CITY OF KITCHENER
PARK MASTER PLAN

SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS REPORT

JULY 2009

Prepared by:
GSP Group Inc.
F.J. Galloway & Associates
Ecoplans Limited
PMA Landscape Architects
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Park Master Steering Committee
Dan Ritz, Supervisor, Design & Development (Project Manager)
Dianne Adams, GIS Supervisor
Sandro Bassanese, Site Development Facilitator
Brian Bateman, Senior Planner
Ken Carmichael, Supervisor of Traffic and Parking
Sharon Daniel, Engineering Technologist
Ashley DeWitt, Landscape Architectural Intern
Greg Hummel, Manager, Park Planning, Development & Operations
Kevin Mick, Design & Approvals Engineer
Carrie Musselman, Senior Environmental Planner
Tim O’Brien, Landscape Architect
Brian Page, Supervisor, Site Development
Dave Schmitt, Env/Urban Forest Project Manager
William Sleeth, Landscape Architect
Brandon Sloan, Senior Planner
John Stevenson, Engineer Construction Project Manager
Peter Wetherup, Parks Planner

Consulting Team
GSP Group Inc.
F.J. Galloway & Associates
Ecoplans Limited
PMA Landscape Architects
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

The City of Kitchener is the largest area municipality within the Region of Waterloo. It has approximately 211,000 residents representing nearly 40% of the Region of Waterloo’s 553,000 population. The City has continued to grow over the last many decades, and represents one of the strongest growing and developing communities within Ontario and Canada.

Kitchener has a progressive history in the development of parks, recreation and cultural services for its residents. In 1976, it completed Ontario’s first Parks and Recreation Master Plan which was a basis to support the longer term planning, development and investment in these services for community members. In 1991, a second generation Master Plan was completed, and in 2004, a Leisure Facilities Master Plan was developed and approved by Council. The City has utilized these Master Plans as a primary planning tool in the identification of service needs for park and facility development, and in assessing investment priorities, including the integration of many of the recommendations in the City’s Development Charges By-laws.

In the 2004 Leisure Facilities Master Plan, a recommendation was presented and accepted that a more detailed master planning process should be completed for parks and community trails. In this regard, the City of Kitchener initiated the development of a Park Master Plan in the fall of 2008.

1.2 Park Master Plan

The focus of the City of Kitchener Park Master Plan is multi-fold. First, it is intended to establish a conceptual and policy basis upon which to plan, develop and fund the future development and operations of parks and community trails. Second, the Master Plan focuses on specific initiatives in the development of key parks. Third, the
Plan, in its implementation components, addresses operational standards, delivery strategies and guidelines that will support parks development and operations. Within these three dimensions of the Park Master Plan are a series of other elements that are important in addressing a range of considerations, from policies and strategies through to operations.

### 1.3 Master Plan Work Program

The Master Plan Work Program has three primary phases:

- Situation Analysis Report;
- Draft Master Plan Development;
- Master Plan Finalization.

The Situation Analysis Report is designed to undertake a wide range of consultation, research and analytical activities that provide a sound basis for understanding the current operating environment for parks in Kitchener, as well as future perspectives that could influence the development and delivery of parks and related services. In this light, current and future demographics, land inventory and park provision levels, trends, service delivery and financial and other assessments were completed. Also, a multi-tiered consultation program was completed involving focus groups with park user groups; two community workshops; an online resident survey; and written submissions. Interviews were conducted with Council members and City Staff, as well as discussions with community partners and agencies, such as the school boards, Grand River Conservation Authority and the Ministry of Natural Resources.

This document will provide the base line of data, both on current and projected operating environments and strategies that will provide the foundation for developing the City of Kitchener Park Master Plan’s policy directions, recommendations and implementation programs.
2.0  POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROFILE

The demographic composition and development profile of a community are intrinsically linked to the assessment of the type, size, location and amount of parkland required. Demographic characteristics and trends in the age profile and ethnic diversity of the population can be key indicators of the community's current and future needs and preferences for parkland. Similarly, the planned land use pattern and the amount, location and type of development will influence parkland opportunities and requirements. As such, this section of the report provides a summary of Kitchener’s demographics and community development profile to highlight key considerations for the Park Master Plan.

In preparing this section a number of sources were referenced, including:

- Statistics Canada Census and Community Profiles, 2006;
- Region of Waterloo Land Budget Analysis, 2009; and,

2.1  Historic, Current and Forecasted Population

The City of Kitchener as a whole has experienced strong growth rates over the last 30 years. In 2006, Statistics Canada reported that the City’s population was 204,668, a 12.1% increase from 2001. The graph to the left identifies the growth in the City’s population between 1976 and 2006, and the forecast population to 2031 as prepared by the Region of Waterloo. The Region is in the process of updating the population forecasts for each area municipality to conform with the growth targets established in the Provincial Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

It is anticipated that Kitchener will continue to see strong population growth to 2031, with a forecast population of 252,100 in 2016 and 311,500 in 2031. This will continue to create increased demands for parks and related facilities. The objective of the Park

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>131,870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>139,734</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>150,604</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>168,282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>178,420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>190,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>213,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>232,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>252,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>272,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2026</td>
<td>292,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2031</td>
<td>311,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Region of Waterloo and Statistics Canada, 2006 Census
*2006 Population based on a 4% undercount
*Numbers subject to change
Master Plan is to guide future investment in the City’s parks to ensure the needs of existing and future residents are sustainably met.

### 2.2 Age Profile

Urban municipalities across Ontario and across Canada are experiencing an aging of the population profile, and Kitchener is no exception to this demographic trend. From 1996 to 2006, the percentage of Kitchener residents over the age of 55 increased from 18% to 22%, and this age segment will continue to grow both in number and proportion of the total population. It is anticipated that children and youth populations in Kitchener will remain relatively stable, with no significant increase.

The graph to the left illustrates the magnitude of the city’s changing age profile by charting the 2001 and 2006 age cohorts. Please refer to Section 7.1.1 for a fulsome discussion on the implications of an aging population.

As a result of the demographic shift, the types of facilities and opportunities provided in certain neighbourhood parks may not be ideal for the demographic of that area. The aging of the population impacts expectations on accessibility and the types of leisure services and activities demanded, with rising interest in walking and related health, fitness and wellness oriented activities, bird watching, art and culture as well as heritage. Additional information on the implications of an aging population in the context of planning for parks and leisure opportunities and related trends and strategies is provided in section 7 of this report.

*Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census*
2.3 Ethnicity

Kitchener’s population will continue to become increasingly diverse. In 2006, 26% of Kitchener’s population was not born in Canada. The graph to the right illustrates the origin of Kitchener’s visible minority population as a percent of total population as compared to the province as a whole. This diversification affects demands for a wider range of leisure opportunities and culture-based events and activities. A key consideration for the Master Plan is the important role that parks play in providing opportunities to celebrate cultural diversity, providing a venue for cultural events, social gathering and a wide range of leisure pursuits.

2.4 Community Development Profile

The 2009 draft Kitchener Growth Management Plan (KGM) provides information regarding the characteristics and growth trends for each of the subareas in the city. For the last number of years, growth has predominately occurred at the edges of the urban area in the form of suburban development; however, an objective of the KGM is to direct a significant portion of anticipated new growth to the inner-city area in the form of intensification and redevelopment. Central city intensification is targeted around the re-development of brownfields and other underutilized or abandoned sites. Major infrastructure investments such as a Rapid Transit system linking Kitchener, Waterloo and Cambridge are being considered and will help to attract intensification and redevelopment projects in the urban core.

Suburban-based growth will continue in designated greenfield areas, but with a greater emphasis on diversity in the mix of housing unit types and compact built form to achieve higher densities and “walkable” communities.

Mixed land use is also targeted in key nodes and corridors to provide more complete communities offering housing, employment, shopping and recreational opportunities.
Table 2-3 summarizes the priority subareas identified for future growth and development, as well as the existing and/or needed active parkland provision in each area. A more detailed summary of the KGM and other Regional and City planning documents is provided in Section 7. In addition, a further discussion of the implications of intensification and evolving land use planning/growth management trends and approaches on parks planning and development is provided in Section 7 of this report.

**Table 2-1: Draft Kitchener Growth Management Plan: Summary of Growth Subareas**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subarea</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Priority Status</th>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Active Park Provision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban Growth Centre</td>
<td>Intensification</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>The 131 residents &amp; jobs/hectare in 2008 is to be planned to achieve greater than 200 RJs/ha by 2031</td>
<td>Existing. New urban required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Use Corridors</td>
<td>Intensification</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Major streets; Development applications ongoing</td>
<td>Existing. New potential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nodes</td>
<td>Intensification</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Primarily exist. Required TBD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood Mixed Use</td>
<td>Intensification</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Existing. Any new TBD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridgeport North</td>
<td>Greenfield</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Pending regional road improvements 402 maximum new units</td>
<td>Kiwanis Park, Exist Neighbourhood Park unbuilt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand River North</td>
<td>Greenfield</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>702 maximum new units</td>
<td>Neighbourhood park pending with playground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand River South</td>
<td>Greenfield with MUNode</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>182 maximum new units</td>
<td>Additional parks required including potential District Park with sportsfields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subarea</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Priority Status</td>
<td>Comments</td>
<td>Active Park Provision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hidden Valley</td>
<td>Greenfield Area Remaining</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>14 maximum new units</td>
<td>One Neighbourhood Park existing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deer Ridge</td>
<td>Mainly built-up</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>68 maximum new units</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doon South Phase 1</td>
<td>Greenfield</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1,276 maximum new units</td>
<td>(2) Neighbourhood parks pending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doon South Phase 2</td>
<td>Greenfield</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>2,321 maximum new units</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brigadoon</td>
<td>Greenfield</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>526 maximum new units</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brigadoon South</td>
<td>Greenfield</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>No applications to date</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huron</td>
<td>Greenfield</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>387 maximum new units</td>
<td>Existing (1) Neighbourhood park unbuilt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huron South</td>
<td>Greenfield</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1,755 maximum new units</td>
<td>(3) Neighbourhood Parks pending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trussler Southeast</td>
<td>Greenfield</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Neighbourhood park(s) required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trussler Northeast</td>
<td>Under Review (all greenfield – C Priority)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Required - TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trussler Northwest</td>
<td>Greenfield</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laurentian West Phase 1-3a</td>
<td>Greenfield</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>449 maximum new units</td>
<td>Parks built, Neighbourhood unbuilt, Neighbourhood pending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laurentian West Phase 3B</td>
<td>Greenfield</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>No applications to date</td>
<td>Pot. Neighbourhood park(s) w. playground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highland West</td>
<td>Mainly built-up</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>No applications to date</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasgow West</td>
<td>Greenfield</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>No applications to date</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Draft City of Kitchener Growth Management Plan, 2009
3.0 PARKS PROFILE AND SERVICE DELIVERY REVIEW

This section provides information on the values and benefits of parks and a detailed summary of parkland supply and distribution within the City of Kitchener, as well as the current service delivery model. A review of pertinent documents (Appendix A) was undertaken to assist in preparing this and other sections of the report.

3.1 The Value of Kitchener’s Parks

Parks are a defining feature of Kitchener’s culture, heritage, urban character and quality of life. Beginning with the opening of Victoria Park in 1894, Kitchener has a long and proud history of recognizing the essential role of parks in shaping a healthy, vibrant and liveable community. Today, Kitchener boasts over 325 parks including more than 1,800 hectares of parkland, trails and natural areas. These vast resources provide many environmental, economic and social benefits and are a vital part of the city’s infrastructure. Traditionally, the value of parks, particularly their economic value, is not quantified or documented as a basis for investment like it has been for other forms of public infrastructure such as streets and buildings, bridges, transit, water and wastewater systems. All of these assets require sustained investment in maintenance and renewal or they will deteriorate. Parks are no exception.

In developing Kitchener’s Park Master Plan as a roadmap for future investment in parks, it is important to consider the value of the City’s parks system.

3.1.1 Environmental Benefits

Kitchener’s parks have a fundamental role in the conservation of the natural environment. Over half of the City’s parklands are classified as natural areas. These areas play a vital role in sustaining the availability of clean air and water, protecting and conserving biodiversity, and offsetting the impacts of climate change. Studies have shown that trees act as the ‘green lungs’ of urban areas, their leaves naturally filtering...
the air by stabilizing dust and absorbing pollutants\(^1\). In addition, vegetation cleans and filters water, traps sediment, recycles nutrients, stabilizes slopes and slows runoff, improving the quality of water for human consumption. Parks also help to conserve the dwindling urban biodiversity, protecting habitat and helping threatened species retain their natural resilience to climate changes. The green spaces in urban areas also have a cooling effect, breaking up the reflected heat from hard surfaces, while the shade provided by trees buffers buildings and paved areas from excessive heat.

In economic terms, the environmental benefits of parks reduce the costs of water supply and filtration, stormwater management and flood control, air pollution mitigation, and energy consumption. The parks system protects critical natural features and processes, thus reducing the need to emplace more costly forms of infrastructure to perform these functions. At a time when Kitchener is increasingly challenged with managing the rising cost of replacing and renewing aging infrastructure while also attempting to provide new infrastructure required to support growth, these environmental and related economic values of the parks system will only increase in importance.

