

CITY OF KITCHENER

**VOLUME II
LEISURE FACILITIES
MASTER PLAN**



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

In the late fall of 2003, the City of Kitchener initiated the development of a Leisure Facilities Master Plan. A need for this Plan was prompted by the fact that the last Plan had been completed in 1991 and had served the City well in guiding its investments in Parks and Leisure Services. Also, the city continued to experience significant growth, new major leisure facility initiatives continued to be suggested by the community and the Department of Community Services, and other trends and leisure services considerations continued to emerge actively within the operating environment.

The City of Kitchener has had a long history of developing strategic parks and recreation plans as a basis for their long-term investments in and implementation of leisure services delivery strategies. A major initiative was completed 1976 which was one of the first Parks and Recreation Master Plans undertaken in the province. The next generation of long term planning for leisure facilities and services was completed in 1991. After thirteen years of building on this Plan, a need for a third generation long-term plan for leisure facilities was identified.

The focus of the 2004 planning initiative was on leisure facilities in terms of recreation, arts and culture, sportsfields, trails and related considerations as they involved facilities. Plans for open space, neighbourhood parks and related components, along with cemeteries and golf courses were to be developed via other processes. Parks recommendations focused on venues at the District Park classification level and above. The Plan's recommendations are primarily identified for the 2005 to 2014 period with some beyond that point.

1.2 Background Research

The first phase of the Leisure Facilities Master Plan involved a comprehensive research-based work program for which the inputs, analyses and results are available under a separate cover entitled Research Report for the City of Kitchener Leisure Facilities Master Plan. The conclusions and strategic themes are contained in Appendix I of this volume. The research phase involved the following key inputs as a basis for the Leisure Facilities Master Plan's development:

- A population profile and projections review, a community development profile and related community development perspectives.

- Current participation profiles, facility utilization considerations, etc.
- Review of relevant planning, policy and related strategic and policy documents and materials from both the City and the Region.
- A 300 unit random selection survey of Kitchener household representatives focusing on participation patterns, future perspectives, awareness and value ratings and other inputs.
- Some twenty-five focus groups, interviews and public meetings involving over 200 community and organized group representatives soliciting their input on the strengths and weaknesses of the leisure facilities and service available, the services delivery model, future perspectives and needs, etc.
- A financial review of operating costs and the City's ten-year capital forecast for leisure facilities.
- A facilities inventory, along with a Building Condition Study of twenty-five selected leisure facilities.
- Trends analysis related to leisure services, delivery models, etc.
- Other key inputs and assessments

1.3 Leisure Facilities Master Plan Development and Format

The Research Report was used as a basis for the development of a series of leisure facility strategy alternatives and perspectives. The Steering Committee and the Senior Department Management Team, along with representatives from the Planning Department participated in a day long workshop to assess the research outcomes, the facility development perspectives and investment strategies. Results of this session were utilized as a further basis for the development of the first draft of the Leisure Facilities Master Plan for the City of Kitchener which has been reviewed and updated through two Steering Committee sessions and other inputs.

The recommendations within the City of Kitchener's Leisure Facilities Master Plan have been developed on three levels, moving from strategic foundation through to specific initiatives:

- **Level 1 – Plan Foundation** – Section 3.0 provides the philosophical and conceptual basis of the Plan via a Vision, Mission, Principles and Values and Goals.
- **Level 2 – Leisure Services Policies and Delivery Strategies** – Section 4.0, focus on establishing a policy foundation for the City of Kitchener's development, delivery and evaluation of leisure services, as well as the variable delivery approaches that could be utilized by and participated in by the City of Kitchener.
- **Level 3 – Specific Leisure Facility Initiatives** – Section 5.0 identifies actions, investments and approaches that are proposed to be undertaken by the City of Kitchener over the next fifteen years.

This document is the Leisure Facilities Master Plan. It was presented to Committee of Council on January 25, 2005. It results from the Background Research Report inputs and analysis, staff review meetings, two community consultations sessions held in November 2004 at the Kitchener Memorial Auditorium, further meetings and input from community groups in December 2004 and January 2005 and a final public meeting held January 13, 2005 at the Victoria Park Pavilion.

2.0 STRATEGIC THEMES

From the Research Report, a series of conclusions and strategic themes were developed that established a foundation upon which the Leisure Facilities Master Plan was based. The conclusions are available in the Research Report. The following material represents the key strategic themes that emerged from the conclusions and research phase for the project.

.1 Facilities and Parks

- Continuing investment in community centres as the primary community-focused leisure services delivery strategy, augmented by school, church and other community-based facilities.
- Preparing long-term strategies for the development of major facilities in regards to arenas and indoor pools that may need renewal, repositioning, enhanced capacity, etc.
- Development and distribution of sportsfields, their maintenance and ancillary park development initiatives for the more predominant sportsfields in light of changing user expectations, registration trends, etc. in regards to soccer, baseball, football, etc.
- Achieving a balance between facility rehabilitation / renewal and new facility development, to protect and better utilize past investments.
- On-going development and intensification of the community trail system in support of a changing leisure activities patterns, as well as a transportation resource.
- Developing stronger multi-user / multi-purpose facility development initiatives that address both enhanced user benefits and economies of scale.

.2 Segment / Target Populations and Servicing Approaches

- Potentially developing outdoor facilities for specialized / targeted leisure activities, such as cricket, field hockey, Nordic activities, rowing and canoeing, on a regional or multi-municipality basis.
- Developing facilities, operational plans and policies that support inclusiveness for all age groups, abilities, etc.

- Determining the extent of a transition strategy in regards to teen and senior services that may be resulting from demographic, expectation and other changes.
- Continuing to expand the integration of health, education, social and community / leisure services.
- Developing strategies that respond to key demographic shifts in terms of aging; multi-culturalism; family definitions and needs; targeted senior government policies, such as preschool and early years development; and other initiatives / changes.
- Ensuring adequate ice resources for changing user profiles relative to women's ice use, adaptations for disabled ice users and changing adult user patterns, such as masters skating programs, etc.
- Determining the right focus and service delivery approaches / mix in support of downtown and central neighbourhood redevelopment and new types of inner-city residential formats and profiles.

.3 Services Delivery Strategies and Assessments

- Ascertaining the need, ability and will to examine more regional oriented approaches, especially in terms of facility provisioning strategies and servicing groups that have broader than a one municipality mandate and/or require a larger market base to be sustainable.
- Determining the role, potential and the enhanced utilization strategies in regards to school facilities in the leisure services delivery model.
- Defining and identifying the economic potential of major city-wide and regional facilities in terms of role, expectations, potential and realignments.
- Integration of key site-based Master Plans that have evolved over the last number of years, as well as putting increased emphasis on the Grand River Corridor and stream corridors as open space and leisure resources.

.4 Community and Leisure Services Capacity Development

- Identifying what partnerships work, have the best outcomes and applications in Kitchener and how partnerships can be further utilized to expand and deepen the leisure services delivery opportunities.
- Developing creative capital and operation funding models that both respond to the enhanced sustainability of leisure organizations and facilities, as well as supporting population growth and changing user requirements and trends.
- Development of supports and policy perspectives in regards to volunteer development, recognition, training, risk management, etc. as a primary resource and role within the leisure services delivery model in Kitchener.
- Development of marketing, communications, technology and other capacities to support awareness, education / value and other key dimensions of leisure participation encouragement, benefits-based approaches, outcomes measurement, etc.
- Reinforce the linkages between leisure participation and stewardship of the green lands network of open spaces, parks and community trails.

3.0 PLAN FOUNDATION

3.1 Introduction and Corporate Alignment

A Vision, Mission and Principles have been identified for the City of Kitchener Leisure Facilities Master Plan. They have been developed based on key themes and content that emerged from the City's Corporate Plan, the department's roles and responsibilities, the community input received in the research phase, trends in the development of leisure services and other sources.

One of the primary foundation's for the Leisure Facilities Master Plan's Vision, Mission and Principles was alignment with the City of Kitchener's Corporate Plan. The Vision of this Plan is as follows:

Together we will build an innovating, caring and vibrant Kitchener with safe and thriving neighbourhoods.

This Vision focuses extensively on the safe and thriving neighbourhoods and the vibrancy of Kitchener have been captured in the Plan's Vision Statement.

Also connected to the Vision within the Corporate Plan are five community directions.

- **We will develop decision-making and management processes that respond to the issues, directions, values and vision of our community.**
- **We will actively work towards meeting the affordable housing needs of the community.**
- **We will continue to create a vital downtown in our community.**
- **We will work in partnership with community members, agencies and providers to promote well-being and a healthy community.**
- **We will improve the quality of our air, water and land resources and increase green spaces.**

There are many key components of these directions that connect directly with the Leisure Facilities Master Plan, such as working with community members and agencies, increasing green space,

environmental improvements and other actions. The Plan's Vision, Mission, Principles and Values and Goals have been connected to these directions.

3.2 Vision Statement

A Vision Statement sets a horizon towards which all 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 Leisure Facilities Master Plan and is a basis upon which the Plan evolves, both in terms of its development and its ongoing application.

Recommendation

<p>A diverse array of accessible leisure participation opportunities that encourage community capacity building, resident health and well-being and strengthen the city's neighbourhoods.</p>
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The Vision for this Plan is to create a diverse array of accessible leisure participation opportunities for Kitchener residents. The key component of the Vision is that there will be a diverse and a balanced array of leisure opportunities to meet the varied interests of Kitchener residents and that these opportunities will be accessible. Leisure participation opportunities represent the core of the leisure services delivery system and are the fundamental rationale for the city's investment in the provision of these services, either directly or in partnership with others.

The second part of the Vision identifies the three key focuses that collectively identify the rationale for these investments and why residents benefit from participation in leisure activities. Community capacity-building is one benefit, involving the opportunity for people to invest in their community through participation, volunteerism, leadership and other activities, whether as a coach for sporting activities, an instructor in an arts class or contributing to an association's efforts to better their local neighbourhood.

Another benefit speaks to the health and well-being of the residents themselves. Active participation involves fitness, the development of the mind, the achievement of new skills and enhanced personal development, the pursuit of ones interest and the ongoing development of the whole person, as both an individual and as a contributing member of their community.

A third benefit identified in the Vision is strengthening neighbourhoods. Neighbourhoods are identified in the City's Corporate Plan as one of the centre points as to how the community needs to evolve and service the need of its residents. The city sees itself as a collection of neighbourhoods that come together

to form the city, each being unique, each having different needs and each contributing in differentiated and valued ways. The Leisure Facilities Master Plan needs to align itself within this Vision, with the neighbourhoods and their importance, how they operate and to support their need to be vibrant, contributing and sustainable.

3.3 Mission Statement

A Mission Statement speaks to the fundamentals and focus of what is going to be achieved via the Plan. It articulates intent and the broad strategic approaches to be utilized.

Recommendation

The Kitchener Leisure Facilities Master Plan directs the city's achievement of a balanced array of accessible and participation-based leisure opportunities. It brings together all the community's leisure capabilities and resources that contribute to the enrichment of the quality of life for Kitchener residents through both partnerships and direct delivery strategies that:

- **Inspire a true value for the benefits of leisure participation opportunities and encourage broad-based, active resident participation that supports improved resident health, well-being and personal development.**
- **Generate a strengthened sense of community identity, spirit and service with residents.**
- **Support improved neighbourhood unity and capacity, as well as positive community and economic development.**

The Mission for this Plan is targeted at guiding and directing the city's ongoing achievement of a balanced array of leisure activities that connects directly with the Vision. This is a city-based Plan. The city takes ownership for it but works with the community on the achievement of all the outcomes. It is designed to bring together all the community's capacities and resources and not just those of the city. Therefore, the implementation of the Plan involves both direct city action, as well as the city working with others through partnerships, joint ventures and other initiatives in order to achieve the outcomes desired.

The key outcome for the Plan is to enrich the quality of life for Kitchener residents, that is, that all residents will be better off in terms of the quality of their day to day life by potentially being able to access leisure facilities and services across a spectrum of activities that touch their interests.

The first objective of this particular goal involves three considerations. First, to have a Plan and strategies that focus on residents understanding the benefits of leisure participation as an important part of life within the community for both them and their families. A strong belief in the need for leisure services creates a positive values basis that allows the community to work collectively to ensure that it has an excellent array of opportunities in terms of its leisure facilities and services.

This objective also focuses on leisure opportunities within the community, that enhance resident health, well-being and personal development. This could involve fitness in terms of physical activity. It could be well-being in terms of reducing stress or being able to socialize and be with others. It also could involve personal development in terms of expressing their artistic interests or being involved as a volunteer and contributing back to the community to satisfy their need to be a member of their community and to serve.

The second objective speaks to the community as a collective of its residents. Leisure services, through team sports, individual activities, external travel, etc. have the opportunity to strengthen the residents' sense of community through creating a strong identity of the city as being a positive and good place that realizes success. It also can support a growing sense of community spirit and ownership. Also critically important, is that leisure services create unique opportunities for people to serve their community through voluntary roles and supports that contribute to enhancing the quality of life of individuals in the community and the overall well-being of the community itself.

The third objective focuses on the growth and sustainability of the city's neighbourhoods via providing a common identification and cause, that is a centre point in terms of building the leadership, interest and connecting points necessary for a neighbourhood to be strong, vibrant and sustainable. The Plan, within a city-wide perspective, also needs to be able to deliver key contributions to the city's community and economic development roles and initiatives. These can be achieved through parks providing significant urban form resources in the ongoing physical development of the community or trail systems that connect various nodes within the community to provide alternate transportation systems. Economically, sport tourism and other economic activities within the leisure services mandate can be vital to the community in terms of job creation, economic sustainability and enhancing the revenue generation capacities of key facilities, thus reducing their financial impacts on the community and users.

The Plan's Mission is designed to be supportive to both Kitchener's Corporate Plan and the Vision for the Leisure Facilities Master Plan in its efforts to ensure that it is broad-based in serving all the community's members, supports neighbourhoods and creates a real value amongst the residences related to leisure services being a key part of a healthy, active and successful community.

3.4 Principles

The following Principles have been developed as a basis for the directions, strategies and recommendations within the Kitchener Leisure Facilities Master Plan.

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

Recommendation

The Leisure Facilities Master Plan will focus on...

- **The provision of a balanced mix of leisure opportunities, involving recreation, arts, culture, minor sports, education and linked access to social, health and related services.**
- **Fair and equitable leisure opportunities that encourage participation by all dimensions of the community in terms of ability, culture, economic, geographic and related interests and backgrounds.**
- **Developing and implementing operations, programs and resources that operate with integrity, are continually evaluated relative to outcomes and respond to evolving resident needs.**
- **The maximum utilization of existing resources, through their on-going rehabilitation and renewal.**
- **The provision of geographically dispersed facilities to meet changing market demands and population growth patterns, while ensuring key linkages with neighbourhood, district and city-wide servicing requirements.**
- **The continuation of specialized services for seniors, youth, the disabled, new immigrants, early years and other targeted populations whose citizenship and quality of life could be enhanced through better access to and increased participation in leisure services.**

- **Sustaining an important emphasis on neighbourhood-based leisure services provisioning through the development of local resource centres; supports to community groups and neighbourhood associations; enhanced access to local schools and related community-based facilities; and other connected endeavours.**
- **The Community Services Department continuing its leadership role in the planning, development, facilitation and supports for leisure services availability, using an array of innovative delivery strategies involving partnerships, joint ventures, direct delivery and community-based service provider approaches.**
- **Ensuring that the city's parks, open space, the Grand River and stream corridors and natural areas continue being valued by the community, conserve key environmental resources, are accessible to the public for both programmed and non-programmed activities and contribute significantly to the urban form of the community.**
- **Developing leisure facilities that are flexible and can be linked to broader community strategies and initiatives related to health, economic development, transportation, education and growth management.**
- **Facilities and services that are sustainable over the longer term through innovative designs and effective operations, and that are adaptable and flexible, environmentally sound, affordable to construct and operate, facilitate an ease of maintenance and actively support inclusion.**

The first Principle identifies the importance of a balanced mix of facilities that touch recreation, arts, culture, education and other service dimensions. It is through this balanced mix that a spectrum of services is available that can meet the multitude of needs and variable interests of residents. Leisure services are not for one particular dimension of the community. They need to be reasonably available for the multitude of resident interest that constitute a community.

Also vitally important, is that today leisure services do not stand alone. In most cases, they have significant interconnectivity to social, health, educational and other related services. This focuses on the holistic development of each person and treating them as a whole person and not their individual needs. It is through this interchange and collective approach that individuals are better served, have more opportunities and achieve enhanced outcomes. An example that Kitchener has practiced and continues to develop, is its community centres being resource centres where they have the opportunity to tailor their programs to the localized needs of a neighbourhood across a spectrum of servicing requirements.

Another Principle supports the need for the fair and equitable provision of leisure services so that all residents can have a reasonable opportunity to access and participate in leisure activities. These services also need to not simply exist but efforts need to be made to encourage participation. This encouragement needs to be both generic in terms of the whole population but also needs to be targeted at specific groups who have barriers that need to be overcome, require different types of informational resources or have other considerations that need to be addressed in order to ensure fair and equitable access. In an increasing multicultural community, with some financial barriers and other challenges, the communication and encouragement process becomes increasingly important and diverse in order to serve the whole community.

Another Principle focuses on the Plan not only investing in new leisure facilities but that considerable effort needs to be made to renew existing facilities and to ensure that maximum use is being made of what is already available. Too often, the planning focus can gravitate towards the new and exciting and lose sight of what currently exists. This is particularly important, as many municipalities, Kitchener included, have many aging facilities that have been in existence for twenty to fifty years. Therefore, not losing sight of the need for rehabilitation and renewal is vitally important.

Also, there has to be a reasonable geographic distribution of leisure facilities so that there is balanced access across the community, and that there are key linkages to service areas and scale so that neighbourhood facilities service neighbourhoods, districts facilities support districts and city-wide facilities support city-wide access patterns. Facilities should not be concentrated in one area but need to have a dispersion so that everybody feels that they have reasonable access, travel times are shared and all areas of the community feel well served.

Many segments of the population have specialized needs or could achieve a particularly enhanced benefit from participating in leisure activities. To date, seniors, youth, the disabled, new immigrants and early years have generally been identified as important target populations for various economic, health, social development and other considerations. Though these target audiences can change over time, they do represent areas of some importance and can get 'lost' in the general service deliver parameters that can often evolve. Much of the participation of these individuals is tied to specific outcomes, such as better socialization which can effect the longer term successful development of a child, or keeping seniors active so that they are healthier and more connected to the community and less isolated, along with achieving greater inclusion for those with disabilities or new immigrants who cannot speak the language and experience significant barriers and can be left out or behind.

Another key Principle is to sustain an important focus on the neighbourhoods of Kitchener. This is a strategic priority as expressed within the City's Corporate Plan. Therefore, this Plan needs to address key opportunities to provide leisure programs and activities locally, whether through a resource centre or enhanced access to local schools or other community-based facilities. It also reflects the fact that there needs to be investment in community groups in terms of them being able to sustain themselves, develop leadership capacities, communicate and other important activities that will foster their success and sustainability.

One of the key Principles of the Plan is that the City's Community Services Department has a definable and an important leadership role in the planning, development, facilitation, delivery and evaluation of leisure services in the city. The department represents a huge resource in terms of the assets they have to work with, that is their technical skills and capabilities and other inputs that are vital to both the services they deliver directly and the supports they can provide to other parties who are central to the overall leisure services delivery strategy. The city does not need to be all things to all people or undertake every thing directly. In fact, the ability to work with neighbourhood associations, organized leisure services groups and other third parties is an integral strategy in expanding the array of services, their geographic distribution, the opportunities for people to contribute to their community through volunteerism and to ensure greater levels of participation.

The city's parks, open space and natural areas represent a very significant community resource. They impact the urban form and development pattern of the community, as well as conserving key natural resources that are valued by the residents and are necessary to sustain a healthy ecological and environmental balance. Also, these resources need to support both program and non-programmed activities. Not all leisure services need to be programmed. In fact, there is significant importance in ensuring that there are opportunities for spontaneous and unorganized activities which foster more creativity, social interchange and adaptability. Key areas of consideration within this Principle involve the Community Trail system which is highly valued, the Grand River corridor which is a very significant resource and the community's parks and sportsfields.

Leisure facilities no longer stand alone as they can become important investment instruments in terms of broader community strategies. Therefore, the Plan needs to ensure that the leisure facilities being proposed are supportive to various senior government health initiatives, Smart Growth, the city's economic development strategy, transportation priorities and investments and other initiatives.

Investments in leisure facilities and services also need to be sustainable over the long term. This can come in the form of innovative designs and efficient operations or it may involve facilities that are adaptable and flexible. There is a host of considerations in facility design that are important to this Principle in terms of ensuring the city's investments maximize the return to be realized, the long term sustainability of services and user benefits and satisfaction.

3.5 Plan Goals

The following goals have been identified from the research for the Kitchener Leisure Facilities Master Plan.

Recommendation

- 1. To establish a resource centres development model that supports both the delivery of neighbourhood-based leisure programs and the City's Corporate Plan objectives.**
- 2. To realign arenas / ice surfaces to reflect contemporary operational, locational and market trends and requirements.**
- 3. To provide a foundation and priority for future leisure activities and park and open space utilization within the Grand River Corridor and for the Community Trails system.**
- 4. To develop a longer-term strategy for the development of indoor pools / aquatic operations that reflect demand levels and future residential distribution patterns.**
- 5. To develop a balanced strategy for the renewal and upgrading of existing leisure facilities, including park sites, as well as the introduction of new leisure resources to reflect population growth, emerging residential development patterns and market trends.**
- 6. To support economic development and tourism opportunities and alternate strategies related to some of the City's key leisure facilities.**

- 7. To give consideration to variable leisure services delivery models, building on the current model's successes and introducing new approaches that may be more reflective of the regional-based participation patterns, capital and operating cost implications and market trends and activity profiles.**

- 8. To develop selected policy, role and positioning strategies for the Community Services Department in terms of the broader leisure services network and delivery model within the community.**

- 9. To assess and develop strategic directions in key policy areas, such as the Community Grants Program / Affiliation Agreement, gender and disabled participation perspectives, targeted populations and other dimensions.**

4.0 LEISURE SERVICES DELIVERY POLICY AND STRATEGIES

4.1 Introduction

The Leisure Facilities Master Plan foundation provides recommendations on a Vision, Mission, Principles and Goals as a basis for the Plan's other recommendations. The next dimensions to be developed within the Plan, prior to the individual leisure facility and service initiatives, are the city's service delivery policy and delivery strategy recommendations. These recommendations set out the framework on which city decisions on leisure facilities and services need to be assessed and go forward. This component of the Plan has two dimensions. First, is the Leisure Services Delivery Policy recommendation that guides the city's actions and investments. Second, are the potential array of delivery strategy recommendations designed to achieve the various desired outcomes.

4.2 City Leisure Services Delivery Policy

.1 Overview

Municipalities are coming under increasing expectations to being able to deliver a wider range of leisure opportunities, many of them involving increasingly sophisticated facilities, integrated services delivery approaches and growing long term capital, operating and financial / sustainability requirements. Society has moved to a point where there is a growing array of leisure activities that people want to be involved with, many of them involving smaller clusters / segments of individuals within the community and beyond. Also, many activities / services are subdividing into groups that want high performance experiences or individuals who just wish to try something out or have a more limited experience. In the middle, may exist expectations, from hobbyist to a regular participant at a recreation level of interest.

The increasing mix of leisure activities, and the differentiated connecting points that participants have with each of these activities, is generating a more complex service delivery environment. Further complicating this environment is that new groups are forming that need support while established groups go through cycles of strength and weakness variability. As a result, the city can be approached to support the launch of a new service initiative or by organizations that are experiencing sustainability challenges or when significant leadership challenges occur.

As a basis for the city to express its role in the planning, development, delivery and evaluation of leisure services, it requires a policy framework upon which to ensure that it is not seen as the sole party responsible and that everything does not lead back to the city. However, the policy needs to recognize

that the city is in a unique position within the leisure services delivery model in terms of skills and capacity, assets and financial resources, service stability and other key delivery factors. Finding a balance that is a basis to undertake this role is a vital part of the long term planning process for leisure services and facilities in Kitchener.

.2 Recommendation

The following Leisure Services Delivery Policy recommendation has been developed for the City of Kitchener's Community Services Department.

