programming for seniors.
- That the County of Brant should, over the period of this Master Plan, continue to **monitor and assess potential opportunities** for an **indoor pool facility**, and **engage the private sector** in potential opportunities, particularly for affordable public access to therapeutic aquatic facilities and programs, within the policy and strategic framework of this Master Plan for County involvement in development and delivery of recreation facilities and services, and based on an updated feasibility analysis and business case addressing in detail the identified factors related to geographic access and proximity of County residents to existing and planned facilities in adjoining communities, alternative services delivery and potential partnerships, and a well-defined capital funding strategy and sustainable operational financial model.

### **4.6 Arenas, Community Centres and Indoor Turf**

The County's four existing ice surfaces are well-used and will continue to be required to address capacity needs for ice activities over the life of this Plan. For many years, residents have enjoyed a high level of indoor ice provision and community centre spaces with good geographic

distribution, and this has been enhanced through the more recent investments in the development of the Brant Sports Complex (BSC) and repurposing of the Syl Apps Community Centre former ice surface to indoor turf, and renewal of the South Dumfries Community Centre (SDCC) and Burford Community Centre (BCC).

The magnitude of forecast future population growth in the County over the next 10 to 15 years and beyond will impact the per capita arena provision standard, but will not move it beyond an acceptable level provided the four existing ice pads are sustained at their current high levels of capacity and use. Additional investments in the existing arenas and community centres will be needed during this period, to maintain the current arena operations and facility capital maintenance requirements and in some cases to respond and adapt to identified functional requirements and trends for related activities, programs and services.

### **Recommendation #32: Arenas and Community Centres**

- That the County of Brant should **collect and monitor participant data** from registered ice users and in programs and activities utilizing community centre spaces, continue to monitor usage of available ice and multi-purpose/meeting rooms, and seek opportunities to further **optimize scheduling in consultation with user groups**.
- That the County of Brant should undertake the required **arena and community centres asset management** as well as **ongoing operational investments**, administrative, scheduling and **marketing/promotional dimensions** to sustain the quality and continued high levels of community use and programming of the existing centres and available ice time at the arenas.
- That the County of Brant should, through further investments in the existing arenas, review opportunities to **adapt the facilities** based on identified functional and programming requirements defined **in consultation with user groups**, as well as evolving standards, trends and best practices, related to storage spaces, dressing rooms including consideration of co-ed programming, gender neutral washrooms, activities that require controlled access, team rooms and administrative spaces, tournament and event requirements, concurrent use considerations and other similar dimensions.
- That the County of Brant should, if evidence of a **sustained and growing community need emerges** from the above monitoring and scheduling activities and user groups consultation, plan for the **expansion of indoor ice capacities** through potential twinning of the SDCC arena, or by replacement of the SDCC with a new two-pad arena, within the policy and strategic framework of this Master Plan.
- That the County of Brant should review and consider **potential re-purposing and additional programming/facility opportunities at the Burford Community Centre hall** with a focus on community-based and volunteer-operated programs, and/or alternative service delivery models such as partnerships with other recreation and

community service providers, such as a fitness centre, indoor playground facility, seniors centre/programs, youth centre/programs or other similar functions.

### ***Syl Apps Community Centre***

The Syl Apps Community Centre is a former multi-use arena complex at 51 William Street located along the Grand River adjacent to downtown Paris. With the opening of the new Brant Sports Complex, the arena portion was discontinued. Since that time, the Centre has been converted to a multi-use facility involving:

- 175' x 77' indoor FIFA soccer field, converted arena floor;
- Indoor lacrosse facility.
- A 265 seat banquet hall with a kitchen and a bar;
- A wide array of turf-based programs, involving kinder-play, walking, etc.
- Host to a number of summer and speciality camps;
- Part-time Youth Centre;
- Home to the Paris Museum and Historical Society.

Outside of the facility, is a large parking lot, playground, skateboard park and a ball diamond. A new access to the Grand River is being developed. The external portion of venue is being redeveloped with the current capital initiative to facilitate enhanced access to the River and to decommission the ball field. For River access, the Syl Apps Community Centre is a primary access point where participants pay their fees, can park their cars and walk down to the nearby Penman's Dam river access point.

Over the last decade or so, the County has invested significantly in its arena and community centres in St. George and Burford. The County has also developed the new Brant Sports Complex and undertaken other investments. The Syl Apps Community Centre has not been significantly invested in, in terms of upgrades, renewal or repositioning, except with regard to the conversion of the arena floor to indoor turf which has been a successful transition.

The major constraint relates to the age and design of the building for its original functioning as an arena and banquet facility, with a large foyer, hallways, dressing rooms and other similar design features. As a result, there is a considerable amount of space that is underutilized as it does not necessarily support current uses effectively or efficiently.

Syl Apps Community Centre is well-located for pedestrian, cyclist and river access, and proximity to the downtown area of Paris, and has considerable capacity but needs both a refreshment and repositioning in order to maximize its utility in support of a new range of activities involving indoor soccer and lacrosse, and a wide range of recreation programs and children's services, as well as the banquet facility. Also, with the external portion of the site to be redeveloped and an additional

river access being developed, this Centre will become more prominent in supporting river-based activities that are growing considerably in the County of Brant area.

Questions have also been raised as to whether the Museum is in an appropriate location and a good use of the facility's space. Would the Museum be better integrated with other cultural, library or related facilities. Such a move would also open up additional multi-use space for additional recreation programs and services.

In order to establish a future direction for the Syl Apps Community Centre, a Feasibility / Business Plan needs to be developed that examines what the potential integrated services profile and opportunities are for this well-located and significant community resource space. Key tenets of this initiative would align with the Business Plan Policy in this Master Plan, and involve:

- Reconfiguring the indoor spaces to better suit emerging demands for indoor soccer, lacrosse, programs and services and a host of other direct and indirectly delivered programs;
- The possible inclusion of a gymnasium or multi-purpose court flooring, indoor walking track and related programs;
- The potential benefits of relocating the Museum to a more integrated / aligned venue;
- Maximize space availability and utilization of the building aligned with new and different uses than the original arena design applications;
- Enhanced development of any supports that could be considered for river access activities with facilities and information centre that could also support trail users and cyclists;
- The ability for the site to become a dynamic indoor / outdoor special events centre;
- Multi-use and integrated services opportunities and possible designation and positioning of the facility as a community hub with service areas focusing on children, youth and seniors.

A Feasibility / Business Plan would also need to look at a number of other key dimensions:

- Any reuse profiles and their potential impacts on the residential areas around the Centre;
- The economic impact of an enhanced indoor / outdoor special events centre for new and / or relocated existing events that are occurring on the streets in Paris and require road closures;
- Capital and operating cost projections;
- The current and longer term use opportunity and utilization profiles.

The potential of Syl Apps Community Centre is considerable due to location, scale, current usage and the realignments that have been made to-date. Maximizing space availability and utility, aligning space and features with growing needs for special events and other perspectives could

significantly enhance the facilities contributions to the community's quality of life and available services as well as supporting visitors and tourism functions.

From a special events perspective, there are few weekends left at the Fairgrounds in Burford and Paris, and there is limited other large indoor space availability for such events. The Syl Apps Community Centre could be the basis for a unique opportunity to develop an indoor special events centre with some outdoor aligned capacity that would increase the economic impact of special events, support downtown businesses and add to the overall tourism initiatives within the community.

Due to the extensive possibilities, the scale of reconfiguration and repositioning of the facility, alignment with current initiatives and the marketing and demand assessments required, a Feasibility / Business Plan is a required first step in moving forward on any major initiative for this facility that really represents the last major community complex in Brant that has not been reinvested in at a significant level.