3.1.2 Economic Benefits

Parks are often considered a subsidized service as they cost money to provide and manage and yet are generally available for free use by the community. This narrow view of parks fails to consider the broader economic benefits that parks provide, their contribution to economic capital and their high return on investment. Local, regional and provincial economies benefit significantly from parks. They are a major draw for the recreation and tourism industries; they help to attract investment in business and real estate; they enhance property values; and, they provide free venues for the community for a range of recreational and other activities and events.

Parks save money for governments and residents. The free use of parks saves residents and businesses the cost of finding leisure opportunities and venues for a range of events and activities elsewhere. They reduce the cost of medical expenses and pressures on the health care system by providing opportunities for healthier, active lifestyles. They provide water recharge, filtration and air pollution control functions, saving money on other forms of infrastructure. Proximity to and views of parks add to the residential value of a home and subsequently, an increase in property taxes. Parks contribute to quality of life and the appeal of the community as a place to live, work, open a business and as a tourism destination.

International research has shown that when the economic benefits of parks are fully considered and quantified, they are significantly undervalued based on the resources allocated to parks and the high return on investment they provide. A study completed in Australia concluded that without access to the public parks, it was estimated that community service groups would incur an additional $10.6 to $14.6 million in program costs per year in the Greater Sydney Region\(^2\). A recent study in Philadelphia concluded that the city’s 10,000 acres of parkland provide the following economic benefits:

- $18 million in added property tax revenue;
- $689 million in increased equity for homeowners near parks;
- $40 million in tourist revenue;
- Savings of $70 million in medical expenses;
- $7 million worth of stormwater and air pollution control each year;
- $1.1 billion in direct use and health values\(^3\).

The economic benefits attributed to Philadelphia’s parks were estimated at a time when the parks were characterized as badly underfunded and deteriorating. As noted


\(^3\) The Trust for Public Land for the Philadelphia Parks Alliance. 2008. How Much Value Does the City of Philadelphia Receive from its Park and Recreation System?
in the study, appropriate levels of funding for parks management, maintenance and rehabilitation would only increase the economic contributions and other benefits of the parks system.

### 3.1.3 Social Benefits

Parks provide a number of social benefits. In parks, families and friends can come together to have fun, celebrate important occasions or just relax, which provides a significant social value. Urban parks also provide opportunity for community and multicultural activities including festivals and special events such as ethnic community garden schemes and migrant community days, which support communication, engagement and cooperation.

With the increasing obesity rates, stress and sedentary lifestyles, the provision of parks is of utmost importance to the overall health of a community. Parks offer opportunities to walk, jog, cycle and participate in numerous organized sports (e.g. soccer, baseball, etc.). The availability of parks for physical activity is critical to the well-being of children and youth, not only from a physical health perspective, but as venues for socialization.

Current international research indicates that natural environments, such as parks, offer low-cost preventative and remedial opportunities for public health. Health initiatives have been demonstrated to control and/or decrease healthcare costs. A study in the United States found that people who used local parks for recreation reported fewer visits to the doctor than did non-park users. Additionally, ‘green exercise’ has been shown to significantly improve the self esteem and quality of life for people suffering from mental illness.

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3.2 Parkland

Kitchener’s vast parkland resources include over 325 park locations involving more than 1,800 hectares of land, ranging from small parkettes and urban greenspaces to neighbourhood and community parks to major sports venues to an array of natural areas. This section provides information about the current inventory, distribution, classification and service provision levels of parkland in Kitchener and identifies related gaps, issues and opportunities for consideration in developing the Master Plan.

3.2.1 Current Parks Classification System Review

The City of Kitchener has three classification systems that categorize parkland, being:

1. Municipal Plan Classification;
2. Neighbourhood Design Guidelines Classification; and,

Table 3-1 summarizes the Parks Classification System adopted in the City of Kitchener Municipal Plan to guide the acquisition and provision of parkland.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Service Area</th>
<th>Size (ha)</th>
<th>Provision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greens</td>
<td>Aesthetics &amp; rest areas</td>
<td>Immediate area</td>
<td>&gt;0.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tot Lots</td>
<td>Unorganized children’s play activities</td>
<td>Radius up to 0.5 km</td>
<td>0.2-0.5</td>
<td>1 to 2 per high density area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood Park</td>
<td>Unorganized and spontaneous activities</td>
<td>Radius up to 2 km</td>
<td>0.5-4</td>
<td>0.5-1.0 ha per 1,000 population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood Sportsfields</td>
<td>Unorganized and spontaneous activities</td>
<td>Radius up to 5 km</td>
<td>2-10</td>
<td>1.0-2.0 ha per 1,000 population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Sportsfield</td>
<td>Organized youth and recreational adult level sports</td>
<td>Radius up to 12 km</td>
<td>5-30</td>
<td>0.5-1.0 ha per 1,000 population</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In 2007, the City of Kitchener adopted Neighbourhood Design Guidelines which apply to new subdivisions and neighbourhood shopping centres outside of the Central Neighbourhoods. The Guidelines are intended to inform the next comprehensive review of the City of Kitchener Official Plan and provide a description of park types (not including active parkland) as summarized in Table 3-2.

**Table 3-2: Neighbourhood Design Guidelines Parkland Description**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood Park Spaces</td>
<td>• Prominent street intersections; adjacent to schools/trails</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provide at least 1m frontage for every 100sm of park area along public streets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 1.0-2.5ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parkettes</td>
<td>• Along residential blocks/adjacent to trails or SWM facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Play equipment, seating, bike racks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Rectangular or square in shape with two street frontages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 0.2-1.0ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commons</td>
<td>• Passive green space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 100% street frontage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Range in size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear Parks</td>
<td>• Along long blocks/linkages to larger parks, trails or pedestrian designations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Small seating area, pathway, signage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 12-20m in width</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There are a number of variations in the type, size and purpose of parkland between the parks classification system in the Municipal Plan and the Neighbourhood Design Guidelines. In particular, the Neighbourhood Design Guidelines generally focus on ‘urban’ parkland as opposed to active recreation parkland (i.e. sportsfields) and do not consider the provision of City or community-wide parkland. Additionally, the Neighbourhood Design Guidelines provide detailed information on the function of the various green spaces.

The third classification system that is used by the City is for parks mapping and inventory purposes in connection with the municipal Geographic Information System (GIS), as identified in section 3.2.2. The GIS database does not include descriptions of each park type (i.e. size, purpose).

The use of three different parkland classification systems raises some issues in determining service levels and matching planning objectives to current inventory and vice versa. For example, the GIS is a useful tool for determining the amount of parkland in the City and within defined areas. However, since the GIS classifications are not reflective of the Municipal Plan and Neighbourhood Design Guidelines, it is difficult to determine whether the existing parkland inventories meet the policies and objectives of these documents related to targeted provision levels. The City’s 2005 Leisure Facilities Master Plan recommended continued use of the park classification and provisioning levels identified within the Municipal Plan and the 1991 Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The new Park Master Plan should recommend an updated and unified parkland classification system.
3.2.2 City-Wide Parkland Inventory

The City of Kitchener GIS classifies the parkland inventory by type. Table 3-3 provides a summary of the amount of parkland by type and the level of provision per population across the entire City based on the current GIS inventory.

Table 3-3: Parkland Inventory by Type and Service Levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Example(s)</th>
<th># of Sites</th>
<th>Amount (ha)</th>
<th>Provision Level (ha/1,000 residents)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regional Park</td>
<td>Chicopee Park</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>66.5</td>
<td>0.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Park</td>
<td>Victoria Park, Rockway Gardens, Kiwanis Park</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>92.6</td>
<td>0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community or District Park</td>
<td>Breithaupt Park, Peter Hallman Ball Yard</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>120.6</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood Park</td>
<td>Eastforest Park, Franklin Park</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>355.6</td>
<td>1.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Area</td>
<td>McLennan Park, Homer Watson Park, Huron Natural Area</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>1121.3</td>
<td>5.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Space</td>
<td>Paige Park, Parkvale Park</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sportsfield</td>
<td>Bridgeport Sportsfield, Meinzinger Park</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
<td>Madison Green, Cenotaph Green</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic Site</td>
<td>Woodside National Historic Site</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facility Property</td>
<td>Rockway Centre, Water Treatment Centre</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unclassified</td>
<td>South Park</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>326</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,874</strong></td>
<td><strong>9.16</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: City of Kitchener Geographic Information System, 2009

*Note: Includes 77 hectares of trails and 20 hectares of stormwater management facilities

Population-based provision levels vary widely among the various categories of parkland types. The acquisition and provision of certain parkland, such as natural areas and historic sites, is largely opportunity-based, and therefore the provision levels may not reflect a specific standard or target.
Kitchener Parks

- Regional
- City
- Community/District
- Neighbourhood
- Natural Area
- Open Space
- Sportsfield
- Green
- Historic Site
- Facility Property
- Unclassified
Other types of parkland such as neighbourhood, community/district and city-wide parks are typically acquired via mandatory dedication as a condition of land development, through donations, public purchase or other means to achieve a desired level of service, distribution and access.

Kitchener’s overall parkland inventory represents a current provision level of 9.2 hectares of parkland per 1,000 residents. This compares well with other mid-size urban areas such as London (6.5 ha/1,000), Barrie (8.9 ha/1,000) and St. Catharines (3.1 ha/1,000). Excluding Natural Areas, Kitchener’s provision level is 3.7 ha/1,000, exceeding London (2.7 ha/1,000), Barrie (2.0 ha/1,000) and St. Catharines (2.5 ha/1,000).

The City of Kitchener Municipal Plan targets a provision standard of 0.5 to 1.0 ha of neighbourhood parkland per 1,000 residents, plus neighbourhood sportsfields in the range of 1.0 to 2.0 ha/1,000 population, for a total neighbourhood-level standard of 1.5 to 3.0 ha/1,000 population. Based on the City’s GIS inventory, the current provision level for neighbourhood parks is 1.74 ha/1,000 population. The current provision levels for neighbourhood parkland and sportsfields are at the low end of the City’s target. As noted earlier, current provision levels for other types of parkland identified in the City’s GIS inventory cannot be evaluated against the Municipal Plan targets due to the differences between the two classification systems.

### 3.2.3 Parkland Inventory by Planning Communities

There are 53 Planning Communities in the City of Kitchener. A range in amount of parkland is anticipated given that planning communities vary in size, both in terms of population and physical land area. Communities such as Doon South have large natural areas which increase the supply of parkland.

Table 3-4 summarizes the total amount of parkland currently provided in each community, including parks, trails and stormwater management facilities (Appendix B contains a detailed summary).
Table 3-4: Parkland Inventory by Planning Community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Planning Community</th>
<th>Amount (ha)</th>
<th>Planning Community Area</th>
<th>% Parkland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Alpine</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>174.9</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Auditorium</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>95.2</td>
<td>23.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Bridgeport East</td>
<td>41.9</td>
<td>233.7</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Bridgeport North</td>
<td>72.3</td>
<td>230.0</td>
<td>31.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Bridgeport West</td>
<td>56.9</td>
<td>143.5</td>
<td>39.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Brigadoon</td>
<td>74.7</td>
<td>229.2</td>
<td>32.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Cedar Hill</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Central Frederick</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>109.7</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Centreville Chicopee</td>
<td>118.8</td>
<td>440.9</td>
<td>26.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>Cherry Hill</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>111.7</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>City Commercial Core</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>92.4</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Civic Centre</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Country Hills</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>103.8</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Country Hills East</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>101.4</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Country Hill West</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>189.3</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Doon South</td>
<td>123.2</td>
<td>880.5</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Dundee</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>481.9</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Eastwood</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Fairfield</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>124.8</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Forest Heights</td>
<td>64.4</td>
<td>495.4</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Forest Hill</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>186.5</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Grand River North</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>277.2</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Grand River South</td>
<td>96.6</td>
<td>480.0</td>
<td>20.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Heritage Park</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>191.2</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Hidden Valley</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>218.8</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Highland West</td>
<td>63.5</td>
<td>519.0</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Huron Park</td>
<td>129.3</td>
<td>568.8</td>
<td>22.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Idlewood</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>196.3</td>
<td>21.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# City of Kitchener

## Park Master Plan – Situation Analysis Report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Planning Community</th>
<th>Amount (ha)</th>
<th>Planning Community Area</th>
<th>% Parkland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>King East</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>KW Hospital</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>85.9</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Laurentian Hills</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>298.0</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Laurentian West</td>
<td>55.4</td>
<td>562.1</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Lower Doon</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>226.8</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Meinzinger Park-Lakeside</td>
<td>38.3</td>
<td>126.3</td>
<td>30.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Mill Courtland Woodside Park</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>171.2</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Mt. Hope Huron Park</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>148.6</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Northward</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>122.8</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Pioneer Park</td>
<td>134.6</td>
<td>360.6</td>
<td>37.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Pioneer Tower East</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>189.6</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Pioneer Tower West</td>
<td>87.0</td>
<td>542.0</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Rockway</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>113.3</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Rosemount</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>263.2</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>South Plains</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>596.7</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Southdale</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>131.3</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>St. Marys Hospital</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>82.4</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Stanley Park</td>
<td>64.2</td>
<td>326.9</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Trillium Industrial Park</td>
<td>106.0</td>
<td>613.9</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Trussler</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>616.4</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Vanier</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>350.6</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Victoria Hills</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>221.9</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Victoria North</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>332.0</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Victoria Park</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>74.4</td>
<td>31.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Westmount</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>191.5</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td><strong>1,874</strong></td>
<td><strong>13,829</strong></td>
<td><strong>13.6%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: City of Kitchener Geographic Information System, 2009

*Note: Population by Planning Community Required to Determine Service Levels*

The 2005 Leisure Facilities Master Plan recommended the undertaking of a Parks Servicing Provision Plan to identify underserviced areas relative to neighbourhood
parks, potential opportunities that may be available in the short and/or long term within these service areas, and potential strategies to overcome the deficiencies focusing on sites, sizes, partners, and funding approaches. The new Park Master Plan is intended to address this recommendation of the Leisure Facilities Master Plan.