- **The City of Kitchener is a leader in the planning, development, delivery and evaluation of leisure services needs and opportunities within the municipality.**
- **The city firmly believes in the value of and need for community organizations to successfully operate leisure services as a primary means to expand the accessibility, availability, affordability and mix of leisure services that are available to its citizens.**
- **The prioritization process for City of Kitchener's participation and investments in the leisure services facilities will focus on servicing City of Kitchener residents as the primary users within the following priority framework:**
 - **First – leisure services that facilitate and encourage broad-based participation amongst city residents at a recreational level of activity, including in-city, regional and provincial competitive oriented activities for children and youth.**
 - **Second – leisure services and accessibility supports that link to the specialized needs of targeted populations, such as those with disabilities, seniors, young children, teens, new immigrants, etc.**
 - **Third – leisure services that are primarily intended to support key strategic initiative of the City of Kitchener, such as downtown redevelopment, conversion of brownfield sites, conservation of major open space resources and specialized services that ensure a broad mix / array of leisure opportunities for Kitchener residents.**

- **Fourth – leisure facilities development that are targeted primarily at national and international level athletes, participants, etc., and which will only be considered within a sport tourism framework where need / use levels and impact potential demonstrates an evident benefit to the community, and where other partners (municipalities, senior government levels, sustainable non-profit organizations and the private sector) are active, substantial and committed contributors.**
- **The city will fulfill its role in the planning, development, delivery and evaluation of leisure services based on the following hierarchy of responses and roles.**
 - **First – will actively work to facilitate and support community groups and individuals in the development and delivery of leisure services by providing technical supports, access to grants, and other supports involving data information, volunteer training and recognition, access to facilities and related strategies.**
 - **Second – will enter into partnerships, joint ventures and related collaborative initiatives, at variable levels of involvement, that result in a shared responsibility for a leisure facility or service's delivery where:**
 - **The interest of the residents of Kitchener are fully realized**
 - **Need is apparent**
 - **Sustainability within acceptable risk parameters exists.**
 - **Third – to undertake the direct delivery of leisure services and facilities where other delivery strategies are not viable or available, utilizing direct capital investment and annual budget support, as well as city staff operating alone or in partnership with volunteers.**

- **Any city involvement in leisure services delivery should be based on the following conditions:**
 - **Identification of demonstrated need at reasonable participation levels**
 - **Evidence of long term sustainability**
 - **Assured public accessibility, participation and affordability**
 - **Involvement by the city reflective of the scale of the benefits to be achieved to both the participants and the community at large.**
 - **The use of business case analysis and preparation as a basis to support city investments in a leisure facility or services initiative.**
- **The city will establish a data collection and outcomes / performance monitoring capacity that will effectively assess the value of the city's role in the various delivery strategies, the degree of participation that is being realized and the benefits being realized by the city's investments.**

The policy focuses on the fact that the city is best served if organized groups and individuals within their own perspectives can be integrated into the delivery of leisure facilities and services. This strategy generally focuses on program dimensions, as most facilities become too costly and often require some form of direct or partial city involvement. The city can not 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 administrative, program development and delivery perspectives.

The city has a strong role in facilitating these groups in order to help them form, to provide technical supports and to assist them in terms of the challenges that may occur from time to time. This role allows the city to engage with these groups at points where the groups can remain independent but do not have the capacity to access some 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 city has many of the skills and capacities in-house or has access to such resources that can be very beneficial to these groups, especially if they are experiencing difficulties and their sustainability becomes threatened.

The second level of the policy, indicates that the city, before it will take direct involvement in the delivery of a leisure facility or service, will look for alternative approaches. This could be through partnerships, joint ventures or other collaborative initiatives. A recent example has been the SportsWorld Arena initiative. Partnerships are also being considered with the Boxing Club and other groups. This is not a new perspective for the city. But asking the question early in the review and development process, as to whether other strategies are available, needs to be formalized. It may be that these opportunities are not apparent to the groups, and that partnerships and joint ventures may need to be initiated by the city and even organized by them in terms of forming groups or operations that could eventually be a partner with the city.

The third dimension of the hierarchy, is that the city, based on evident need and strategy compliance, decides to make a direct investment in the development of a leisure facility or the delivery of a leisure service. This will occur when no other available alternatives exist and need is apparent. It leaves the city with a very important role, particularly with respect to leisure facilities.

The policy further articulates key criteria and related considerations that need to be addressed whenever the city becomes involved in a leisure facility or service 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 city's involvement needs to be in balance with the benefits that are going to be realized. It is possible that the 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 city will need to further develop the application dimensions of the policy, giving particular consideration to the last point which is ensuring the data recording systems are in place to assess participation and benefits, as well as performance monitoring of the outcomes and benefits to be realized.

4.3 Leisure Services Delivery Strategies

There are multiple approaches relative to leisure service delivery strategies for the city. The following material is a basis upon which to develop an overall services delivery strategy.

.1 Data Collection, Analysis, Evaluation and Mapping Resources

Overview

Currently, some of the city'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. At the level of complexity that is being experienced, a more attuned data collection and analysis system needs to be in place. Complimenting 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.

This latter consideration becomes increasingly important as non-profit organizations become more invested in major facilities, longitudinal volunteer availability challenges exist within key non-profit organizations and other considerations become more active in the operating environment that could threaten sustainability or create substantive issues that need to be addressed to support sustainability.

Also, mapping resources need to be developed to support the array of recommendations in the Master Plan as a key analytical and development tool. Funding will be needed to support the development of the mapping tools, as well as planning inputs in support of all the leisure facility park and open space development recommendations.

Recommendation

An enhanced data and analytical based monitoring process is required, involving the following considerations.

- **A comprehensive review and further development of the department's data collection, analytical and evaluation activities to ensure increasingly relevant, accurate and timely data to support decision-making with emphasis on:**
 - **The city's leisure operations to ensure that revenues are being optimized, expenses are being minimized and participation opportunities are maximized.**
 - **Changes that are occurring in the regional market context that could influence participation patterns and which might impact financial results, related to reduced revenues, increased expectations or other changing market conditions.**
 - **Supporting organizations that the city is significantly connected with in terms of grants or related to the potential impacts if the organization were to cease operations or run into a major financial issue.**
- **Use of Leisure Services Delivery Policy as the primary basis for any current or future leisure services evaluations related to philosophical fit, criteria, goals, etc.**
- **Development of mapping resources to support the Master Plan's implementation.**

.2 Supports to Organized Groups

Overview

The City of Kitchener has an effective history of providing targeted supports to organized arts and culture, minor sports, targeted populations and other groups.

These supports can be wide ranging, involving training on board governance; supports related to registration and budget management; volunteer development, training and recognition; advertising and marketing; trends assessments and population analysis; etc.

Direct supports to various leisure services groups are currently organized within the Community Services Department on a functional basis. The cost to the city is relatively low compared to what would occur if any major organized group were to falter or disappear and the service needed to be delivered within the city's direct delivery model. Therefore, investing in the health, well-being and sustainability of organized

delivery groups is a valuable, long term investment, both in terms of community development and capacity building, as well as for the city's long term budget management requirements in leisure services.

Recommendation

That the city's current model of organizational support to leisure services delivery groups be sustained and enhanced where reasonably possible, as one basis for achieving the facilitation role identified within the Leisure Services Delivery Policy.

.3 Partnerships / Joint Ventures

Overview

The city has a well established history in terms of partnerships, joint ventures and other initiatives. Whether it's the new St. Marys Community Centre, the SportsWorld Twin Pad facility, the Budd Park Indoor Soccer facility or other initiatives, the city has utilized this technique on numerous occasions.

Over the last ten years, there has been considerable discussion and experimentation with private-public partnerships, joint ventures and other initiatives. Some have worked, and many have failed to materialize due to the rigors and risk management requirements that are often in place. This is an area that the city may wish to increasing use where opportunities exist. However, to increase the use of these techniques will likely require some form of increased flexibility and risk taking. The city 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 opportunities, reduce financial pressures on the municipality and provide other benefits. However, they also require the development of new skills in terms of contract management, partnership evaluation and other inputs, along with enhanced risk taking and other change perspectives.

Recommendation

To continue partnership, joint venture and related initiatives where:

- **Need is identified;**
- **Public access and affordability are assured;**
- **The partnership is financially reasonable and sustainable;**
- **The scope of investment is reflective of the benefits to be realized by residents of the city.**

.4 Developer Responsibilities

Overview

Municipalities use a mix of park dedication and other land conveyances, development charges in new residential developments in order to secure land and leisure facility resources. There has been a movement towards the developers preparing parkland, in addition to rough grading and also undertaking completion of park development.

Some developers believe that their residential developments will have a significant advantage if parks are developed earlier within the overall development process. Typically, municipalities do not advance the development of parks until certain population thresholds are identified and development charges have reached certain levels.

Recommendation

The city explore with developers, the possibility of developers taking on a larger role in the preparation of parks, open spaces, community trails and potentially leisure facility sites.

This will be a challenging task as not all developers will have an interest, however the opportunity could be an incentive for developers to take on the early preparation of parks and facility sites to city standards through development charges credits. If indeed there is benefit to be realized from a marketing perspective by the developer, then there could be a strategy whereby their involvement could result in facilities being derived earlier, but always to city standards.

Such a strategy could result in several benefits:

- Reduced city tendering requirements and potentially some cost savings.
- Protection of city's standards.
- Reduced pressure from residents for earlier development of facilities in evolving areas.
- A more integrated approach to the development of new communities / neighbourhoods in terms of roads, services, utilities, parks, etc.

- A more linked scheduling of leisure resources in new areas to the rate of growth in these areas, and potentially reduced pressure on leisure resources in other neighbourhoods that need to support both their local area, as well as emerging neighbourhoods on a transitional basis.

This approach will require negotiation and investigation. However, it is a model that represents an opportunity to address current challenges and is increasingly reflective of the expectations of residents in newly developing areas.

.5 Community Grant Program

Overview

The city operates a segmented / multi-dimensional Community Grants Program that involves eight differentiated themes. It is valued at \$1.52 million in 2003, covering 125 individual grants which ranged from \$99 to \$33,600.

Each of the grants has its own intake process, criteria and target audiences. A minority of the grants are one time, such as for playgrounds, travel grants and community gardens. The majority of the funds are expended on annualized grants to organized groups, with over two thirds of the grant money, \$560,000 being allocated to minor sports and \$934,000 being allocated to various cultural, community and other groups outside of the minor sports sector. The minor sports grantees also need to sign an Affiliation Agreement with the city that outlines the roles and expectations for each party, criteria and the types of supports that the city will provide.

In assessing the grants, as per the Research Report, it is evident that the grants are undertaken on an individualized basis, such as minor hockey realizing approximately 60% of the minor sports grants while other large participation-based minor sports receive significantly less. It is recognized, that much of the grant funding is associated with offsets for the cost of ice which is a significantly different variable than the cost of sportsfields.

Over the last number of years, the general sense has been that the Community Grants Program has become more complex and many groups are becoming more dependent on the annualized funding and need annualized increases in their core funding. There does not appear to be an evident performance monitoring model for the outcomes realized in terms of participation levels, attendance, city strategic goals / directions or related benefits and outcomes that foundation the city's investment.

Recommendation

With respect to the Community Grants Program, the following is recommended:

- **That the Community Grants Program be continued and be utilized as a basis to fulfill the city's facilitation role as an alternative to direct delivery and to sustain a broader mix / spectrum of leisure services.**
- **That a review be completed in conjunction with the current department review, to determine whether the complexity and the number of components of the program can be reduced to potentially the following:**
 - **Annual Community Service Grants**
 - **One time Community Service Grants**
 - **Community Service Grants to targeted populations**
- **That the following criteria be further developed and be created as a foundation for the allocation of funds and within the program:**
 - ***Non-profit leisure service providing groups* – based on the number of Kitchener citizens 'touched', level of volunteerism, economic impact and identifiable benefits within two categories:**
 - **Emerging groups operating less than three years**
 - **Established groups operating for more than three years.**
 - ***Sport and event tourism* – economic impact statements and measures**
 - **Capital and one time grants - based on benefits derived and city cost displacement criteria.**

- **Targeted populations / audiences - based on policy priorities for:**
 - **Disabled / disenfranchised**
 - **New immigrant populations**
 - **Fairness and equity balancing**
 - **Other principles / values as identified and approved**
 - **A review of organizations receiving continuing grants every three years related to strength, accessibility and connectivity to city priorities and directions.**

The actual amount of funds expended through the Community Grant Program is fundamentally a policy-based decision related to what resources are available and the level of investment the city wishes to undertake. There is no apparent formula that will necessarily dictate the actual investment level year to year, however how the distribution occurs, should be developed around a more integrated model, within a more developed set of criteria and based on an outcomes-oriented evaluation process. These evaluations should occur every three year for continuing grants.

.6 New Policy Development

Overview

The city has numerous policies with respect to their specific involvement in key areas of leisure services and some of the principles and criteria that are involved. This involves special events, the Community Grants Program, harassment and related considerations.

During the course of discussions around the development of this Plan, which involved the review of some existing policies, a trends analysis, and input received from the consultation program, other areas of potential policy development were identified. It is important that the city have a comprehensive policy framework to support its leisure evaluations and investments. In many cases, the city has active programs in these areas but requires them to be connected to a strategic framework. Also, the department has city-wide responsibility for the Ontarians with Disabilities Act and accessible issues which are key policy areas.

Recommendation

The following policy development areas are recommended:

- **Fairness and equality of accessibility. (Leisure Access Cards / Personal Assistance Cards are in use currently)**
- **Affordability parameters**
- **Targeted populations in terms of ability, new immigrants and others who have significant barriers to participation.**
- **Economic impact and development expectations from city investments.**
- **An evaluation and monitoring program and associated processes.**
- **Naming rights and corporate sponsorships.**
- **Other distinctive areas.**

.7 Multi-Municipal Approaches

Overview

One of the distinctive characteristics of many of the organized leisure service groups and the leisure participation patterns in Kitchener is the fact that they often extend beyond the municipal boundaries. The prevalence of Twin City-based organizations and / or regional service organizations is evident, especially beyond minor sports.

For the groups that are more broadly-based, a question emerged around the fact that these groups need to deal with each municipality separately in order to piece together their service delivery strategies and approaches. This creates additional work for the volunteers, can pit one community against the other and has a host of other considerations that are incongruent with how the market actually operates.

Additionally, local municipalities and the Region are developing a wide range of leisure facilities, policies and planning initiatives that impact leisure services delivery and investment. Sometimes, the rationale for these facilities and plans are to attract users from other municipal jurisdictions in order to create the volume levels that warrant the investment. These types of issues have emerged around the Breithaupt Centre in its early years, RIM Park, the Waterloo Recreation Centre, etc. Also, some of this facility development can result in potential over capacities and diseconomies.

What is evident, is that a significant portion of the leisure services market operates on a Twin Cities and / or regional basis. These groups often have to achieve these market sizes in order to attract adequate volumes of participants and / or volunteers. It was interesting to note, that in some focus groups, all the participants were not from Kitchener yet represented so called Kitchener-based groups.

It is recognized, that joint planning on a multi-municipality basis, and sometimes within overachieving Region of Waterloo mandates, can be very challenging and could raise sensitivities. However, with the cost of leisure services facilities and services, a question needs to be addressed as to whether there is an alternate delivery model or models that more intensively integrate leisure facilities and services amongst the municipalities in the region. The key issue is, can service delivery models be developed that better utilize existing facilities, reduce the need for additional facilities targeted to support residents within municipal boundaries and reduce overall capital and operating costs when the market behaves significantly differently than how the service delivery model operates.

The scale of the investments being made, such as the Kitchener Memorial Auditorium Complex, Centre in the Square, RIM Park, Waterloo Recreation Centre, etc., and the increasing specialized supports / facilities being considered for unique activities, such as cricket, rowing, canoeing, Nordic activity, etc., is significant. This results in a suggestion to make an effort to explore whether a more integrated model that is more cost effective and customer / participant / volunteer focused can be achieved.

Recommendation

That the City of Kitchener, through Council and staff efforts, undertake an initiative to enter into discussions with local municipalities and the Region of Waterloo, and beyond if reasonable, to explore whether a more integrated services delivery model involving enhanced collaboration, could be developed and implemented to facilitate increased public accessibility to facility resources and improved investment outcomes.

This strategy would be a significant initiative, but the capital cost and annual operating cost considerations, and the market behavioural characteristics warrant a reasoned and methodical effort in selected leisure service areas based on a broader geographic delivery model.

When one considers that single pad arenas are costing in the \$3 million to \$4 million area, indoor swimming pools can cost up to \$5 million to \$7 million and major sportsfields complexes are multi-million operations, all of these with significant annual operating deficits, the ability to achieve greater

multi-use capacities on a single site and potentially building fewer facilities while still providing adequate service levels in the overall market, could have significant financial benefits for all the partners involved.

.8 Facilities Project Development

Overview

The City of Kitchener has undertaken many major recreation facility developments based on various inputs, assessments, etc. However, it has not made use, on a broadly consistent basis of a Business Plan model for individual facility initiatives. Many communities have this as a requirement prior to final decision-making on major capital investments that have long-term operating cost requirements. The city is currently moving to a business case model that would be a basis for this initiative.

A Master Plan is a process that brings together significant amounts of research to identify priorities, needs and strategies over an extended period of time, often ten 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 Business Plans for individualized leisure facility resources due to the changing characteristics of the market and demand over time, community growth patterns, trends, the municipality's financial resources and commitments, etc. The Master Plan sets the overarching facilities development framework for leisure services and priorities. Then, individual Business Plans be are undertaken based on timelines established within the Master Plan and the current city business case template. These Business Plans should focus on:

- Locational considerations.
- Governance and management plans.
- Connections to the city and department's corporate / strategic plans and goals, policies, objectives, etc.
- Alternative development strategies in terms of using existing facilities, building new facilities, undertaking additions, etc.
- Need and demand profiles, marketing requirements, etc. and related feasibility assessment components.
- Determining market competitive 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.
- Three year operating pro formas in order to identify revenues, expenses, staff requirements, etc.

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, firmer capital cost projections, etc.

Recommendation

- **That the City of Kitchener's Community Services Department move actively to requiring a Business Plan on all capital leisure facility proposals as follows:**
- **That any new facility initiatives or major addition to an existing leisure facility with a potential capital cost of over \$250,000 be supported by a Business Plan.**
- **That the city direct the undertaking of the Business Plans, seeking broad-based public consultation, and working in partnership where appropriate with community proponents.**
- **That the results of the Business Plan, when finalized and accepted, become the basis for a new or expanded leisure facility being incorporated into the capital budget forecast for the city related to timing, capital cost projections, etc.**
- **That the capital cost projections be well developed within the Business Plan and be incorporated into the capital cost forecast considering future adjustments upwards in the capital costs based on:**
 - **The potential impact of inflation that may not be predictable or certain.**
 - **Any alteration in the proposed facility's design clearly articulate the appropriate rationale and need for significant changes that may have occurred between the time of the Business Plan's development and the time of final approval.**

.9 Multi-Use Facility Development

Overview

Over the last decade or more, there has been a significant move towards the development of leisure and community 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%.
- 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 more enhanced facilities relative to scope, quality and volumes.

There are significant benefits to this strategy and it can be creative in its application. These facilities can involve arenas, community centres, branch libraries, school facilities, social service facilities, community policing offices, fire stations, transit depots, etc. The City of Kitchener has utilized this model in various formats, such as Cameron Heights indoor pool, the Grand River Branch Library, the Lyle Hallman Indoor Pool and Community Centre and numerous other facilities.

The continuation and enlargement of this strategy is a key leisure facilities delivery approach that needs to be continued and enhanced wherever possible in order to improve user satisfaction and quality experiences, as well as achieving the maximum capital and operating economies of scale.

Recommendation

That the City of Kitchener, for all major facility renewal and new leisure facility development initiatives, investigate in depth the potential for a wide range of multiple use opportunities within a single facility venue.

.10 Community Use of Schools

Overview

The 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 leisure activities. These facilities include gymnasiums, resource rooms, outdoor sports fields, specialized facilities, classrooms, etc.

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

In the summer of 2004, the Province of Ontario announced a \$20 million program as part of an overall initiative to facilitate and encourage increased utilization of publicly funded schools by community organizations. Considering that these facilities are built by the same taxpayer, and that there is a wide array of gymnasiums and leisure oriented facilities, these present a potential resource for leisure programming, often located in neighbourhoods, districts, etc.

The city could take leadership, along with other municipalities to explore with the local school boards, the opportunity for municipalities to access publicly funded schools on behalf of organized groups, in order to provide more local leisure facility capacity and to reduce the pressures and need for additional long-term municipal investments in stand-alone leisure facilities.

Recommendation

That the City of Kitchener initiate discussions with its municipal partners in the Region of Waterloo and the Waterloo Region District School Board and the Waterloo Region District Catholic School Board to develop policies, strategies and processes that effectively enhance community accessibility to publicly funded schools for leisure services.

.11 Natural Areas

Overview

Natural areas within the City of Kitchener are a vital resource and connect with the Grand River Corridor, parks, environmental areas, etc. They represent currently over 50% of the parkland in Kitchener. They are extensively used by both residents and visitors for a wide array of leisure activities, primarily on a self-directed basis, including walking and hiking, jogging, Nordic skiing, bicycling, photography, fishing, nature interpretation, boating, children's play, non-programmed activities, nature appreciation, etc. They are used at all levels of the park classification system, ranging from neighbourhood contact through to regional quality and user perspectives.

A need exists to ensure that there is a policy framework in the on-going acquisition, management and utilization of these resources in order to sustain their long-term ecological and environmental viability and their availability as part of the urban form and leisure resources base of the city.

Recommendation

That the City of Kitchener consider policies and strategies for their extensive natural areas and their use and enjoyment by the public involving:

- **Conservation and management to ensure the continued existence of this resource at a level of quality which supports the leisure pursuits of the public into the future.**
- **Operational and capital funding at a level consistent with current and future public use and the resources required to facilitate this without eroding the quality of the leisure experience of future users, a loss that in most cases could be permanent.**
- **Development of the infrastructure which supports the use of natural areas by the public, including trails, boardwalks, parking, signage, interpretive facilities, washrooms, litter and garbage control, security and safety.**
- **Engage in a more multi-disciplinary approach to the conservation and human use of the natural areas through the planning and engineering phases of subdivision development with a greater emphasis on the future use of all natural areas by the public.**

5.0 LEISURE FACILITIES

5.1 Introduction

The following material develops the need, rationale and strategies associated with the future delivery of major leisure facilities and services recommendations for the City of Kitchener. These recommendations have been developed based on the Research Report, several Steering Committee planning sessions, trends assessments, capital budget inputs and related considerations.

5.2 Resource Centres

.1 Overview and Delivery Strategies

The development of resource centres, sometimes referred to as community centres, has been the focal point of the City of Kitchener's leisure services delivery strategy for over twenty years. It represents the foundation upon which neighbourhoods and districts are supported, volunteer-based delivery is facilitated and community programs are delivered. Two major considerations prevail in regards to future recommendations involving resource centres. The first addresses the balance between city-owned and operated resource centres, either in stand-alone or multi-use environments, and the alternative of utilizing local schools, churches, ethnic clubs and other spaces that already exist. The second key consideration is the role of resource centres in terms of recreation and leisure and the need for them to have a balanced role in conjunction with being a resource centre for the delivery of needed social, health, education and related services. The following material provides an overview of these two considerations.

The development of an array of resource centres distributed geographically across the community is one of two approaches used by municipalities to facilitate the delivery of leisure and community-based programs. This involves those delivered directly by Parks and Recreation / Community Services Departments and/or with partners or by other community service providers on a rental basis.

This strategy focuses on the development of generally multi-use oriented facilities in key neighbourhood and district locations. They are designed to provide variable types of spaces and staffing capacity that brings programming into the areas where people live, recreate and spend significant components of their daily life.

The second approach is to utilize leisure program capable facilities that exist across the community, such as school classrooms and gymnasiums, faith-based community facilities, cultural clubs / centres and

similar resources. This approach builds on existing infrastructure invested in by taxpayers through other levels of government, eg: school boards and others, or by non-profit organizations.

The two approaches have inherent strengths and weaknesses, reflecting uniquely different service, quality and accessibility alternatives.

The City of Kitchener, over the last twenty years, has invested significantly in the development of resource centres across the community. These investments are proposed to be further enhanced with the current capital budget forecast's identification of expansion / renewal of existing and the addition of new resource / community centres over the next ten years. This does not mean that leisure services groups do not utilize school, church and other facilities as it is likely impossible for any municipality to develop the amount and variability of spaces necessary to support all the community-based service provision that occurs.