### **Recommendation #33: Syl Apps Community Centre**

- That the County of Brant undertake a **comprehensive Feasibility Study / Business Plan** to establish the future directions, priorities, use applications and capital investments required to **reposition the Syl Apps Community Centre as a multi-use recreation and special events complex** with both indoor and outdoor capacities, with consideration to the following potential components as an initial guideline:
  - Reconfiguring the indoor spaces to better support indoor soccer, lacrosse and other indoor turf programs and services, direct and indirectly delivered programs;
  - Gymnasium or multi-purpose court flooring, indoor walking track and related programs;
  - Formalized and expanded Youth Centre;
  - The potential for relocating the Museum to a more integrated / aligned venue;
  - River access with supporting facilities and information centre that could also support trail users and cyclists;
  - Indoor / outdoor special events centre;
  - Possible designation and positioning of the facility as a community hub with multi-use and integrated services focusing on children, youth and seniors.
- That the County of Brant should, as part of the planning to address future sports field capacity requirements (see also Recommendation #29), explore the development of a **full-size indoor or seasonally covered artificial turf sports field** firstly on the basis of a **regional facility on a partnership basis**, if such a new facility is entertained in the future in connection with planned changes to the facilities at Syl Apps based on the above recommendations. Usage of the existing indoor turf at Syl

Apps should continue to be monitored and participant data should be collected and monitored to support potential future feasibility analysis.

#### **4.7 Municipal Gymnasium**

Based on the consultation and research undertaken in support of the Master Plan there is an identified interest and future capital plan for the development of a municipality-owned and operated gymnasium facility. Larger urban centres have established these facilities over the past several decades, and there is a growing trend among smaller urban and urban/rural Ontario municipalities to develop municipal gymnasium spaces, or to develop joint facilities under an alternative service delivery model in partnership with school boards and/or other service providers such as the YMCA or Boys and Girls Club. The principal rationales for these initiatives are the significant utilization being made of existing school gymnasiums, the limited availability of school gymnasiums for community use or gymnasium facilities that reflect a different era and capacity in terms of their features, challenges with school gymnasium regular access, storage of equipment and other functional aspects for programming, and growing demand for both youth and adult volleyball, basketball, indoor soccer, ball hockey and other gymnasium-based / high ceiling uses.

Based on the data provided by the Grand Erie District School Board, as summarized in the Situational Analysis Report existing school gymnasiums are heavily used for community programs and activities within the limited available times. Additional gymnasium capacity could enhance higher levels of participation and expansion of some gymnasium-based uses / sports, offer daytime / weekday programming to the growing older adult and seniors market, and resolve functional aspects by creating a home and centralized space for both County-run and volunteer-operated gymnasium programs and related equipment storage. Some County capital funding has been identified for a possible facility with some discussions to date relative to an addition to the Brant Sports Complex which would have advantages in complementing the existing arenas and providing associated off-ice training and fitness opportunities and also in terms of available parking and convenient vehicular transportation access with proximity to Highway 403. The Syl Apps Community Centre also warrants consideration as a possible gymnasium location (see Section 4.6 – Recommendation #33) and has related advantages as the centre is within walking distance of residential neighbourhoods and some local schools, as well as Downtown Paris, and a gymnasium would help to support other related uses such as the children’s camps, Youth Centre and community events.

Based on the Business Plan Policy in this Master Plan, any project over \$250,000 should be based on a comprehensive Business Plan. In this light and with some of the ongoing discussions and data assessments on gymnasium use and need, a Business Plan for a possible municipal gymnasium either developed by the County or the County in partnership with a school board, YMCA or other party, should be undertaken. The Business Plan should respond to the list of items that need to be incorporated into a Business Plan as per the policy. There should also be consideration for the potential development of partnerships, and the preference for multi-use facilities. A gymnasium as a standalone facility should not be considered.

The opportunities for a new gymnasium facility could be located at the Brant Sports Complex and may be a significant opportunity for the reconfiguration and repositioning of the Syl Apps Community Centre, both as a recreational facility but also as a special event venue. It could possibly be a partnership opportunity with a school board, YMCA or other party.

A gymnasium complex could also incorporate a fitness centre, Early Years facilities or a host of other activities that could be part of a broader complex based on needs beyond just gymnasium sports. These elements would need to be considered based on need, feasibility, sustainability, other facilities and services available within the community, and related perspectives.

#### **Recommendation #34: Municipal Gymnasium**

- That the County of Brant undertake a **comprehensive Business Plan** as per the Master Plan Business Plan Policy for **future gymnasium facilities**, with particular emphasis on partnership and multi-use facility opportunities, and comparative evaluation of possible locations balancing considerations related to geographic access to target populations and markets including children, youth and older adults/seniors, convenient transportation access, including active transportation, and other existing or planned facilities that would be complementary.

#### **4.8 Community Halls**

Through municipal amalgamations over the years, the County of Brant has become the owner, and in some cases operator, of a number of community halls that at one time represented some ten or more community halls. Over the years, several halls have been closed, sold or taken over by local community groups. Challenges exist with the smaller community halls, involving: the age and condition of the facilities requiring significant capital investment to meet building codes, accessibility standards and other requirements; limited capacities and features of some of the halls in supporting weddings, banquets, and other social gatherings; demographic changes and aging of the population in some of the local communities; an inability to generate local volunteer support to operate the facilities; and related challenges. Some of these halls have strong local affinity as they were developed through local resident capital contributions, construction participation and volunteer leadership.

The challenge for community halls in Brant is typical of what happens in many amalgamated areas as changing user patterns and demographic, volunteer levels, building code requirements and larger facilities being built in the market area, result in diminished use and need for such halls. Brant has undertaken a strategy to reduce the number of halls where warranted and to sustain halls where local initiatives remain strong in terms of leadership and operations.

Some of the community halls that are not operated by the County may not be sustainable over the long term. This could occur if significant capital investments are required to refurbish the building structures and systems to meet building code and AODA requirements and related perspectives. Also, challenges could occur if local volunteer support and use of the facilities were to diminish below feasible levels.

The Master Plan strategy proposed is not to arbitrarily close community halls but to work with local communities to sustain them. However, when significant capital investments are required and the utilization levels don't warrant the levels of investments needed, and sustainability is in serious jeopardy, then the County should work with local parties to determine the best future directions for the facility, including their possible sale and closure, or alternative repurposing options, to be determined on a case by case basis. As the capital costs becomes more significant and challenging these decisions will grow. Local community-based leadership and operation of these facilities is the preferred services delivery approach, rather than the County taking on full operations and programming responsibilities.

#### **Recommendation #35: Community Halls**

- That on a case by case basis, the County of Brant regularly **review the sustainability of community halls** related to:
  - Committed local leadership availability to operate and maintain the facility.
  - The level of capital investments required to sustain the facility in comparison to current and projected utilization levels.
  - Availability of alternative uses for the facility and / or rental activities.
  - Significant declines in utilization levels that do not support continued operations.
  - Alternative strategies to increase utilization.
- That the County of Brant **work with local groups**, wherever possible, **to develop sustainability models** or to look at **alternative operational models and uses**, including the possible re-purposes or sale of facilities where appropriate.
- That the County of Brant continue to work with community groups to establish recreation programming and activities at the **Scotland Community Centre** within the renovated facility.

#### **4.9 Other Recreation Facilities**

With the County's inventory of parks and recreational resources a range of other facilities are available to the community, as documented in the Situational Analysis Report. Use of these facilities should continue to be monitored to assist in determining future needs. These and other specialized park facilities and structures should be included in the County's asset management planning to identify and address future capital maintenance and lifecycle costs.