### 3.2.4 Planned Parkland

There are 14 planned parks within the City of Kitchener, ranging in size and type. The table below provides a summary of planned parks, as of April 2009.

Table 3-5: Planned Parkland by Planning Community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Planning Community</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Size (ha)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Bridgeport North</td>
<td>Unclassified</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Brigadoon</td>
<td>Open Space</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Country Hills East</td>
<td>Natural Area</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Neighbourhood Park</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Neighbourhood Park</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Neighbourhood Park</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Doon South</td>
<td>Natural Area</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Grand River South</td>
<td>Natural Area</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Natural Area</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Natural Area</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Open Space</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Highland West</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Park</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Neighbourhood Park</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Huron Park</td>
<td>Natural Area</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Neighbourhood Park</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Laurentian West</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Park</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Neighbourhood Park</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>South Plains</td>
<td>Unclassified</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Victoria North</td>
<td>Unclassified</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>69.7</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: City of Kitchener Geographic Information System, 2009
As illustrated in Table 3-5 and the accompanying map, most planned parkland is located in the suburban areas of Kitchener.

3.2.5 Parkland Gaps and Issues

Through the background research and consultation, the following gaps and issues have been identified related to parkland provision as important considerations in developing the Park Master Plan:

- Consistency amongst the parkland classification system, particularly the Municipal Plan and the Geographical Information System;
- Need to define “park” and formalize a hierarchy and provision standards/targets;
- Shifting focus from suburban park development to urban parkland development;
- Assessing the maintenance impacts of urban parkland, including parkettes and urban plazas;
- Ensuring that newly developed areas have similar provision levels as established areas;
- Need for resources for the timely development of neighbourhood parks in new development areas and allocation of appropriate resources for increased maintenance and operations requirements;
- More attention to updating/redeveloping existing neighbourhood parks in mature areas (capital maintenance and renewal);
- Ensuring that the land dedicated for parks as required through the land development process is optimal for the intended park functions, uses, facilities and maintenance/management as well as accessibility and linkages;
- Engaging the community in the design and programming of parks;
- Considering the traffic and intensity of use impacts of active sports parks and ensuring adequate parking and ancillary facilities; and,
- Need a plan for winter use of parks as there is a lack of year-round activities.
Additional parkland issues, trends and other considerations identified through the research and consultation are summarized in sections 6 and 7 of this report.

3.3 Trails Inventory & Analysis

Currently, Kitchener offers over 175 kilometres of trails throughout the City that support different levels of recreation for all members of the community. Off-road trails within Kitchener have been routed through parks, natural areas, hydro corridors, communities, and provide linkages through and between woodlots, surrounding communities, schools, community centres, parks, and significant roadways. In addition to the community trail network, there is an on-road bicycle system along collector and other major roads.

At the time that the City of Kitchener Bikeway Study was completed (1998), the City had 100 kilometres of community trails, 3 kilometres of bike lanes, 67 kilometres of on-road signed routes, and 49 kilometres of on-road bikeways (paved shoulders or wide shared-use lanes). The Region of Waterloo Cycling Master Plan (2004) 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 City of Kitchener Bikeway Study (1998) identified a need to extend the trail components to on road corridors as well.

Kitchener has two main types of trails, community trails and woodland trails. Trails within Kitchener provide a comprehensive network of safe, leisurely, and integrated routes throughout the City. A trails hierarchy comprised of both community and woodland trails provides a clear method for determining surface treatments, widths, location, proximity to amenities, decorative features (i.e. benches, trash receptacles), user expectations, and long-term maintenance requirements. Trail surfacing within the City is dependant on the requirements of anticipated users.
3.3.1 Community Trails

Community trails facilitate city wide travel and are the primary trail system in Kitchener connecting parks, recreational centres, schools, commercial sites, cultural and institutional centres, Grand River Transit facilities and numerous residential neighbourhoods. Community trails provide the framework for the trail network within the City of Kitchener and are typically more suitable to compaction, two-way traffic, and a higher frequency of use/users. Trails are typically 3.0m in width and contain a suborder of trail types which include asphalt, stonedust/limestone, and multi-use. These trails are an essential and valuable asset to local lifestyle and community vitality in the City as they promote opportunities for walking, hiking, bicycling, as well as many other forms of active and passive recreation. This type of trail accommodates the most amenities (i.e. benches, washrooms, signage) and the widest range of user abilities, including accessibility options. Community trails also offer the greatest opportunity to move from attractions and destinations throughout the City and outside the City.

The Iron Horse trail and the Victoria Park trails represent an informal ‘first order’ within the community trails category, having been constructed and maintained to a higher standard than the majority of community trails within the city. Both the Iron Horse and Victoria Park trails have continuous asphalt surfacing, wayfinding and safety signage, and associated trail amenities such as trash receptacles and benches. Maintenance standards for both trail systems are high, and include all-season work that ensures that they are accessible to trail users throughout the year.

The 175 kilometres of community trails within the City of Kitchener are comprised of the following:

- 70.4 km of asphalt;
- 10.6 km of recycled asphalt;
- 51.6 km of compacted stonedust, tar and chip, and limestone;
• 21.5 km of gravel surface;
• 14.6 km of natural ground surface;
• 0.4 km of concrete
• 5.0 km recycled concrete;
• 0.8 km on wooden boardwalks;
• 0.4 km on bridge structures.

3.3.2 Woodland Trails

Woodland trails are the second order of trail system within the City of Kitchener and are typically 1.8m in width and facilitate more informal and environmentally sensitive connections within the City. Typically constructed on existing natural ground, woodland trails are designed to be more sensitive to the surrounding environment by providing little disturbance of the existing landscape, less impact, and fewer frequencies of traffic/users. Aimed to accommodate locally oriented traffic, woodland trails also provide neighbourhood links within the community trail framework, facilitating neighbourhood loop opportunities and connecting local points of interest. Many of the woodland trails are informal, and have developed over time through persistent pedestrian use. Kitchener has approximately 82 kilometres of woodland trails, on boardwalks, footpaths, bridges, and natural ground connecting parks, woodlots, environmental features, natural areas, and conservation authority lands.

3.3.3 Primary Trail Systems

The City of Kitchener contains several primary trail systems, including:

**The Iron Horse Trail** – The Iron Horse trail is a rail line converted into a 3m wide asphalt bicycle and walking trail link running between Kitchener and Waterloo. In the City of Kitchener, the asphalt trail covers a distance of 4.71 kilometres and provides connections with the Trans Canada Trail system. The trail also provides a direct link between two important parks within the region, Victoria Park in Kitchener and
Waterloo Park in Waterloo.

Industrial artifacts that speak to Kitchener’s manufacturing history are installed at trail nodes along the route, providing trail users with interpretive elements that reflect the history of the community. The trail is also marked with maroon and gold trail markers, reflecting the colours of the Grand Trunk Railway, the company whose trains once utilized the tracks where the trail now runs.

**The Victoria Park Trails** – There are approximately 3.59 kilometres of paved asphalt, stonedust, and boardwalk trails routed through Victoria Park, one of Kitchener’s premier parks located in the downtown core. This trail network also links to the Iron Horse trail, providing access to adjacent communities and associated recreational amenities.

**The Walter Bean Grand River Trail** – Once complete, the Walter Bean Trail will be a 3m wide asphalt, stonedust, and gravel trail, representing over 78 kilometres of continuous trail within the Grand River corridor. The trail will extend the existing Cambridge-to-Hamilton trail system as one continuous pathway through Kitchener, Waterloo, and Woolwich to north of West Montrose. The trail provides important linkages between several communities, and also provides trail users with access to the Grand River corridor and its associated recreational opportunities. There are several other trail systems that currently or will in future link with the Walter Bean trail, such as the RIM Park trail in Waterloo and the Grand Trunk trail in Cambridge, making it an important north-south link. In the winter, the Walter Bean Trail is a popular destination within the City of Kitchener for snow-shoeing, cross-country skiing and hiking. Currently there is 27.0 kilometres of built out trail within the City of Kitchener, with a total of 11 access points planned along the ultimate route.

Within the City of Kitchener the Walter Bean trail is discontinuous, with several phases awaiting funding, the location of access points, and the securing of rights-of-way. The trail is owned by the Municipality through which it runs, and therefore requires
significant co-ordination amongst neighbouring municipalities.

**The Dominic Cardillo Trail** – Named in honour of the longest-serving Mayor in Kitchener’s history, the Dominic Cardillo trail is 2.51 kilometres of paved asphalt and stonedust trail starting at the Ottawa River Centre at the corner of River Road and Ottawa Street South, and travelling south through the Idlewood Bush and ending at Chicopee Park. The Dominic Cardillo Trail is routed through the Chicopee Natural Area, and several trail connections link to other parts of the City.

**The Trans Canada Trail** – The Kitchener section of the Trans Canada Trail runs along the Iron Horse Trail, as well as along several on-road connections for about 15 kilometres through Kitchener to join Waterloo in the north with Cambridge on the south. The trail is a 3m wide asphalt trail, and the trail alignment follows that of Schneider Creek for much of the length within the City of Kitchener.

**The Kiwanis Park Trails** – 3.3 kilometres of paved asphalt and walking trails are located in this 119 acres park in the Bridgeport North community in north Kitchener, east of Waterloo. Kiwanis Park also contains rolling natural areas, swimming, canoeing along the Grand River, and several picnic spaces.

**The McLennan Park Trails** – As part of the phased redevelopment, there have been several new trails planned for this reclaimed 97-acre multi-use park in Laurentian Hills community in south Kitchener. There is an existing 3m wide stonedust trail that runs through the site from northeast to southwest along the hydro corridor, providing a connection from the neighbouring community to the nearby school and associated recreational amenities. As part of the phased development of McLennan Park, several looped trails will be linked to the existing hydro corridor, as well as a bike park. The bike park will consist of four courses dedicated to BMX and mountain bikers, offering a 4X track, a pump track, a free-ride course and dirt jump park.

**The Huron Natural Area** – the City of Kitchener's largest and most valuable natural area, bordered by Bleams, Huron and Fischer-Hallman Roads and Trillium Drive in
south Kitchener. This 107 hectare space includes several existing and some newly planned woodland and community trail systems. The Huron Natural Area (HNA) trail system includes looping trails within its interior that offer trail users access to various habitat types, physiographic points of interest, and numerous species of flora and fauna. Many of the newly planned trails, as outlined in the Huron Natural Area Master Plan, improve connectivity within the HNA network, as well as the greater city and regional trail systems.

The City of Kitchener contains numerous informal trails through natural areas that are connected via on-road routes. For example, the Grand Valley Trail provides informal routes through east Kitchener with destinations at the Chicopee natural area and Fairview Park Mall. Beginning in the Doon community in south Kitchener, the trail is located through woodlots and the southern portion of Homer Watson Park following the Grand River. The trail then moves through the Pioneer Tower community of Kitchener, crossing Hidden Valley Drive before arriving in close proximity to Fairview Park Mall. Upon leaving the mall the trail continues through more urban areas, the Chicopee natural area, and tying into the Walter Bean Grand River Trail near Natchez Woods in north-eastern Kitchener.

3.3.4 Gap Analysis

Trail facilities in Kitchener are, as they are in most cities, somewhat fragmented. There are some examples of linkages being provided to community trails with on-road routes, however large gaps do exist within the system. Trail construction and development is often associated with new neighbourhood planning and existing infrastructure improvements. While this has allowed the City of Kitchener to achieve economic efficiencies, it has subsequently resulted in a series of unconnected trail linkages which are not always in the area of greatest demand, and therefore, highest priority to trail users and local communities. Also, the connectivity of the overall trail system within the City is fundamental to local lifestyle and community vitality.
Establishing an integrated and connected trail network within is one of the most critical objectives to trail planning and development. Community trails connect key attractions and destination nodes, such as residential neighbourhoods, employment centers, recreation and community centres, schools, district sport fields, major shopping centres, and provide alternative travel options. The development of primary and secondary loop trails of varying lengths is fundamental to promoting trail use and highlighting key features within Kitchener. Trails also aim to link major destinations points in continuous, efficient loops. An integrated loop trail should also aim to connect both on-road trails and off-road trails routes to ensure optimal connectivity. Also, the connectivity of the overall trail system within the City is not only fundamental to local lifestyle and community vitality, but also a vital, integrated transportation network.

A gap analysis aims to identify the existing gaps within the trail network, identify strategies and actions to overcome gaps, and identify long term funding needs. The following summarizes the gap analysis for Kitchener’s trail network:

- **Downtown Core**: Downtown Kitchener contains key attractions and important amenities such as the public library, Victoria Park, elementary and secondary schools, bus transit terminal, and the Farmer’s Market. Providing trail linkages to and within downtown can play an essential role in community interaction, vitality, and connectivity. The City of Kitchener aims to provide connecting trails to the downtown core to facilitate easier access from surrounding residential neighbourhoods. Providing trail amenities in the downtown core needs to be developed in conjunction with trail planning. Amenities such as bicycle racks, benches, trash receptacles, signage, and information kiosks can contribute to the overall user experience and downtown beautification. Currently, the continuous trail network within the City does not connect seamlessly with other modes of travel such as bus transit stops and rail nodes.