Other municipalities have chosen to focus their attention more on the use of school and community-based facilities. However, virtually all of these municipalities also augment this strategy with the development of one or more municipally operated resource / community centres based on the community's specific requirements, geographical layout, resources and historical practices. In addition, many municipalities have been faced with the need to purchase closed school facilities in order to sustain indoor community spaces in key areas of their community due to the changing nature of school operations.

The following material provides a strengths and weaknesses assessment of the two delivery strategies.

City Community Centre Approach

Strengths

- Dedicated space is available seven days per week, through the day and evenings, and not dependent on other users' / owners' schedules and needs. Therefore, more consistency and less variability in availability and access exists.
- Opportunity to identify and implement user priorities based on the municipality's core services, servicing priorities, etc.
- Ability to create multi-use centres of a broader use nature that have inherent operational and capital development efficiencies, such as with arenas, branch libraries, firehalls, etc.

- Enhanced ability to modify and change programming to meet evolving community needs.
- Space is often purpose built providing enhanced capability to meet specific program needs and requirements and can be reconfigured over time through renewal, expansion, etc. to respond to changing needs and requirements.
- Offers neighbourhood / communities a greater sense of empowerment and influence over the facility's operations and services provision.
- The operators can facilitate a wide range of services with multiple partners rather than being a singular renter of a facility on a scheduled basis.

Weaknesses

- Requires significant capital outlays initially and future capital maintenance, along with operational cost supports.
- Perceptions at times of and the potential for duplication of publicly funded spaces in specific situations.
- Some potential for seasonal or marginal time underutilization.

Community-based Facilities Approach

Strengths

- Potential to enhance the utilization of existing facilities to gain more value for these investments.
- Potential capital and operating cost savings.
- A possibility that there exists a diversity of facilities though this is not always guaranteed.
- Revenue flows through rents, leases, etc. can augment the viability of other public and not for profit facilities.

Weaknesses

- Owners can have restrictive access and utilization clauses that would diminish or restrict use by certain groups based on belief, values, etc.
- Owners have priority in facility utilization and other groups are able to utilize the space at times only as available, or get "bumped", sometimes on a frequent basis creating scheduling instability.
- Rental and lease costs can be a barrier, along with insurance and related issues.
- Since 1997, accessibility and the cost of school facilities has become increasingly challenging and customer service issues in some communities have been significant. However, the provincial government has recently allocated \$20 million across Ontario to enhance the community use of schools.
- Community-based facilities can operate at a wide variability of quality, safety and maintenance levels that can inhibit use.
- Many of the community facilities are purpose built for other types of programs and activities and may need to be adapted for broader use applications.
- Services and program planning tends to be more singular if one is just renting program space rather than a more co-ordinated effort from a broader community needs and interest focus, when a more comprehensive facility is available.
- The closure of community facilities, particularly schools, can have a significant impact on leisure space capacity in a specific area, as can any shifts in other priorities for these facilities which can impact long term venue sustainability.

A city resource centres approach is a more costly investment from capital and operating cost perspectives but provides for the greatest levels of integration, stability, specialization of space and is a preferred community service development and coordination platform. The community facilities approach has potentially significant economic benefits but has evident barriers in terms of accessibility, quality of spaces, consistency of delivery, priority for third party groups, etc. The key basis to this strategic decision from a policy perspective is ensuring strong outreach and community-based approaches for leisure services delivery, which is the basis of Kitchener's current program delivery model for resource centres.

The second consideration is in regards to the role of these centres as a leisure programming facility and as a broader resource centre. Kitchener has been able to differentiate its resource centres so that they reflect the unique needs of various areas within the city. Some resource centres are clearly focused on leisure programming, while others provide both leisure programming and social and community services linkages.

The notion of a resource centre as a community or neighbourhood resource centre has been growing in a number of communities. Mill-Courtland, Chandler-Mowatt, Chicopee and Victoria Hills Community Centres have fulfilled these roles in a balanced framework. Additionally, the region has undertaken enquiries as to whether some of their direct social service programs could be offered through Kitchener's resource centres.

Once a resource centre is established within a neighbourhood, it becomes a focal point. It also becomes a place of assembly, gives the neighbourhood an identity and represents a unique opportunity to outreach other types of services that may not be purely in the leisure services framework. If the space already exists, selected hours, resources and related inputs can be provided through the centre to help people who may have financial, counselling, family development, health and other needs that may be better served if the services were brought to them rather than them having to overcome transportation, child care, language and other barriers to access these services at centralized locations within the region.

The results of the consultation program, and the trends analysis, indicated the increasing intersection of multiple service perspectives for resource centres. This increasingly builds on the Colin Maloney report of the early 1990s, Children First, where schools were seen as neighbourhood centres, involving health, education, recreation, social services, continuing education, etc. Though this has not evolved for a significant number of reasons, the concept is truly based on enhanced customer service, better accessibility and stronger community ownership, identity and stability in supporting neighbourhoods and other key values and principles.

The model of a neighbourhood resource centre, providing both leisure and social and community related support services, provides unique opportunities for partnerships and is the preferred delivery model wherever it is needed relative to specific neighbourhood requirements, and can be reasonably achieved on an economic basis.

.2 Current Situation and Inputs

Consultation

Based on the focus groups and public meetings held for the City of Kitchener's Leisure Facilities Master Plan, and a review of recent budgetary and community centre reports, the following points are evident:

- The significant support and desire for resource centres as both a place for leisure and social services access and as key identifiers for individual communities and volunteer capacity development.
- The aspirations of many groups that have access to existing resource centre facilities to meet increasing use demand in terms of both the number of participants, but more importantly, the increasing request for a broader range of leisure and social services and programs.
- Interest from communities that have temporary or no resource centre facilities to be able to sustain their position in the capital budget program for new facilities.
- A broadly based desire to see resource centres flourish, not as "cookie cutters" but based on partnership and operational models that best reflect the inherent skills, capacities, interest, needs and aspirations of the communities they are located in and serve.

A review of the utilization statistics for the resource centres indicated variability in use levels based on the following considerations:

- A wide diversity of program and service functions and applications.
- More intensive scheduling.
- Strong differentiation in regards to programs and services offered, third party rentals, etc.
- Utilization within the parameters one would expect in terms of seasonality, time of day, etc. usage.

Community Centre Business Plan

The 2000 City of Kitchener Community Centre Business Plan also identified the strong support and need for a geographically diversified resource centre's approach based on the inputs and analysis completed for that project.

Some of the key summary points from the findings of this study were as follows:

- Overall, the current system is working well to serve the programming facility needs of residents.
- Population growth was identified in the outlying suburban areas, as well as the core / downtown area.
- Key areas of identified need were Stanley Park / Grand River and the south end of the city, which is identified as a high growth area.
- Active living programs, gymnasium-based programs and pre-school programs were identified as being the most popular.
- Affordable programs or more drop-in or flexible program space was identified as being important.
- A number of resource centres do not have a full gymnasium which limits their ability to offer indoor sports, such as volleyball and basketball, with a double gymnasium being identified as a standard for new resource centres.
- New resource centres should have ample storage, multi-purpose program rooms, a commercial kitchen and a large community room. (The kitchen component will need definition as to scale on a case-by-case basis.)
- Future resource centres should be multi-purpose and should be connected to a library, school or a child care centre or other relevant facility as possible.
- The city should explore the reuse of existing building space in the downtown area to augment core resource centres requirements.

Current City of Kitchener Community Centre Proposals

Five proposals currently exist for future community centre enhancements in the city's capital forecasts or are being considered:

- The expansion of the Victoria Hills Resource Centre in 2005 at a cost of \$2.4 million.
- A new resource centre for Chandler-Mowat in the 2005 / 2006 budget at \$2.5 million.
- A new resource centre in Kingsdale in 2011, budgeted at approximately \$3.8 million.
- A new resource centre in 2012 budgeted at \$4.4 million for South Kitchener.
- A possible Mill-Courtland Resource Centre initiative, as either a portable unit or building expansion but unbudgeted at this time

In addition to these projects, the city is currently undertaking the development of the Stanley Park / Grand River Community Centre and the new St. Mary's / Downtown Community Centre which are both under construction. Also, there has been recognition of a possible need to expand the Bridgeport Resource Centre.

Centre Project Profiles

Chandler-Mowat

The proposal for this resource centre is to replace temporary facilities which have been operating for a number of years. The project is well advanced and beyond a Business Plan focus. The service area has several key characteristics:

- Significant high social need considerations due to single parents, age, income and multicultural characteristics.
- A relatively young family profile, with a teenage and multi-cultural focus who live in relatively high density environments.
- An area that is relatively isolated, being bordered by the Expressway, Ottawa Street and other corridors.

The proposal for Chandler-Mowat is for a \$2.5 million permanent building within the 2005-2006 capital budget. The closest resource centres would be Forest Heights and Country Hills, which service distinctly different geographic populations beyond this area.

The area has been identified as a high needs community where a partnering group, the House of Friendship, has established a resource centre with the city and to deliver a range of programs to respond to the particular needs of this community. A new resource centre would have the following benefits:

- Create a stronger centrepiece for the community and assist in building a stronger community image and perspective.
- Provide increased space and stability for a wider range of needed social, community and leisure-based programs.
- Create opportunities for other service providers to deliver a broader base of services directly in the area.
- More effectively respond to the specialized needs of the area, as well as the leisure service requirements of this community.

Kingsdale

Kingsdale currently has a portable classroom and some supported operational funding. It is scheduled in the capital budget for a new community centre in 2011, valued at \$3.8 million. The Kingsdale community is a long-established community in this city. It is a mix of commercial, high-density and low-density residential areas. It is a well-defined community in terms of Highway 8, Fairway Road, the Expressway and Courtland Avenue.

Through the 1970s and beyond, the area had one of the stronger community associations and has been active in community development for many decades. It is also the home to the Doherty Arena and other recreation and school-based facilities.

The need for a permanent resource centre has evolved based on the growth in programming, beyond the scope of the current portable operation. Also, a need has been identified to respond to the changing profile of the area as young families move into the area and older residents move on due to the typical

transitioning of neighbourhoods, as well as the fact that a strong core population exists within a higher-density residential environment.

One of the options available for a community centre, would be the conversion of the Doherty Arena to a resource centre, based on the identification of the Doherty Arena for decommissioning in the arena's component of the Master Plan. The site is deemed not to be suitable for a twin pad arena facility due to its isolated nature and the attracting of larger volumes of traffic onto residential streets. However, this facility could be converted to a resource centre, is located in a park environment and is generally well located and known to the local community it would service.

Due to the conversion of an existing facility, the total costs of developing a resource centre in the area could be reduced, which could allow for the centre to be advanced in the overall capital budgeting program to better respond to the current programming growth and the opportunity to partner with other community groups in delivering additional social and leisure services within the community. This transition in strategy could, if all components were to evolve, see a potential community centre developed in the 2007-2009 period.

As an interim measure in order to build capacity, the current portables at Chandler-Mowatt could be relocated to the Kingsdale site.

South Kitchener

South Kitchener, beyond the Doon and neighbouring industrial area, is a fast growing community. It is projected to have the most substantive population growth over the next twenty plus years. As such, it represents the most strategic development direction for the city on a long-term basis.

The population forecasts for the area are for over 30,000 people and will go higher in the longer term. Therefore, based on the service delivery model selected by the City of Kitchener to significantly invest in resource centres across the community, this area will warrant a resource centre to facilitate the provision of leisure services opportunities for the area's population. Also, this strategy reflects the fact that the development of schools in the area as alternate leisure space resources may not come on a timely basis or at the level of other parts of the City due to the current Schools Accommodation Policy of the province, which could see many of the children bussed out of the area.

Therefore, due to the population growth relative to scale, the geographic distinctiveness and positioning of the community and the uncertainty of the availability of other community facilities, a need for a

resource centre is identified. Due to the size of the community and the current 2011-2012 timeframe, it will warrant a permanent building, which is currently forecasted at \$4.4 million.

Victoria Hills

Victoria Hills Community Centre has operated for an extended period of time in the west area of Kitchener. It serves a population that continues to grow to the west, with high-density residential corridors on Victoria Street, Westmount Road, Fischer-Hallman Road and other areas. Based on the 2003 data, it has significant utilization hours, nearly 4,000 per year and achieved over 55,000 attendances in that operating year.

In the 2000 Community Centre Report, a proposed addition of 3,000 square feet for a multi-purpose room was identified for Victoria Hills, with an original budget of \$977,000.

In a September 2003, report to the city, the Victoria Hills Community Association identified the fact that to support a 3,000 square foot multi-purpose room, additional corridor space, storage, washroom capacity and parking capacities needed to be addressed.

Subsequent consultation programs with the Victoria Hills Neighbourhood Association and the Belmont Seniors identified a need for more programmable space. They felt that adding to the existing gymnasium would not give them the space necessary to meet community needs. Work completed on program evaluations indicated that approximately 50% of those responding were identifying gym space activities as needed. Based on the revised considerations for a second gymnasium, the capital cost was elevated to \$1.59 million, plus \$67,000 for parking and accessibility considerations, an internal office and resource area alignments of \$380,000 and kitchen upgrades and an emergency generator totaling \$100,000.

The utilization statistics indicated, along with the program evaluations, that additional space is required. The preference is for a second gymnasium facility to support high ceiling activities plus multi-use programs. What is being projected by the Association is a two-part development. The first is space expansion and related supports. The second part involves internal reconfigurations to the offices, kitchen, etc. The expansion component, at \$1.6 million, plus parking lot and related considerations, appears to be demand-based and would facilitate enhanced programming, accessibility and attendance in a growth-oriented area of the City.

The Master Plan is less able at this time to comment on the \$579,000 associated with the commercial kitchen, generator and internal realignments. A commercial kitchen is a significant expense and there

would need to be some assessment as to the level of utilization such a kitchen would get when many facilities today are more dependent on caterers for larger functions. The utilization profile for a community kitchen component has not been identified which would create increased utilization. A Business Plan that aggregates all the current information and input available into a consolidated strategy and rationale is needed to finalize the components to be invested in.

Mill-Courtland

Mill-Courtland is in the central part of the city and has had an established community centre, with a strong community and social services focus, ie: a resource centre model. The resource positioning of this facility responds to the demographics, social service requirements and some of the key challenges of this particular neighbourhood of the city.

The 2003 utilization data indicated 2,212 hours of utilization with participation levels at over 38,000. Some 907 hours or 41.0% involved paid rental hours, involving 9,986 users or 26.3% of total users. In terms of attendance, it had one of the higher rates but significantly because of rentals.

The unique positioning of this facility with significant social service activity, involving food banks, counselling, specialized human service programs, etc., along with leisure services, results in a need to examine it differently. Much of its activities and services would be more one on one, short duration, etc. Therefore, it may not have the intensity perspective that other leisure service oriented facilities have that target multiple population groups, however the use statistics indicated reasonably high resident contact of nearly 30,000 people outside of the rentals.

The organization has identified a need for a small addition which is somewhat predicated around the limited site space available.

Further assessment of this expansion needs to evolve. The placement of a portable unit on the site to expand the programming options and space availability at approximately \$30,000 to \$50,000 has been provided as a short-term solution. A permanent solution would be an addition to the building at approximately \$350,000 as budgeted in 2008/2009. A Business Plan is needed prior to initiation of this project to assess actual use and need.

.3 Proposed Community Centre Delivery Strategies and Criteria Recommendations

Services Delivery Approach

The service delivery model being affirmed in this Master Plan, focuses on city resource centres supplemented by community-based facilities. Based on recent attendance and hour utilization statistics, the expansion of or development of new resource centres within the current budgetary profiles and based on the 2000 Community Centre Study is supported. Such a strategy reflects a continuing commitment by the city to ensure neighbourhood level leisure servicing opportunities, not just of a recreational perspective, but on wellness, social services and related parameters. This model enhances accessibility, supports neighbourhood identity and volunteerism and creates improved opportunities for residents to access the services that are most meaningful to them and which are reflective of the needs of the different areas in which they live.

The evidence presented by the community from multiple sources identified an evident preference and need for a city resource centre approach to leisure services and programs spaces and accessibility, augmented by the use of community-based facilities. This model is preferred for the following reasons:

- The ability to strengthen community development and to give a centrepiece to community life, identity and capacity building.
- The flexibility of having space that is predominantly dedicated to community and leisure program services and delivery.
- The flexibility, stability, continuity and control that can be offered to users via this approach.
- The ability to better respond to evolving and changing community needs, aspirations and capacities.
- A more effective response to both established areas of the city where schools could close or limited facilities are available and for growth areas where the timing of schools can be uncertain and facilities are needed due to growth.

Resource Centres Development Criteria and Strategies

The following perspectives develop the decision-making framework for the current operation of existing resource centre facilities and the future development of new facilities, expansions, etc.

Principles

The following principles are recommended to support decision-making in regards to the city's investment in resource centres:

Recommendation

- **To create a stable and sustainable resource for the delivery of leisure and potentially social health and other linked services within a defined community.**
- **To provide an identity and centrepiece to a neighbourhood or community.**
- **To facilitate volunteerism in the delivery of leisure services and community development and other significant neighbourhood / community capacity-building initiatives.**
- **To develop and sustain a sense of community pride, ownership and participation at the neighbourhood level where people live, interact and recreate on a regular basis.**
- **To provide leisure resource opportunities that are accessible related to where people live, interact and wish to participate with their family, friends and neighbours on a local level.**
- **To ensure a primary focus on the provision of leisure and social service programs that have demonstrated need within the community, with only a secondary or tertiary focus on rentals or other uses that are not necessarily tied to the community.**
- **To develop governance and management plans for each centre that reflect the needs, capacities and traditions of each area within an operating template that supports flexibility, reduces risks and focuses on outcomes.**

Delivery Structure

In support of long-term planning as to the scope and rationale for resource centres, a three-tiered delivery model is being proposed, similar to what has been in place within the Parks Classification System for years.

The three levels of delivery are as follows:

- **Resource Centres / Neighbourhood Program Centres** – these are centres that provide leisure and social services programming to defined neighbourhoods or communities within Kitchener. They have the following characteristics:
 - o Service one or possibly two defined neighbourhoods or service areas / planning communities.
 - o Provide primarily meeting, program delivery / multi-use, rentable, gymnasium and related-type spaces for localized leisure and partner-oriented and funded social services program delivery.
 - o Can be connected to a branch library, school or related community facility, but do not themselves focus on servicing district areas of the city.
 - o Are sized in terms of floor space and building features to reflect the number of people who live in the defined service area, the types of programs and services needed and the alternative spaces that are available within the community. They would generally be between 2,000 square feet and 20,000 square feet.
 - o They would be operated within a partnership framework with the City of Kitchener Department of Community Services and local groups, neighbourhood or community associations, etc., with the governance and operating model being developed based on local capacities, history, city-policies, etc.
 - o Currently involve the following community centres: Mill-Courtland, Chandler-Mowat, Doon-Pioneer Park, Centreville-Chicopee, Bridgeport, Forest Heights, Victoria Hills, Stanley Park and Country Hills.

- **District Recreation Centres** – these are multi-use centres of significant investment that have the focus of servicing district or city-wide populations, but also have a defined neighbourhood component. Their key considerations involve:
 - o One facility or several buildings within a campus model that can provide an indoor pool / ice surfaces, major sports fields, community rooms, gymnasiums, etc.
 - o The primary focus of the facility is on a district servicing strategy that may involve city-wide organizations and leagues. Therefore, at a minimum, responding to the needs of between four and ten neighbourhoods / planning districts.
 - o Directly operated by the city, though a community / neighbourhood association may be a partner in locally-based programming space and time allocations.
 - o Size will be highly variable depending on the major facilities, but likely would involve 40,000 square feet to 100,000 square feet.
 - o Facilities would include: Lyle-Hallman Indoor Pool / Grand River Arena / related facilities; Breithaupt Recreation Centre, Cameron Heights Pool, Forest Heights Indoor Pool, the proposed South Kitchener Community Centre; and Lions, Queensmount, McLaren and Doherty Arenas.

- **Specialized Community Facilities** – represent facilities that have city-wide servicing parameters or beyond, or are designed for targeted populations that attract people from broad geographical areas. The key factors involve:
 - o Space is allocated primarily to specific population groups but may also have servicing capabilities for other uses on a secondary basis.
 - o Spaces will be highly variable by user group and need, likely ranging from 2,000 square feet and upwards.
 - o Facilities would be primarily operated by city staff due to scale and risk, however, community or population-based groups could be involved through management boards and other models based on the specialized nature and targeting of the facility.

- o Would include the following: Kitchener Memorial Auditorium Complex, Rockway Senior's Centre, St. Mary's Community Centre, Harry Class Outdoor Pool, Centre in the Square, the Kitchener Market, etc.

The purpose of this hierarchical approach is as follows:

- To establish the servicing range and expectations for a community facility in terms of its primary focus, accountabilities and expectations.
- To establish the basis for the governance and operating model for the facilities, with more community / shared involvement in the smaller, localized facilities and direct city operating responsibilities within the larger facilities.
- To ensure the localized focus of the community-based facilities so that they do not gravitate to becoming larger and larger facilities over time and lose their neighbourhood connectivity and focus.
- To establish reasonable levels of investment and scope.

Development Criteria

One of the key questions that emerged from the research and internal discussions is the development criteria for new resource centres. Currently, need and decision-making revolves around community groups coming forward, staff proposals, etc. However, there is an increasing number of groups who are in discussions around the possible development of resource centres in their area. As a result, a set of criteria is needed to support decision-making in regards to resource centres.

Recommendation

- **The group proposing a centre must have a minimum of five to seven years of successful and sustainable local program delivery operations using schools, churches, arenas and other facilities.**
- **An identifiable core of ten to fifteen committed volunteers needs to be demonstrated, who have been active for a minimum of one to two years.**
- **A definable neighbourhood or service area is evident that does not infringe on other defined service areas, creates undue overlaps, etc.**

- **Additions to existing resource centres should not occur until reasonable utilization of service area schools, churches, club houses and other facilities have been explored and utilized were possible.**
- **Any new resource centre, involving a permanent structure, and any addition over \$250,000 should have a Business Plan completed involving the community / neighbourhood association and the city in a partnership to determine:**
 - **The program and service needs for the area without creating a dependency on rentals by third parties, such as churches and others who service a broader dimension of the community and / or who may have other venue alternatives. That is, feasibility should not be dependent on secondary and tertiary uses.**
 - **Statement of objectives as to the purpose, focus and direction of the facility.**
 - **Demand profiles, needs and trends relative to both anticipated hour and participant levels.**
 - **An Operating Plan identifying the proposed hours of operation, the intended users and related profiles.**
 - **A review of the other available public community spaces that could be utilized relative to their accessibility, affordability, location, capacities, safety and related criteria.**
 - **Completion of a conceptual floor plan to determine space allocations and sizes.**
 - **Development of a tested capital cost projection, with appropriate alternatives in terms of specialized equipment, expansions, space alternatives, etc. that gives a clear capital investment option or options.**
 - **A three-year projected operating pro forma.**
 - **A governance and management plan.**
 - **Statements as to how this investment will advance the Strategic Plan of the city and the Community Services Department.**

- **An assessment of the sustainability of the initiative over a ten year timeline.**
- **Identification of variable sources of capital investments in terms of fundraising, grants, reserves, Development Charges and direct city investment.**
- **The use of portable buildings or shared facilities for a period of up to five years is an acceptable pre-development strategy to a permanent facility, as well as an opportunity to test demand levels prior to a more significant investment.**

The intent of these criteria is to establish a minimum threshold for community groups to pursue a resource centre and for the decision-making by the city in terms of need, capital costs and sustainability. The research indicated concerns over the variability of capital costs and the tendency for them to grow, along with sustainability, governance and management considerations. The need for the Business Plan is increasingly important due to the scale of these investments and the number of questions that are involved in the future decisions that are involved around these facilities. Also, there needs to be an increasing linkage to the use of community-based facilities, such as schools, churches, etc., particularly when additions are being considered and other areas of the city do not have a community centre but need could exist.