### Recommendation #36: Other Recreation Facilities

- That the County of Brant should continue to **track and monitor the use** of the picnic shelters and amphitheater as booked facilities and to explore means of collecting and monitoring data regarding the usage of other facilities, to **assist in determining future needs** for capacity improvements and new facilities.
- That the County of Brant should **incorporate** the full range of individual and specialized park facilities and structures in the County's **Asset Management Plan** and undertake asset renewal and lifecycle replacement for these facilities as needed.
- That the County of Brant consider opportunities to **further develop unorganized and extreme sport recreation opportunities** (e.g. BMX, mountain biking) at Destination or Community Park locations, and/or as part of the trail system, and within some Neighbourhood Parks where the location is appropriate for smaller scale skate features such as rails and ramps that can be incorporated into park designs.
- That the County of Brant consider additional **multi-use pads/outdoor basketball courts** and **outdoor ice rink** opportunities, primarily in future parks to be developed on lands dedicated by development in Paris and St. George. If an appropriate site is identified and available, the County should consider this an **outdoor community ice rink in Downtown Paris**.
- That the County of Brant review and undertake to **address accessibility requirements** and **structural issues** at the Paris Lawn Bowling Clubhouse, if feasible as determined within the policy framework of this Master Plan. The County of Brant should also work with the Lawn Bowling Clubs to **consider re-developed facilities as expanded use / year-round multi-use facilities** and/or integration of lawn bowling opportunities at other multi-use facilities.
- That the County of Brant should **consider additional leash-free dog park locations** with **priority to community-based proposals** having an organized and self-supporting and sustainable operational model similar to the existing Simply Grand Dog Park.
- That the County of Brant should work with the Paris Tennis Club, St. George Tennis Club and Grand Erie District School Board to explore opportunities to **increase capacity and court availability for tennis programs** and to identify and **resolve lighting and other facility issues at the Paris tennis courts**, as well as storage facility and washroom access, and regarding the potential redevelopment or repurposing of the existing tennis courts located in Burford. The potential use of the existing court at Poplar Hills Park for pickleball should also be reviewed.
- That the County of Brant should consider opportunities for **multi-functional program space for seniors, adult and youth programs** combined with other developments to create hubs within St. George, Paris and Burford (e.g. program space, art studio etc.).

#### **4.10 River Access**

Access to the Grand River for canoeing, kayaking, fishing and commercial river boating activities is growing, the latter grew significantly to over 100,000 visits per year, primarily in the June to September period. River access has become a significant tourism asset and the primary visitor attraction that has grown exponentially over the last number of years.

Currently there are four County-owned and operated river access points, including Bean Park Landing River Access, Lions Park River Access, and Penman's Dam River Access in Paris, and Eric Tomlinson Landing River Access in Glen Morris. Under the County's Park Use By-law No. 225-04, the Penman's Dam and Eric Tomlinson River Access points are designated commercial river access points, Bean Park is a designated non-commercial river access point, and Lions Park is a designated special event river access point. The By-law directs commercial outfitters to the commercial river access points. The commercial scale of the business opportunities continues to grow with multiple operators/outfitters.

What is evident, is that there is no coordinated or orchestrated river access model. Parking can be a problem at some points, and there is potential liability and concerns on using the river. The County is currently planning for the development of another river access point behind the Syl Apps Community Centre, and some operators are looking at developing private land access points as well.

Concerns have been expressed by staff about some of the regulatory gaps in terms of responsibility for supporting river access, on river activities and related perspectives. From a policy perspective, it is believed that the preferred model for the County is to be supportive with tourism advertising and engagement, developing possible access points, renting space for ticket sales and related activities, and continued County regulatory roles involving permitting of river access and activities at County-owned access points. Development of a single, high profile, destination-based river access could be a long term consideration but is not seen as viable at this time as the future directions of this activity are not totally known, there is significant liability issues and the industry may not be at a scale to assist in supporting the capital funding for such a facility. A more diversified river access strategy is the current model being pursued by the County and is the preferred approach.

## Recommendation #37: River Access

- That the County of Brant continue its current **support, promotion and facilitation, and regulatory role for river access** activities involving County-owned access points, within its existing strategy and by-law/permitting process for both commercial and public uses of the Grand River and Nith River, **continue to monitor usage and facility needs**, and **liaise with river access operators on a regular basis** in support of the potential growth and economic impact of this growing tourism initiative.
- That the County of Brant continue to pursue **the development of a new river access point at the Syl Apps Community Centre** based on the River Access Concept (May 2016) and also review and **consider improvements to Penman's Dam river access**, based on the Demonstration Pilot Plan prepared for this Site as documented in the **Grand River Access Point Standards Manual & Pilot Design Plans**, to support the continued and increased use of the with adequate launching and landing space, and as a trailhead with potential for additional parking along Willow Street, facility needs (e.g. washrooms, storage, mapping of on-river routes and trail routes) and visitor information/wayfinding improvements.
- That the County of Brant continue to investigate and evaluate the potential for **improvements to other existing river access points**, and/or **development of additional river access points**, building upon the findings of the 2015 assessment summarized in Report No. PR-15-37 – **River Access Site Assessment**, based on the standards manual as documented in Report No. PR 15-38 – **Grand River Access Point Standards** and through continued and ongoing consultation with operators/outfitters, the Grand River Conservation Authority, adjacent municipalities located along the rivers, and other stakeholders and the public.

### 4.11 Natural Areas Management

County-owned natural areas include over 43 hectares of conservation land, most of which is not actively managed or maintained with trails or other facilities for public use. The Grand Valley Trail and the Grand River Conservation Authority Parks and Conservation Areas are local examples where opportunities for public access and enjoyment of natural areas is facilitated through appropriate levels of facility development while conserving sensitive ecological features, functions and processes within these areas. The abundance of natural open space areas on managed lands will continue to be a key defining feature and appeal to residents and visitors in the County of Brant.

For lands acquired by the County, the Operations Department is responsible for the management of natural areas. The Situational Analysis Report and this Master Plan incorporate Natural Areas in the Parkland Classification System to better recognize these areas as part of the parks and open space system.

Through the research and consultation undertaken in support of the Master Plan, related issues were identified related to the lack of natural areas management and public access, concerns about misuse and potential declining health of natural features, and required resources. Opportunities and considerations identified for the future involve trails development, passive recreation and nature appreciation, outdoor education and stewardship linked to conservation and related community health benefits. There is a need to establish direction for the use, maintenance and management of natural areas and to identify public access/trail opportunities in balance with conservation objectives.

The following projects and initiatives are recommended for natural areas management and public access and use opportunities.