- **New/Planned Communities**: Trail improvement in newly planned areas is often
associated with development and municipal infrastructure projects. It is important to link proposed trail systems within newly planned communities with the existing trail fabric to ensure that residents of the new developments have access to key attractions and key destinations. One example is in South Kitchener where several new communities are planned, each with their own network of trails that interconnect with the overall trail network. Trails have also been proposed through the scenic roads program, which routes trails within existing scenic road easements, such as along Tilt Drive and Stauffer Drive in the Doon South community of Kitchener. An integrated looped trail system ideally contains areas to facilitate expansion as newer communities begin to include community centres, schools, parks, and commercial facilities. Trail systems, where possible, should connect schools to allow residents of surrounding neighbourhoods the safe option of travelling to school using the trail on foot, by bike or other non-motorised means. The trail network within the City of Kitchener should facilitate long-term planning by forming a system that is integral and linked to the community. An integrated trail network aims to revitalize and provide linkages through locations that are less attractive, often with major constraints, or in remote and isolated areas of City. Trails developed into these areas could increase the vitality and attractiveness of these areas and contribute to the overall image, aesthetics, and community lifestyle of the City of Kitchener.

- **Natural Areas**: Natural areas and woodlots within the City contain trails to provide residents of the community an up-close and intimate relationship with nature. However, natural areas may contain several obstacles associated with physical constraints, ranging from steep topography, protected features (i.e. streams, wetlands), and bridges that do not necessarily allow for the development of multi-use trails without incurring major reengineering costs, and environmental impacts. When improving connectivity of the trail network though natural or sensitive areas taking into account protected limits and policies to provide the least amount of impact and disturbance as possible is important. Consideration of the interactions between trail users and wildlife
should also be given when route planning. There is also very minimal to no linkages between natural areas and they are often viewed as isolated features. Natural areas within the City of Kitchener would benefit from a more integrated and continuous trail system that ultimately ties into the overall trail framework for the City.

- **Maintenance and Monitoring:** A secondary component to ensuring a connected and integrated trail network within the City is the proper upkeep of existing trails to ensure that further gaps are not created. Winter maintenance may be feasible on some asphalt trails to provide year-round use and activities.

- **Multi-Use Trails:** There are several multi-use trails within Kitchener that promote active recreational opportunities. The City continues to build upon and foster the development of multi-use trails to promote active recreation and lifestyles. In several other municipalities multi-use trails are being developed to facilitate hiking, biking, cross country skiing, and snowshoeing. A phased master plan for McLennan Park, in the Laurentian Hills community in central Kitchener, contains several proposed BMX bike trails to facilitate active recreation. As residents continue to discover the benefits and importance of using trails as part of a healthy and active lifestyle, the development of a connected trail network to key destinations and attractions within the City will be of primary importance. Currently, there are several gaps identified within the multi-use trail network contained within the Grand River corridor, and there is a need to complete trail connections and linkages within the Grand River corridor as well as the overall network within the entire City.

- **Partnerships:** The City continues to work with local agencies and municipalities such as the Cities of Waterloo and Cambridge, Region of Waterloo, Hydro One, and the Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA) to identify trail opportunities and linkages, design parameters and management agreements to implement new trail linkages. One of the only permitted uses or forms of development
within hydro corridors are trail developments. Currently, several trails are located within hydro corridors as the City continues to partner with Hydro One to link trails within hydro easements into the overall trail network. The City has developed 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.

3.4 Outdoor Facilities

A number of the parks across the City of Kitchener include outdoor facilities, including playgrounds, sportsfields, outdoor pools and water play features, basketball and tennis courts, multi-use play pads, and others.

Table 3-7 provides a summary of the inventory of outdoor facilities by type as well as the provision per 10,000 residents.

Table 3-6: Inventory of Outdoor Facilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Supply</th>
<th>Provision (per 10,000)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Playground</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseball Diamond (City)</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soccer Field (School Board)</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis Court</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseball Diamond (School Board)</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soccer Field (City)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basketball Court</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Splash Pads</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Pool</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OTHER FACILITIES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horseshoe Pitch</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frisbee</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-Purpose Pad</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The City’s 2005 Leisure Facilities Master Plan identifies the following recommendations related to outdoor recreation facility provision:

- Acquire and develop a new district park in South Kitchener including:
  - Four soccer fields (one potentially with field turf);
  - Two baseball fields (one lit);
  - A skateboard park;
  - Four-unit tennis court with a two unit, three-on-three basketball component;
  - Connection to the community trail system;
  - A playground and neighbourhood park component;

- Develop two to four new soccer fields in east Kitchener between Ottawa Street and King Street using existing park area or acquiring a new site;

- The potential development of two additional soccer fields in west Kitchener;

- The redevelopment of softball fields in south Kitchener area (Southwest Optimist, Budd Park, Wilson, etc.);
• Possible location of another softball/slo-pitch field in and venue upgrading at Peter Hallman Ball Yard;
• Develop replacement ball fields in the west Kitchener area if the Queensmount twin pad arena is located on the current site and the existing ball fields are displaced;
• 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;
• That the City assess its public tennis facilities 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.

In addition to the directions of the Leisure Facilities Master Plan, key trends and influences on outdoor recreation facility needs identified through the research and consultation phase of the Park Master Plan include the following:

• Growth in soccer for both the youth and adult age segments;
• Steady demand for baseball diamonds from the youth age segment;
• Growth in the demand for softball by the adult age segment;
• Under-serviced city-wide for other turf sports (i.e. field hockey, cricket, rugby, lacrosse) that compete for fields with soccer users; and,
• Review of the cost/benefit of artificial turf as opposed to traditional grass fields.

A fulsome discussion of these and other trends and factors influencing parkland and related outdoor facility provision and needs is provided in Section 7 of this report.
3.5 Regional, School, Conservation Authority, Hydro Corridors and Other Lands

As with many recreation facilities, municipal boundaries do not determine the utilization profiles for parks and outdoor facilities. Therefore, the directions and policies of neighbouring municipalities through their Master Plans can influence the range of opportunities available to Kitchener residents and vice-versa. This section summarizes the major parks planning initiatives and assets of adjacent municipalities, the Grand River Conservation Authority, the school boards and other providers.

3.5.1 Region of Waterloo

The Regional Municipality of Waterloo is not directly involved in the delivery of parks which is primarily a responsibility of the local municipalities. The Region of Waterloo has a Regional Forest off Homer Watson Blvd near the Hwy 401, a carry-over from the former County Forests that provides trails and outdoor experiences within a passive use framework. It is highly accessible and widely used. Few other significant Regional lands are available that are not contracted to the City.

The Region plays an important role in the planning and delivery of a linked regional trails system through its Cycling Master Plan and other initiatives. On a regional level, the Trans Canada Trail provides a comprehensive and integrated trail system throughout several cities, towns, and municipalities. Within the Region of Waterloo, and the outlying communities, various river trails, rail trails, and on road cycling routes provide important connections.

3.5.2 City of Waterloo

Over the next ten to fifteen years, the City of Waterloo is scheduled to potentially undertake significant investments in major park facilities that respond to both program and non-program-based activities that will potentially attract Kitchener resident utilization. The following park initiatives are identified within the City’s Recreation and
Leisure Services Master Plan which could influence parks and trails opportunities for Kitchener residents:

- Redevelopment Master Plan for Bechtel Park. The park’s eastern boundary connects with the Kitchener and Waterloo municipal boundary and pedestrian access can be achieved from the Bridgeport Public School and other sites. The City’s plan is to redevelop the current indoor soccer/badminton facility and sports fields as the cemetery expansion occurs in the adjacent Parkview Cemetery. Wide-ranging plans have been identified that would result in upgraded soccer fields, the possible elimination of the baseball stadium and increased playground and other opportunities. The plan also contains trail opportunities that connect Kitchener and Waterloo.

- Further development of RIM Park. Outdoor facilities currently include more than ten soccer fields and five primary baseball fields. Consideration is being given to develop support facilities for this venue that would enhance tournaments with concession areas, washrooms, change rooms and related amenities. The continuous development of RIM Park also provides trail opportunities to Kitchener residents and several amenities including concession areas, washrooms, change rooms and related amenities.

- Possible development of a major soccer complex in West Waterloo that could have from four to seven soccer fields, of which one would be of stadium quality. This could attract significant adult utilization from across the Region and support the Waterloo Minor Soccer program.

- Acquisition of the McNally lands, a 100 acre plus natural area to be developed with trails that will attract many users with wide varying interests, such as artisans, hikers and those interested in natural heritage.
• A Master Plan for Waterloo Park. This is a long standing venue that has had significant use by both Waterloo and Kitchener residents and provides numerous trail connections. The Iron Horse Trail currently connects Victoria Park in Kitchener to Waterloo Park in Waterloo and beyond and is one of the most widely used trails in the City of Kitchener. There is potential to relocate the cricket field from the facility, as well as change a number of the other elements within the park that would result in a more passive and less programmed venue.

The most significant change profile of interest to Kitchener residents will be if the City of Waterloo pursues the redevelopment of Bechtel Park, the possible development of a major soccer complex in west Waterloo and significant changes to Waterloo Park.

3.5.3 City of Cambridge

The City of Cambridge has and continues to invest significantly in the Grand River corridor, especially in the central area of the community. Due to distance and other factors, traditionally there has not been as significant an interest by Kitchener residents for Cambridge parks and trails compared to those venues in Waterloo. Also, many of the adult sports leagues are Kitchener-Waterloo-based and not regionally-based, though individual Cambridge residents may participate. Therefore, there is only limited scheduling of Cambridge sports fields for teams that are based in Kitchener and Waterloo. Highway 401 is a significant barrier for trail connectivity between these two municipalities, with linkages such as the proposed Walter Bean trail being few and far between.

3.5.4 Townships of Wilmot and Woolwich

Master Plans for the Townships of Wilmot and Woolwich do not identify any major new park complexes, though there will be a sports complex in Breslau with potentially two sports fields involving baseball and soccer. These are primarily intended for local
minor sports programs, but there is some identification that adult teams from Kitchener and Waterloo could utilize those facilities on a rental basis. For Wilmot Township, the focus has been on the development of the new twin pad arena and the recent announcement of a new indoor pool facility. No major park complexes are currently being actively pursued.

The Township of Woolwich contains 11 trails totalling approximately 80 kilometres. Breslau also has several trails, including the Riverland Trail and the Hopewell Trail which has an asphalt and stonedust surface and accommodate a wide variety of uses. Sections of the Grand Valley Trail located in Snyder’s Flat, opposite the Grand River to the north of Kiwanis Park in Kitchener provides opportunities for trail connections into Woolwich for Kitchener residents. Other trails within the City of Cambridge include the Blair Trail, Devil's Creek Trail, Brewster Trail, Northview Heights Trail, Grand Trunk Trail, Living Levee Trail, Mill Run Trail, and Cambridge to Paris Rail-Trail ultimately providing a trail connection to Hamilton.

3.5.5 Grand River Conservation Authority

GRCA operates the Pinehurst Conservation Area south of Brantford, the Laurel Creek Conservation Area in Waterloo, the Bellwood Lake Conservation Area near Fergus and the Shades Mills Conservation Area in Cambridge. All of these venues provide a range of outdoor and year-round activities that can attract Kitchener residents. Of particular note are the Laurel Creek and Chicopee Conservation Areas. The first venue is located in west Waterloo and is used for regional cricket activities, hiking trails, picnics, camping and other experiences. The Waterloo Master Plan recommends more intensive municipality-oriented park development of that site. The Chicopee facility is located in Kitchener and operates year-round, with its history and focus on the winter skiing program. However, additional outdoor activities have been added.

Each Conservation Area contains its own trail system, but also provides external trail connections to key attractions and destinations within the City of Kitchener. Other
regional trail connections within the Grand River watershed include the Grand Valley Trail comprised of nearly 275 kilometres of trail, with sections located in Kitchener.

3.5.6 Schools

There are 48 elementary schools and 6 secondary schools in Kitchener. Many school sites are located near existing municipal parkland and many school sites provide parkland and sport facilities to the immediate neighbourhood and surrounding area residents.

Elementary and secondary schools are evenly dispersed throughout Kitchener. Many school grounds are in good locations to serve the local neighbourhood and district populations. In some older communities, school grounds are the primary source of parkland and green space, thus adding value, aesthetics, and increasing the overall vitality of the community.

Elementary schools tend to be aligned with virtually every neighbourhood within the community. Therefore, these venues provide augmented neighbourhood park spaces. The School Board facilities at the elementary level have a wide diversity of development scope and quality. A number of the core area schools for both Boards primarily provide asphalt surfaces with limited turfed areas. Some of these are used for outdoor rink venues in the winter but all can provide some outdoor recreational support. In newer areas of the City, the elementary schools are on sites from four to seven acres and can have an array of soccer, baseball, play structure and other resources, including basketball courts.

Secondary schools tend to be located on a district servicing level and provide higher level outdoor facilities, such as tracks, football fields, tennis courts and related venues.

In some planning communities, schools provide the only sports field facilities, such as Rockway Elementary and Wilson Avenue 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 KW Hospital Community.