Operational Perspectives

The following operational perspectives are proposed in light of the discussions, inputs, etc., for resource centres:

- The resource centres be operated as a partnership between a community organization and the city.
- The community / neighbourhood association should be responsible for:
 - o Local communications and promotions.
 - o Program co-ordination, and within partnership-based centres, rentals, etc.
 - o Volunteer development, recruitment and recognition.
 - o Identification of program / service priorities, needs and allocations.
 - o Program delivery as appropriate.
- The city should be responsible for:
 - o Facility maintenance, insurance, risk management, etc.
 - o Providing technical supports to the community / neighbourhood organization, broader-based advertising and promotion, volunteer supports, etc.
 - o The possible provision of directly delivered city programs and services.
 - o Performance evaluation of the operations and outcomes.
 - o Assurance that the city's objectives, policies, procedures and related considerations are adhered to and implemented.
 - o Budget oversight, accounting and related financial considerations.
 - o Program and leadership development supports, planning, etc.

- The city undertake the development of a more rigorous and comprehensive data collection program for all its centres that ensures a capability to focus on the primary user objectives of the centre, being leisure and social service programs and delivery and which track multiple years of hours of utilization, attendance, etc.
- The role of rentals in the operational plans should be seen as a secondary and tertiary income generating-opportunities:
 - Not be the justification for a new facility, expansions, etc.
 - Rentals by third parties, such as cubs, scouts, etc., that service the local population should be considered a primary user.
 - Rentals to broad-based church groups or for weddings, conferences, meetings, etc. that have broad-based audiences would be considered a secondary use.
 - Rentals should not displace an existing or scheduled community centre use unless a reasonable alternative is available and adequate advance time is available. They should only absorb space / time that is unused for the primary focus, ie: neighbourhood leisure and social service programs.

Another key set of considerations in regards to the operations of the resource centres is as follows:

- Scheduling flexibility needs to be a significant objective in order to ensure maximum utilization of the facility and participation levels.
- A fair and equitable process is required to ensure that various interests within a neighbourhood have access to the facility based on:
 - Historical use patterns.
 - Participation levels.
 - Fit with the objectives of the community centre.
 - Efforts to ensure inclusiveness of all community members, to support emerging interests and activities and to ensure fairness and equity.

- Each resource centre to establish its own mix of activities, services and strategies to reflect the uniqueness of its neighbourhood service area. Centres should not be viewed as templates but as localized resources that could be uniquely different across the city.

.4 Resource Centre Recommendations

The following specific facility recommendations are proposed:

- **That the Victoria Hills expansion be undertaken in 2005, involving a Business Plan approach based on existing inputs and research, related to:**
 - **The development of a new multi-purpose room.**
 - **The interior reconfigurations and the addition of the needed support space requirements.**
 - **An assessment of the kitchen requirements to ensure the level of investment reflects the types of uses that will actually occur, ie: event support and a community kitchen.**
- **That a new Chandler-Mowat Community Centre be undertaken in 2006 as per the current planning model.**
- **That a potential permanent expansion to the Mill-Courtland Community Centre be assessed based on the following inputs:**
 - **Completion of a Business Plan in 2006 that clarifies the levels of local use, needs and alternatives.**
 - **Depending on the outcome of the Business Plan, the possible development of the expansion in 2008.**
- **That a community centre for the Kingsdale area be pursued, based on the following development program:**
 - **Availability of additional portable facilities as an interim measure until permanent facilities are in place.**

- **Connected to the future potential availability of the Doherty Arena.**
- **A Business Plan completed in 2007.**
- **Potential development of a resource centre between 2008 and 2010 based on the alternatives that emerge and the Business Plan outcomes.**
- **The development of a district recreation complex in South Kitchener, which would include a resource centre component, within the following framework:**
 - **Site selection study completed consistent with the Huron Park South Community Plan.**
 - **Business Plan completed in the 2009 to 2011 period.**
 - **Development of the facility, depending on the Business Plan outcomes, in the 2011 to 2013 period.**
 - **Ensuring potential connectivity to the other proposed leisure facility initiatives for the area as part of a possible multi-use centre / complex.**
- **That other emerging resource centre requests, such as for the Bridgeport Resource Centre expansion be tested against the various criteria outlined in this Plan, and determinations made as to whether these Business Plans identify appropriate need, fit and value.**

The Victoria Hills Community Centre expansion is being proposed due to the potential for population growth in the area, the current detailed planning completed to date and the fit with the criteria relative to the advanced state of activity that has been realized. The most challenging question would be to ensure that the significant level of investment in the kitchen reflects the types and scale of use that will actually occur.

The Chandler-Mowat facility is progressing through the early design stage. The area has specialized needs, has been operating successfully for a significant number of years and has had identification of support within the 2000 Community Centres Study. Development work has progressed to the point of design and implementation.

The Mill-Courtland Resource Centre has a portable space being provided as a short-term solution. However, the utilization levels of the facility, minus the rentals by third parties, indicates that a review is needed to determine whether the allocation of space, time, etc. or other strategies could be undertaken to facilitate enhanced localized activities based on the criteria that have been developed for resource centres. Therefore, a Business Plan should be completed to ensure that a permanent facility is the most appropriate strategy.

The proposed Kingsdale Resource Centre arises from the 2000 Community Centre Study and on-going requests from individuals in the area. One unique consideration in this area is the possible availability of the Doherty Arena if it is decommissioned. Therefore, a Business Plan to determine need and alternative development strategies is proposed. If the Business Plan affirms the need, then the preferred development strategy can go forward. The timing of the various components of the development program for a Kingsdale Resource Centre would be shaped by the decisions that may be emerging around the future of the Doherty Arena. Additional portable facilities should be provided in 2005 to support on-going growth and development that is being experienced.

The South Kitchener Community Centre is proposed based on the fact that there could be soon 38,000 new residents over the next fifteen years in Kitchener and approximately 60%+ of these will be in the South Kitchener area. This is a fast growing area, with some areas having access to community centres and some currently not having the availability of this resource.

The development of this facility could also have an impact on the need for future expansions of Doon-Pioneer Park and Country Hills Resource Centre as residents in the far south area of Kitchener currently utilize these facilities. Eventually they could be more focused on a community centre in their area.

In terms of the preference for multi-use strategies, this Resource centre could be developed more in the model of the Forest Heights Community Centre with other major district facilities attached in terms of a twin pad arena, indoor pool, etc., depending on what evolves in these other leisure facility areas.

There have been some discussions around new community centres in regards to the Kitchener-Waterloo Hospital, Belmont and related areas. These requests have come in the form of letters and preliminary discussions. However, no significant process has been entered into to determine the need or viability of a resource centre. The planning process for a Comprehensive Development Area south of Glasgow Street, east of the Iron Horse Trail, could include consideration of a resource centre for the existing and proposed population.

As part of the on-going development of the resource centre's delivery model, a two-step process could evolve in regards to these projects if proponents exist and wish to pursue it, including expansion of the Bridgeport Resource Centre. These are:

- A testing of the concept against the criteria that have been developed in this Plan.
- The potential undertaking of a Business Plan as per the criteria.
- Ensuring areas of the city in need of a resource centre but who are without one, have appropriate priority consideration.

Based on the current recommendations and growth patterns of the city, a portable facility, shared resources or other strategies would likely be the preferred interim approach if feasibility were determined for new service areas. Long-term needs and investments beyond the 2013 period may eventually occur, however, short term justification in terms of five and ten years is not apparent at this time.

Anticipated future growth patterns of the city include substantial new residential and employee populations through re-urbanization. The City should also consider whether investing in new leisure facilities such as resource centre would act as an incentive to stimulate reurbanization. This would be a departure from the current method of requiring an existing community to demonstrate need and viability prior to establishing a portable or permanent community centre.

5.3 Arenas

.1 Overview

The City of Kitchener has had a strong history of operating municipal arenas. Currently, it operates three ice surfaces at the Kitchener Memorial Auditorium Complex which is one of the most significant facilities in Ontario and across Canada. It also operates Lion's Arena on Block Line Road in the Strausburg Road area and the Grand River Arena at Grand River High School. These two arenas are of a relatively similar age and have considerable life expectancy remaining and are well located.

The city also operates three other arena facilities that have significant challenges. The first two were built at the same time approximately forty years ago, Doherty and Queensmount. Both are single pad arenas which were developed under a design concept that had a very profound roofline that did not achieve their objectives in terms of heat cushioning. They now represent significant replacement costs. Both facilities

are also of an age where major systems will need renewal or replacement. The estimated renewal cost for Doherty Arena is up to \$1 million and for Queensmount, potentially up to \$2 million.

The final arena is McLaren Arena, which is located adjacent to the Kitchener Collegiate Institute and Kitchener-Waterloo campus of Grand River Hospital. It is a mid-range aged arena that is located very near the border of Kitchener and Waterloo, is not visible from a major arterial, is a single pad facility and will likely need some upgrading in the future in terms of dressing room additions and enhancements if it is pursued as a permanent facility. The land that it sits on has potential value for future hospital expansion or other medical/commercial type uses which would represent a higher and better use for this site due to its location within the Kitchener-Waterloo market area. It could generate some capital revenue to the municipality if it were sold. If it were to be sustained, a minimum of \$500,000 in upgrades would be needed if it were to be maintained for more than five years.

The City of Kitchener is facing a major investment decision in terms of renewing two aged arena facilities that have features about them that are very unique, costly and are single pad in nature. It has another arena that is not located within a central population service area of Kitchener residents and for which the site may have a better use profile.

In the delivery of arena services, there are some significant trends that are important to note and utilize in the development of a strategy:

- The tendency is to develop municipal arenas in two pad configurations as these tend to be approximately 25% less costly to construct and 25% less costly to operate, as only one ice resurfer and staff team are required, compared to two stand-alone single pad facilities.
- Due to the cost of arena development and operations, and the fact that most of the user groups now travel to multiple arenas outside of their neighbourhoods, the trend is to develop arenas at a district level rather than at a neighbourhood servicing profile. As a result, newer arenas in a twin-pad configuration are developed on arterial or collector routes with high visibility and treated as destination oriented sites / venues.
- Multi-use recreation facilities have become a prominent strategy for two reasons. First, the capital and operating cost efficiencies that can be achieved are significant. Second, some users, especially on a family basis, prefer to go to one location and park, and then be able to undertake multiple activities, whether swimming, accessing a branch library, ice activities, community centre programs, etc.

- Arena facility usage is being influenced significantly by the significant increase in women's hockey and other types of new programs. Women's / girls' hockey is generally increasing 15% to 30% per year in urban centres. This often results in the development of four to six new teams per year and an increased demand for ice. What is also anticipated is as more girls play hockey, and as they grow older, they will continue to want to play hockey. Therefore, it is anticipated that the city will see more women's junior and senior hockey, women's adult leagues and potentially in the future masters / oldtimers women's hockey. Related to skating, an increase in precision skating, adaptive hockey programs and the evolving of masters skating programs have occurred.
- There has also been a significant increase in tournament and skating festivals / meets. This trend is fueled by an interest in broadening and upgrading minor / youth programs, to better demonstrate and challenge athletes / participants and for local youth associations to raise funds to support their programs.
- As a result of the above two trends, along with increased interest in marketability, risk management, etc., municipal arenas have changed dramatically. The need for six dressing rooms per ice pad to support women's participation and tournament play, two referees rooms, upscaled concessions, meeting / boardrooms / tournament rooms, event space, etc., have all evolved into the design of new arena facilities.
- Ice user organizations also prefer a twin pad or larger facilities, as they are much more efficient for operating tournaments or meets especially when professional ice skating coaches are involved and for on-going program operations.

These trends are significant in shaping both the demand and the user profile for ice, as well as design scope and standards that new arena facilities need to address. In Kitchener's case, outside of the Kitchener Memorial Auditorium Complex, all of the arenas are single pad facilities, with many of them being over thirty years old and moving to fifty years of age, and will need significant capital investments to address both the capital maintenance and replacement programs, as well as renewal programs to bring them to a contemporary program standard, such as increased numbers of dressing and referee rooms.

Based on the inputs and discussions to date, a review of the trends and other considerations, the following conclusions are presented:

- Kitchener is at an interesting threshold, where it has the opportunity to decommission aged arena facilities and replace them, utilizing its capital funds more effectively in the development of more contemporary and operationally efficient facilities that will better meet the needs of users.

- The agreement with SportsWorld provides a minimum five-year transitional period to affect an arena development strategy and to initiate its implementation in the short term, along with potentially longer term opportunities to implement a broader transition.
- Capital funds for the new facilities could be offset by some displacement of the capital costs for maintenance / replacement requirements and a potential sale of assets on a limited scale.
- A new arena services locational strategy would result in facilities being located in more preferred and visible locations, as well as facilitate greater multi-use potential and more cost efficient operations.

Additionally, the Granite Curling Club has identified a potential partnership opportunity to connect a curling addition to the South Kitchener Twin pad Arena in which they would be a funding partner.

.2 Recommendations

The following multi-part development strategy for arena services in Kitchener is recommended:

- **In 2004, the opening of the SportsWorld facility in the October of that year, followed by the decommissioning of Queensmount Arena as an ice facility. Consideration needs to be given to resolve the other non-ice uses like Oktoberfest before demolishing or sale is considered.**
- **In 2006, develop a new twin pad facility in the west Kitchener area ready for the 2006-2007 season.**
- **By 2007, decommission either Doherty Arena or possibly McLaren Arena or both, depending on market demand, with the preference involving Doherty if an alternate use as a community centre is feasible and due to its higher renewal costs.**
- **Between 2011 to 2015, develop a new twin pad arena facility in the southern reaches of the city, possibly in conjunction with a proposed community centre, prospective indoor aquatics facility for the area and a potential partner funded curling facility.**
- **Potential decommissioning of either Doherty or McLaren after 2007, if SportsWorld continues as a public facility, and/or timed with the opening of the South Kitchener initiative.**

The following are some of the key strategy considerations around this proposal:

- Results in a staged decommissioning of up to three aged, high cost facilities, two of which have locational challenges, with their decommissioning connected to the development of increased ice

capacity in the community, that is, four new ice surfaces developed and two decommissioned in the short term. This results in additional ice pads that will provide additional capacity for a five to nine year period.

- The first new twin pad should be developed in the west Kitchener area as this area could lose its only two arena facilities, McLaren and Queensmount. The area represents close to 30% of the city's population when considering the service area, which is primarily from the Waterloo border on the north, to King Street on the east, Ottawa Street on the south and Trusslers Road on the west. The area also continues to experience some population growth.
- A location for the new twin pad arena would be in the west and Kitchener area.
- Doherty Arena is not a candidate for a twin pad arena in the future, as it is on a dead end street, not visible to traffic and as a twin pad, would draw extensive traffic into residential areas. It is better positioned, after a major renovation, to be the proposed new community centre for the Kingsdale area if that facility is deemed feasible.

A new twin pad arena in the 2011 to 2015 period will be needed to address population growth. In fact, demand may warrant the advancing of this particular project which could be reviewed in five to seven years. The southern area of the City is the preferred location due to the intensity of growth that will be experienced in that part of Kitchener over the next ten to fifteen years.

This project is also a candidate for a multi-purpose initiative, potentially integrating the proposed community centre for that area, and for a new indoor pool. Discussions should be held with the City of Cambridge in terms of any possible joint development initiatives in light of their residential development patterns in close proximity to this area of Kitchener.

The proposed arenas strategy has the following benefits:

- It provides geographical alignment for arenas related to the city's population growth areas.
- Results in more twin pad facilities that are more efficient to operate and to build, along with a multi-purpose and multi-use facilities strategy.
- Facilities will be of a contemporary standard to support evolving ice user needs.

- Capacity will be added to meet both immediate and longer term ice demand needs on a staged and methodical basis.
- Arenas will be positioned as a district servicing / destination level on visible traffic routes.

.3 Arena Facilities Development Profile

In the development of new arena facilities, the following activities and criteria be utilized:

- That all new arena facilities be developed through a Business Plan, undertaken a minimum of one year prior to their development.
- That the minimum criteria for twin pad arenas be as follows:
 - o Two ice surfaces of a minimum of eighty feet by one hundred ninety feet, up to a maximum of eighty-five feet by two hundred feet.
 - o Olympic size ice surfaces not be developed unless an evident need is in place.
 - o All arena facilities have six dressing rooms per ice surface, two referees rooms, a First Aid room and related facilities.
 - o One meeting / tournament room be available for up to twenty people per facility.
 - o Seating and warming areas be incorporated at appropriate levels for the use intended.
 - o Automated systems and energy efficiency be maximized in all facilities.
 - o Specialized or dedicated areas for user groups be available in arena facilities but that these groups at a minimum, be responsible for the fit-out of that space if it has exclusive use.
 - o Canteen, merchandise and related areas be established in the design to maximize traffic flow connections and revenue production.

- That locational considerations be based on:
 - o Direct connections to or visibility from major roadways.
 - o Consideration be given for connectivity to multi-use environments, involving potential branch libraries, schools, community centres, fire halls, etc.
 - o Appropriate parking and reduced impacts on neighbourhood areas be incorporated.

- That private-public partnerships be considered where:
 - o Public access is assured.
 - o Facility standards, in terms of construction and maintenance quality, are at city levels.
 - o Evident financial advantage exists, either on capital and/or operating dimensions.
 - o Sustainability and financial stability are evident.
 - o The city has first right to allocate the contracted hours and/or acquire the facility.
 - o A new private facility developed in conjunction with the city does not unreasonably displace utilization hours within current city arena facilities unless decommissioning is incorporated.

- That the city continue to provide ice resources that average one ice surface, including the Conestoga College facility at a rate of one ice surface for 15,000 to 20,000 residents for which the current rate is one ice surface for 22,300 residents.

A slight increase in the level of service is proposed in light of the evident and significant growth in women's hockey and other ice uses.

Based on the current plan of three arenas being decommissioned, continued use of the SportsWorld facility and two new twin pads, this would result by 2015 in one ice surface for every 20,000 individuals, which is approximately a 10% growth in capacity. A more substantive growth in capacity may be required due to some of the key trends, however, the uncertainty of the continuation of some of these

trends and what is generally considered a potential oversupply of ice on a regional basis, temper the immediate need to identify additional ice beyond that which is being recommended.

.4 Outdoor Rinks

Overview

Kitchener is one of a few communities in southwestern Ontario that has an active and large outdoor ice program. It is operated by volunteers, has over fifteen sites and a long history of success and use.

Recommendation

The outdoor rinks program continue based on its current format.

The ability and primary reasons for this continuing initiative are:

- Neighbourhood-oriented servicing which is a strategic goal and outcome of the city and this Plan.
- The use of volunteers to bring services to where people live.
- The historical sustainability of many of the outdoor ice surfaces over long periods of years.
- The low cost of service delivery for an important Canadian-oriented activity.

Due to changing weather patterns, many communities have diminished or eliminated their outdoor rink program. In Kitchener, they have significant value, tradition and success and should continue to be supported.

5.4 Aquatics

.1 Overview

The City of Kitchener operates four indoor and three outdoor pools, the last pool being developed being the Grand River or Lyle Hallman pool that is now over fifteen years old. Several of the pools, such as the one at the Breithaupt Recreation Centre and the Harry Class Outdoor Pool are well over thirty years old, the latter being over sixty years old.

The aquatic programs operated by the City of Kitchener have been well utilized. It is augmented by facilities on a regional basis at the Waterloo Recreation Centre, the two universities and others venues.

Residents have a choice as to where they wish to take aquatic lessons or where they wish to swim, particularly in regards to regionally-based aquatic teams.

The usage data in the Research Report indicated several key outcomes:

- Significant utilization levels at Forest Heights and Lyle Hallman which are suburban based.
- Moderate to significant use of the Breithaupt Pool
- More limited use at the Cameron Heights pool.

It also needs to be noted, that the Cameron Heights Pool, in recent years, due to lower utilization levels, has become a differentiated facility in that it is where aquatic teams, lifesaving and leadership courses and other specialized programs are offered. Also, the Breithaupt Pool has a therapeutic pool which attracts significant numbers of seniors and others who wish to use that specialized aquatics resource.

For the outdoor pools, the Harry Class Pool, formally known as the Municipal Pool, and which is a 50 metre facility, has extensive use, with Idlewood also having a good use profile. The Wilson Pool has less use but generally within reasonable parameters for an outdoor pool based on its more constrained location.

What the data indicated is that the Cameron Heights Pool, for an indoor facility, has a substantially lower use profile than the other indoor pools. Discussions at a generalized level about the possible closure of this pool have been on-going for a number of years. There has also be some concerns raised by the School Board about the pool being within the facility and the potential closure and / or expansion of the secondary school that would either close or reuse that space. Operationally, the pool is embedded in the facility creating some challenges around access, security, etc.

The data also indicated that Cameron Heights Pool, as a downtown facility, has a significant lower user pattern than the suburban indoor pools. With a significant amount of growth forecasted for the community and no indoor or outdoor pool in the south area of the city, the needs of that particular area will become increasingly apparent.

One strategy that could be considered, would involve the closure of the Cameron Heights Pool upon the opening of a new indoor pool in South Kitchener, as potentially part of a larger multi-use complex. This

would develop a new indoor aquatics facility that is in a suburban area where use levels are higher and would respond to the significant growth in population anticipated in an area of the city that currently has no indoor pool. It would also result in the Cameron Heights Pool not being susceptible to the long-term school needs. However, two concerns arise:

- It would result in no indoor pool in the core area of the city where there is efforts being made to attract residents.
- The specialized services that the pool currently operates would need to be 'pushed back' into the other indoor pools, creating possible use / scheduling challenges.

Over the years, a rule of thumb servicing profile for indoor pools has generally suggested one indoor pool for every 50,000 people. However, demand-oriented considerations should prevail where possible. In using the rule of thumb consideration, Kitchener is at its maximum servicing level and within fifteen years would be on the edge of the servicing level in terms of needing a fifth indoor pool. From a demand perspective, it is not immediately apparent that there is significant latent demand for indoor aquatic activities that is not being serviced in light of the fact that there is ready capacity remaining within the Cameron Heights Pool.

In regards to outdoor pools, they are on a strategic level, generally always widely valued by local area residents. The Harry Class Pool, due to its size and location services the core area of the city, as well as the north and west sides. The Idlewood Pool has the opportunity to serve the eastern reaches of the city, while the Wilson Pool, which is smaller and has a lower attendance rate, serves more the Kingsdale, Fairview, Rockway and related areas.

It is also an apparent trend that municipalities are tending not to develop new outdoor on wading pools for three key reasons and giving more consideration to splash pads:

- The limited seasonal opportunity they offer.
- The high costs of development and operation for the short service period.
- The lost days due to inclement weather that reduce their overall productivity.

- Splash pads target play, younger children and offer more attractivity, resulting in higher utilization. They generally do not duplicate swim lessons and other uses in indoor pool operations.

.2 Recommendations

Based on the assessments, utilization, levels, trends, etc., the following recommendations are made in regards to the City of Kitchener's aquatics facilities:

- **That a new indoor pool be developed in South Kitchener by 2013, preferably as part of a larger recreation complex within a district recreation centre strategy.**
- **A Business Plan be completed on a proposed South Kitchener indoor pool either as a separate entity or as part of a larger recreation leisure facilities initiative by approximately 2010.**
- **That as part of the Business Plan in 2010, the future of the Cameron Heights Pool be integrated in terms of either a decommissioning option as demand does not warrant five indoor pools within the city, or continuation if demand levels increase and warrant an additional facility.**
- **That if for any reason, the Cameron Heights Indoor Pool cannot be sustained up until 2013, that the South Kitchener pool proposal be advanced on a timely basis to ensure reasonable continuation of a four indoor pool servicing model within the city.**
- **That the three outdoor pool facilities be sustained within their current operating formats, with no additional outdoor pools developed within the life of this Leisure Facilities Master Plan.**
- **That the city undertake discussions with the Waterloo Region District School Board on future access to Cameron Heights Pool.**
- **That splash pads be considered in areas with significantly higher levels of younger children and where demand for an outdoor water resource is evident.**

The recommendations identify that the preferred strategy is to provide an indoor aquatic service in the South Kitchener area due to the size of the population, the driving times to existing indoor pools and the multi-use facility potentials. The future of the Cameron Heights Indoor Pool may not be viable if utilization levels overall do not increase due to population growth or changing aquatic use patterns. It is

proposed, as part of the Business Plan for the South Kitchener Indoor Pool proposal, that the future of the Cameron Heights Indoor Pool be incorporated, not as an alternative to the South Kitchener Indoor Pool, but rather whether a fifth indoor pool facility is viable in itself and at that location.