### **Recommendation #38: Natural Areas Management**

- That the County of Brant should formally incorporate existing County-owned natural areas as part of the overall parks management umbrella and integrate these areas and any additional natural areas acquired or otherwise managed by the County as part of the parks and open space system through the **preparation of a Natural Areas Management Plan** to establish the following:
  - A complete inventory and mapping of County-owned natural areas;
  - A list of natural areas within the County of Brant that are not currently in public ownership;
  - With the primary objective of long term conservation, an evaluation and prioritization of natural areas including a review of:
    - Applicable planning policies (Official Plan, Area Plans, Zoning);
    - Size, habitat diversity, presence of habitat types that are unique or under-represented, or other notable ecological features;
    - Current condition of the natural area including magnitude of human impacts and adequacy of existing protection mechanisms and land use designations which may preclude development or site alteration (e.g. Provincially Significant Wetlands, woodlands, floodplain, etc.);
    - Management objectives for the area and related operating resource requirements and potential partnerships;
    - The scope of potential public access opportunities, relationship to the surrounding trails network, related benefits and required resources;
    - Outdoor educational opportunities and potential stewardship and engagement initiatives to get the community involved;
    - Linkage opportunities to other natural areas and habitats;

- Opportunities to negotiate conveyance of the natural area through the development process, land donation, conservation easements, direct purchase by the County or other means;
- If purchase is required, identify estimated costs and secure funding in annual budgets or through other means (e.g. provincial/federal grants).
- That the County of Brant should identify **sufficient operating budget, staffing and other resources** to carry out recommended **restoration and conservation/maintenance** based on the findings and direction of the Natural Areas Management Plan. This is a critical aspect of natural areas management and integration of these areas with parks.
- That the County of Brant should, where supported based on the findings of the Natural Areas Management Plan, consider opportunities to design and develop **trails within natural areas** based on the updated Trails Plan and consideration of the following:
  - Trails with minimal impacts and disturbance on the existing ecological features, with sensitivity to protected features and habitats;
  - Opportunities to incorporate interpretive signage for outdoor education;
  - Optimally locating trail access points and controls (gates, trailheads);
  - Ongoing and long-term maintenance.

#### 4.12 Trails and Cycling Routes

Trails are a significant recreational resource in Brant and have been developed by the County, volunteer organizations and the Grand River Conservation Authority. The Grand River, Nith River, former rail corridors and a variety of other routes offer a range of trail types, locations, distances and experiences, and some trails serve both recreational and active transportation functions. A series of on-road cycling routes is also identified within the County and these routes, as well as larger routes that cross into adjacent municipalities, are increasingly seen as important tourism resources.

Recognizing both the recreational and active transportation dimensions of trails and cycling routes, the County has completed and implemented components of both a Trails Master Plan (2010) and a Transportation Master Plan (2008 and 2016 update). The Recreation Master Plan builds upon, integrates and updates these initiatives through an updated Trails Plan that identifies key linkages and connections to create and expand a linked parks, open space and trails system and that resolve any gaps in the existing trails network. The updated Trails Plan is available as a companion document to the Recreation Master Plan, and should be used along with the Transportation Master Plan and engineering standards to guide future investments in trails and cycling infrastructure and supporting facilities involving trailheads, mapping and trails information/promotional materials, wayfinding and various types of other signage, trails surfacing, width, intended functions, uses/activities and other design and development parameters.

### Recommendation #39: Trails Plan

- That the County of Brant should adopt the updated **Trails Plan** as a working document, to be used and applied in conjunction within the overall framework of this Recreation Master Plan as well as the County's Official Plan and Transportation Master Plan to continue to guide the acquisition, planning, design and development of trails and cycling routes and infrastructure and management of existing and new trails and cycling infrastructure and related supports and amenities.

### 4.13 Recreation Programs

There are a wide range of recreation programs and activities available in the County of Brant, including those delivered by volunteer and not-for-profit groups and other community-based organizations, other service providers, and a significant array of programs delivered directly by the County. Many of the available services and programs are identified in the County's Community Services Guide issued twice annually corresponding to seasonal activities (Fall/Winter and Spring Summer). In addition to continuing to collect data to review, monitor and evaluate County programs in terms of participation levels, changing interests and demands, functional space and facility needs, feedback by participants and satisfaction levels, the following programming initiatives emerged from the Master Plan consultations and are recommended for further review and consideration.

### Recommendation #40: Recreation Programs

- That the County of Brant should **continually assess and monitor** whether any programs or services directly delivered by the County can be **delivered by the community or other service providers** and/or the private sector with or without County support or on a partnership basis, and in consideration of current and future needs, capacities, staffing and other resources required, community access particularly in high-need areas, and quality of programs and services, and with a view to avoiding an environment of competition with other service providers.
- That the County of Brant should consider consulting with local seniors organizations, seniors services and housing providers to assess interests and opportunities for establishing **additional seniors programming opportunities** in the County, including consideration of therapeutic activities, within the context and direction of the services delivery policies and direction of the Master Plan.
- That the County of Brant should explore potential opportunities for **new or expanded arts and culture programming** as a more significant element of the available program mix and offering.
- That the County of Brant should explore **additional outdoor programming** opportunities or combined indoor/outdoor programming, such as outdoor fitness, that

would expand the use of parks, trails and natural areas as part of the available recreation programs.

- That the County of Brant should ensure that all decision-making related to programs and services delivery by the County is made with **a full understanding of immediate and longer-term staffing and other resource requirements** to provide the necessary operational capacities for sustained delivery of the programs and services.
- That the County of Brant should further explore the **use of available online tools, mobile technology and social media** in marketing and promoting participation in recreation programs, providing for convenient methods for accessing program information and for registrations, and for obtaining feedback and reviews of program experiences and evaluation.
- That the County of Brant should review the impacts of travel distance on recreation program participation and **work with current and potential future transportation service providers** to explore potential strategies for offering convenient and affordable transportation to available recreation programs and services, and for ensuring easy access to information about how to travel to and from programs and services.

## 5 IMPLEMENTATION

### 5.1 Parks and Recreation Implementation Framework

The Implementation component of the Master Plan provides a preliminary indication of capital and operating resource requirements and timing for recommended action items identified from the Parks and Recreation Service Delivery Policies (s. 3), and Parks and Recreation Specific Initiatives (s. 4) of the Master Plan. Direction is also provided for tracking the progress of implementation and for reviewing and updating the Master Plan.

A number of current and emerging factors were identified during the research, consultation and development of this Recreation Master Plan that will impact its implementation and future outcomes. These are:

- The need for flexibility to respond effectively and in a timely manner to forthcoming changes including an aging population, the need for youth programming/facilities, municipal government responsibilities, aging facilities infrastructure, cultural diversity, healthcare, environmental and other factors;
- Evolving trends, standards and best practices affecting policies intended to direct the acquisition, design, development, promotion, use and maintenance of parks and recreation assets, infrastructure and programming; and,
- Capital and operating funding constraints that will continue to require County leadership and facilitation of community engagement and collaborative approaches as a basis to support a stronger and more sustainable community-based parks and recreation services delivery model, and the prioritization of activities and investments for the long term.

In this context, the recommended implementation program and related factors should be considered in the County's capital and operating forecasts and annual budgeting process. The actual timing, funding and directive to proceed with specific actions is subject to the results of those deliberations of and as authorized by Council. Availability of partnership and funding opportunities related to community fundraising, grant programs, joint ventures and other sources for specific action items may alter the timing and other details of said items.

In the event that changes to identified action items and/or new action items are identified, reference should be made to sections 2 and 3 of the Recreation Master Plan to ensure the changes are consistent with the Master Plan Foundation and Service Delivery Policies. The Situational Analysis Report should also be referenced as an information resource documenting the results of related research, consultation and analysis as well as trends, strategies and best practices.

### 5.2 Implementation Schedule

There are a number of recommendations that have direct associated capital costs and/or other resource requirements and related timing/scheduling considerations. These recommendations are summarized in the following **Implementation Schedule**, outlining the recommendation, the

potential funding and resource requirements and the proposed timing for implementation. The first three years of the Plan (2017 to 2019) are shown individually, followed by the next two years (2020 & 2021) aggregated, then the subsequent five year period (2022 to 2026) also aggregated, and finally recommendations that may not require implementation until beyond 10 years. This aggregation reflects that the specific timing of actions recommended for implementation beyond the next 2 to 3 years should be determined based on further information generated from earlier initiatives (e.g. plans for river access) and/or as needed based on related triggering events (e.g. acquisition of additional parkland as new development occurs).