Conestoga College, in the southeast Kitchener has an abundance of parkland and numerous local sports facilities including an arena, gymnasium, courts, soccer fields, and three softball diamonds. It is recognized that these facilities are built by the College for their students and that primary access by the student population is priority. However, there are opportunities to facilitate community access that could ultimately reduce the need for additional community-developed facilities in the area. While much of the venue supports a growing student population in terms of both program and non-programmed recreational activities, the spaces are easily accessible to Kitchener residents, particularly those living in the immediate Doon area.

3.5.7 Hydro Corridors

Another contributor of park and trail lands are hydro corridors. They provide long linear linkages through a community that can be used for trails and other activities. The City of Kitchener, since the mid-1970s, has made use of these corridors for trail development. Increasingly, these rights-of-way are also being utilized for parking and other applications in support of park activities.

3.5.8 Other Land

A number of ethno-cultural clubs also have venues that have both facility as well as some outdoor recreation spaces. The Portuguese Club on Williamsburg Road has a soccer field while others have small parks, sometimes rented for picnics and other activities. The Sunrise Cricket Club has a cricket pitch at Fischer-Hallman and Plains Road. The majority use of these venues is often club related with limited public access.
Cemeteries can provide parkland opportunities, increasingly for walking, outdoor contemplation, bird watching, nature interpretation, community gardens and other uses. The City operates three cemeteries which can provide a mix of opportunities at the fully developed Mount Hope Cemetery, the nearly fully developed Woodlawn Cemetery and the current and future focus of cemetery operations on the Williamsburg site. There are no private cemeteries operational within Kitchener.

Another provider of parkland can be church facilities. Some have fairly small passive open landscape spaces often in older neighbourhoods. Others may have larger spaces in more rural areas with a baseball diamond or other facilities. Many of these spaces are programmed by the congregation and/or have limited public access.

There is also an array of privately-owned lands that have various levels of accessibility. In some cases, undevelopable ravine or environmentally sensitive lands owned by developers may not be conveyed to the City and remain under private ownership. They may be used for trails, nature interpretation and other activities if accessible. Some lands owned by local industries/businesses may permit public accessibility. Over the years, a number of larger businesses have developed baseball fields on their property for staff, industrial leagues and some community use.

Other parklands are in private residential or developer ownership. Private lands tend not to have any development associated with them and often have restrictions in terms of accessibility/trespassing and some are held for future development. However, they do represent opportunities for people living in the immediate areas, such as hikers, nature enthusiasts, fishers accessing creeks and rivers and other users.

3.5.9 Summary

The provision of outdoor recreation and related spaces in Kitchener is contributed to by a host of community organizations, each with a particular mandate. From a regional perspective, historically there have been significant inter-play between major
sports and less programmed/natural area parks use. The City, through its Community Services Department and the two School Boards, are the most significant providers. They also have their venues distributed at multiple levels of development across the community, i.e.: neighbourhood, district as well as City-wide service levels. Some have complete public accessibility while others are more selective or may be associated with an organization and only its membership. However, all the spaces contribute to the urban form of the City, adding visual green space within the urban environment, and have various levels of use that support a wide range of both passive and active recreational activities.

3.6 Service Delivery Organization

The City of Kitchener, through the Community Service Department has the most comprehensive and primary mandate to engage in the acquisition, design and operation of these resources. As illustrated in the previous section, there are a number of organizations who are directly or indirectly involved in the provision of the parks and trails that are used by and meet the needs of Kitchener residents. The Grand River Conservation Authority and the School Boards play an important service delivery role as part of their own organizational mandates and in partnership with the City. This section reviews the current service delivery organizational structure and highlights key related trends, issues and opportunities.

3.6.1 City of Kitchener

The City of Kitchener has the premier mandate for the acquisition and delivery of parks, and trails. The City’s service delivery role is primarily two-fold:

- To bring properties into public ownership, and to plan their development and management, along with coordination of reciprocal agreement roles with the Conservation Authority and School Boards so as to enhance the array of outdoor spaces available for Kitchener residents;
• To manage and maintain the sites to safe and functional standards.

The City’s parks and trails function is located within the Community Services Department and works closely with the recreation facilities and programming activities undertaken by the City. Figure 1 illustrates the organization structure associated with this function.

The organization capacity that has evolved over the years for the City in this area of service involves the following:

• A design and development group that tracks the acquisition and plans the design and development of the City’s outdoor spaces;

• An operations group that is responsible for the day to day sports fields and venue maintenance, turf maintenance, on-site facilities repair, trails maintenance and related activities;

• An environmental services group that provides the horticulture, forestry and aligned specialty services needed to assess and sustain these unique assets.

Park Operations works closely with Community Development to coordinate and support park facilities development and ongoing operations, as well the City’s Planning Department in regards to the future acquisition of parklands, and the Finance Department in terms of Development Charges and related capital, operating and funding requirements. The Community Services Department corporately is responsible for the coordination of the park and trail activities in conjunction with all the other Department activities, and the integration of these initiatives within the overall policies, strategies and resourcing undertaken by the City across all its services.
3.6.2 Other Service Providers

On a broader scale, the Grand River Conservation Authority is the owner, and in some cases the operator of venues and lands across the watershed. In Kitchener, they own the Chicopee Conservation Area and the Stanley Park Conservation Area. These properties are managed by the City of Kitchener under contract with the Authority, or leased to the Chicopee Ski and Summer Resort, a not-for-profit organization. The Authority also owns other parcels of land, but no significant areas are identified within the City for Conservation Authority consideration in the near future.

As noted earlier, another key provider of parks are the school boards, including the Waterloo Region District School Board and the Waterloo Region District Catholic School Board. Over the years, the City has developed a number of campus relationships with both Boards, whereby one or two elementary schools connect to a City park to form a larger park complex. This has allowed the sharing of spaces, facilities, ancillary supports and other opportunities, often resulting in an enhanced servicing opportunity at a lower capital cost.

The distribution of the school venues, and the ability to link them to municipal parks, has represented an important development strategy in Kitchener. However, over the years there have been some challenges to this model. The first challenge is school closures, particularly in more mature neighbourhoods where there may be more limited municipal park spaces historically. In these cases, the loss of the school site could represent the loss of one of the only park areas within such a neighbourhood. The second challenge has been the longer term planning of park campuses, whereby a School Board decides not to proceed and sells its land for residential development. As a result, the City may not have taken the maximum amount of land needed to service the area’s population, and therefore, may have an undersized site. Also there is increased residential development as a result of the selling of the school property placing potentially more service needs on the remaining park site.
Historically, the City of Kitchener has explored the opportunities to access publicly funded schools in order to provide more local recreation amenities in an effort to reduce the long-term need for additional stand-alone recreation facilities within the city. Since the mid 1990’s, there has been a significant decline in the community use of schools due to the increased fees for utilization, customer service challenges, accessibility requirements 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 individual or separate municipal facilities as substitutes for school accessibility.

One other challenge, from a sports field perspective, is that School Boards tend not to have the funding base from the province for the capital development of higher quality sports fields at the elementary school level, and often undertake reduced maintenance, particularly during the summer months. Therefore, a number of community sports organizations, such as baseball and soccer, often face challenges in using school facilities due to quality, safety, size, neighbouring land use and other challenges.

What is increasingly being seen in some municipalities is the municipality undertaking more of the development and maintenance of the exterior of the school properties in order to strengthen community use in terms of accessibility and sports field quality and overall utility.
4.0 NATURAL AREAS

The intent of the natural areas overview is to summarize the existing conditions of the current Natural Areas System (includes all natural areas that are found within the Natural Area GIS layer) review background material and general policy direction as it relates to natural areas in the City of Kitchener, provide an assessment of current management policies and procedures that are in place and outline the strengths, issues and opportunities of the system.

4.1 Existing Conditions and Policy Framework

Kitchener’s natural areas system represents a substantial portion of the City’s parkland inventory. Natural areas are used for a variety of leisure activities, primarily self-directed activities such as walking, hiking, photography, fishing, nature interpretation and Nordic skiing6.

All parks and natural areas are part of the more inclusive/broader ‘Open Space’ system, as defined in The Municipal Plan. A number of policy and strategic direction documents prepared by the City of Kitchener and the Regional Municipality of Waterloo make reference to natural areas and provide some direction as to their acquisition, development, management planning, management and stewardship of natural areas.

This section documents important information on the current inventory, management, stewardship, use, protection, acquisition and development of natural areas and highlights related goals, objectives and policies.

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6 City of Kitchener, 2005
4.1.1 Definition/Classification of Natural Areas

‘Natural Areas’ within the City of Kitchener include all lands that are owned or managed by the City that could be classified as ‘natural’ according to the ELC classification system (e.g. forest, woodland and swamp, marsh), including cultural communities (e.g. plantation and cultural meadow). Some natural areas are ‘stand alone’ while others are part of larger city parks. Natural Areas should not be confused with ‘naturalization areas’ which are generally small areas within the City where active maintenance has ceased and naturalization processes are occurring. In some cases, tree and shrub plantings have occurred in these areas, but not necessarily with the goal of establishing native vegetation (i.e. many non-native species have been planted in these areas).

According to the City of Kitchener Municipal Plan⁷ are a number of park classifications which could fall under the umbrella term ‘natural areas’. For example the following are outlined in Part 2: Section 3 (Community and Cultural Services) of The Municipal Plan:

**District Natural Areas** are described as “lands of local natural significance, often comprising woodlots and streams. These typically have a service radius of up to 15 km and are typically up to 50 hectares”⁸.

**City Natural Parks** are described as “significant natural lands in need of protection in order to ensure reasonable preservation. The service area is primarily city wide with secondary service to the surrounding region. These areas are typically between 50 and 200 hectares”⁹.

**Regional Parks** are described as “lands which support activities and facilities that serve

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⁷ City of Kitchener Municipal Plan, 2005b  
⁸ City of Kitchener, 2005, p.3-3  
⁹ Ibid.
participants on a regional basis, including the conservation of lands such as the Huron Environmental Area cooperative Project. The service area is primarily region wide and sites are typically over 50 hectare"10.

Part 2: Section 7 (Natural Resources Management) of The Municipal Plan discusses the 

**Natural Habitat Network** and considers the following elements to be part of the network:

i) Environmental Preservation Areas;
ii) Environmentally Sensitive Policy Areas;
iii) Provincially Significant Wetlands;
iv) Significant Valley Lands and other natural corridors;
v) Sensitive groundwater recharge areas, discharge areas, head waters and aquifers;
vi) Significant Woodlands;
vii) Fish Habitat;
viii) Significant Wildlife Habitat; and
ix) Other natural areas of Local Significance.

However, not all of the elements listed above are mapped as natural areas within the City of Kitchener. ‘Natural areas’ do not fit within the City’s current Parks Classification System. For the purposes of this report, ‘natural areas’ refers to all areas mapped as such within the Natural Areas GIS layer. The City of Kitchener advised that this is the most current natural areas data. It is recognized that this layer is somewhat dated (2005) and that the City is in the process of updating this information, however updates (including any new natural areas added to the system since 2005) were not available at the time of preparing this report.

10 City of Kitchener, 2005, p. 3-3
4.1.2 Natural Areas Statistics

Natural areas represent a substantial portion of the parkland in the City of Kitchener; however there is discrepancy with respect to the exact amount. According to the City of Kitchener Volume 2: Leisure Facilities Master Plan, natural areas represent over 50% of the parkland in Kitchener. According to the Strategic Plan for the Environment, natural areas make up 65% of the park system. It is unclear what data was used to make these summary statements.

An analysis of the Natural Areas System was carried out using the 2005 Natural Areas GIS data provided by the City of Kitchener. Newer natural areas that have been added to the system since this time have not been included in the analysis since this information was not available at the time of writing. Table 4-1 provides some basic statistics on the Natural Areas System.

Table 4-1: Natural Areas Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Natural Areas</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total size of the Natural Areas System</td>
<td>858 ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Natural Area Size</td>
<td>8 ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smallest Natural Area</td>
<td>0.1 ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Largest Natural Area</td>
<td>109 ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area of Kitchener</td>
<td>13,821 ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Kitchener within NA System</td>
<td>6.21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11 City of Kitchener, 2005
12 City of Kitchener, Planning Division, 2008
Some of the more notable natural areas (in terms of size, biodiversity and recreational opportunities) include the following:

- Huron Natural Area
- Tilts Bush
- Topper Woods
- Homer Watson Park
- Steckle Woods
- Laurentian Wetlands
- Borden Wetlands
- Monarch Woods
- Breithaupt Park
- Kiwanis Park
- Stanley Park Conservation Area
- Natchez Hill*
- Lackner Woods*
- Idlewood Park
*Under Private Ownership

4.1.3 Inventory Status

Natural heritage inventories, including habitat description/delineation and botanical and wildlife inventories, provide valuable information on the ecological attributes of natural areas. Having this data is the first step in developing appropriate protection, management and enhancement of the Natural Areas System.

There are varying levels of inventory completed for the City of Kitchener’s natural areas. All natural areas were inventoried in the early 1990’s, leading to the development of the Woodland Management Program\textsuperscript{13}. Since that time, an extensive

\textsuperscript{13} City of Kitchener, 1995
A botanical inventory program has been conducted (in 2001) in cooperation with the University of Waterloo. This involved recording UTM locations for all rare species observed.