As an interim provision to provide for the possible need to close the Cameron Heights Pool for school board use or other reasons, it is important that long-term capital planning and the Leisure Facilities Master Plan identify the fact that four indoor pools are required. Therefore, if Cameron Heights Pool were to be decommissioned earlier, then an advanced effort in bringing forward the South Kitchener Indoor Pool will be required.

The Business Plan considerations around the Cameron Heights Pool component would need to consider not only demand levels, but two other key considerations that will be more relevant some ten plus years out:

- Evident increases in significant population growth in the inner city area that would warrant a localized, indoor aquatic resource.
- Even if operational after ten years, whether the Cameron Heights Indoor Pools is sustainable at that location in light of events that have or will be unfolding by that time related to the school itself.

The outdoor pool facilities are highly valued and well utilized. However, the Leisure Facilities Master Plan does not recommend increasing the array of outdoor pools due to their cost, seasonality, weather impacts and the capacities available and the investments being made in indoor aquatic facilities.

5.5 Seniors' Centres

.1 Overview

Designated Seniors' Centres have been a significant component of the leisure services delivery mix within urban municipalities. The specialized needs, interests and perspectives of seniors have warranted a targeted approach that has been highly valued and has realized significant participation levels.

The City of Kitchener has demonstrated support for this initiative in the past through the development of the Rockway Seniors' Centre, the Victoria School's Senior Centre and the delivery of Senior's programs at the Breithaupt Centre. It is currently developing a new Downtown Community Centre that was built on a Wellness Centre concept to transition and replace the Victoria School Seniors Centre.

One of the strategic trends that is emerging in the operating environment is that seniors centres continue to grow but tend to be targeted at an user age profile of those between 72 and 85 years of age. In recent years, they have had difficulty attracting younger seniors or earlier retirees for a host of reasons. One set of reasons involves the younger seniors, or early retirees, who do not see themselves as part of the seniors' community or are not interested in site-based leisure programs and services, or services that have a strong socialization orientation. The seniors population themselves often see the younger seniors or early retirees as having different interests or being from a different generation and who can represent some integration challenges.

With the 'baby boom' phenomena, which currently represents the population between forty-two and fifty-seven years of age, and the fact that they represent some 30% of the population, it is forecasted that there will be a significant change in perspectives over the next ten to fifteen years, in the desire for, participation in and the delivery methods associated with seniors services. The transitions will involve much more broadly based interests in leisure programs and services, often with a stronger physical orientation, more menu-oriented choices and potentially less of a need to be a member or belonging to a designated site or venue.

Some of these trends are already being expressed in that not all seniors participate in designated seniors centres. There are senior programs at the Breithaupt Centre, in churches, at ethnic clubs and in other centres across the city. As a result, currently and increasingly in the future, two distinct market segments for seniors leisure services will evolve. One that is centre-oriented and age-targeted that has a stronger club and socialization perspective. Another segment that will respond to a wider range of services at multiple sites and is less member-based.

As a result, the long term development of seniors services will need to focus on these two market segments and the relative differences and needs that both may have. In the short and medium term, it is not a question of significantly transitioning dedicated seniors centres but is more focused on creating the strategies and the platform to ensure a wider base of leisure programs and opportunities for seniors.

Another consideration that has been addressed by many communities, is the fact that seniors programming often tends to be primarily undertaken on a Monday to Friday basis during daytime hours. As a result, some very sophisticated and very heavily invested facilities could be made available in the evenings and on weekends for a broader base of leisure and community uses. In Burlington, there is a concerted effort to now make the seniors centre available outside of the regular senior programming

timeframes. Other communities are following similar patterns.

Another consideration is that many seniors, especially as they move to older age levels, may have transportation barriers. As a result, moving seniors programs into local areas becomes an increasing consideration and opportunity, especially in areas of the city that may have a high concentration of seniors. This strategy also allows them to participate with their neighbours and friends, reduce travel time and inconvenience and build a sense of neighbourhood and community.

.2 Recommendations

Based on the analysis and the research, the following recommendations are made in regards to Seniors' Centres and services for the City of Kitchener:

- **That starting in 2006, opportunities be sought with the seniors and other groups to utilize the Rockway Senior's Centre for a broader base of leisure community uses in non-designated seniors' times in the evenings and on weekends when available.**
- **That seniors programs be increasingly considered a community programming priority for city operated and / or supported resource centres where numbers warrant and demand is evident in order to service broader seniors' markets.**
- **That seniors programming ensure a broader mix of activity and program opportunities involving physical / fitness, socialization, skills development, lifeskills, health and well-being, social services and related dimensions based on localized need.**
- **That the Woodworking Centre project with the City of Waterloo be implemented in 2005.**

The recommendation strategizes that the Rockway Senior Centre be sustained for a significant period of time as a designated seniors centre, but that unused capacity be made available to support community groups, neighbourhood associations and others in the area. Senior's programs at the Downtown and Breithaupt Centre continue as important services.

Additionally, with resource centres being the primary delivery vehicle for leisure services in local areas of the city, these facilities should give significant consideration to ensuring that there is a mix of seniors programs and services available where numbers and demand warrant. This population group should be given a priority relative to space and time in balance with the other priorities within each community based on their relative needs and profile.

As a result, the recommended strategy within the Kitchener Leisure Facilities Master Plan is to sustain an evolving dedicated seniors centre, move more seniors programming out into the community and to engage seniors on a wider front of activities and services targeted at their specific needs. This strategy is consistent with current and projected needs, strategic trends within this particular population group and focuses on enhancing existing resources and leisure delivery strategies to be more efficient and effective.

The current partnership incentive with Waterloo for a Woodworking Centre for seniors to open in 2005 represents a targeted approach and a more efficient delivery strategy. The funds for this, \$50,000 per year in operational support, have been approved.

5.6 Arts and Culture

.1 Overview

The Department of Community Services initiated CulturePlan II in January of 2004. It is currently in process and will reflect new initiatives and requirements, as well as build on the 1996 Cultural Plan I.

As a community, Kitchener has invested significantly in major arts and cultural facilities. The Centre in the Square, the Children's Museum, the Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery, the City Hall Rotunda and many other venues have been developed, either by the city or by community groups with city participation. They create a tremendous mix of facilities for arts and culture for city residents, as well as for regional residents and beyond.

In addition, the city is a hub of multi-cultural settlement, with 23% of its population in 2001 having not been born in Canada and over seventy multicultural communities being represented within the population. Many multicultural activities occur, ranging from the significant dimensions of Oktoberfest to individual cultural community events and activities.

The arts and cultural sector tends to operate on three levels in terms of master planning:

- Arts and cultural venues that respond to the needs of the community and beyond, such as Centre in the Square, the Art Gallery, etc.
- Artist / artisan focused leisure program activities, ranging from quilting to woodworking to weaving to pottery, fine arts, drama, etc. and many other dimensions that can be offered within the major arts and culture venues or at a local community level.

- Special events and multicultural activities.

The first level of arts and culture services is targeted at those who have a strong appreciation for arts and cultural, who wish to view and participate in significant cultural activities or those who have an educational and developmental interest through higher order courses and programs. The second tier of the arts and cultural perspective represents a community programming level where people may have an interest in a drawing class, or in pottery, woodworking, guild or other artisan types of activity, along with drama and other related activities at a learn-to or hobbyist level. The third level of activity involves special events. The City of Kitchener operates an array of special events for the arts and cultural community, such as artistic shows and exhibits, etc. Also in the special event category, are the multicultural events that celebrate the contributions, traditions, experiences and identity of the diverse communities that collectively make-up Kitchener. Oktoberfest is the significant example but there are many others.

The first tier of arts and cultural activity requires dedicated and specialized facilities. Kitchener has a significant infrastructure in place. The second tier represents an opportunity for the community centres, the Rockway Seniors Centre and other facilities operated with/by the city and community groups to deliver programs of interest, where people do not have to travel to the large venues and can undertake them within their local communities.

The third dimension requires significant volunteer effort, needs a focal point and will always evolve as various interests, market and related considerations prevail.

.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations are presented in regards to arts and culture strategies:

- **That the city finalize CulturePlan II and integrate it where appropriate into the Leisure Facilities Master Plan.**
- **That the resource centres continue to offer and expand where feasible their arts and cultural programs where numbers warrant and interest prevails.**
- **That the city continue to be a partner in and provide technical supports to special event and multi-cultural events that provide a richness and diversity to community life and economic development.**

If CulturePlan II were to indicate a major new facility for arts and culture, it should be undertaken through the development process that involves a Business Plan and a Business Plan. It also should look at the activities being identified as needed and whether they can be delivered through other means and venues. Also, city staff, in their roles supporting community centres, should encourage the testing and experimenting of arts and cultural programming within the community centres, recognizing that interest will ebb and flow but that mix of activities that broadens the horizons and interests of the neighbourhood are beneficial outcomes beyond focusing on only high volume but more narrowly defined activities.

The third recommendation supports the city's continuing role in participating in and supporting special events and multi-cultural events. They represent important tourism dimensions to the community, give a profile and sense of community membership to multicultural groups, highlight arts and cultural achievements and capacities and provide an overall richness and diversity across the community that benefits all residents and the community as a whole.

5.7 Significant Multi-Use Facilities / Sport Tourism Policy Development

.1 Overview

The City of Kitchener, for over fifty years, has been a major host community to significant sport tourism events at the regional, provincial, national and international levels. The city has developed and operated major multi-use facilities that support city-wide, regional and broader-based sport tourism activities and events. In the early years, sport tourism was not a specific industry or initiative, but the hosting of regional, provincial, national and international events was supported significantly by the city, primarily

through the development in the mid-1950s of the Kitchener Memorial Auditorium and its subsequent upgrading, and the addition of Centennial Stadium and Jack Couch Ball Park.

Kitchener Memorial Auditorium

This facility has grown, with the 1989 addition of the twin-pad facility, a fitness centre and amphitheatre. As a result, it hosts a wide range of sport tourism and entertainment events, ranging from the Junior A, Kitchener Rangers Hockey team, to tournaments, to shows, the Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest and many other activities. Over the years, the venue has hosted Memorial Cups, Canadian World Junior Hockey Team camps, NHL exhibition games and training camps, national curling activities, national and university championships and other events.

The city has made periodic investments in the facility, the last being a \$6.8 million upgrade and market repositioning investment in 2002.

However, the Auditorium building, with its 6,000 seats and the Cardillo Bowl, is having increasing challenges in being an eligible hosting venue for many national and international events. Seating requirements are increasingly moving over 7,500 and 10,000 seats and many new facilities have been built, such as the John Labatt Centre in London, Copps Coliseum in Hamilton, the Ricoh Centre at the Canadian National Exhibition grounds in Toronto and other newer venues. The city, over the next number of years, will be reaching a crossroads as to whether it wishes to continue to be a sports tourism lead host venue for the higher-end national and international events or whether it wishes to position itself more in other tiers of this market where its current facilities can address seating capacity and operational requirements.

Another potential key consideration is that most of the new venue developments also involve significant economic and commercial activity in the immediate venue proximity. This can range from the London, Guelph and Hamilton situations being in downtown areas to other arrangements where the venue becomes a destination and attracts economic development on its parameter. The Kitchener Auditorium Complex has not evolved to that particular state, though it exists directly on the Expressway and one of the major access ramps.

Another dimension of the Auditorium component of the review will be the further needs of the community-owned, successful Kitchener Rangers Junior A Hockey Team. Further seating requirements will need to be considered in the review, relative to the longer-term needs of the Rangers.

Centennial Stadium – Track and Field / Special Events and Sportsfields

In 1967, the city built, as a centennial project, Centennial Stadium with 3,500 person plus seating capacity, an eight lane artificial running track, a football / soccer grassed infield and ancillary support facilities under the grand stand.

The Stadium has been a significant venue for track and field events in Canada, having over the last eight years hosted the Canadian Senior Championships, two Canadian Junior Championships, Canadian National Legion Championships, Ontario Track and Field Championships, high school OFSAA championships, as well as numerous smaller competitions. Each spring, over a thousand Senior Elementary and High School students practice and compete at Centennial Stadium, making track and field one of the largest school sports in terms of overall participation. Centennial Stadium is home for the only track and field program for wheelchair athletes between Toronto and Windsor. Centennial Stadium has also been the venue for marching band competitions, Ontario Summer Games and other activities.

The venue supports track and field training for various community track and field clubs, school board annual track and field events / meets, soccer games and other activities. In the past, it has been the venue for marching band competitions, Ontario Summer Games and other activities.

Centennial Stadium supports both local city-based activities, as well as sport tourism initiatives. It is both multi-level in terms of activity focus and multi-use in terms of the range of users and uses.

The facility has had some regular maintenance, but has also reached a point in its nearly forty year lifespan, that two issues have evolved:

- The lack of full maintenance of the track and facility to maintain the venue at current standards has impaired its ability to attract Canadian, Provincial and regional events. In its present condition, neither the provincial nor national athletics associations will consider holding events at Centennial Stadium. Its seating capacity also prevents the stadium from being considered for international competitions.
- The deterioration of the track and the grand stand has come to a point where significant investment is required to bring the facility back to international standards.

Centennial Stadium has reached a point in its lifecycle where either major reinvestment for renewal is required or an alternate facility is required, such as investing in a partnership strategy with a current or

proposed leisure facility, future school venue, etc.

If Centennial Stadium is renewed as is, it is not likely to facilitate many national or international sport tourism events due to its limited seating capacity. Therefore, consideration will need to be given to its future scale as to seating and amenities based on the outcomes of the Sport Tourism Review. The city will need to examine the future role of Centennial Stadium relative to its current capabilities versus any enhanced capabilities that may have once existed or where other sport tourism focused uses beyond its current capacity level may be desirable, ensuring its on-going multi-use capabilities.

Jack Couch Baseball Park / Peter Hallman BallYard

A third dimension at the Auditorium Complex involves Jack Couch Baseball Park. This is a hardball facility that was moved from Victoria Park. It has been home to junior and senior amateur teams, minor baseball on a seasonal basis. It is a single-field facility with some ancillary supports. However, it is known to have some alignment issues relative to the sun and spatially home runs can end up on Ottawa Street. It is not generally viewed as a premiere facility related to what might be available in other communities from a sport tourism perspective.

Another key sport tourism resource is Peter Hallman Ball Yards. Developed over the last ten years by the city, it has three slow-pitch fields and has become a centrepiece for adult slow-pitch. It also houses a number of tournaments and now has an opportunity to become a venue for a major annual national softball event. Further development of a fourth field and enhancement of the facility is required to position this facility to a higher sport tourism plateau.

Other Venues

Similarly, sport tourism considerations could be considered for Budd Park, relative to being a soccer facility, particularly considering the growth in that particular sport. Rugby, field hockey and diving also identified potential to pursue facilities from a sport tourism perspective.

Other initiatives that have been identified through the research, have been interest in a potential indoor / outdoor integrated track and field facility that could host national, international and provincial events, as well as provide a training platform for track and field athletes in southwestern Ontario. The potential to create a multi-use facility has been identified by the Kitchener-Waterloo Track and Field Club, with the possible incorporation of a boxing facility as has been identified previously, an indoor pool, a gymnasium, etc.

Summary

Sport tourism is an area of investment that many communities are looking into. Some have clearly invested significantly to attract major events, such as Copps Coliseum in Hamilton, the Canada Games Aquatic Centre and T.D. Waterhouse / Canada Games Stadium and the John Labatt Centres in London, the Molson Centre in Barrie and many other facilities being developed across the province from Burlington to Ottawa, targeted at various levels within the sport tourism market.

For Kitchener, with its long history, particularly involving the Kitchener Memorial Auditorium Complex, a question has emerged as to where should the city's priorities be relative to sport tourism and competitive athlete development, who are the potential partners, what are the possible positive economic impacts and what are the future facility requirements necessary to be competitive at the different levels of the sport tourism market. In this light, what is required is a comprehensive review by the city of what its future intent and potential is in the sport tourism market across a realistic range of facility and operational investments. The policy basis and the decisions emerging from this assessment are critical in determining what the future investments should be in major facilities that impact service delivery on a city-wide or beyond basis. These are facilities that are not necessarily based on neighbourhoods or districts but are more targeted at specific audiences and have broader municipal perspectives than participation oriented recreation / leisure facilities.

.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations are proposed for the sport tourism policy investment review:

- **That the City of Kitchener undertake a comprehensive market and economic assessment of its potential role in and benefits from sport tourism for the City of Kitchener and develop a policy that reflects and substantiates the strategic direction the City of Kitchener wishes to pursue over multiple levels of sport tourism:**
 - **Regional**
 - **Provincial / Interprovincial**
 - **National**
 - **International**

- **That based on the sport tourism policy results, that the city then consider the appropriate investment requirements to achieve the policy's strategic directions in concert with city / local level facility servicing needs, related to:**
 - **The Kitchener Memorial Auditorium.**
 - **Centennial Stadium / track and field facility.**
 - **Jack Couch Ball Field.**
 - **Peter Hallman Ball Yard.**
 - **Other initiatives**
- **That the review and investment process clearly articulate the potential for and commitment from other partners in the development of any facility initiatives, being area municipalities, the private sector, non-profit organizations, etc.**
- **That once a development plan emerges, that it be incorporated into the City of Kitchener Leisure Facilities Master Plan.**

In order to support the future investment in city-wide and regional facilities, the city needs to complete a comprehensive assessment of where it wishes to be in the sport tourism market. This assessment needs to lead to a sport tourism policy that then becomes the basis for facility investment choices and decisions that the city wishes to make over the next ten to fifteen years.

This review will focus on regional, provincial, national and international levels, as all levels are important and contribute economically. As an example, regional tournaments occur more frequently and can generate important sustainability funds for local groups, and collectively have potentially more economic impact than one or two large national events.

The scale of this particular initiative is well beyond a master planning process due to its specificity and level of detail. But it is a critical component that needs to be seen as uniquely different than the investments being made in neighbourhood and district-level services within this Master Plan. Some sport tourism facilities do facilitate broad-based participation by Kitchener residents. They are also developed to a standard and around a rationale that services users well beyond the City of Kitchener, potentially in

some cases, the majority of users may be residents from outside of the city. These facilities will typically have not only a capital cost incurred by city residents, they will also have operating deficits. Therefore, considerable consideration needs to be given to the total benefits realized by Kitchener residents compared to the subsidization that the city may be incurring and not being supported for use by residents of other communities in comparison to the potential economic impact benefits that might or might not occur and the sustainability of these facilities over longer periods of time.

In moving this initiative forward, several key considerations should be put forward:

- The sport tourism perspective needs to be supportive to and integrated with local group use of these key facility resources, as well as support multi-use capacity.
- The overall investment program could consider ten to twenty-year timelines and is not necessarily seen as being activated in the next three to five years except unless exceptional opportunities are identified due to the scale of the investments potentially required.
- The overall policy should not result in the loss of any current capacity to support ice, track and field, baseball and other activities as current levels warrant maintaining services until decisions are made and overall implementation plans are coordinated, such as for Centennial Stadium that requires more immediate renewal due to track surface and related concerns.
- The review process needs to look at alternative investment strategies relative to upgrading other venues within the community, the availability of meaningful partnerships related to capital and operating costs, demand levels and the sustainability of major capital facilities over the long term in light of trends in the various event sectors.

It is also recognized that the city is likely not in a position to take on multiple initiatives due to the high cost that would potentially be incurred. They may need to look at alternative strategies and to clearly prioritize what is most important to the community at large in light of finite resources and a balanced array of municipal services that must be provided for all the citizens of Kitchener.

One role that the City of Kitchener could consider is taking a leadership position in bringing together potential partners for some facilities. It is through this leadership and facilitation role that a broad array of key sport tourism facilities could evolve within a larger population / regional perspective. At another level of partnership, it will also be critical that the sport groups involved in any one of these initiatives be significant partners at all levels but also be unified and work collectively. The scale of facilities that have

been discussed require greater critical mass, sustainability and intent in order to develop the initial supports for investment.

In the end, any investment in this city-wide / regional area will be formed around economic impact on the community and will need to be seen as an investment. Therefore, the policy needs to be comprehensive and set a clear direction due to the scale of opportunities and risks associated with this long-standing component of leisure services within the City of Kitchener.

5.8 Community Indoor Spaces

.1 Overview

One potential joint venture indoor facility was identified in the consultation program in regards to the Kitchener Boxing Club. Currently, they have a facility that meets their needs for day-to-day activities but not for tournaments and club expansion. A potential partial donor has been identified and negotiations have been on-going. The Club would prefer a stand-alone facility participated in by the City of Kitchener. However, in the age of multi-use facilities, multiple investment choices and fiscal constraint, this scope of a specialized facility for limited numbers of users would be challenging to justify for the municipality.

What would be more effective and supportive, would be to work in a partnership to develop a new boxing facility as a room / area attached to an existing community centre or future city facility, where compatibility would exist. This could involve one of the new twin pad arenas, one of the district recreation centres or other type of venue. The economies of scale would be significant in terms of the joint use of infrastructure and cost to construct, as well as operating costs.

This same model could also be used for other specialized club-oriented facilities that could emerge, such as gymnastics clubs, artisan / guild groups, etc.

The second consideration within this sector reflects back on the resource centres and the issues and challenges associated with accessing local school facilities. At one time, the City of Kitchener undertook a major role in booking and allocating school facilities. Since 1997, there has been a significant decline in availability and challenges in terms of customer service, affordability, etc. As a result, school boards have taken on more of their own allocation processes.

There are over thirty gymnasiums within Kitchener in school settings that are all paid for essentially by the same taxpayer. For the City of Kitchener to get into a continuous strategy of duplicating facilities that are not significantly utilized and exist on a dispersed basis throughout the community needs to be addressed. Therefore, before the City of Kitchener builds more gymnasiums, it should undertake a comprehensive initiative with the school boards to determine whether a strategy that is mutually beneficial can be developed that addresses the series of barriers and challenges that have created the access problems for school facilities. This could involve:

- Providing funding to cover certain groups' access, such as youth groups, small clubs, grass roots organizations that lack the numbers and resources but for which support on access fees would be significantly less expensive than expanding city capital facilities, potentially aligning it to the Community Grants Program.
- Determining whether work rules and other considerations can be modified to facilitate city staff taking on a stronger operational role and responsibilities for the schools after hours.
- Determining whether a broader Reciprocal Agreement framework can be achieved that supports groups in terms of their costs, schedules, equipment use, etc.
- How to better utilize the region's share of the \$20 million that the provincial government has recently announced as being available to school boards to support community accessibility to local school facilities.
- Where joint operational frameworks, eg: grass cutting, facility maintenance, etc., could be achieved.

The level of investments in gymnasiums and specialized rooms by both the school board and the city is extensive. It calls for a collective effort to create innovative solutions that serve the same taxpayer well and enhance community participation in leisure services.

Another consideration in regards to indoor facilities involves indoor soccer and related season extending programs. With the significant growth in soccer, related to youth, females, adults and masters, the city can expect increasing demand for more year-round oriented soccer leagues, development programs, etc. This is a trend that mirrors hockey experiences over the years as seasonality considerations become increasingly extended. Soccer now is the largest registered minor sport in the country. It is also experiencing significant growth in adult and master leagues. It will be an important investment point via

partnership arrangements that the city will need to consider. The importance of the program is in terms of the number of people it touches, the age ranges, the gender balance, etc. meet important criteria for city involvement.

.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations are presented in regards to partner-oriented indoor leisure facilities:

- **That the City of Kitchener consider expanding its joint initiatives with specialized clubs and groups, such as the Kitchener Boxing Club, and that they be undertaken as a component to an existing or a proposed city facility in order to gain the maximum economies of scale.**
- **That the criteria for these types of initiatives involve:**
 - **Over 75% City of Kitchener resident participation in the club's / group's programs.**
 - **Compatibility with the existing facility that it would be joined with.**
 - **Consistency with the City of Kitchener's Corporate Plan, goals, access policies and other policies and directions of this Plan.**
 - **Mutual economic and participation benefits for all parties involved.**
 - **The level of city capital and operating investment be in balance with the levels of participation by Kitchener residents and the degree of activity that is undertaken and benefits to be realized.**
 - **These agreements be evaluated every three to five years to ensure the outcomes identified are being realized, with a subsequent report to Council.**
- **The city undertake alone, or with other municipalities in the region, an approach to both the Waterloo Region District School Board and the Waterloo Region Catholic District School Board in regards to determining whether a new model of community access and reciprocal agreements for use of local schools can be achieved that reduces the need for the duplication of facilities and overall capital investment in leisure resources, enhances leisure participation opportunities and quality and minimizes capital and operating cost implication for all parties involved.**

5.9 Community Trails and the Grand River Corridor

.1 Overview

In the 1970s, the City of Kitchener initiated a significant Community Trails program. Over the last thirty years, it has evolved extensively into new areas and via corridor routes that were available into more developed areas. Trails have also been developed on streetscapes in order to connect various points and have been part of creekway and other reconstruction initiatives in order to extend their reach.