As identified in the Schedule, there are some recommendations that will have capital costs or other potential resource requirements that are to be determined (TBD) and in some cases this will be identified as a result of further more comprehensive surveys and evaluations, for example:

- The proposed **Parks Inventory and Renewal / Rehabilitation Program**, that will identify the need for park renewal and rehabilitation/lifecycle costs related to existing parks;
- The proposed **Natural Areas Management Plan** that will identify the potential need for capital investment in acquiring specific natural areas and/or improving public access opportunities for compatible forms of recreation, and related operational considerations to effectively conserve and manage County-owned natural lands on an ongoing basis;
- The recommended comprehensive **Feasibility Study / Business Plan for Syl Apps** and for **municipal gymnasium(s)** that may be used to set and prioritize strategic direction for the County's existing indoor recreation facilities.

There are also capital costs associated with new park development as a result of residential development, particularly in Paris and St. George. The Master Plan identifies a new neighbourhood park each year for the next 10 years. These developments could have total capital costs in the order of \$2,000,000 to \$3,000,000 of which as much as 90% could be funded by Development Charges (DC) resulting in a potential net, non-DC capital expenditure of \$200,000 to \$300,000 over the next ten years.

Where possible, the estimated capital expenditures in the Master Plan (including the net non-DC eligible cost for park development) are identified for the duration of the Master Plan. In many cases the capital costs for specific implementation items will arise out of the further studies and more detailed planning and feasibility analysis recommended in this Master Plan and as such the related capital costs are noted as to be determined (TBD).

IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE									
Recommendation	Potential Funding / Resource Requirements	Year(s)							
		2017	2018	2019	Up to 5 Years 2020-21	Next 5 Years 2022-26	10 Year Total	Beyond 10 Years	
<b>#7 Functional assessment initiative</b> (s. 3.2)	<i>Staff time</i>	✓	Ongoing					TBD	Review / update
▪ Prioritize staffing and services									
▪ Evaluate collaborative approaches									
▪ Establish organizational model									
▪ Periodic assessments and discussions with community service providers	<i>TBD – staff time, event space, incidentals, etc.</i>								
<b>#8 Engage voluntary sector in services delivery</b> (s. 3.3)	<i>TBD – assess potential sponsors/ community partners</i>	Ongoing					TBD	Review / update	
▪ Provision of common supports	<i>Staff time / TBD</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
▪ Multi-tiered recognition program	<i>TBD – staff time, awards/ recognition/promotional, etc.</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓			
▪ Host community services provider forums	<i>TBD – staff time, event space, speaking fees, incidentals, etc.</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓			
▪ Sustain online resources library	<i>Staff time / TBD</i>	Ongoing							
▪ Establish working group	<i>Staff time / TBD</i>		✓						
<b>#9 Technology integration in customer services and services planning</b> (s. 3.4)	<i>TBD – software/hardware, online presence, mobile technology</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	TBD	Review / update	
▪ Incorporate parks and recreation with Corporate Technology Plans	<i>TBD – software/hardware, online presence, mobile technology</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			

IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE								
Recommendation	Potential Funding / Resource Requirements	Year(s)						
		2017	2018	2019	Up to 5 Years 2020-21	Next 5 Years 2022-26	10 Year Total	Beyond 10 Years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marketing and promotion via social media, one-stop information portal</li> </ul>	<i>TBD – software/hardware, online presence, mobile technology</i>	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	TBD	Review / update
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review available data sources and online feedback sources/mechanisms</li> </ul>	<i>Staff time / TBD</i>	-	Ongoing					
<b>#11 User fee reviews</b> (s. 3.6)	<i>Staff time / TBD \$10,000 - \$15,000 for comprehensive study</i>	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	\$20,000 - \$30,000	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual reviews</li> </ul>	<i>Staff time / TBD</i>	-	✓	✓	✓	✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Five-year comprehensive assessments</li> </ul>	<i>\$10,000 - \$15,000 for comprehensive study</i>	-	-	-	✓	-		
<b>#12 Policy development initiatives</b> (s. 3.7)	<i>Staff time / TBD</i>	✓	✓	✓	As needed / ongoing		TBD	Review / update
<b>#13 Data collection, analysis, evaluation and performance measurement program</b> (s. 3.8)	<i>Staff time / TBD</i>	✓	✓	✓	Ongoing		TBD	Review / update
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comprehensive review of activities</li> </ul>			Ongoing		✓			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reporting of results</li> </ul>			✓	✓	Annually			
<b>#15 Individual participant financial support</b> (s. 3.10)	<i>Staff time / TBD</i>	✓	✓	✓	TBD		TBD	Review / update
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assistance program(s)</li> </ul>	<i>Current – increase based on growth</i>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reporting</li> </ul>	<i>Staff time / TBD</i>				Annually			

IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE								
Recommendation	Potential Funding / Resource Requirements	Year(s)						
		2017	2018	2019	Up to 5 Years 2020-21	Next 5 Years 2022-26	10 Year Total	Beyond 10 Years
<b>#18 Community use of schools</b> (s. 3.13)	<i>Staff time / TBD</i>	Ongoing					TBD	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to work with local School Boards, maintain agreements</li> </ul>								
<b>#19 Tourism integration</b> (s. 3.14)	<i>Staff time / TBD</i>	Ongoing					TBD	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrate tourism considerations and assessments with parks and recreation planning, communications, initiatives and investments</li> </ul>	<i>Staff time / TBD</i>	Ongoing					TBD	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incorporate special event flexibility and functionality in parks and facilities, where appropriate and feasible</li> </ul>	<i>Staff time / TBD</i>	Ongoing					TBD	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with community organizations and special event operators</li> </ul>	<i>Staff time / TBD</i>	Ongoing					TBD	✓
<b>#20 Affiliation Policy</b> (s. 3.15)	<i>See below</i>	See below					TBD	Review / update
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Amend affiliation policy to update eligibility criteria and benefits, support for emerging groups</li> </ul>	<i>Staff time / TBD for initial amendment and periodic reviews, at least every 5 years</i>	✓				✓	TBD	Review / update
<b>#21 Advisory Committees</b> (s. 3.16)	<i>See below</i>	See below					TBD	Review / update
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integration / re-structuring / re-orientation of Parks and Recreation Committees as Task Force(s) with new terms of reference</li> </ul>	<i>Staff time / TBD</i>	-	✓	Ongoing			TBD	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustain Tourism Advisory Committee</li> </ul>	<i>Staff time / TBD</i>	Ongoing					TBD	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Periodic reviews of Terms of Reference</li> </ul>	<i>Staff time / TBD, every 2 years</i>	-	✓		✓	✓	TBD	✓

IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE									
Recommendation	Potential Funding / Resource Requirements	Year(s)						10 Year Total	Beyond 10 Years
		2017	2018	2019	Up to 5 Years 2020-21	Next 5 Years 2022-26			
<b>#22 to #25 Parks, Open Space and Trails Policies and Strategies</b> (s. 3.17)	<i>See below</i>	See below						TBD	Review / update
▪ Adopt Parkland Classification System	-	✓	Ongoing application						
▪ Maximize supply and acquisition of suitable parkland from development dedications as per Official Plan, By-law under Planning Act	<i>Part of Planning process</i>	Ongoing							
▪ Review and update Official Plan policies for parks, open space and trails and Parkland Dedication / Cash-in-Lieu of Parkland Dedication By-law based on Master Plan policy recommendations	<i>Part of next Official Plan Review / By-law Reviews</i>	TBD based on timing of Official Plan and By-law Reviews							
▪ Pursue acquisition of natural areas (see also Recommendation #38)	<i>Part of Planning process and/or targeted acquisition</i>	TBD based on opportunities and priorities for targeted acquisition							
▪ Review and consider opportunities for potential surplus parkland based on recommended criteria	<i>Staff time / TBD</i>	✓	Review periodically (e.g. with Official Plan Reviews)						
▪ Review/consider potential community fundraising, joint ventures, partnerships to acquire parkland, coordination and integration with schools			Ongoing						
▪ Adopt Design and Development Process, policies, roles/responsibilities			Ongoing application to projects						
▪ Assess and monitor operational resource needs		Ongoing							
▪ Review of Park Use By-law based on Master Plan directions as a guide		✓	Review periodically						
▪ Review parks planning procedures for integration of operational considerations			As needed / ongoing						

IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE								
Recommendation	Potential Funding / Resource Requirements	Year(s)						
		2017	2018	2019	Up to 5 Years 2020-21	Next 5 Years 2022-26	10 Year Total	Beyond 10 Years
#26 Parks Inventory and Renewal/ Rehabilitation Program (s. 4.2) – see also #27, #29, #30, #33, #37, #38	Potential partial DC funding (where additional capacity is created with improvements), parks-related reserves; community fundraising; grant programs; partnerships and sponsorships, etc.	✓	Ongoing				TBD	✓
	▪ Parks Inventory Database Staff time – field work, photography, GIS, as-built documentation, mapping, etc.		Maintain / update as needed					
▪ Park Renewal and Rehabilitation Program	TBD based on renewal and rehabilitation needs / asset management	Ongoing						
▪ Parks Tree Inventory	\$25,000 - \$30,000; explore potential GRCA partnership	-	✓	-	-	✓	\$25,000 to \$30,000	✓
▪ Parks Tree Planting and Tree Replacement Program	TBD based on tree inventory	-	✓	Ongoing			TBD	✓
#27 Specific Park Improvements (s. 4.2) – see also #29, #30, #33, #37, #38	TBD / as outlined above and in related recommendations	See below				TBD	Review / update	
#28 New Park Development (s. 4.2)	TBD / as outlined above and in related recommendations, see below	See below				TBD	Review / update	
▪ Review/monitor per capita Parkland provision levels	Staff time / review annually	Ongoing				TBD	Review / update	

IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE								
Recommendation	Potential Funding / Resource Requirements	Year(s)						
		2017	2018	2019	Up to 5 Years 2020-21	Next 5 Years 2022-26	10 Year Total	Beyond 10 Years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Land acquisition for expanded/new Destination Parks (see also related facility recommendations)</li> </ul>	<i>\$0.7 to \$1.0 million for parkland acquisition and general improvements (excluding facilities); parks-related reserves; community fundraising; grant programs; partnerships and sponsorships, etc.</i>	<b>Opportunity-based / Ongoing and/or Targeted Acquisition based on Detailed Planning and Facility Needs</b>					<b>\$0.7 million to \$1.0 million</b>	<b>Review / update</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Land acquisition and development of expanded/new Community and Neighbourhood Parks</li> </ul>	<i>Dedication from development or use of cash-in-lieu of parkland to acquire park sites; \$125,000/ha to \$185,000/ha to develop acquired parkland; consider developer-build park opportunities and partnerships; up to 90% of capital costs for new park developments may be eligible for DC funding</i>	<b>As needed with new development in Paris and St. George - 1 new park site each year, on average (see s. 4.2 and Situational Analysis Report)</b>					<b>\$2.0 to \$3.0 million</b>	<b>Review / update</b>
<b>#29 Sports Fields (s. 4.3)</b>	<i>See below</i>	<b>See below</b>						<b>Review / update</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor and assess need for additional sports field capacity</li> </ul>	<i>Staff time / TBD</i>	<b>Ongoing, annual reviews</b>					<b>TBD</b>	<b>Review / update</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop additional soccer/multi-use sports field capacity with improvements to existing soccer fields and new fields and consolidate fields / supporting facilities to support tournaments</li> </ul>	<i>\$3.5 to \$4.5 million for existing field improvements and 2-4 new mini pitches, two new lit full-size fields; review capital funding opportunities with sports groups; partnerships; community fundraising; potential DC funding up to 90% for additional capacity</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>\$3.5 to \$4.5 million</b>	<b>Review / update</b>

IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE								
Recommendation	Potential Funding / Resource Requirements	Year(s)						
		2017	2018	2019	Up to 5 Years 2020-21	Next 5 Years 2022-26	10 Year Total	Beyond 10 Years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pete Lavoie Ball Park redevelopment</li> </ul>	<i>Project costs and funding as per detailed plan approved in May 2017</i>	✓	✓		-			As per approved plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lighting of additional existing ball diamond(s) at Green Lane Sports Complex plus lighting replacement at Mount Pleasant ball diamond</li> </ul>	<i>\$225,000 to \$375,000; review capital funding opportunities with sports groups; partnerships; community fundraising; potential DC funding up to 90% for additional capacity</i>	-	-	✓	✓	✓		\$0.225 to \$0.375 million
<b>#30 Playgrounds (s. 4.4)</b>	<i>See below</i>	See below						Review / update
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update Asset Management Plan to include playgrounds</li> </ul>	<i>\$5,000 for lifecycle analysis and asset value estimates, funding strategy; \$2,500 for five-year update</i>		✓		-	Review after 5 years		\$7,500
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Playground safety audits and rehabilitation/replacements to sustain and enhance existing/planned locations</li> </ul>	<i>\$50,000 to \$75,000 annually for audits and replacements/ rehabilitation</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		\$0.5 to \$0.75 million
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New playground development and resolve existing gaps</li> </ul>	<i>See cost estimates for new Community and Neighbourhood Park development (#28); \$50,000 to \$100,000 to resolve gaps</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		\$50,000 to \$75,000 (see also #28)
<b>#31 Aquatic Facilities (s. 4.5)</b>	<i>See below</i>	See below						Review / update
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustain Paris Community Pool, monitor program participation, usage and use feedback, maximize access</li> </ul>	<i>Staff time / TBD based on asset management, program and facility needs / enhancements</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		TBD

IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE								
Recommendation	Potential Funding / Resource Requirements	Year(s)						
		2017	2018	2019	Up to 5 Years 2020-21	Next 5 Years 2022-26	10 Year Total	Beyond 10 Years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Addition of bike racks at Paris Community Pool</li> </ul>	<i>\$2,500 to \$5,000, potential partial DC funding</i>	-	✓		-	-	\$2,500 to \$5,000	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review potential transportations service options to indoor aquatic facilities</li> </ul>	<i>Staff time / TBD</i>	-	✓	✓	-	✓	TBD	Review / update
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor / assess indoor aquatic facility opportunities, partnerships, engage private sector</li> </ul>	<i>Staff time / TBD \$10,000 to \$15,000 in 3 to 5+ years if partnership emerges / to engage private sector; potential partial DC funding</i>	Ongoing			✓	✓	\$10,000 to \$15,000	Review / update
<b>#32 Arenas and Community Centres (s. 4.6)</b>	<i>See below</i>	See below						Review / update
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collect and monitor participant data and usage for ice and multi-use/meeting rooms, optimize scheduling, user groups consultation</li> </ul>	<i>Staff time / TBD</i>	Ongoing, annual reviews					TBD	Review / update
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustain existing arenas, undertake asset management, marketing, promotional activities to maximize use and adapt facilities to functional needs</li> </ul>	<i>Staff time / TBD based on asset management, program and facility needs / enhancements</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	TBD	Review / update
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expansion of indoor ice capacity if warranted, aligned with asset management activities (e.g. twinning of SDCC or replacement of single pad with two new ice pads)</li> </ul>	<i>TBD – review in 5 to 10 years (\$20,000 for condition assessment / study), align with asset management for any major capital maintenance or replacement/lifecycle needs; review funding with sports groups; partnerships; community fundraising; potential partial DC funding</i>	-	-	-	-	✓	\$20,000	>\$35 million

IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE									
Recommendation	Potential Funding / Resource Requirements	Year(s)							
		2017	2018	2019	Up to 5 Years 2020-21	Next 5 Years 2022-26	10 Year Total	Beyond 10 Years	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider potential re-purposing and additional programming/facility opportunities at Burford Community Centre hall</li> </ul>	<i>\$100,000 to \$250,000 for program and space review, design, renovation; review funding with user groups; partnerships; community fundraising; potential partial DC funding</i>	-	-	✓	✓	-	\$0.1 to \$0.25 million	Review / update	
<b>#33 Syl Apps Community Centre (s. 4.6)</b>	<i>See below</i>	See below							Review / update
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feasibility / Business Plan for multi-use recreation / event facility / community hub / indoor and outdoor opportunities</li> </ul>	<i>\$50,000 to \$75,000 for plan, program and space review and concepts, business case / financial plan / partnerships</i>	-	✓	✓	-	-	\$50,000 to \$75,000		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facility redevelopment / renovation / investment and positioning</li> </ul>	<i>TBD based on Feasibility / Business Plan</i>	-	-	-	✓	✓	TBD		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor and sustain indoor turf usage and engage with indoor turf user groups and City of Brantford re potential full-size indoor regional turf facility development / partnership</li> </ul>	<i>TBD in conjunction with above; \$25,000 for user groups and City engagement, facility planning and initial feasibility review / concept</i>	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	\$25,000 / TBD for facility		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional indoor turf facility investment and positioning</li> </ul>	<i>TBD based on above</i>	-	-	✓	✓	✓	TBD		
<b>#34 Municipal Gymnasium (s. 4.7)</b>	<i>See below</i>	See below							Review / update
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feasibility / Business Plan for gymnasium facilities</li> </ul>	<i>\$50,000 for plan</i>	-	✓	-	-	-	\$50,000		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gymnasium facilities investment and positioning</li> </ul>	<i>TBD based on above, \$3.5 million per 2016-2020 capital forecast</i>	-	-	✓	✓	-	\$3.5 million		

IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE									
Recommendation	Potential Funding / Resource Requirements	Year(s)							
		2017	2018	2019	Up to 5 Years 2020-21	Next 5 Years 2022-26	10 Year Total	Beyond 10 Years	
<b>#35 Community Halls</b> (s. 4.8)	<i>See below</i>	<b>See below</b>							<b>Review / update</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facility and community-based program sustainability reviews and development of operational models and uses</li> </ul>	<i>Staff time / TBD; 2016-2020 capital budget for community hall upgrades \$50,000/year</i>	<b>Ongoing, annual reviews</b>					<b>\$0.5 million</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish Scotland Community Centre community-based programming</li> </ul>	<i>Staff time / TBD</i>	✓	<b>Ongoing, annual reviews</b>				<b>TBD</b>		
<b>#36 Other Recreation Facilities</b> (s. 4.9)	<i>See below</i>	<b>See below</b>							<b>Review / update</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Track/monitor use, future needs for picnic shelters and amphitheatre</li> </ul>	<i>Staff time / TBD based on asset management, program and facility needs / monitoring</i>	<b>Ongoing, annual reviews</b>					<b>TBD</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incorporate full range of parks/ recreation facilities in Asset Management Plan</li> </ul>	<i>Incorporate with overall Asset Management Plan update, define asset management needs and funding strategy</i>	<b>TBD based on timing of overall Asset Management Plan updates</b>					<b>TBD</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further develop extreme sport opportunities (e.g. BMX, mountain biking, new/redeveloped/expanded skate park(s) where needed)</li> </ul>	<i>\$200,000; potential partial DC funding for new/expanded facilities; community fundraising and partnerships</i>	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>\$0.2 million</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional multi-use pads / outdoor basketball courts and outdoor ice rink(s)</li> </ul>	<i>See cost estimates for parks renewal and new park development (#26, #28); \$250,000 for other locations (e.g. ice rink in/near Paris downtown area)</i>	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>\$0.25 million</b>		

IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE									
Recommendation	Potential Funding / Resource Requirements	Year(s)							
		2017	2018	2019	Up to 5 Years 2020-21	Next 5 Years 2022-26	10 Year Total	Beyond 10 Years	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paris Lawn Bowling Clubhouse accessibility and structural review, consider re-developed lawn bowling facilities as multi-use / year-round or integrate with other multi-use facilities</li> </ul>	<i>\$5,000 to 10,000 for structure review (and/or incorporate with broader County accessibility and building/structure reviews); improvement costs and funding opportunities TBD based on review</i>	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	\$5,000 to \$10,000 / TBD	Review / update	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional leash-free dog park location(s) with priority to community-based proposals for self-supporting operations</li> </ul>	<i>\$15,000 to \$25,000 depending on community-based proposals and opportunities, type and level of facility development</i>	-	-	-	✓	-	\$15,000 to \$25,000		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tennis program / capacity review and court improvements (e.g. lighting at Paris tennis courts, potential redevelopment or repurposing of Burford tennis courts)</li> </ul>	<i>\$15,000 to \$25,000; review funding opportunities and strategy with Tennis Clubs and Grand Erie District School Board; potential partial DC funding</i>	-	-	✓	✓	-	\$15,000 to \$25,000		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multi-functional program space for seniors, adult and youth programs</li> </ul>	<i>TBD - integrate with multi-use facilities planning, design and asset management planning and improvements/renewal</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	TBD		
<b>#37 River Access</b> (s. 4.10)	<i>See below</i>	See below							Review / update
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue role in support, promotion, facilitation and regulation of river access, monitor usage and facility needs, liase with access operators</li> </ul>	<i>Staff time / TBD</i>	Ongoing, annual reviews					TBD		

IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE								
Recommendation	Potential Funding / Resource Requirements	Year(s)						
		2017	2018	2019	Up to 5 Years 2020-21	Next 5 Years 2022-26	10 Year Total	Beyond 10 Years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New river access point at Syl Apps Community Centre, improvements Penman's Dam river access, potential other access point improvements and new access point location(s)</li> </ul>	<i>Staff time / TBD; 2016-2020 capital budget for river access \$100,000</i>	-	✓	✓	✓	-	\$0.1 million	Review / update
<b>#38 Natural Areas Management</b> (s. 4.11)	<i>See below</i>	See below						Review / update
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare Natural Areas Management Plan</li> </ul>	<i>\$50,000 to \$75,000; review potential community and conservation authority partnerships and funding opportunities</i>	-	✓	✓	-	-	\$50,000 to \$75,000	Review / update
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prioritize Natural Areas acquisition opportunities / linkages and determine potential public access opportunities</li> </ul>	<i>TBD based on Natural Areas Management Plan</i>	-	-	✓	✓	✓	TBD	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and allocate sufficient operational resources for restoration and conservation</li> </ul>	<i>TBD based on Natural Areas Management Plan</i>	-	-	✓	✓	✓	TBD	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trail development within natural areas</li> </ul>	<i>TBD based on Natural Areas Management Plan; see also Trails Plan (#39)</i>	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	TBD	
<b>#39 Trails Plan</b> (s. 4.12)	<i>\$0.5 to \$1.5 million / TBD based on detailed designs, land dedications and trail construction by development; review funding with user groups; partnerships; community fundraising; potential partial DC funding; integrate with roads projects</i>	See below					\$0.5 to \$1.5 million	Review / update

IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE								
Recommendation	Potential Funding / Resource Requirements	Year(s)						
		2017	2018	2019	Up to 5 Years 2020-21	Next 5 Years 2022-26	10 Year Total	Beyond 10 Years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design and implementation of previously planned multi-use trails, bike lanes/loops and on-road trails - see Trails Plan (map)</li> </ul>	<i>TBD / see above</i>	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	See above	Review / update
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cambridge to Paris Rail Trail access point and connection from East River Road at Blue Lake Road</li> </ul>		-	-	✓	✓	✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Green Lane Sports Complex trail head and trail connection to Cambridge to Paris Rail Trail</li> </ul>		-	-	✓	✓	✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nith Peninsula natural trails, mountain biking trail, connection with Paris Lions Park</li> </ul>		-	-	✓	✓	✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Watt's Pond trail / loop</li> </ul>		-	-	✓	✓	✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Burford Lion's Centennial Park potential trail extension</li> </ul>		-	-	-	-	✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trailhead and amenities at Mount Pleasant Park for the L.E. &amp; N. and T.H. &amp; B. Trails</li> </ul>		-	✓	✓	-	-		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential trailhead and amenities in Onondaga for Grand Valley Trail</li> </ul>		-	-	-	✓	✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jacob's Woods trail and/or mountain biking/BMX trail/track</li> </ul>		-	-	-	✓	✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential equestrian trailhead development – Mount Pleasant Nature Park</li> </ul>		-	-	-	✓	✓		

IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE								
Recommendation	Potential Funding / Resource Requirements	Year(s)						
		2017	2018	2019	Up to 5 Years 2020-21	Next 5 Years 2022-26	10 Year Total	Beyond 10 Years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Burford Community Centre – perimeter loop</li> </ul>	<i>TBD / see above</i>	-	✓	✓	✓	-	See above	Review / update
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Powerline Road Trail (Paris Road to Highway 24)</li> </ul>		-	-	-	✓	✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Rest Acres Road Multi-use trail</li> </ul>		-	-	✓	✓	✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Grandville / Cleaver Road / Powerline Road trail link</li> </ul>		-	-	✓	✓	✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Onondaga trail link to Six Nations / Haldimand County</li> </ul>		-	-	✓	✓	✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Beverley Street West-Riverview Highlands St. George trail development</li> </ul>		-	-	-	✓	✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Potential trailhead/facilities along Willow Street in Paris with Penman's Dam river access point improvements</li> </ul>		-	✓	✓	✓	-		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ New/updated trails and cycling route information map / website / promotional material, integration with tourism marketing; educational initiatives (e.g. 'share the road', cycling safety, etc.)</li> </ul>		-	✓	-	-	✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Unified trails signage, identification and wayfinding, regulation / by-laws</li> </ul>		-	✓	✓	-	✓		

IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE								
Recommendation	Potential Funding / Resource Requirements	Year(s)						
		2017	2018	2019	Up to 5 Years 2020-21	Next 5 Years 2022-26	10 Year Total	Beyond 10 Years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integration of on-road cycling and pedestrian facilities with urban and rural road redevelopment and asset management, cycling amenities (bike lockers, bike racks/parking, rest stops, bicycle repair stations) – as per Transportation Master Plan, see Trails Plan (map)</li> </ul>	<i>TBD / see above</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	See above	Review / update
<b>#40 Recreation Programs (s. 4.13)</b>	<i>Staff time / TBD for specific programs and services, define and evaluate staffing and resource needs</i>	Ongoing, annual reviews					TBD	Review / update
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continually assess and monitor County of Brant programs and services and opportunities for community-based or other service providers</li> </ul>								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess interests and opportunities for additional seniors programming, arts and culture programming and outdoor programming</li> </ul>								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with transportation service providers to enhance program access</li> </ul>								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation of community development model</li> </ul>								

### 5.3 Operating Impacts

The operating impacts of the Master Plan implementation will include the following:

- Recommendations associated with policies and strategies that need to be developed and integrated with current practices – many of these will not have an immediate or directly measurable financial impact on operating or capital costs;
- Opportunities for shared costs accruing from proposed partnership, joint venture and community support initiatives that may result in reduced capital and operating costs for the County of Brant and offer new opportunities for recreation services; and,
- Policy-driven reallocation of some Department resources that may create some efficiencies.

The recommendations which will include direct operating cost implications include:

- Enhanced community engagement and the facilitation / leadership role undertaken by the County of Brant has the potential to increase revenues through facility bookings and thereby reduce net operating costs.
- The proposed program, services and facility user fees assessments may result in net revenue increases (including potentially capital cost surcharges), thereby reducing net operating costs.
- New park development as needed will require some additional operational resources (e.g. staffing, equipment) and maintenance expenses.
- New or improved indoor and outdoor recreation facilities such as a redeveloped Syl Apps Community Centre, municipal gymnasium facilities and sports fields will have associated ongoing operational costs associated with staffing, maintenance and utility costs, while providing opportunities to create operational efficiencies through facility design and sustainability measures, consolidated facilities and updating/replacement of aged facilities. For sports fields, the potential introduction of an artificial turf field would have reduced annual operating costs compared with natural turf.
- Additional trails developed as well as increased service to existing trails (such as winter maintenance) to support both year-round recreational use and active transportation would require some additional annual maintenance. This produces off-setting benefits related to supporting active and healthy lifestyles and reducing travel demands by car.
- Natural Areas acquired by the County of Brant require ongoing management and conservation activities which vary based on the type and sensitivity of natural area and level of public access. The health of Natural Areas and the environmental benefits offer several cost benefits related to “ecosystem services”, reducing hard infrastructure costs for drainage/stormwater management, water filtration, and basic life support systems (clean air, water, land, etc.).
- If additional programs and facilities are developed as a result of an identified need and feasible business case, they will have associated operating costs which may be offset by related revenues / user fees.

Operating cost impacts are an important aspect of the Master Plan and they will evolve on an incremental basis as recommendations are implemented. Many of the policy recommendations, particularly those related to parkland dedication and community and partnership support may result in reduced costs and increased revenues. The overall effect on operating costs is not anticipated to be a significant constraint on the implementation of Master Plan recommendations, but need to be assessed within the limitations of the operating budget of the County of Brant. These costs need to be balanced against the County's objective to invest in and support a broad array of parks and recreation facilities and services to serve the diverse community needs.

#### **5.4 Master Plan Review**

The Recreation Master Plan is a living document and as such reflects the current and anticipated operating environment. Over time, unanticipated changes will necessitate revision of the Master Plan. The following Master Plan review process is proposed to deal with these changes.

##### **Recommendation: Master Plan Review Process**

- That the Master Plan be **updated annually**, specifically the **implementation components**, in order to maintain a current listing of capital and operating initiatives and as a progress tracking tool for staff and Council, and to support information updates to the community.
- That at the **fifth anniversary** of the plan, **planning sessions / workshops** be held to review more comprehensively the recommendations with respect to changes in the fiscal, demographic, environmental, and legislative operating environment. Modifications to the plan may be made to reflect changing municipal strategic priorities and the impact of recommendations previously adopted.
- That at the **tenth anniversary**, a **Master Plan Update** be prepared to assess the direction of the plan relative to municipal key strategic objectives and determine if changes in the operating environment require changes in the plan's direction.