Where natural areas also have Environmentally Sensitive Policy Area (ESPA) or Provincially Significant Wetland (PSW) designations, a certain level of biological inventory has been completed, as required to obtain their respective designation. Other notable natural areas have also recently been inventoried (e.g. the Huron Natural Area).

Future plans of the City include updating inventory information for all natural areas, including using the ELC system to classify vegetation communities, and incorporating this inventory work into a GIS-based system.

### 4.1.4 Special Ecological Attributes

Based on available information, data on special ecological attributes varies among the city’s natural areas, but generally natural areas that are also ESPAs and PSWs have at least some of this information documented. For example, information on rare species, rare communities, ecological diversity and ecological functions are some of the criteria used for determining ESPA status. Some information on special ecological attributes also exists for the natural areas inventoried in the early 1990s (for the Woodland Management Program) but this information needs to be updated for newly acquired areas.

Typically, where recent planning applications include or abut natural areas in the City, some level of ecological inventory and analysis (often fairly comprehensive) has been undertaken and is provided to the City as part of the review / approval process. However, there is no standardized approach to transferring and storing/organizing the this data. It is anticipated that once the City’s natural areas database is fully developed, this data transference / storage approach will be standardized.
4.1.5 Habitat Type

Natural areas within the City typically include the following habitats: forests/woodlots, wetlands, plantations, meadows and riparian areas. In general, most of the larger natural areas are treed forests or swamps.

The City has begun to map out natural areas based on the ELC system, and all newly acquired natural areas are mapped using this approach.

4.1.6 Trails within Natural Areas

Many of the natural areas in the City of Kitchener have at least a partial trail network. A large proportion of these trails are classified as ‘woodland trails’; however some of the natural areas also have ‘community trails’ connecting them with other natural areas, parks or other parts of the City. Woodland trails are typically 1.8 m in width and constructed on existing natural ground. Community trails are typically 3 m in width and contain a suborder of trail types which include, asphalt, stonedust/limestone, multi-use, bike lanes, on-road signed routes, and on-road bikeways.

Using the Natural Areas and Trails GIS layers provided by the City of Kitchener, an analysis was carried out to determine the current trail network within the natural areas. Based on this analysis, 40 of 102 natural areas have woodland trails, comprising a total length of 82.7 km. In addition, 56 of 102 natural areas have community trails, comprising a total length of 39.6 km.

There are no formal policies or guidelines that provide direction with respect to locating trails within natural areas.
4.1.7 Management of Natural Areas

The Strategic Plan for the Environment\textsuperscript{14} establishes the following broad objectives relating to management planning for natural areas:

- To develop and implement an effective natural area conservation program within the municipality;
- To reintroduce, enhance and maintain the natural environment in the urban area.

The City’s Leisure Facilities Master Plan recommends the conservation and management of natural areas to ensure their continued existence at a level of quality which supports the leisure pursuits of the public into the future.

In addition, park/natural area-specific management plans have been prepared for certain areas. For example, both the Huron Natural Area and Topper Woods have relatively recent management plans that have been developed to direct the establishment of various elements including trails, signage, fencing, restoration work, boardwalk development and potential future acquisition of adjacent lands. However, there are no policies or guidelines for developing site-specific management plans or prioritizing natural areas for management plans.

There is also the Woodland Management Program written in 1995\textsuperscript{15} that provides some general direction with respect to management of natural areas. The City is currently working on developing a new template for managing their natural areas and currently has a draft document prepared entitled Draft Urban Natural Area Management Plan: City of Kitchener\textsuperscript{16}.

The City has a limited budget for maintenance activities in natural areas. The services

\textsuperscript{14} City of Kitchener, 2008
\textsuperscript{15} City of Kitchener, 2005
\textsuperscript{16} Lefler, February 2006
provided are limited to response to public call such as hazard tree removal, garbage pick-up, and responses to weather-related events. There is no standardized list of management activities or approaches for managing natural areas.

4.1.8 Stewardship and Education Initiatives

The City’s Strategic Plan for the Environment identifies the following broad objective relating to stewardship of natural areas:

- To promote a culture of stewardship throughout the community and with all of our partners\(^\text{17}\).

Formal stewardship and education initiatives include those administered through the Kitchener Natural Area Program (KNAP). KNAP was created in 2006 by Kitchener-Waterloo Field Naturalists, Waterloo Stewardship Network, and the City of Kitchener. Two years of funding have been provided by the Ontario Trillium Foundation which supports the hiring of a Stewardship and Education Coordinator, typically held by University co-op students. Funding from the City of Kitchener provides additional support for the stewardship and educational projects. The City is currently in the process of hiring a full time Natural Areas Coordinator whose primary responsibility will be developing educational and stewardship initiatives in the City’s natural areas.

The goals of the KNAP program are to:

- engage the community in stewardship projects,
- educate people about Kitchener’s natural areas and
- create opportunities for people to experience nature in the city.

In its first two years the program has created more than 6,000 stewardship and education hours, and made contact with 2,250 people in the community\(^\text{18}\). Much of

\(^{17}\) Strategic Plan for the Environment, 2008

\(^{18}\) City of Kitchener, 2009
the stewardship focus has been at the Huron Natural Area, however stewardship programming has also occurred in Homer Watson Park, Steckle Woods, Monarch Woods, Idlewood, Breithaupt Park and Alpine Park.

In addition, the Local Environmental Action Fund (LEAF), although not specific to natural areas, could be utilized for stewardship activities in natural areas. LEAF is a $5 million environmental fund with the goal to “reduce, or repair, Kitchener’s impact on the environment focusing on the reduction of greenhouse gases, and to enhance the ability of the Kitchener community to live sustainably into the future.” LEAF is a program that is intended to operate as a catalyst to leverage community stakeholder participation and investment in order to improve the environment.

Other stewardship and education initiatives are sometimes implemented through site development projects, particularly in recent years. For example, subdivision plans may include interpretive signage at the limits of natural areas and provision of homeowner brochures to residents living near natural areas. We are not aware of any specific City guidelines or policy with respect to such site-specific stewardship initiatives.

There may also be additional, less formal stewardship activities carried out by local ‘Friends’ groups or community/neighbourhood associations.

There are no specific guidelines for developing stewardship programs in natural areas, prioritizing sites for stewardship activities and allocating funds.

4.1.9 Level of Protection

All of Kitchener’s natural areas are part of the parkland system and for the most part appear to be mapped as ‘Open Space’ on The Municipal Plan - Land Use Plan (Map 5). According to The Municipal Plan, the primary intent of the Open Space land use category is “to preserve the integrity of the natural environment, provide a buffer between land uses and increase the opportunities for recreation, conservation and
general enjoyment of an area. Therefore, as ‘open space’, natural areas in the City of Kitchener are generally protected from removal and/or incompatible development.

Kitchener’s natural areas are also protected through the City of Kitchener Zoning By-law 85-1, which include four park zones. The most restrictive park zone is the ‘Hazard Land (P3)’ Zone, which restricts the permitted uses to flood control, agriculture and outdoor recreation.

A number of the City of Kitchener’s natural areas overlap with other regionally and provincially designated areas which afford an additional level of protection. Specifically, there are a number ESPAs and PSWs designated in the Regional Official Policies Plan within the city and identified in The Municipal Plan.

Based on GIS analysis, it has been determined that 8 of the 102 natural areas overlap all or in part with an ESPA. There are an additional 15 natural areas which overlap all or in part with a PSW designation. There are a further 4 natural areas that have both ESPA and PSW designations. Many of these natural areas with additional levels of protection are relatively large (e.g. Homer Watson Park). Table 4-2 outlines the area calculations for natural areas with one or more of the aforementioned designations.

**Table 4-2: Natural Areas with Additional Levels of Protection**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Total Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natural Areas with ESPA designation within their boundaries</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>197 ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Areas with PSW designation within their boundaries</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>226 ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Areas with both ESPA and PSW designation within their boundaries</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>102 ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Areas with no additional designations</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>333 ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Area of the Natural Areas System</td>
<td></td>
<td>858 ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Natural Areas System with additional levels of protection</td>
<td></td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

19 City of Kitchener, 2005b, p 6-1
4.1.10 Acquisition

Specific goals, objectives and/or policies relating to the acquisition of natural areas in the City of Kitchener are listed below in Table 4-3. The source for each goal, objective or policy is also provided.

Table 4-3. Goals, Objectives and Policy Direction Relating to the Acquisition of Natural Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals, Objectives and/or Policy Direction</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Complete a Greenlands Strategy</td>
<td>Regional Growth Management Strategy (2003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 2.G.3 states that the Region, in collaboration with the Area Municipalities, the Grand River Conservation Authority and other stakeholders, will develop and implement an Urban Greenlands Strategy that:</td>
<td>Regional Official Plan (ROP) (Draft 2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) identifies a system of natural areas and open spaces that enhance quality of life and public health within urban areas; (b) helps mitigate air pollution, “heat island effect” and stormwater runoff within urban areas; (c) promotes green roofs, community gardens and tree planting in urban areas; (d) secures additional public urban greenlands through the development review process; and (e) provides a range of open-space amenities for local residents of urban areas and the region as a whole.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To develop and implement an effective natural area conservation program within the municipality. • To reintroduce, enhance and maintain the natural environment in the urban area.</td>
<td>Strategic Plan for the Environment (City of Kitchener 2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Conserve significant natural environment features, systems and networks. • Prepare a consolidated Local Greenlands Network</td>
<td>Kitchener Growth Management Strategy (City of Kitchener 2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 2: Section 3: • <strong>Objective i</strong> to provide for a continuous linear open space system in the City of Kitchener which includes the diverse natural areas of the</td>
<td>City of Kitchener Municipal Plan (City of Kitchener 2005)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Goals, Objectives and/or Policy Direction | Source
--- | ---
municipality and the Grand River and its major tributaries (Section 3.2 i) | 
• **Objective ii)** to provide for linkages between open space areas to be used for a community trail network throughout the City (Section 3.2.ii) | 
• **Policy 4)** The City of Kitchener has adopted a Parks Classification System to guide it in the acquisition of parkland and open space. This hierarchy established by the Leisure Facilities Master Plan shall be used in planning and locating parks in the City. | 
• **Policy 6)** The City of Kitchener shall develop a system of linked open spaces, urban trails and bikeways throughout the City relying heavily on the City’s parklands, watercourses, utilities corridors, conservation areas and schools. | 
• **Policy 7)** The City of Kitchener is supportive of the Grand River Corridor Conservation Plan will strive to maximize the public access along the Grand River. Section 3.1.2.1. The City of Kitchener may exercise its powers in order to acquire and/or protect Open Space Areas from urban development | 

**Part 2: Section 6**
Urban Design - states that the City is to develop active and attractive open spaces and is to ensure that these open spaces connect with pathways, bikeways and natural connections.

**Part 2: Section 7**
Natural Resources Management, provides policies for the protection and enhancement of urban woodlots, including:
• Preservation and protection of significant urban forested areas and woodlots.
• Development of a Woodland Strategy which will use whatever means available to preserve and protect significant tree stands, hedge rows, woodlots and forested areas from development.
• To implement a program for the reforestation and naturalization of parks, open space and stormwater management areas.
Goals, Objectives and/or Policy Direction | Source
--- | ---
Part 3: Section 6
The Open Space designation is primarily intended “to preserve the integrity of the natural environment, provide a buffer between land uses and increase opportunities for recreation, conservation and general enjoyment of an area.”

Woodlots, wetlands, fish and wildlife habitat areas, flood plains, hazard lands, Environmentally Sensitive Policy Areas, Provincially Significant Wetlands (PSW) and the 120 m adjacent lands and Locally Significant Wetlands and the 30 m adjacent lands are designated as Open Space.

Open Space land can also include linkages between open space areas. Such linkages could include utility corridors, abandoned railway lines, wildlife passages, storm water management areas or any other landforms which provide for a continuous linear open space system.

Several mechanisms are available to ensure that the best natural lands are acquired. The following mechanisms have traditionally been utilized:

- Conveyance at no cost to the City as part of a development application;
- Negotiation for conveyance into public ownership for considerations such as density bonuses, tax receipts, (partial) compliance with parkland dedication requirements;
- Land exchanges;
- Conservation easements;
- Purchase by the City.

In addition, there are 2 specific programs that provide direction or assistance with respect to acquisition of natural areas in the City of Kitchener, including the Natural Lands Acquisition Fund and the Local Environmental Action Fund (LEAF).

The Natural Lands Acquisition Fund is strictly to be used for the acquisition of lands
that are at risk of development, and that cannot be acquired through any other means. At this time, there are no specific criteria developed to determine the types of natural lands to acquire, but the focus is meant to be on lands not yet protected in policy or zoning; and significant natural lands designated and/or zoned for development.

The Local Environmental Action Fund (LEAF) was approved by City council in 2007. LEAF is a $5 million environmental fund with the goal to “reduce, or repair, Kitchener’s impact on the environment focusing on the reduction of greenhouse gases, and to enhance the ability of the Kitchener community to live sustainably into the future.” LEAF is a program that is intended to operate as a catalyst to leverage community stakeholder participation and investment in order to improve the environment. Although LEAF program criteria do not normally permit the purchase of new parkland, it could be used to acquire significant natural lands where other techniques for acquisition or protection have not succeeded.

4.1.11 Development

There appears to be little direction with respect to infrastructure development or directing the use of Kitchener’s natural areas. Although there are some general recommendations found within the Leisure Facilities Master Plan (as outlined below), this was not intended to address natural areas. Recommendations for natural areas as provided in the Leisure Facilities Master Plan\(^{20}\) include:

- 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;

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\(^{20}\) City of Kitchener, 2005
• 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.