In recent time, the effort has been more focused on connecting trails and has had somewhat less visibility. Also, the region has developed a Cycling Master Plan which referenced trails, as has the city. Trail development has also been identified for the Grand River Corridor, the Walter Bean Trail, stream corridors linking to the Grand River and other areas with significant investments in terms of river crossings, enhanced trailheads and other infrastructure.

The city has been fortunate to develop a partnership with the Walter Bean Trail Foundation that is raising funds to develop the trail along the Grand River. This is a significant resource that needs to be continually supported and become an integral part of the overall development of the river corridor, as well as the City's Community Trails program.

The second component of this is the Grand River Corridor. The Grand River has historically represented the eastern and southern boundaries of the city. The city has grown out towards it over the last decades. The river has not necessarily represented a significant and visible resource as it has not been within the developed portion of the city like it is in Cambridge or the Thames River is in London, or the Speed River is in Guelph. However, as development now moves quickly out to the Grand River, its long-term future as a natural resource, an open-space corridor, a trail focus and parks and leisure resource becomes increasingly important. In the consultation process, a number of people and groups indicated that they felt the city as a whole had turned its back on the river and had not realized a sense of awareness and value for the long-term importance that it could have.

Community Trails are an increasingly valuable asset. They provide corridors for walking, hiking, bicycling, rollerblading, etc. Walking has been identified as one of the most popular leisure activities, is a significant fitness pursuit and will continue to grow with an aging population in terms of popularity and participation. These outcomes connect to both the health and wellness goals at the national and provincial level, key trends within the community's demographics and transportation and related goals in terms of

trying to implement and encourage alternate means of travel.

The Regional Cycling Master Plan has developed a series of spines that connect various points in Kitchener. The intent is that the city's on-going Community Trails program would connect with these spines to form an integrated network. The Bikeway Study Plan for the City of Kitchener identified a need to move from 50 km of dedicated trail to 100 km and to extend the trail components on road corridors as well. A need for its possible future updating has been identified.

Another consideration around trails is the surface. The harder the surface, the better is the footing, as well as being better for baby strollers, wheelchairs and related users. However, it is much more expensive, requires increased maintenance over time and invites bicyclists, rollerbladers and others that travel at higher rates of speed. The surface of the trails has become a significant consideration in setting standards and future directions. As trails become more popular and heavier use concentrations evolve, the trail heads become a more significant component in terms of visibility, accessibility, parking, signage and potentially user services, such as a tea house, skate rentals or other services. Some of these services would only occur on high-use trails, potentially ones along the Grand River corridor.

Another consideration that was raised repeatedly was that there has not been a consistent advertising and marketing program to create awareness and increased utilization of the trails. There have been periodic maps and some limited promotion. However, their true potential is not being realized in terms of their overall opportunities, importance and value, etc. Some marketing efforts are required to enhance the value that can be achieved through greater participation and alternate travel utilization.

.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations have been developed for the Community Trail system and the Grand River Corridor:

- **That an annual marketing and promotional program be developed for the Community Trail system that focuses on:**
 - **An updated map that is available via multiple points of distribution.**
 - **Three to five articles per year in the newspaper, on Cable TV and via other media.**

- **Potential special event or a Community Trails Day celebration.**
- **Demonstration projects in regards to the value of the trails, etc.**
- **Ensure that Community Trails connect key activity nodes, such as district recreation centres, community centres, schools, district sports fields, major shopping districts and other nodes, providing an alternative travel option.**
- **The trails be generally designed for multi-purpose use in terms of travel modes, with potentially some sections being designated for specialized uses that may be limited to reduce potential conflicts.**
- **That a commitment be made to develop unfinished linkages in the Community Trail system in the downtown and developed areas, as well as the continuing extension of the Community Trail system into newly developing areas, focusing on:**
 - **Acquisition of lands and use of existing infrastructure where necessary to connect trails.**
 - **Contributions by developers to develop the trails into new areas within an earlier timeframe.**
 - **A minimum city capital contribution of \$300,000 per year for Community Trail development.**
 - **Coordinate trail development within the framework of the Regional Cycling Master Plan.**
 - **A strategy to develop specialized trail heads that provide visibility, services and enhanced appreciation and activity on the trails.**
 - **Updating of the city's Community Trails Plan.**
- **That the Community Trails be converted from woodchip surfaces to either compacted stone dust or pavement over time.**
- **That motorized vehicles continue to be banned from all Community Trails and that speed limits be established for cyclists in selected high use / conflict areas.**

- **That the city participate with the GRCA and other municipalities to prepare a comprehensive development plan for the Grand River Corridor within its boundaries that pulls together all the plans, regulatory requirements and strategies that have been identified by the Grand River Conservation Authority, the Region of Waterloo and various city plans in order to develop a comprehensive strategy for the conservation and utilization of the corridor, related to:**
 - **Community trails.**
 - **Sports fishing.**
 - **Rowing and canoeing.**
 - **Protection of Environmental Sensitive Areas.**
 - **Access points, scenic lookouts, trail heads, etc.**
 - **Green space corridors and buffers.**

That the city work in collaboration with the Region, the GRCA and the neighbourhood municipalities, as well as the Region's Green Land strategy to integrate the Trails Program for the whole area.

These recommendations focus on initiating long-term commitments and change processes to enhance the awareness, utilization and utility of the Community Trail system. The need for the trails is well established and is connected with key strategic trends. The questions that emerges from this Leisure Facilities Master Plan is to continue the momentum, connect unconnected links and to continue to make an investment that allows the trail system to move forward on a year-to-year basis.

In regards to the Grand River Corridor, the need is to pull together the disparate array of various plans and ideas and to create a policy centrepont and framework that guides and directs decision-making as urban development continues to push towards the Grand River and use alternatives and choices are lost or become compromised.

5.10 Park-based Facilities

.1 Overview

Many larger neighbourhood and district parks have significant outdoor oriented leisure facilities located in them. This can involve sportsfields, skate parks, tennis courts, basketball courts, support buildings, etc. They represent a significant resource which focuses primarily on neighbourhood and district servicing levels. From the consultation, trends and related research, a number of considerations were identified. The most significant of these is the profound growth in soccer, both at the minor and the adult levels, both for males and females.

Minor soccer registration has grown to over 500,000 players which is now a higher level of registration than for minor hockey. A recent forecast from Soccer Canada indicated they expect one million registrations by the end of the decade. Kitchener has a strong soccer program, partly due to the multi-cultural dimensions of the community's population profile. Also occurring, is the increased growth in adult, women's and master's soccer. These are natural progressions in leisure activity on a longitudinal basis when more and more children are playing the sport at the minor level and wish to continue their activity as they move through the older age groups as happened with hockey.

The need for additional soccer facilities will occur on two fronts. The first is the increased participation rates of youth and adults. The second is the growth in population that the city will experience in the next fifteen years, potentially totally 40,000 new residents. As a result, new soccer facilities will be needed at multiple levels:

- New and upgraded fields on city or school board lands.
- The lighting of fields to double capacity.
- Field complexes to support organized leagues, tournaments, etc.

Based on current participation levels and use, six to ten new soccer fields are likely required to meet the demand that will be experienced. A number of these will need to be located in the south, east and west Kitchener areas to support population growth, while others could be undertaken via converting baseball fields and lighting existing soccer facilities.

In terms of baseball, it is currently experiencing downward participation levels in some areas due to user

transitions to golf, soccer and other summer sports. No specific growth-oriented baseball field needs were identified. However, an additional field at Peter Hallman Ball Yard an enhancement that would support larger tournaments and adult league play. This facility also could be the potential site for a relocated Jack Couch Park if this were to be considered. Further upgrading of the venue in terms of a scoreboard and related facilities is recommended to enhance the sport tourism potential.

One other consideration around baseball fields would be the potential loss of baseball diamonds if a twin-pad arena facility were built at Queensmount Senior Public School. There are existing fields that would be lost and should be replaced in the Queensmount area to service that population. Enhancement of softball fields in South Kitchener / Kingsdale is proposed in co-ordination with expansion of the Peter Hallman Ballyard. Wilson Park, Southwest Optimist and other parks need to be considered for the strategy based on:

- Maximizing use of currently available fields.
- Minimizing neighbourhood impacts related to lights, traffic, etc.
- Ensuring partnerships that share resources and revenue opportunities for all users and partners.

Discussions were also put forward in regards to field hockey, football and cricket. In regards to field hockey, the question that emerged is that there are good fields at Resurrection High School but they do not have the support facilities in terms of the washrooms and changerooms necessary, as much of the activity involves out of town teams. The school is not open to provide these facilities.

The minor football program feels that it has excellent facilities in Bridgeport. However, the lighting of the fields would enhance the growth and capacity of the sport on a long-term basis. There is no need for any additional fields.

Rugby is a growing sport in Canada. It is anticipated that there will be 150,000 registrants playing rugby in Canada by 2010. Currently, rugby is offered on a region-wide basis. Additionally, rugby is also opening up significant female play. It is a sport recognized in the Canada Games, Ontario Games and many other broader-based sporting environments. It is also attracting more adult play, similar to baseball, hockey, etc.

The current rugby body in the Waterloo Region area has been giving consideration to developing a rugby venue with appropriate fields and support facilities. This would support regular league play, club operations and tournament activities. It is proposed in the Master Plan that the City of Kitchener work

with the Waterloo Country Rugby Football Club to explore partnership and joint venture opportunities to develop a rugby venue. Given the regional context of this group, a multi-municipality partnership may be an evident opportunity. Also, this facility could be part of a larger facility development initiative so that a multi-use perspective could be achieved consistent with the policies within the Master Plan.

In regards to cricket, growth is anticipated due to population migration patterns from the Caribbean, India and Pakistan where this sport is very popular. However, upon investigation, there are cricket fields at the Laurel Creek Conservation Area, Waterloo Park and Meadowlane School in Kitchener, private facilities and other resources that appear to be satisfying the needs. It is also a sport that is offered on a regional basis and only a certain percentage of Kitchener residents are directly involved. This connects to a broader strategic issue of joint delivery of leisure facilities when they have a regional perspective.

Another park facility that has reached a mainstream position is skateboard parks. Currently, one is available at the Kitchener Memorial Auditorium Complex. However, in a community the size of Kitchener, expecting skateboard participants to travel long distances for a limited single-park experience is unrealistic. Users continue to use roads, curbs, stairs and other venues that often are a distraction to the public, create undue safety situations and do not allow the participants to have a reasonable experience. There are some permanent facilities in Forest Heights and in other areas.

Based on a community the size of Kitchener, there could be consideration for four to five skateboard facilities. The current facility could support the east and downtown quadrant, one in the Forest Heights area, at McLaren Park, in the north area and in the southern reaches could be considered to meet the utilization levels and perspectives on a longer-term fifteen-year basis.

Another suggestion brought forward was for a Nordic facility. This is clearly a regional and potentially beyond regional facility in terms of the levels of use and attractiveness. Therefore, it does not represent a specific initiative for the City of Kitchener, as the majority of the users would come from other municipalities. However, if an initiative were to arise, Kitchener could be a partner in such a facility.

Tennis courts represent another consideration in terms of park-based facilities. Tennis has a variable history in terms of participation levels that ebb and flow. However, there has been a tendency in recent years to develop fewer tennis courts. Some communities have been positioning tennis more in a club environment where they build the facilities and then turn them over to a club to operate with all operating and maintenance costs being undertaken by the club. This strategy can limit public utilization unless

public time slots are made available.

Many tennis courts are being converted into three-on-three basketball ball courts, winter outdoor ice skating rinks, pads for portable skateboard equipment and ball hockey. One challenge is that utilization for outdoor skating rinks can reduce the life expectancy of the hard top surface, resulting in increased maintenance / repaving requirements. Three on three basketball is an evolving sport that is attracting more interest while tennis is either stable or in decline. Therefore, there could be opportunities to reposition a number of tennis courts to alternate uses that are more connected to local neighbourhood preferences. There are also higher caliber tennis courts at Resurrection Secondary School and other locations that provide a baseline service level for tennis.

A final consideration for this category is the fact that the core area and the inner north and west areas, are relatively mature and developed. Some areas have a shortage of neighbourhood parkland. The Official Plan utilizes a provisioning rate that was developed from the 1991 Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Its provisions are still valid today in terms of the standards. What needs to be considered in underserved areas is a longer-term plan to acquire closed schools, tax-arreared properties or other resources that create the ability to provide some localized park opportunities for playgrounds, green spaces, etc. Except in a few cases, this strategy is likely focused more on parkettes and small neighbourhood parks rather than larger neighbourhood parks where there may be multiple sportfields. This strategy consideration should become a priority so that when opportunities present themselves, the city has a policy, a direction and the resources to solve some of these provisioning challenges in these particular areas.

The following areas of the city have identified neighbourhood park deficiencies based on current provisioning standards:

- Bridgeport West
- Cedar Hill
- Country Hills
- Country Hills East
- Doon South
- Mill Courtland Woodside
- Rockway
- Rosemount
- St. Mary's Hospital
- Vanier

- Grand River South
- K-W Hospital
- Huron Park
- Trussler Dundee

The provisioning standards and park classification system outlined in the Official Plan should continue to be the guideline for the provision of parks and open space and their utilization profiles. Though some interest may exist in terms of providing smaller parkettes in neighbourhoods, the increased cost, neighbour inconvenience and loss of activity opportunities suggests that smaller parkettes of less than one acre should only be utilized where there is a distinct shortage of open space with no alternatives available or a very specific need has been identified that is unique. A movement to smaller neighbourhood parks has typically resulted in the challenges identified, which range from higher maintenance costs to lower utilization and increased neighbouring land owner tensions.

Also, the campus model of open space with schools should still be seen as a priority strategy as it reduces the total amount of land that the various parties need to acquire and creates a continuity that is beneficial to park users and school students. However, due diligence needs to be considered in terms of ensuring that these resources are developed simultaneously, as there has been some history of a park being developed and the associated school never evolving. Also, some strategies around long-term school closures and campuses need to be considered. If the school site is sold off for residential development, the number of residents utilizing the park increases and the servicing level may not be adequate as the original parkland may have been reduced due to the campus opportunity.

Another park-based facility is track and field resources. With the development of new Catholic High Schools, the new Huron Heights Secondary School, the indoor walking and track facilities at the Waterloo Recreation Centre and university facilities, no apparent expansion of service in this area is identified related to a second specialized venue. Significant alternatives exist and a reconfiguration of the resources could be accommodated. If a challenge emerged in this area, the city could enter into a partnership with one or two school boards to ensure an enhanced facility becomes available to service Kitchener residents.

.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made for park-based leisure facilities:

- **That if the West Kitchener twin pad arena is located on its current site, and the ball fields are displaced, replacement ball fields be developed within an immediate time frame within the west Kitchener area.**

- **That a new district park be secured or acquired and developed in the South Kitchener area that services both the proposed fifteen year and subsequent years of growth and be the site for:**
 - **Four soccer fields, two lighted, with one potentially having field turf to also support field hockey use.**

 - **Two baseball fields, one lighted.**

 - **A skateboard park.**

 - **A four-unit tennis court, with a two unit, three-on-three basketball component.**

 - **Connected to the community trail system.**

 - **A playground and neighbourhood park component.**

 - **Located in conjunction with potential future schools.**

 - **Potential location for the South Kitchener Recreation Centre, involving a community centre, twin pad arena and indoor aquatic centre.**

 - **A field house / support facility, either as part of the district recreation centre or as a stand-alone facility if that centre is located in another location.**

- **The development of two to four new soccer fields in the east Kitchener area between Ottawa Street and King Street, using existing park areas or acquiring a new site or working collaboratively with local school boards to rehabilitate existing fields.**

- **The redevelopment of softball fields in the South Kitchener area involving fields at Southwest Optimist, Budd, Wilson and other parks.**
- **The potential development of two additional soccer fields in the west Kitchener area, potentially in the Highland West area using school or other venues where possible.**
- **Possible location of another softball / slo-pitch field in and venue upgrading at Peter Hallman Ball Yard and a possible strategy for the relocation of the Jack Couch Park if this is required.**
- **The lighting of one, and possibly both football fields at the Bridgeport venue within the next five to ten years.**
- **Development of skateboard facilities in the South Kitchener District Park, in the area of the Forest Heights community centre, at Breithaupt Park and at McLennan Park.**
- **Potential joint venture development of a rugby venue as part of a larger multi-use initiative giving consideration to a multi-municipal approach.**
- **Undertake an effort to negotiate with the Waterloo Region Catholic District School Board in terms of access to Resurrection High School as a field house in support of the field hockey program.**
- **If a Nordic facility initiative were to evolve from local groups, consider participation as a partner with other municipalities in the potential development of the facility if evident demand exists and a partnership arrangement can be achieved.**
- **Enact a policy that the city will acquire lands in areas that are underserved in terms of neighbourhood parkland on an active basis as they become available, through school closures, tax-arrears and development agreements on property reuse.**
- **The city continue to use the park classification and provisioning levels identified within the Official Plan and the 1991 Parks and Recreation Master Plan, continuing a focus on neighbourhood parks that are one acre or larger as the preferred strategy for this level of servicing.**

- **The city assess its public tennis court facilities as to utilization, and reposition low utilization tennis courts, with a minimum of four to six of these facilities as three on three basketball courts and road hockey facilities. If there are not enough low-use tennis courts, ensure distributed development of three-on-three basketball courts and road hockey pads so that each district of the city has at least two of these facilities.**
- **The city work with the local school boards to determine if three-on-three basketball courts can be developed at secondary school and senior elementary school venues, utilizing either freestanding or wall attached standards.**
- **City staff undertake a review of existing park service level standards for new and existing parks and develop budget estimates on a per acre basis as a basis for future capital budget forecasts for park development initiatives.**

5.11 Site-based Park Master Plans and Underserviced Areas

.1 Overview

The city has finalized site based strategic and master plans for McLennan Park, Kiwanis Park, Victoria Park and the Huron Natural Area. These plans have been the subject of separate consultation and development processes with the recommendations identified and initial budgeting programs evolving.

In terms of McLennan Park, several alternatives were looked at and Alternative 'B' was finalized. This calls for the park area to be sustained in primarily a natural condition without any enterprise-based activities. However, a BMX trail was identified and the venue could also support a cycling circuit to a certain degree, due to its size and location. Another consideration that was not immediately addressed was the possibility of an outdoor skating oval for speed skating. An oval once existing at Conestoga College but has been lost. Speed skating is a sport that has attracted some interest. It would provide an outdoor skating venue for residents of the area in the non-competitive use times.

The Victoria Park Strategic Plan identified and costed a series of initiatives ranging from re-establishment of skating on the lake to redeveloping the walkways and trails, to safety enhancements and overall improvements, along with support and customer-based services.

Kiwanis Park, which is a partnership with the Kiwanis Club of Kitchener-Waterloo and the City of Waterloo, has completed an extensive strategic planning process. The key recommendation was that for the next ten years, the general character and context of the park be sustained with some upgrading. The possibility for a canoe launch and docking point has been identified. Others have suggested that this could be the site for a future Nordic facility. The tablelands remain a question as to what is the most appropriate use. They had been used by a model airplane group but are now an under-utilized resource within the park. The city, with its partners, should undertake a review of the tablelands as to what leisure activities could be supported and what offsets could be achieved in terms of needing to buy additional parkland elsewhere.

Some references have been made to developing the tablelands for residential development. Selling park and open space lands is a serious undertaking as the resource is lost forever. It is generally good practice to not sell park and open space lands unless there is an overwhelming compelling need. Therefore, the recommendation is to not dispose of the tablelands but to consider leisure activity uses that are compatible to the strategic directions for Kiwanis Park and which respond to the needs of the community. The input at the public review meeting for the Master Plan widely supported this approach.

An extensive plan has been developed for the Huron Natural Area as a conservation-oriented resource with a potential future outdoor education facility and program base. The direction for this resource requires additional efforts in terms of resolving governance, operational, partnership, investment and related considerations amongst the school boards, the city, the local residents and others.

Another consideration that emerged from the parks side of the research and assessments, was the fact that through the life of a number of Master Plans over the last twenty years, areas remain underserved in terms of local and neighbourhood park spaces. These are principally in the core or near core areas of the city. Their identification has emerged to some degree again in this Master Plan.

What is felt to be necessary, is that the department should examine the areas that are underserved in terms of neighbourhood park spaces and develop a specific strategy for overcoming these deficiencies. The previous strategy had been more passive in terms of waiting for opportunities to be identified and community groups coming forward. It may be an opportune time to have the department identify the areas and needs, and look at them specifically in terms of potential strategies. These strategies could include sites that are being considered for redevelopment, potential school sites that may become available, possible purchases of surplus sites or lands that are undeveloped or other considerations with or without

partners that could be considered in order to address this on-going consideration from a master planning perspective.

.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations for the four site-based planning initiatives involving major leisure parks and open space resources are as follows:

- **That the Victoria Park Master Plan be implemented.**
- **That the McLennan Park Alternative 'B' be implemented with long-term consideration being given to a BMX range, a cycling course, a potential outdoor skating oval and a skate board park.**
- **That the basic agreements and strategies of the Kiwanis Park Master Plan be implemented.**
- **That the city support the general direction of the Huron Natural Area Park Plan, and continue to facilitate and give strong direction to resolving some of the key challenges that have emerged within that planning process.**
- **That the department undertake a Parks Service Provisioning Plan that focuses on the following:**
 - **Identification of areas that are underserved relative to neighbourhood and local park and open spaces.**
 - **Potential opportunities in the short or the long-term that may be available within the individual service areas.**
 - **Potential strategies to overcome the deficiencies focusing on sites, sizes, partners, funding approaches in terms of developing reserves, etc.**

The recommendations for the four site-based plans have emerged from the fact that significant consultation and research has been completed on each, some have evolved into decision-making and onwards towards implementation and their recommendations are consistent with the key trends and research dimensions of the Leisure Facilities Master Plan.

5.12 Leisure Network Supports and Inputs

.1 Overview

The City of Kitchener allocates resources to educating the community on the benefits of leisure participation, volunteer supports and marketing and communications. However, as leisure planning and services delivery becomes more complex, segmented and costly, increasing efforts need to be made.

One of the key considerations in this area is the need for a parallel strategy to create awareness amongst residents about the following points:

- The availability and accessibility of these facilities and opportunities.
- The value these resources have, not only to the community as a whole, but for their own personal fitness, wellness and development.
- The broader benefits that emerge from an active lifestyle, increased community participation, etc.

It is becoming increasingly important in developing new facilities to increasingly market them. Many of these facilities have greater capacity, need larger user volumes, have opportunities to generate increased revenues that off-set costs and taxes and to be economic generators within themselves when they are at a larger scale, such as for sport tourism or other initiatives. Therefore, the overall marketing considerations, as well as the communications components, need increased development.

Marketing has been a considerable point of investment for the department and the city. Increasing market complexity will likely require additional staff and funding resources, along with the increasing emphasis on revenue generation. The key to any marketing investments is to create awareness and to generate revenues. There is an increasing connectivity between marketing the quality, capacity and revenue production through increased participation levels / registrations, pricing and competitive market strategies and other marketing initiatives. Therefore, the ability to develop an enhanced marketing capacity that is more attuned to contemporary requirements and responds to pressures for additional revenue generation will be needed.

The city should consider reviewing whether centralized marketing strategies can address the growing marketing complexity and target market requirements of the city's investment in leisure facilities and services. A more focused and directed approach may be needed to better position these services as

"products" versus broadcast-based awareness creation. The city, a few years ago, considered different approaches for its communications and marketing delivery. Communications has potential for centralization while marketing needs a stronger focus and accountability model within the department, as suggested in the Department's previous reorganization report.

Volunteers are one of the fundamental resources within any leisure services delivery model. Without the volunteers, the number of leisure opportunities would diminish by at least half, and costs would grow substantially for the users which would effect participation levels. Therefore, the recruitment, training, recognition and development of volunteers is a central requirement for virtually everything that the city engages in, in terms of leisure services, either directly or through the multitude of community-based organizations. The city has an inherent interest in ensuring that there is an on-going cadre of skilled, motivated and committed volunteers, in not only protecting its investments but to enhance the quality of life, and maybe more importantly, build a sense of community spirit, participation and ownership that volunteers derive and provide.

Volunteers are becoming increasingly challenged by demands on their time and sometimes the lack of recognition, being taken for granted, etc. Also, there is an important trend in volunteering where more and more are interested in project-oriented work but not in long-term commitment oriented work, such as on a Board of Directors or in coaching.

The city can play a fundamental role in providing resources to support groups in recruiting volunteers, undertaking collective training initiatives, developing significant and meaningful recognition programs and providing interventions and other strategies to ensure that volunteers are having good experiences and feel that they are contributing. These supports can range from providing governance training, common recruitment strategies, specific volunteer activity development, sharing of information, recognition strategies of a collective or individualized approach and other initiatives.

Another consideration for volunteers is the increasing risk orientation that they are involved with. This risk orientation has resulted in increased police checks, which have a significant cost for some organizations. Other risk orientations involve volunteer groups entering into contracts and financial situations, which are beyond their scope. Still other risks involve liability around the safe use of equipment, or ensuring the programs are delivered appropriately and nobody is hurt. The risk dimension in the use of volunteers, and for voluntary organizations, is substantially increasing and Kitchener has experienced this issue in recent times.

Leisure education, leisure marketing and promotion and the development of leisure volunteers are three sometimes invisible but increasingly important components of an integrated, comprehensive and successful leisure services delivery model. If one or more of these elements breaks down or diminishes, it will impact the value of the investments being made by the municipality and the organizations, could reduce participation levels and increase costs substantively.

.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made in regards to the communications, marketing and the volunteer dimensions of the leisure services network in Kitchener:

- **That the department develop an annual marketing plan for leisure services that focuses on the following:**
 - **Increased targeted communications and marketing strategies / approaches while continuing the same or reduced broadcast-based approaches.**
 - **Development of a twelve-month, cyclical marketing program for all dimensions of leisure services.**
 - **A two-tiered marketing strategy that focuses on:**
 - **Core messages via key media on the benefits of physical activity, leisure activity participation and the value of these components to the quality of community life.**
 - **Core messages in regards to leisure programs, facilities and services availability, timeframes, fees and other logistical / access considerations.**
 - **Increased revenue generation from leisure facilities and services focusing on additional use levels, competitive fees, etc.**
 - **Undertake a review of the best strategy to deliver marketing services in order to increase participation levels, sport tourism success and revenue generation.**

- **That the city develop a volunteer support strategy that focuses on the following:**
 - **Develop an integrated and comprehensive recognition program at a community-wide and individual activity / program area.**
 - **Develop support models around governance, operations and services delivery strategies for organized groups and service providers.**
 - **Provide on-going technical assistance to organized groups on volunteer recruitment, development, etc.**
 - **Investigate the potential for more integrated and comprehensive volunteer recruitment and development strategies.**
 - **Development of a volunteer plan aimed at ensuring growth in the availability of volunteers and their full appreciation.**
 - **Implement a role in all staff functions to support volunteer recruitment, development, retention and recognition.**

- **That the city develop a monitoring program for voluntary, community-based organizations that:**
 - **Identifies on a timely basis, trends, decisions or actions that could undermine the sustainability of the organization and/or create an increased impact on the City of Kitchener's roles and responsibilities.**
 - **Undertakes an evaluation of organizations in terms of governance, volunteers, program quality, financial management and resources, etc., as a report card and organizational support tool on minimum three to five year cycles.**
 - **The collection of strategic-based trend, operations and other data that could influence participation patterns, demand profiles, etc., and to share this annually with the service providers.**

- o **Host an annual event, either collectively or by sector, of community service providers as an opportunity to outline new policy directions, to hear input and perspectives, to present trends and transitions, to undertake governance training, to share information and ideas and to create a more collective entity and service provision where feasible.**

These recommendations are designed to enhance the comprehensiveness, quality and focus on some of the key drivers in the future success of the leisure services delivery system. Communications, marketing, benefits identification, volunteer development and recognition and enhanced monitoring and performance measures all represent key strategies to maximize the outcomes of the investments being made by the city and to better ensure the stability and sustainability of key components of the services delivery model. These recommendations would have staffing implications, particularly for marketing and revenue generation.

5.13 Youth Services

.1 Overview

Youth services, those 0 to 19 years of age are an increasingly important area of service delivery on a broad front. The provincial and federal governments have invested significantly in the early years, 0 to 6 years of age through Early Years initiatives and the Ontario Early Years Centres, as well as Healthy Babies / Healthy Children. Services for youth have been a long traditional centrepiece of the leisure programming but it is increasingly being recognized that development of the whole youth in terms of arts, culture, physical activity, skills development, socialization, etc. is important in achieving a person that can effectively learn, will positively grow and develop and will be a future contributing citizen and member of the community. The latency years, or teenagers, have long been a concern. They have unique needs, they experience many challenges as they transition from childhood to adults. Many different models have been utilized, from drop-in centres to specialized programs, offered by municipalities and/or Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCA-YWCAs, church groups, etc.

The early years and the youth perspectives generally are well addressed and many of the services that exist within the city are being proposed to continue in this Master Plan. One area of consideration is the teenage group, which the City of Kitchener has invested in. The specific programs are not necessarily within the leisure services realm. Rather, they often use leisure services as one of a multitude of service

streams to support some of the challenges, barriers, and behavioural considerations that some teens may have. This often occurs in the downtown area, as it can be a collecting point. Programs and services that work need to be very flexible basis in terms of participant expectations, timeframes, resources, etc.

Essentially, a two-track approach could be considered. First, via the community centres, part of their mandate could be to ensure that there is some priority given for specialized teen programs, relative to drop-in, Saturday night activities and other initiatives that are significantly organized by the teens themselves, rather than for them by others. The second track is specialized street-level activity in the downtown area, using primarily existing facilities and being more program-focused, in order to recognize the fluidity and transitioning that occurs within this specific resident segment.

What the City of Kitchener requires is not necessarily youth-oriented leisure facilities but a youth-oriented leisure services strategy that integrates with social, health, educational and other initiatives and service providers.

.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations have been identified for the youth services area:

- **That the city ensures that there is some priority given to teen services within the community centres.**
- **That the city work with other service providers to develop a strategy for teen-oriented services in the downtown area, including the possible retention of a specialized staff person to support this initiative within a partnership model.**
- **The downtown-oriented services work within existing facility resources and focus on a holistic perspective based on the needs of the target audience.**
- **An annual program evaluation occur to ensure that the integrity and the outcomes of the program are sustainable.**

5.14 Downtown Development

.1 Overview

The City of Kitchener has a number of initiatives to enhance the residential levels and mix of the

downtown area. This is a broader strategy in terms of bringing greater life to the urban core, enhanced commercial and economic development, increased safety and to create a more vibrant and exciting centrepiece to the community.

Additionally, some long-range plans are evolving around a light rail transit system that could connect the major urban areas of the Region of Waterloo that would travel through the urban core. This would also potentially attract residents who would use that as an alternate form of transportation to get to the universities, hospitals and other employment and service venues in Kitchener, Waterloo and Cambridge.

The type of downtown development will be mixed. It is generally recognized that though there will be some parent and family development, significant portions of the development, due to land costs and other considerations, could be more adult-oriented, potentially seniors / retirement and lofts. This later group represents people who might live in studio-oriented residential environments in converted industrial buildings along Victoria Street and other areas.

From the Leisure Facilities Master Plan perspective, one of the key attractants to this strategy is to have an important mix of leisure services opportunities in the inner city area. Victoria Park provides an important anchor as one dimension. The ice skating rink at city hall provides a winter-oriented activity. The Centre in the Square and other arts and cultural facilities provide opportunities. The new St. Marys Community Centre represents another resources that can respond to a downtown resident needs as does the Rotunda at City Hall or the Shepherds School site. Potentially the Kitchener Memorial Auditorium and other venues inside or on the edge of the downtown area are available. However, there is limited neighbourhood-oriented parkland, no sportsfields, trails or similar facilities in the downtown area. Also, if the Cameron Heights Indoor Pool was decommissioned, there would be no aquatics facility in the downtown area.

From a policy perspective, a linking of downtown residential development and ensuring a reasonable array of leisure facility opportunities is important. However, the population levels of the downtown would need to warrant certain facilities as they would in other parts of the community. What is required from a policy and planning perspective, is that the downtown leisure facility assets and parks not be lost, that opportunities be set out to increase parkland availability and that leisure facility planning be an integral part of downtown development strategies.

.2 Recommendations

The recommendations in terms of leisure facilities strategies for the downtown area of Kitchener are as follows:

- **That the city sustain its primary leisure facilities in the downtown area, except for the future considerations associated with the Cameron Heights Indoor Pool.**
- **That the city undertake initiatives to acquire land that could be utilized for parks and open space area in the downtown.**
- **That leisure facilities services be an integral part of the inner city development strategy as a component that can assist in attracting and retaining residents in the downtown area.**

5.15 Leisure Facilities Renewal

.1 Overview

One of the more significant trends that municipalities are experiencing is that there was a significant growth in the development of leisure facilities starting in 1960 and then further augmented by the Wintario Grants era up until the end of the 1980s. Today, many of these facilities are twenty to fifty years of age. Some have been maintained at significant levels, while others have not. The ability to generate reserves and to make investments in facility rehabilitation and renewal has been challenging. Also, fundraising has not been as successful in regards to facility renewal as it is for new facility development.

There is a tendency in some communities to focus on new facilities to the detriment of existing facilities. Every new facility tends to move the yardsticks, and sometimes depreciates the perceived value users and residents have for existing facilities. The on-going renewal of existing facilities becomes increasingly important to sustain capacity but also to ensure that their renewal creates a market connectiveness that enhances and does not diminish their value.

As part of the Master Plan's research phase, a Building Condition Study was completed on twenty-five of the larger leisure facilities owned and operated by the City of Kitchener. It identifies various work items to enhance code-oriented requirements over the next twenty years. It does not identify rehabilitation and renewal considerations that are above code and structural integrity levels.

The results of this study represent a baseline reinvestment in these facilities which needs to be augmented by the market repositioning of facilities on a long-term basis, potentially up to \$8.8 million over fifteen years.

Another building renewal consideration involves Centennial Stadium. It is scheduled to be part of the sport tourism review in conjunction with city-wide and regionally-oriented facilities. However, the state of the track and other components of the facility indicate that it needs renewal work in order to sustain its safe and effective use and support levels for track and field training and events, sports field operations, etc. Therefore, it is being recommended that the city undertake a short-term investment that facilitates continued quality activities at the venue while the sport tourism policy is developed and unfolds over a likely five to ten year period.

One of the key strategies in achieving adequate funding for facility rehabilitation and renewal is to initiate a program of substantial reserves. It is generally considered that a reserve strategy that focuses on an annual charge to operations of 2.0% to 2.5% of the annual replacement value of a facility, based on insurance coverage rates, creates a foundation to ensure the necessary flow of funds to keep leisure facilities at a current standard and to provide resources for renewal when market conditions and trends change.

Park and natural resource assets are an important part of the overall leisure services system within Kitchener. As with leisure facilities, a need exists to enter into and plan an on-going basis the renewal and rehabilitation of park and open space facilities in order to support long-term maintenance plans and capital budgeting forecasts.

.2 Recommendations

That the following facility improvement and resource financing considerations be implemented within the Leisure Facilities Master Plan for the City of Kitchener:

- **That the Building Condition Study recommendations for the twenty-five facilities reviewed for this Plan be implemented within the ten year capital forecasts of the city.**
- **That a short-term solution to bridge Centennial Stadium through the Sport Tourism Policy development process be implemented in order to sustain its safe and effective utilization and support levels.**
- **That the City of Kitchener consider a policy of allocating between 2.0% and 2.5% of the annual replacement costs of its leisure facilities, based on annual insurance coverage rates, as a charge against operations, in order to generate continuous and adequate capital facility rehabilitation and renewal reserves.**
- **That staff undertake the development of park and open space renewal plans to support the long-term rehabilitation, maintenance and capital budgeting forecasts for these resources.**

6.0 IMPLEMENTATION

6.1 Implementation Strategy

Table 6-1 itemizes the facility specific recommendations from Section 5.0 of the Leisure Facilities Master Plan. It provides specific facility identifications, potential year or range of years over which development could occur, primary rationales, strategy alternatives, and where appropriate, a preliminary capital cost estimate.

This represents a template for planning and the various activities associated with each of the proposed initiatives. It will also support integration of approved projects into the city's ten-year capital forecast.

6.2 Operating Financial Impact

These leisure facility recommendations will have a range of potential operating impacts. For some, they are unknown at this time until a Business Plan and / or a Business Plan are completed. Some will be partially or fully offset by the closure of some facilities and the opening of new facilities. Others will be influenced by the range of partnerships and/or other funding sources that may be available to the particular initiatives.

It will be critically important that when Business Plans are completed for each of the initiatives, as per the recommendations, that the operating costs are fully developed and integrated into the annual operating budget projections for the department.

6.3 Plan Review

The following Leisure Facilities Master Plan review process is proposed:

Recommendation

- **Every year, the Plan should be updated in terms of Table 6-1 in order to keep an active list of recommendations before the staff and Council, as well as the community on an on-going basis.**
- **Every three years, planning sessions / workshops should be held to undertake a comprehensive review of the recommendations related to changes in the operating environment, emerging strategic trends, municipal financial strategies and priorities, etc.**
- **At the ten year anniversary, there should be a major review undertaken to assess whether the long-term dimensions of the Plan remain linked to the key trends and rationales or whether other considerations have emerged that result in a need to recast the Plan to reflect the considerations of that time period and onward thereafter.**

The intent of this review program is to keep the Plan relevant in a high change environment relative to the shorter term reviews. The longer term reviews are designed to keep the Plan alive and connected as an ongoing initiative within the city and not as a stand alone project every ten to fifteen years.

**CITY OF KITCHENER
LEISURE SERVICES MASTER PLAN
IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK**

Initiative	Location	Description	Year Proposed	Rationale / Need	Alternatives (if available)	Estimated Initial Capital Costs (\$000)	Potential Annual Operating Budget Net Impact	Community Budget (\$000)
Seniors Woodworking Centre	~ Kitchener / Waterloo Boundary	~ Partnership	~ 2004/2005	~ Target and diversified seniors' markets			\$50,000	\$50 per year
Victoria Hills Community Centre Addition	~ Victoria Hills Community ~ Existing Site	~ Multipurpose Room ~ Support / Service Areas ~ Internal Reconfigurations	~ 2005	~ Program Growth ~ Service Flexibility ~ Moderate Population Growth and Densities	~ Area Schools for Gymnasiums	\$2,400	\$50,000	\$2,400
Sport Tourism Policy Initiative	~ Auditorium ~ Centennial Stadium ~ Peter Hallman Ballyards ~ Jack Couch Ball field ~ Other	~ Long Term Development Plan ~ Focus on regional, provincial, national and international potential and priorities	~ 2005 - 2007	~ Reposition for changing market demands and economic-based venues development	~ Rugby ~ Field Hockey ~ Soccer ~ Aquatics	\$100		\$0
Chandler - Mowat Community Centre	~ Chandler Area ~ Existing Site	~ New Community Centre ~ Multipurpose Rooms, Program Areas and Offices	~ 2006	~ Program Growth and Flexibility ~ Replace Temporary Facilities	~ Area Schools for Gymnasiums ~ Portables to Kingsdale	\$2,500	\$50,000 to \$100,000	\$2,500
West Kitchener Twin Pad	~ West Kitchener	~ Twin Pad Format with Meeting / Tournament Room	~ Business Plan 2005 ~ 2006	~ Replace Aged Facility Structure in Need of Significant Reinvestment ~ Respond to Demand for Ice Time	~ Potential Curling Partnership	\$14,000 to 16,000	\$100,000 for second surface	\$8,000 (approximately)

**CITY OF KITCHENER
LEISURE SERVICES MASTER PLAN
IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK**

Initiative	Location	Description	Year Proposed	Rationale / Need	Alternatives (if available)	Estimated Initial Capital Costs (\$000)	Potential Annual Operating Budget Net Impact	Community Budget (\$000)
Mill-Courtland Community Centre Addition	~ Current Site	~ Possible Expansion based on use review and Feasibility Study	~ Review and Business Plan 2006	~ Utilize Twin Pad Format for Cost Economies	~ Portable unit	\$350 to \$400	\$25,000	\$350
			~ 2008	~ Increased social services				
Kingsdale Community Centre	~ Wilson Park	~ New / Redeveloped Community Centre	~ Business Plan 2006 or 2009	~ Replace portable facilities	~ Respond to community needs and potential	\$1,000 to \$2,500	\$150,000 to \$200,000	\$3,800
		~ If Doherty Arena decommissioned, convert this facility	~ 2007 - 2011					
		~ Otherwise new facility in 2011 ~ Additional portables						
Rockway Seniors Centre	~ Rockway	~ Multiuse potential	~ 2010 +	~ Use of available capacity to service local area and city-wide programs and services		\$100	\$10,000	
South Kitchener District Recreation Centre and Park	~ South Kitchener, ~ South and West of Doon	~ Community Centre	~ Business Plan 2009	~ Population growth near and long term	~ Closure / continuation of Cameron Heights Pool	\$30,000 to \$40,000 including land	\$250,000 to \$400,000	\$4,400
		~ Twin Pad Arena		~ Sustain current servicing levels				
		~ Indoor Aquatics Centre ~ District Park with - 4 soccer fields (2 lighted) - 2 ballfields (1 lighted) - 4 tennis courts	~ 2011 - 2013	~ Programs growth and flexibility	~ Potential for separate venues			

**CITY OF KITCHENER
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IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK**

Initiative	Location	Description	Year Proposed	Rationale / Need	Alternatives (if available)	Estimated Initial Capital Costs (\$000)	Potential Annual Operating Budget Net Impact	Community Budget (\$000)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3 on 3 basketball pad - Play area - Trail connection 						
Sustain Outdoor Pools	~ Across city	~ Outdoor ~ Spray ~ Wading	~ Variable as to maintenance ~ Spray pads ten to fifteen years out	~ Summer and neighbourhood opportunities				
Leisure Facilities Renewal Program	~ Twenty-five venues	~ Centennial Stadium Building Condition Study	~ 2006 ~ 2005 - 2013	~ Sustain facility capacity for interim five to ten year period ~ Sustain and need / exceed building code requirements		TBD \$8,800		TBD
II. PARKS AND TRAILS INITIATIVES								
Grand River Corridor	~ City-wide	~ Strategic Development Plan ~ Connect with Region's Green Land Strategy	~ 2005 - 2006	~ Develop priorities and strategic plan to conserve and protect community resource ~ Work with Region, GRCA, Cambridge, Waterloo, etc.		\$100		
Kiwanis Park Strategic Plan	~ Bridgeport	~ Strategic Plan Implementation	~ On-going	~ Alternate leisure activity uses for tablelands		TBD		
Victoria Park Master Plan	~ Downtown	~ Complete plan as detailed	~ 2005 - 2009	~ Sustain premier city and downtown venues ~ Re-introduction lake skating ~ Safety and security upgrades		\$3,100	\$50,000	\$3,100

**CITY OF KITCHENER
LEISURE SERVICES MASTER PLAN
IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK**

Initiative	Location	Description	Year Proposed	Rationale / Need	Alternatives (if available)	Estimated Initial Capital Costs (\$000)	Potential Annual Operating Budget Net Impact	Community Budget (\$000)
McLennan Park Master Plan	~ Ottawa Street South	~ Complete plan, plus consider BMX, cycling and skating oval additions	~ 2006 to 2025	~ Sustain Alternative 'B' ~ Enhance with city-wide activity venues that use the site's features and access		\$4,500	TBD	\$4,500
Community Trail Development	~ City-wide	~ Ongoing trail development ~ Marketing and promotion ~ Core area connection priorities ~ Winter Use opportunities	~ 2005 - 2020 ~ Annually	~ Complete trail ~ Respond to growth in use and benefits of physical activity ~ Transportation alternations		\$300 to \$500 annually	\$50,000	\$250 annually
Underserved Areas Parks Plan	~ City-wide ~ Core area and underserved areas emphasis	~ Develop individual underserved area strategies for parks and open space lands	~ 2006 to 2008	~ Underserved areas identified over last twenty years but no area specific solutions developed		Department	TBD	
Skateboard Facilities	~ Forest Heights	~ Similar to Auditorium venue	~ 2006	~ Support participation growth	~ Portable units	\$500	\$20,000	
	~ Breithaupt		~ 2009	~ Facilitate access across City		\$200	\$20,000	
	~ McLennan Park		~ 2011			\$200	\$20,000	
3 on 3 Basketball /	~ 2 per quadrant of the city	~ Develop minimum of two pads per	~ 2006 - 2013	~ Support growth in participation		\$100 per new venue	\$5,000 in maintenance	

**CITY OF KITCHENER
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IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK**

Initiative	Location	Description	Year Proposed	Rationale / Need	Alternatives (if available)	Estimated Initial Capital Costs (\$000)	Potential Annual Operating Budget Net Impact	Community Budget (\$000)
Road Hockey Pads		north, east, west and south areas ~ Utilize underused tennis courts where possible		~ Enhance non-programmed leisure opportunities ~ Reuse underutilized resources ~ Facilitate access across the City				
Queensmount Fields Replacements	~ West Kitchener	~ If West Kitchener Twin Pad proceeds, replace lost sportsfields	~ 2007	~ Sustain capacity		\$250		
East Kitchener Soccer Fields	~ East Kitchener	~ Two fields	~ 2007	~ Population growth ~ Participation growth		\$300		
Football Fields Lighting	~ Bridgeport	~ One field possibly two	~ 2008 - 2010	~ Growth in sport ~ Concentrate activity on one site ~ More economical	~ Develop additional field(s)	\$150	10,000	
West Kitchener Soccer Fields	~ Highland West	~ Two fields	~ 2009	~ Population growth ~ Participation growth		\$300		
Rugby Facility	~ TBD	~ Two fields and support facilities	~ 2008 to 2013	~ Population growth ~ Participation growth ~ Partnership / regional participation model		TBD		

**CITY OF KITCHENER
LEISURE SERVICES MASTER PLAN
IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK**

Initiative	Location	Description	Year Proposed	Rationale / Need	Alternatives (if available)	Estimated Initial Capital Costs (\$000)	Potential Annual Operating Budget Net Impact	Community Budget (\$000)
Softball Field Realignment	~ South Kitchener / Kingsdale	~ Enhanced field capacity and quality	~ 2008	~ Improved fields ~ Use capacity in place ~ Partnership model		TBD		

APPENDIX I

RESEARCH REPORT CONCLUSIONS

CONCLUSIONS AND STRATEGIC THEMES

6.4 Observations and Conclusions

The following points summarize the various findings by section that emerged from the Research Report.

1. Overview

- The City of Kitchener has a long history of diversified economic development, population growth and diversity that has supported significant community development, employment and growth.
- Strategically, the city lies adjacent to major inter-city transportation corridors, is in close proximity to the fast growing Greater Toronto Area and continues to evolve as a city, both internally and externally, influenced by various strategic developments at the provincial, national and international levels.
- The city has a long history of ethno-cultural diversity that has provided a richness to its multicultural character, spawned significant leisure and development activities and services and which has forged unique community partnerships, leisure services perspectives and community events. The city remains one of the primary settlement areas for new immigrants to Canada, and continues to evolve in terms of its ethno-cultural diversity.
- The city is not an isolated entity in terms of leisure services markets. It lies within an immediate regional market area of 470,000 people, moving to 550,000 over the next ten to fifteen years. Secondly, another 100,000 to 150,000 people connect on a regular basis for employment, professional services, retail shopping, post-secondary education and other services. Therefore, city-wide and major leisure services developments often serve larger regional audiences. Inversely, major leisure developments in neighbouring communities can attract Kitchener resident participation.
- The city lies within the "Technology Triangle," which is one of Canada's emerging high-tech centres and this will have significant impacts on not only the economic foundation of the area, but in terms of educational levels, population growth, resident expectations, population diversity and leisure interests.
- Each of the municipalities in the region offers its own parks and recreation / leisure services independent and relatively unconnected with neighbouring municipalities. Also, many organizations outside of the minor

sports sector, operate on a Twin Cities or regional basis. As a result, many of these organizations need to interact with two or more municipalities in order to access facilities, garner financial and technical support, etc. There is no mechanism for an integrated municipal leisure servicing strategies.