4.1.12 Linkages

Linkages can refer to a number of types of connectivity between natural areas. For the purposes of this report, linkages are defined as one of the three following types:

1) Trails/Recreational linkages;
2) Contiguous linkages between two natural areas;
3) ‘Corridors’ for biodiversity exchange.

A visual evaluation of natural area linkages was undertaken with a map illustrating all natural areas, Wooded Areas (OBM data) and all ‘open space’ categories from the Land Parcel GIS layer. The results of this qualitative assessment are summarized below:

1) Trails/Recreational Linkages
   • These are dealt with in other sections and will be subject to future studies.

2) Contiguous linkages between two natural areas
   • Many of the existing natural areas are isolated features with minimal or no direct linkage with other surrounding natural areas. Given the urban context, level of development and presence of major roads, this is unlikely to change.
   • The best contiguous habitat linkages tend to be along riparian/valley corridors (e.g. Grand River, Strasburg Creek)

3) ‘Corridors’ for biodiversity exchange.
   • The best opportunity for exchange of biodiversity occurs where there is continuity between natural areas (e.g. along riparian corridors). There is also potential
between natural areas where they are in close proximity and where major barriers/filters to movement are not present. For example, even though major roads bisect these areas, the east and west portions of Idlewood Park and the north and south portions of Stanley Park provide opportunities for biodiversity exchange.

The City of Kitchener Municipal Plan Part 2 Section 7.8.2 states that “In an attempt to preserve habitat areas which exist outside of protected Environmentally Sensitive Policy Areas, wetlands and significant woodlots, the City of Kitchener may require the provision or preservation of natural corridors, linkages and hedgerows to allow the movement of wildlife between and within Environmentally Sensitive Policy Areas, wetlands, woodlots, watercourses and other natural areas.”

Section 7.E.6 of the Draft Regional Official Plan\(^{21}\) states that “The Region, Area Municipalities, Grand River Conservation Authority and other stakeholders will identify linkages through watershed studies, Natural Heritage Inventories, Environmental Impact Statements or other appropriate studies. These areas are intended to provide opportunities for plant and animal movement between environmental features, support hydrological and nutrient cycling, and contribute to the overall ecological integrity of the Greenlands Network.”

Section 7.E.7 of the Draft Regional Official Plan states that “The Region will require the incorporation of linkages, as recommended in accordance with Policy 7.E.1, into the design of new development to maintain, restore or, wherever feasible, enhance linkages between environmental features.”

Section 7.E.8. of the Draft Regional Official Plan states that “The Region will enhance linkages, where appropriate, by restoring natural habitat on lands owned by the Region. The Region encourages the naturalization of inactive sections of parks and open space areas under the jurisdiction of other agencies and in private ownership.

\(^{21}\) Draft Regional Official Plan, April 2009
wherever appropriate, to enhance linkages.”

4.2 Summary of Key Strengths, Issues and Opportunities

The key strengths, issues and opportunities related to Kitchener’s natural areas system identified through the review of existing conditions and policy framework are summarized as follows:

- A substantial amount of information with respect to natural areas exists; however, there is no apparent standardized approach to the data collection, organization and management of these areas;

- Inconsistent use of terminology and classifications used with respect to parks and natural areas as the Municipal Plan, Land Parcel GIS data, and Park GIS data are not consistent with one another and do not appear to coincide with the natural areas GIS data;

- There is no standardized approach with respect to the information to collect for natural areas and how often to collect it, and how to prioritize natural areas for inventory work;

- Although there are 82.7 km of woodland trails and 39.6 km of community trails found within Kitchener’s natural areas, there are no formal guidelines or direction to trail siting within or between natural areas (e.g. the consideration of natural area’s ecological sensitivity). This in turn depends on having good baseline information (e.g. inventory data);

- There are no guidelines for developing site-specific management plans and prioritizing natural areas for management plans;

- There is no standardized list of management activities or approaches for
managing natural areas and the management services provided are typically limited to response to public calls;

- Broad direction is provided for stewardship and education initiatives, and KNAP has made progress in creating stewardship and education hours and contact with the community; however, much of the stewardship focus appears to be at the Huron Natural Area;

- While funding has been provided to hire a full time Natural Areas Coordinator, there are no specific guidelines for developing stewardship programs in natural areas, prioritizing sites for stewardship activities and allocating funds;

- Many of Kitchener’s natural areas are isolated features with minimal or no linkage with other surrounding natural areas and there are limited opportunities for developing such linkages given the urban context, level of development and presence of major roads;

- There is good emphasis on the acquisition and protection of natural areas in Kitchener, but less consideration is being given to the development of infrastructure (e.g, signage, trails fencing etc.), management planning, management activities (e.g. trail maintenance, restoration, garbage removal, etc.) and stewardship of these assets, leading to concerns over the sustainability of the Natural Areas System, particularly as more and more areas are added to the system.
5.0  FINANCIAL REVIEW

5.1  Operating

Table 5-1 profiles the 2008 Parks Operations budget. It has been developed based on two levels. The first reflects accounts within the budget format that are 100% dedicated to parks, open spaces and trails operations. The second component identifies portions of accounts that have two or more applications within the Operations Division, of which Parks Operations is one.

Table 5-1: 2008 Parks Operations Budget Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I</th>
<th>Direct Services Accounts</th>
<th>$</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Environmental Services</td>
<td>1,693,744</td>
<td>27.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sportsfields, Trails and Sites</td>
<td>1,330,861</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Turf &amp; Rinks Maintenance</td>
<td>1,302,267</td>
<td>20.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Sub Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,326,872</strong></td>
<td><strong>69.5</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Shared Services Accounts</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Downtown Maintenance</td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Minor Improvements/Repairs</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sanitation</td>
<td>290,000</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Winter Maintenance</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Administration (40%)</td>
<td>1,262,116</td>
<td>20.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Sub Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,902,116</strong></td>
<td><strong>30.5</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>6,228,988</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>Per Capita Expenditure (212,000)</td>
<td>29.38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The three direct operating cost accounts, Environmental Services; Sports Fields, Trails and Sites; and Turf and Rinks Maintenance had a operating cost of $4.33 million in 2008 and represented nearly 70% of the overall operating budget. The largest single component was Environmental Services at $1.7 million or 27.2% of the total operating budget. Sports Fields, Trails and Sites represented 21.0% of the budget or $1.33 million, while Turf and Rink Maintenance represented a similar amount, approximately
21.0% of the budget or $1.3 million.

The shared accounts represented $1.9 million or 30.5% of the total operating budget. The single largest cost item was Administration at $1.26 million or 20.3% of the total operating budget. This figure was calculated based on 40% of Administrative costs being attributable to Parks Operations and 60% to other components of the overall Operations group. A series of four other costs are identified, ranging from $100,000 for Minor Improvements/Repairs and Winter Maintenance, to $290,000 for Sanitation, which involves the collection of litter/garbage from parks, trails and open space areas. The Downtown Maintenance component involved horticulture, and related services, while Winter Maintenance involved trail and parking lot snowplowing.

In total, the operating budget was approximately $6.23 million. Based on a population projection of 212,000 residents, this represents a per capita cost of $29.38 per resident related to the direct cost of delivery.

In comparison, using the 2005 Municipal Performance Measurement Program results for cities of 100,000 plus residents, the per capita operating costs for parks was $19.00 to $47.00. If one were to use 3% per year inflation compounded, the 2008 figure would be $21.38 to $52.90 per capita. The City’s $29.38 per capita would be considered at the lower end of the range.

There are many factors that impact this comparison, such as total number and length of trails, hectares of parkland and number of sports fields. Therefore, some caution has to be exercised in utilizing these calculations.

### 5.2 Capital

Table 5-2 profiles the ten year capital forecast for parks, trails and open space for the period 2009 to 2018. The table has been structured to reflect the fact that approximately 15% of all project allocations are utilized to cover salaries of staff. Also, the table reflects an approach whereby the Natural Area Stewardship Coordinator
## Park Master Plan – Situation Analysis Report

### Table 5-2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of Projects</th>
<th>2009 ($)</th>
<th>2010 ($)</th>
<th>2011 ($)</th>
<th>2012 ($)</th>
<th>2013 ($)</th>
<th>2014 ($)</th>
<th>2015 ($)</th>
<th>2016 ($)</th>
<th>2017 ($)</th>
<th>2018 ($)</th>
<th>Total ($)</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>I SPORTS FIELDS, TRAILS &amp; SITES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Trails</td>
<td>248,200</td>
<td>239,700</td>
<td>243,960</td>
<td>235,450</td>
<td>236,300</td>
<td>238,950</td>
<td>241,400</td>
<td>243,960</td>
<td>249,050</td>
<td>254,150</td>
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<td>General Park Development</td>
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<td>299,200</td>
<td>305,150</td>
<td>296,650</td>
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<td>302,600</td>
<td>305,150</td>
<td>311,100</td>
<td>317,050</td>
<td>3,052,350</td>
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<td>Major Park Development</td>
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<td>160,650</td>
<td>164,900</td>
<td>167,450</td>
<td>170,000</td>
<td>216,750</td>
<td>945,200</td>
<td>228,650</td>
<td>319,600</td>
<td>326,400</td>
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<td>Victoria Park - General</td>
<td>42,500</td>
<td>43,350</td>
<td>44,200</td>
<td>45,050</td>
<td>45,900</td>
<td>46,760</td>
<td>49,300</td>
<td>60,150</td>
<td>51,000</td>
<td>51,860</td>
<td>470,050</td>
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<tr>
<td>Playground Features</td>
<td>123,250</td>
<td>130,900</td>
<td>148,200</td>
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<td>162,150</td>
<td>154,700</td>
<td>161,500</td>
<td>164,050</td>
<td>187,450</td>
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<tr>
<td>Court Rehabilitation Mte.</td>
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<td>24,050</td>
<td>25,500</td>
<td>25,350</td>
<td>27,200</td>
<td>28,050</td>
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<td>Downtown Parkettes</td>
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<td>22,100</td>
<td>22,100</td>
<td>22,100</td>
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<td>McLennan Park Development</td>
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<td>1,840,600</td>
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<td>3,138,200</td>
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<tr>
<td>McLennan Skateboard</td>
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<td>425,000</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>Turf Rehabilitation Mte.</td>
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<td>17,000</td>
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<td>17,000</td>
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<td>Skateboard Parks</td>
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<td>425,000</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>935,000</td>
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<td>Subtotal</td>
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<td>2,016,350</td>
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<td>6,196,000</td>
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<td>Communities in Bloom</td>
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<td>12,750</td>
<td>12,750</td>
<td>13,900</td>
<td>13,900</td>
<td>124,950</td>
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<td>Tree Planting</td>
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<td>44,200</td>
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<td>46,760</td>
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<td>48,450</td>
<td>49,300</td>
<td>455,600</td>
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<td>24,650</td>
<td>24,650</td>
<td>25,500</td>
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<td>259,250</td>
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<td>13,600</td>
<td>13,600</td>
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<td>16,300</td>
<td>16,150</td>
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<td>23,800</td>
<td>24,850</td>
<td>25,500</td>
<td>26,350</td>
<td>27,200</td>
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<td>Tree Inventory</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>85,000</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>170,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Natural Area Stewardship</td>
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<td>100,000</td>
<td>101,000</td>
<td>107,000</td>
<td>113,000</td>
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<td>119,000</td>
<td>122,000</td>
<td>126,000</td>
<td>1,996,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Subtotal</td>
<td>205,450</td>
<td>216,450</td>
<td>219,150</td>
<td>226,850</td>
<td>229,550</td>
<td>323,800</td>
<td>327,350</td>
<td>259,750</td>
<td>257,150</td>
<td>264,550</td>
<td>2,521,050</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>III OTHER</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vogelsang Green</td>
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<td>127,500</td>
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</tr>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>127,500</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park Buildings</td>
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<td>22,100</td>
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<td>22,950</td>
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<td>23,800</td>
<td>24,650</td>
<td>25,500</td>
<td>26,350</td>
<td>235,450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal</td>
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<td>277,100</td>
<td>22,950</td>
<td>22,950</td>
<td>23,800</td>
<td>23,800</td>
<td>23,800</td>
<td>24,650</td>
<td>25,500</td>
<td>26,350</td>
<td>499,450</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>IV STAFF COSTS</strong></td>
<td>481,700</td>
<td>277,250</td>
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<td>274,250</td>
<td>276,650</td>
<td>636,050</td>
<td>547,250</td>
<td>294,800</td>
<td>297,100</td>
<td>319,100</td>
<td>3,899,750</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,847,000</td>
<td>1,495,000</td>
<td>2,285,000</td>
<td>1,482,000</td>
<td>1,499,000</td>
<td>3,000,000</td>
<td>3,360,000</td>
<td>1,631,000</td>
<td>2,316,000</td>
<td>6,880,000</td>
<td>32,564,000</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL FOR CAPITAL WORKS</td>
<td>2,365,300</td>
<td>1,217,750</td>
<td>1,889,400</td>
<td>1,207,750</td>
<td>1,222,350</td>
<td>3,263,500</td>
<td>2,761,750</td>
<td>1,336,200</td>
<td>6,918,900</td>
<td>6,488,000</td>
<td>28,664,250</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: From Capital - 100% of NAC salaries; 100% of Tree Inventory Staff; 100% of Supervisor Salaries; 50% of Urban Forestry Tech Salary; 100% of Landscape Architect Intern; $223,000 for Landscape Architects and Planner.
position is 100% charged to capital for all ten years, as a selected programs such as Earth Week. Further, a number of items under sports fields, trails and sites have can have an operational perspective to them, such as court rehabilitation, turf rehabilitation and approximately $20,000 a year in community trails for maintenance work.