- The regional government is not a significant primary participant in the delivery of leisure services, but is secondarily through Official Plans, Growth Strategies, regional infrastructure development and land ownership, the regional forest and related considerations.

2. Population Profile

- For the period 2001 – 2016, Kitchener’s overall anticipated population growth increase is forecasted to be 38,549 persons, which represents an average annual rate growth of 1.3% and a total population of approximately 241,049 residents, based on a 2004 population estimate of 201,500.
- The region’s overall growth for the same period is anticipated to increase by 105,185 persons, representing an average annual rate growth of 1.6% and increasing to approximately 595,000 residents.
- The school age populations, 4 to 8 years and 9 to 13 years of age, will decline more significantly in Kitchener than region wide; for 14 to 17 years olds, modest growth is forecasted.
- For the young adult population, ages 18 to 34, a moderate increase is shown, while the 35 to 49 age range is projected to remain stable or experience a minor increase.
- Significant growth in the 50 to 71 age group across Kitchener and the region is projected, with the highest growth rate in the 55 to 68 age group.
- The highest absolute population in 2016 will be in two age groups, 24 to 28 and 50 to 54 year olds, for Kitchener and across the region.
- The population of Kitchener CMA [Kitchener Census Metropolitan Area made up of Kitchener, Waterloo, Cambridge, North Dumfries and Woolwich] has grown at a faster rate from 1996 to 2001 than that of Ontario and Canada;
- The Kitchener CMA ranked sixth with the highest population growth rate from 1996 to 2001 among all CMAs in Canada;

- With a median age of 35.3 years, the Kitchener CMA possesses the youngest median age population in Ontario and the third youngest among all of Canada's twenty-seven CMAs;
- The changing composition of families in Kitchener is reflected in the increase in the number of common-law families between 1996 and 2001. While the number of married families grew by only 5.1%, the number of common-law families grew by 30.7% during the same period, far outpacing population growth of 6.7%. As well, the number of lone parent families increased by 11.2%, while female lone parent families are still the majority, there was a significant increase in male lone parent families, 23.5%.
- Between 1996 and 2001, the number of seniors, aged 65+, increased by 8.5%, reflecting an aging population, but the proportional increase in the population of seniors is slight, relative to overall growth of 6.7%.
- More than 8,000 people have immigrated to the city since 1996, with the greatest percentage originating from Eastern European countries, including Yugoslavia and Romania. Approximately one quarter of the city's population is foreign born, 23%. This has increased the diversity of ethnic groups, with a corresponding increase in the number of people whose mother tongue is not English.

3. Community Development

- Suburban-based growth will continue to be the predominant form of development in Kitchener, especially over the mid-term, five to ten years.
- The largest areas of suburban growth will be in the south-west area in the Laurentian West, Doon South and Huron Park Planning Communities. Growth is also planned for Grand River South and Bridgeport North Planning Communities.
- Potential for central city intensification through re-development of brownfield or former industrial sites, greyfield or obsolete commercial and institutional sites, and is being promoted by the city, region and province. The predominant housing form is likely to be apartment units for a mature adult market, not more family-oriented housing.
- Over the longer term, a significant level of growth could materialize around major infrastructure investments, eg: Region's Light Rail Transit proposal.

- Any shift to intensification/re-development form in the inner-city will help support existing investments in parks, recreation and community facilities, and may result in additional leisure facility needs.
- Aging population and changing ethnic diversity may impact on the delivery of programs and services and change the nature of some leisure facilities and the activity components within them.
- The preference for community centres is delineated by the community input and the department staff as follows:

The ability to strengthen community development and to give a centrepoint to community life and capacity building.

The flexibility of having space that is predominantly dedicated to community and leisure programs and services delivery.

The flexibility, stability, continuity and control that can be offered to users via this approach.

The ability to better respond to better and changing community needs, aspirations and capacities.

The reduced dependency and lessened priorities that exist for this approach compared to increased dependency and less available community-based facilities.

A more effective response to both the established areas of the city where schools could close or limited facilities are available, or for growth areas where the timing of schools can be uncertain and the need emerges due to growth.

4. Leisure Resources Inventory and Utilization

Parks and Open Space

- Generally across the city, the municipality is achieving or exceeding the service standards for Neighbourhood and District Parks.
- Neighbourhood Park deficiencies exist in smaller, central area communities, including Cedar Hill, K-W Hospital, Rockway, Rosemount, St. Mary's Hospital, and Vanier. There may be limited opportunities to provide additional parkland within some of these mature communities.
- Schools are providing the only sportsfield facilities in some planning communities. Rockway Elementary and Wilson Ave Public School in the Vanier Community, J.F. Carmichael School in the St. Mary's Hospital

Community, Notre Dame Separate School, Rosemount and Smithson Public Schools in the Rosemount Community and King Edward School in the K.W. Hospital Community are specific examples.

- District Parks and Sportsfields are generally well distributed across the city. Planning for this level of facility has taken place at the Secondary Plans stage for new communities, often in conjunction with school facilities.
- Natural Areas have been acquired through the development approval process as they become part of the urban community.
- A significant amount of parkland has been acquired in new development areas over the last twenty years and in new proposed areas resulting in generally a good supply of lands for park and open space functions for all levels of servicing.
- The opportunity to continue to develop district parks, sportsfield and potentially community centres with new school construction, including the Waterloo Region District School Board's proposed new secondary school on Huron and Strausberg Roads.
- One new secondary school in 2006 and two to four new elementary schools by 2018 will add opportunities for community use of schools in Huron / Doon South and Grand River South areas. The elementary schools are not a certainty.
- Arena and indoor pools are within reasonable service to population ratios regionally, with lower arena service ratios in Kitchener.

Community Centres

- Community centres are the dominant delivery vehicle for community-based programming, involving over 26,000 hours of service and nearly 216,000 attendances in 2003.
- Other community centres, schools, churches and clubs are also a primary delivery vehicle, involving nearly 4,000 hours of use and 120,000 attendances.
- Community centres represent a very significant undertaking for the city and are the primary service vehicle to support the on-going delivery of community leisure programs via community-based organizations, whether neighbourhood organizations or activity specific groups, Community Services Department, the Waterloo Region Social Services or others.
- Each of the community centres has a unique profile in terms of the type of use and the manner in which service is delivered in partnership between the department and the local neighbourhood associations / community groups.
- The summer of 2004 announcement of an additional \$20 million by the province to facilitate enhanced community access to school facilities will have some impact on user groups' significant concerns around the affordability, accessibility and priority that community access has for local school board facilities. However, the actual extent of this enhancement is undetermined at this time until policies and plans are in place by the two local school boards.
- The city has a total of seven neighbourhood leisure oriented community centres, with a new one under development to service Stanley Park. Another two community centres are identified in the capital budget by 2013.
- The city operates another series of seniors and specialized community centres at Victoria School, Rockway Seniors' Centre, Breithaupt Community Centre and others, including a new Wellness Centre at the former St. Mary's High School site on Weber Street.

Ice Facilities

- Ice utilization during prime time is over 90% booked.
- Organized groups have identified continuing need for ice, with waiting lists for minor sports and other user categories.
- The city has entered into an agreement with Sportsworld to develop a twin pad facility that will provide a minimum of 2,000 prime time hours per year to be allocated by the city to primarily minor hockey for competitive and related uses.
- Queensmount and Doherty Arenas require significant reinvestments in these thirty-plus year old infrastructures which has raised questions in terms of their on-going viability versus a replacement approach.
- Except for the Kitchener Memorial Auditorium Complex, all the city's current arenas are single ice pad facilities which in today's terms are relatively inefficient economically.
- McLaren Arena could be pressured by hospital expansion priorities and may have alternate use scenarios that could create a need to consider replacement of this facility.
- The regional market has ice availability in terms of RIM Park, along with a proposed new twin pad arena in the Township of Wilmont and a replacement for the Elmira Arena is being considered.
- The need for additional ice facilities has been documented and the construction of the new twin pad at Sportsworld will allow one or more of the older arenas to be closed. The decommissioning of two other older facilities will be determined and their replacement with new twin pads required within the next fifteen years.

Aquatics

- Approximately 52,000 visits were made to this city's four indoor and three outdoor aquatic facilities, with children under the age of seventeen sector constituting approximately 51% of total utilization.
- Breithaupt Community Centre attracts a significant portion of the seniors due to the therapeutic pool, while Forest Heights attracts a higher proportion of adults. Idlewyld, Wilson and Henry Class outdoor pools attract a significant portion of children.
- Lyle Hallman, Forest Hills and Henry Class attract approximately 55% of the total utilization.
- The lowest attendances occur at Wilson and Idlewood outdoor pools and the Cameron Heights indoor pool. This latter pool has significantly less attendance by a five to seven-fold factor over the other indoor pools.

5. Financials

- Operationally in 2003, the city expends approximately \$28.3 million on leisure services of all types with offsetting revenue of \$13.7 million for a net expenditure of approximately \$14.6 million, based on 2003 actual expenditures. This net figure is proposed to decline by \$600,000 in fiscal 2004.
- Parks Operations, open space and related operational activities constituted approximately \$4.9 million in net deficit, while over \$10 million is earned through golf courses and Enterprise Services, which makes up approximately 75% of total leisure revenues.
- The overall revenue coverage rate is approximately 48.3%. This same figures is identified for fiscal 2004.
- The city's ten year capital forecasts for leisure services identifies nearly \$68 million of investment between 2004 and 2013, of which Enterprise Services, Operations and Community Services constitutes close to \$58 million. Another \$6.8 million is scheduled for aquatics and athletics and \$2.3 million for golf courses.
- Expansion of community centres is scheduled for Victoria Hills in 2005, Chandler-Mowatt in 2005; new community centres are scheduled in 2008 to 2011 in the Kingsdale and southern areas of the city; a new twin pad arena is identified in 2006 and major upgrades to the Kitchener Memorial Auditorium Complex, Huron Natural Area, McLennan Park site development and other areas are scheduled across variable years.

- For the near \$68 million of capital identified; some \$27 million is for maintenance and an additional \$7.8 million for repair. New developments represent approximately one third of the total, \$24 million.

6. Building Condition Study

- Most of the twenty-five facilities reviewed were in relatively good structural, mechanical and electrical condition.
- Approximately \$8.8 million in upgrades to the facilities were identified over a ten-year plus period.

7. Community Survey Results

Participation and Awareness

- One in four respondents said they or someone in their household use the city's recreational facilities at least once per week, and this rose to one in two when we included those who said a few times per month. One third estimated their use would increase in the next few years, half said it would stay the same, and the remaining few saw a decrease on the horizon.
- Half said they had participated in a facility based recreation program in Kitchener at some time last year; three quarters had done so at some time in the past. Three in ten of all households had a child in such programs in the past year, and this was over eight in ten for those households who had children.
- Arenas and indoor pools drew one in three adults for themselves or their children, to facility based programs in the past year, and one in five used sport fields for such programs. Pay-as-you-go / drop-in programs were the most frequently used activities at both arenas and indoor pools, followed by teams, then lessons, at arenas, and followed by lessons, then teams and at pools.
- There was high awareness for almost all city recreational facilities, but usage in the past year varied from a high of 63% for Victoria Park to a low of 16% for outdoor pools.

Satisfaction

- Overall satisfaction with the number of facilities, quality of facilities, and the job the City did of letting people know about them was relatively low – only one in ten gave a score of ‘excellent’ to these three items, and six in ten gave a score of ‘excellent’ or ‘good’.
- On the other hand, satisfaction for specific facilities was much higher among respondents who had used that particular facility in the past three years. One third to one half of those who used a specific facility gave it a score of ‘excellent’, and eight or more of ten said ‘excellent’ or ‘good’. Kiwanis Park and the five arenas (not including the Auditorium) were the exception, with only one in seven recent users saying ‘excellent’ and between seven and eight in ten saying ‘excellent’ or ‘good’.
- Among those with an opinion, eight in ten said prices for City recreational programs and facilities were 'about right', and the remaining two in ten said 'too high'.
- The Leisure Guide was the way most residents saw or heard about Kitchener recreation and leisure programs; eight in ten were aware of this catalogue and five in ten had used it last year. One in three were aware of web based program information and half this number had used it last year.

Future Planning

- A majority supported multi-use facilities and the need to invest more in recreational facilities, but there was resistance to facilitating this through increased taxes. There was little support for more City golf courses and mixed reviews for a leash free dog park.
- When asked to choose their top priority from a list of seven recreational facilities the City could build in the future, community trails and ice rinks were chosen most often, by one quarter of those polled. However, there was some level of support for all the ideas and no runaway winners that were supported by the majority of the population.

8. Focus Groups and Public Meeting Summary

Strengths

- The array of quality parks and leisure facilities that exist across the city.
- The Community Services Department and the array of supports and services it provides.
- The volunteers and their levels of participation.
- Specialized services for seniors, the disabled, teens and others.
- The leisure facilities located in the downtown area.
- The departments involvement in more socially and health-oriented services and the broadening definition of community services.
- The community centre's program and its connections to neighbourhood centres, different models of service delivery, etc.
- The partnerships developed with various service providing groups.
- The array of service providing groups within the community, and the skills that they bring.
- The Community Grants Program operated by the city.
- The array of cultural venues and supporting groups.
- The array of events and festivals that are operated by community groups but supported by the city in multiple locations.
- The increasing diversity of adult leagues in soccer, cricket, field hockey and other less traditional activities.
- A number of lower profile groups are gaining access to facilities, such as the rowing club, the boxing club, field hockey, etc.

- An excellent history of utilizing Leisure Services Master Plans as a basis for long-term planning.
- The availability of less formal activities, such as the outdoor ice rink program, summer playground programs, access to open space areas, etc.
- The services available for seniors, such as the therapeutic pool at Breithaupt Park, the Victoria Seniors' Centre, the new Wellness Centre, Rockway Seniors Centres, transportation supports, home supports, etc.
- The supports provided for marketing, recruiting and recognizing volunteers, training and development and other technical aids to local groups.
- Specialized programs, such as Graffiti Busters, Safe City, Downtown Teen Program, etc.
- City Hall, in terms of the rotunda, the outdoor ice skating rink and its overall accessibility.
- The good mix of large comprehensive facilities, city-wide and regional parks and outdoor facilities, major centres such as the Auditorium and Centre in the Square, the community trail system and other key assets that act as anchors to the service delivery model for all citizens and contribute to economic development.
- New strategy directions, eg: Sportsworld twin pad arena initiative.
- City is generally very responsive to citizen initiatives, enquiries, participation, etc. The city places a high priority on a diverse parks and recreation / leisure services capabilities and assets.

Concerns / Issues / Weaknesses

- Increasing demand for specialized programs, such as for seniors with a growing population, dementia-based programs, special needs programs, programs that respond more effectively to a multi-cultural community, programs for the community centres for ages 12-17 years, etc.
- Improved communications between the city and the groups, as well as amongst the groups themselves to enhance awareness, cooperation / partnerships, reduced duplication, etc.
- Transportation supports for targeted populations who find access to venues significant, such as the disabled, seniors, etc.

- For some population groups, affordability issues are significant.
- Design considerations related to specialized population needs in terms of accessibility, adapting spaces for broader use by those with disabilities, stone dust based trails, etc.
- Potential need for sportsfields for cricket, field hockey, lighted football fields in Bridgeport, additional ball fields of a competitive level, etc. This includes access to support facilities, such as washrooms, concessions, parking, lighting, etc.
- A host of school-based access issues involving:
 - Cost of access
 - Availability, short notice cancellations, etc.
 - The maintenance level of school and sports fields
 - Overall availability
- Aging facilities that will require:
 - Replacement facilities, such as Queensmount and Doherty Arenas
 - Additional investments in facility renewal as they age.
- Determining the role and achieving enhanced accessibility for the community to major facilities within not only the schools, but at Conestogo College.
- Additional demand for ice time due to the intensive growth in women's hockey, waiting lists and other barriers to fuller levels of participation.
- Additional soccer fields will be required in light of the growth of the sport and of the population, both in terms of the volume of new residents and the residents who are arriving in Canada from soccer-oriented countries.
- A number of facilities and services are best delivered on a regional basis, however this is complicated due to the number of municipalities involved. These include Nordic sports, arts and culture, etc.

- A number of groups are utilizing Waterloo and/or Guelph facilities due to cost, availability or other issues with school and city facilities.
- Increasing numbers of disabled sports are emerging as inclusiveness becomes more mainstream, such as Wheelchair Bocci Ball.
- A number of gaps identified in the community centre delivery model related to a lack of facilities or a need for enhanced facilities at Victoria Hills, Chandler-Mowatt, Mill-Courtland, Kingsdale and the newer areas in the south end of the city.
- Some sense that there has been a tailing-off of the Community Trail system's development and that this needs to become a greater priority as it touches more people and has multiple roles and functions that are beneficial to large cross sections of the population.
- Identification of some activity trends that may induce additional facilities, such as a second skateboard park, an outdoor skating oval, bicycle courses, etc.
- Sustaining the volunteer connection and capacity within the community, as many organizations are run by a "handful" of volunteers. Sustaining the volunteer base, facilitating renewal, providing training and dealing with the increased risks that these groups are involved with, both financially and in terms of liability, as well as changing user expectations is a growing concern.
- The increasing dependence on fundraising is challenging to many smaller non-profit organizations, which could affect their long-term sustainability.
- Policy considerations on gender, disabled, multi-cultural and other dimensions of leisure services delivery and access.
- Increased considerations related to neighbourhood and district park development in terms of turf maintenance, signage, parking, effective separation of uses / overlaps, sustainability of vegetation, safety and related considerations.
- They city is not capitalizing on some of the potential enhanced economic opportunities that may exist around Centre in the Square, the Kitchener Memorial Auditorium Complex, the large park complexes, etc. in terms of facilitating investments for restaurants, support services, etc.

- The Grand River is not appreciated by the community and is not yet a mainstream focal point in terms of its conservation, trail systems, access, etc., though a significant number of studies have been completed.
- Concerns over the level of environmental stewardship for the open space and natural areas.
- Managing the increasing expectations of residents for higher quality facilities, more convenient access to leisure services, expanded leisure services interests, etc.
- Managing an effective balance between the various dimensions of leisure services, such as sports, arts and culture, community-based programming, parks and open space, etc.
- Concerns that some of the community centres may not be as utilized as they could be, and the monitoring systems and capabilities associated with assessing the use of community centres, the viability of non-profit organizations, benefits from public investments, etc.
- Development of appropriate facilities on an effective long-term basis in the high growth areas of the city, such as indoor pools, arenas, community centres, etc., along with district-based parks and related sportsfields.

Future Perspectives

- Developing an effective youth and teen oriented service delivery model in terms of outreach, drop in, etc.
- Effectively responding to the growth in volume and changing participation profiles and expectations of an aging population. Increasingly active seniors, which will change various perspectives on seniors' services.
- Effectively responding to a more multi-cultural community, where 23% of the current population was not born in Canada and many of individuals are coming from non-traditional sources in terms of leisure experiences and interests.
- Changing perspectives around socially and health-oriented services, such as Youth Criminal Justice, Ontario Works, home-based care for the elderly, etc.
- Potential for increasing interest in arts and culture within an aging population.

- An increasing emphasis, through various acts and policies of the provincial government and others, around inclusiveness of the disabled and those who are disadvantaged in order to enhance their participation and well being and in realizing benefits from leisure activities, including changing expectations of the disabled and their families around their ability to participate on an equal basis.
- Increasing emphasis for the disabled in terms of specialized / adapted sports, arts and culture and other activities.
- Responding to the potential doubling of the number of soccer participants in the city at youth and adult levels, male and female, as well as anticipated increases in field hockey, cricket and other less traditional sports activities.
- Adapting to some of the trends in baseball activities, such as declining participation in fastball, changes in regards to slow-pitch and potentially minor baseball.
- Preference towards multi-use facilities, not just involving leisure services but other public and private uses.
- The growth and importance of marketing, communications and related support services to attract users, better educate consumers, etc.
- An increasing emphasis on sport tourism across a broad front and levels of intensity, including more competitive / tournament oriented facilities for minor sports.
- A growing trend towards specialized leisure services within the sports realm, involving Nordic, boxing, rowing, canoeing and other initiatives that will require either local or regional responses eventually in terms of facilities.
- Continuing growth and development of the local community centre concept, in conjunction with the use of churches, schools, etc.
- Increasing interest in walking, hiking, bicycling and other trail oriented activities.
- Increasing emphasis on physical fitness, holistic well-being and other trends that will connect dimensions of health, education, social and community / leisure services.

- Increasing expectations of not just rehabilitating but repositioning and renewing older facilities and parks as markets / needs change.
- A trend towards more educational components within the leisure services in order to enhance understanding, value, etc.
- Additional emphasis on more of a business model for high-cost facilities to return additional revenues to use partnerships, access other types of funding, both capital and operating, etc.
- Considering whether subdivision developers need to participate in leisure services development at a higher level, such as finishing parks, building facilities, etc.
- Increasing emphasis on environmental stewardship, protecting environmental and heritage properties / venues, etc.
- Increasing emphasis on the use of technology, both in terms of operational supports and as a primary leisure activity.
- With an emphasis on downtown redevelopment, transit systems, etc., ensuring adequate leisure services in the downtown area to support these unique populations.
- A long-term plan for the Grand River corridor.
- Neighbourhoods will grow in importance as this is the level of a larger community that residents will attach themselves to.
- Managing the transition occurring within volunteerism, in terms of numbers, interests, capabilities, levels of intensity and risk, etc.
- Better understanding the role of the not-for-profit and private sectors in leisure services development and the city not trying to be all things to all people at all times.
- Increasing emphasis on gaining fiscal efficiencies in operations, through multiple means, whether energy conservation, multi-use / larger facilities, partnerships, etc.

- Positioning senior's services from segregated centres to more drop-in, integrated and related services, which is part of a generational shift which will be challenging to manage.

9. Documents and Related Reviews

- The city's Community Grants Program is a major investment in non-profit and community-based organizations, approximately \$1.5 million per year and growing, both in terms of funds and linkages.
- The city's Affiliation Agreement for minor sports lays out a significant level of responsibilities for the city and the sports groups in terms of services and supports that will be provided.
- Significant background studies have been developed on trails and bikeways for both the city and the region, with a major spinal system being designed for the region to link with various local networks.
- Trail development in and around Kitchener has been given a significant priority with proposals to effectively double the number of trails within Kitchener.
- The regional arts and culture Master Plan has placed significant emphasis on regional based arts and cultural, heritage and related venues, investments, communications and related operations and development initiatives that would involve a significant array of Kitchener-based facilities and programs.
- A number of site-based master plans have been developed for the Grand River corridor, the Huron Natural Area, McLennan Park and Kiwanis Park which have established a series of directions and preferred alternatives that range from specific details and approvals to concepts that need further development. McLennan Park has a number of key options, while the future of Kiwanis Park is set out to be similar to its current profile with some upgrading. The Huron Park Natural Area represents a significant and specialized implementation approach as an outdoor education centre on a broader partnership basis.
- The Victoria Park Strategic Plan identifies a rejuvenation strategy for this community focal point with significant investment requirements of \$3.13 million.
- Community centres have been identified as a primary service delivery vehicle through various reports for the next ten to twenty years.

- The Sportsworld twin pad arena and an arena decommissioning strategy will have significant long-term considerations in regards to the delivery of arena facilities.

10. Trends

- Key demographic trends identified in regards to an aging population, stabilized youth and teen populations, a more multicultural face on the community, increasing single parent households and other higher impact characteristics in regards to leisure services delivery.
- Increasing emphasis on multi-use facilities; more holistic approaches to leisure services with education, health and social services; as well as increased importance being placed on partnerships and alternative delivery strategies.
- Heightened concerns in regards to affordability, availability, using all of the community's resources, the roles of school facilities in the leisure services delivery model and other key considerations.
- Increasing market segmentation in regards to teens, seniors, preschools, the disabled, multi-cultural communities and other population groups that are now identified as a more targeted basis, which is resulting in increased market segmentation and changing delivery approaches.
- Increased application of technology, both as a support to operations and as a programmatic activity.
- Changing user expectations in terms of facility quality and services, expectations, price point perspectives, immediate accessibility, customer service levels, use of the internet and related registration enhancements, etc.
- Growth in sport tourism, economic development and related initiatives around leisure services and its assets.
- Heightened emphasis on education, diverse communications, knowledge-based participation and an emphasis on evaluation and outcome monitoring and measurement.