The City is in the process of extracting operationally oriented costs from the capital budget to align with the province’s PSAB definitions which will reduce the capital budget projections by the amounts moved to the annual operations budget.

In total, approximately $32.6 million in expenditures is identified within the ten year forecast. Of this, nearly 80% is for sports fields, trails and sites, 12% for staffing costs, 7.7% for environmental services and 1.5% for smaller projects.

The largest single initiative is the South District Park at $10.0 million representing approximately 30% of the total projected costs which is scheduled to occur in 2017 and 2018. The second largest component is the development of McLennan Park at $3.14 million, followed by general park development of $3.0 million and community trails at $2.4 million. The City recently received $2.0 million from the Federal and Provincial governments for McLennan Park. $1.0 million will be used in 2009-2010 and the remaining $1.0 million will be added to the 2014/2015 budget.

The other large item identified at nearly $1.1 million is for the natural areas stewardship program of which $80,000 a year is for the coordinator position which has been deducted and placed in staff costs.

Other items identified are approximately $1.5 million for skateboard parks at McLennan Park specifically and other areas more widely based; and $1.5 million for court rehabilitation.

In the environmental services area, beyond the stewardship program, $455,000 is
identified for tree planting, approximately $250,000 for environment/naturalization and the tree inventory program has approximately $85,000 allocated for two years which will be conducted by in-house staff on a project basis, and environment/woodlot parks with $143,000 in projected capital investment.

In the other category, $127,000 has been identified for upgrading Vogelsang Green and the Cenotaph, with another $235,000 investment for park buildings.

The ten year capital forecast is a mix of major projects and array of rehabilitation, maintenance and upgrading initiatives with sports fields, trails and sites being the dominant points of investment.

Table 5-3 profiles the number of projects itemized and the general categories within the ten year capital forecast. In total, there are thirty-four trail section projects, of which twenty-four are new and ten involve rehabilitation. For general park development, some thirty-six parks are identified, of which thirty are new venues, while twenty-seven major parks are identified for development over the ten years. Play structures involve forty-three projects of both a new or upgraded perspective. In total, 140 projects are identified on a general basis, averaging fourteen projects per year.

Table 5-3: Ten Year Capital Forecast Selected Projects Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Trails Sections</th>
<th>General Parks Development</th>
<th>Major Parks</th>
<th>Play Features</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>124</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rehabilitation</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>34</strong></td>
<td><strong>36</strong></td>
<td><strong>27</strong></td>
<td><strong>43</strong></td>
<td><strong>140</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5-4 examines the parks and trails Development Charges revenues and allocations for the period 2009 to 2018 and in some cases beyond. A total of $18,401,000 is identified for park development of which almost $11.9 million is for McLennan and the South District Parks.
For park development, $14.8 million is the projected capital investment reflected through Development Charges with the City contributing $3.5 million. For trails, the Development Charges represent $142,000 against the total capital cost projected at $2.8 million, with the City contributing $2.66 million for future trail development.

Development Charges represent one of the primary sources of capital funds to support park and trail development, with City generated funds being responsible for Development Charge eligible projects of about $6.2 million.

Table 5-4: Parks & Trail Development Charges - Revenues and Allocations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I Park Development</th>
<th>Total ($)</th>
<th>Growth Related (%)</th>
<th>2009 to 2018 DC Portion (90%) ($)</th>
<th>2018 &amp; Beyond DC Portion ($)</th>
<th>City Portion (10%) ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. General Park Development</td>
<td>3,283,000</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>2,954,700</td>
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<td>328,300</td>
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<td>2. Major Park Development</td>
<td>3,241,000</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>2,916,900</td>
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<td>324,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. McLennan Park Development</td>
<td>3,454,000</td>
<td>45.6</td>
<td>1,416,335</td>
<td>5,473,764</td>
<td>2,037,665</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. South District</td>
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<td>100.0</td>
<td>2,106,936</td>
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<td>842,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>18,401,000</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>9,394,871</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,473,764</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,532,365</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II Trails</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Community Trails</td>
<td>2,614,000</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>39,960</td>
<td></td>
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<td>2. Trail Crossings</td>
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<td>60.0</td>
<td>102,600</td>
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<td><strong>Sub Total</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<td><strong>2,661,440</strong></td>
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<td>III TOTAL</td>
<td><strong>21,205,000</strong></td>
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<td><strong>9,537,431</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,473,764</strong></td>
<td><strong>6,193,805</strong></td>
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6.0 COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

From November 2008 to the middle of April 2009, a multi-tiered community consultation program was completed in support of the development of the City of Kitchener Park Master Plan. Various strategies were utilized to provide segmented consultation opportunities for a variety of residents and community organizations that wished to provide perspectives with respect to the future planning and delivery of parks within Kitchener.

The following profile outlines the sources of consultation activity:

- **Community focus groups** involving fifty-five individuals representing over twenty-five community organizations who utilize parks for sports, winter rink programs, park users and trails related activities, including Kitchener Youth Advisory Council;
- Numerous **written submissions** from citizens;
- Six **City Council** member interviews;
- Four **staff sessions**, involving senior corporate and department staff; planning, design and development staff; and community service department program and management staff, and arts and culture and heritage staff;
- Seven external agencies, service providers and interest groups;
- Two **community workshops** held on Tuesday, March 23 and Saturday, March 28, 2009 involving a total of six discussion tables with fifty-three participants;
- An online community survey utilizing the City of Kitchener website that attracted 178 responses.

Appendix C contains the detailed results of the various consultation forums by grouping or event. The following material provides a summary of the key themes that emerged with respect to the key questions posed:
• What are the strengths, key attributes or above average capacities associated with the parks system within the City of Kitchener?
• What are gaps, concerns, issues or weaknesses that you would identify with the park system in the City of Kitchener?
• What are the future perspectives and needs that the Master Plan needs to understand and respond to over the next ten to twenty years?

The consultation information has been developed in summary form across two groupings:

• Focus groups, interviews and submissions;
• Community workshops and the online community survey.

6.1 Focus Groups, Interviews and Submissions Summary

The following is a summary of the key themes that emerged from across the fifty plus focus groups, interviews and submissions in support of the development of the Situational Analysis Report for the Kitchener Park Master Plan.

Strengths

• The availability of high quality sports fields, eg: Peter Hallman Ballyard, Budd Park, Breithupt, Jack Couch and other park locations.
• Generally good relationships between the City and the sports community.
• The availability of the winter rinks program, which has been abandoned in many other communities.
• Victoria Park, Huron Park Natural Area, Kiwanis Park, McLennan Park and other venues that were repeatedly identified as high value, important to the community and as “jewels” within the park system.
• The trail system which is available in many areas of the community, and provides both recreational and transportation opportunities.
• An outstanding network of natural areas, which are well managed.
• The downtown parkettes and parks areas, along with the festivals and events held in the community.
• The urban forest within Kitchener and the efforts to enhance forestry.
• The condition, variety and availability of parks distributed throughout the community that service multiple interests at aligned service levels.
• The parks are seen widely as well used and significantly important to the quality of life at both neighbourhood and broader community levels.
• The School Board and Conservation Authority lands which contributes significantly to the park system, with Chicopee being identified numerous times.
• The potential of the Grand River corridor and Hidden Valley as significant parkland resources.
• The range of uses within the parks, some which are not typically high profile, such as garden plots, rest areas and commemorative features.
• The level of importance and the value held by the residents for parks, trails and related activities.
• The positive urban form and environmental benefits that the parks and natural areas contribute to in Kitchener.

Concerns / Issues / Weaknesses
• The trail system on many levels, involving winter access, surfaces, maintenance, signage, trail heads, promotion / mapping, destination linkages, routes / variety of experiences and other planning and operational dimensions.
• The quality and maintenance levels of school sports fields which tend not to be at the level of the City parks and impact playability for minor sports groups.
• Maintenance issues, particularly on sports fields during the spring and early summer seasons.
• The shortage of soccer fields which constricts, both recreational and competitive programs.
• In some parks, drainage and other challenges reduce the availability of sports fields and use of open areas.
• Need to consider more lighted sports fields to grow capacity, along with the possibility of using artificial turf surfaces.
• The state of Centennial Stadium, and the lack of a high quality track and field facility.
• The threats to the urban forest in terms of disease, development, abuse and other impacts.
• Bylaw enforcement in terms of pets, encroachment, litter, security, vandalism, and tree removal.
• Recycling and other environmental programs need to evolve to a higher level of presence and impact in the parks.
• The debate over Victoria Park Lake and the Boat House and sustaining the character of the park.
• The need for more passive and smaller parkettes, rest areas and play spaces that are not programmed but foster spontaneity and broader user engagement.
• The need to integrate more public art and culture heritage interpretation into park settings.
• Better integration of park and trail acquisition within the overall strategic and land use planning processes of the City.
• Responding to the increasing expansion of user interests, ranging from more thrill oriented activities for teens to the needs of an aging population, along with multicultural interest transitions within the population.
• Effectively responding to the increased needs around heritage, archaeology, ecological preservation and related mandates.
• Building more effective and enduring partnerships that contribute stronger mutual benefits for parks in Kitchener.
• The City is behind in the development of parks in new areas which creates challenges with residents in these areas related to service expectations.
• Responding to school closures and urban intensification impacts on the more limited park based that tends to exist in the mature neighbourhoods.
• Bringing the Grand River into the mainstream urban form of the City and utilizing its capacities.
• Attempting to move from a reactionary approach to parks development to a more proactive approach.
• Controlling development so that there is adequate protection of environmental areas, adding new environmental and park areas and parklands.
• Effectively responding to woodlot acquisition and management programs where they these woodlots are sustainable and a clear rationale exists.
• Wide identification of budget constraints across all dimensions of parkland acquisition, development and maintenance, whether for passive or active spaces, which constrains the City’s ability to meet many of the expectations and needs identified.
• Developing a long term existing park renewal program as some parks, often in older areas of the City, are aged, tired and the neighbourhood demographics have changed.

Future Perspectives
• Developing a more comprehensive, multi-dimensional trail system that is available on a year round basis and encourages utilization, is destination-based and results in a widely linked network throughout the community that supports both recreational and transportation uses.
• Protecting the limited array of natural areas that remain in the undeveloped areas of the City, and undertaking management programs that sustain and enhance existing natural areas.
• Using new technologies and strategies that intensify the use of the current resources where capacity exists, such as lighting and artificial turf and better sustain the naturalness of the park areas.
• Enhancing the urban design, environmental, recycling, bylaw enforcement and educational dimensions of the overall park delivery system.
• Better understanding and responding to changes in population demographics in terms of ethno-cultural backgrounds, aging populations, and the variable interests of differing aged-based market segments.
• Increasingly contributing to healthier lifestyles, environmental awareness and other key benefits as a result of investing in park spaces and park-based activities.
• Bring the Grand River corridor into the mainstream of the community’s urban form and park resources.
• Enhancing the strategies for park acquisition, the timeliness for development and the need for ongoing renewal of existing venues.
• Developing a vision and perspective that sustains Victoria Park as a “jewel” within the park system and the community, along with other significant venues and natural areas.
• Potentially developing different types and ranges of partnerships that result in a more shared responsibility with resident, and neighbourhoods in Kitchener, other park providers, potential new funders and other related parties.
• Effectively understanding and applying emerging community development initiatives in terms of growth management, light rail, urban design, residential intensification and other policies and strategies which will transform to various degrees, the City’s structure and approaches to development.
6.2 Community Workshops and Online Survey

The following material summarizes the key inputs from the two community workshops and the online community survey.

**Strengths**
- The green spaces and parkettes, and their overall contribution to the urban form and quality of life in the City.
- The Grand River corridor and its potential.
- The Huron Natural Area, McLennan Park and the other larger and unique spaces.
- The trail system, including the Walter Bean Trail.
- The cultural festivals and other special events.
- The accessibility of the parks and their distribution, along with the balance between the natural areas and the activity venues.
- The introduction of splash pads and other evolving features, such as leash-free parks.
- The overall use levels of the parks and their connectivity to where people live.

**Concerns / Issues / Weaknesses**
- The need for a greater balance between environmental and builder / development perspectives at City Hall.
- The need for enhanced maintenance of trails and some parks, along with improved bylaw enforcement and security / safety in some areas.
- The significant gaps in the trail system, particularly related to linkages, loops, destinations and ancillary supports.
- The need for more green spaces in high density areas.
- Increased tree planting across many different areas of the City.
- The threat of selling valuable and needed parkland.
• Protecting the water quality and greenness of the Grand River corridor, along with Hidden Valley and Kiwanis Park.
• Enhancing the amenities in parks, such as washrooms, seating and shade areas.
• Expanding the less traditional park uses, such as community gardens, skateboard parks, splash pads and other uses, along with intensifying the use of existing sports fields and pursuing multi-use facilities.
• The introduction of more environmental friendly practices in parks in terms of recycling and environmental education.
• Building stronger relationships with the school boards and neighbourhood communities.

Vision
• Transforming brown-field sites, closed schools and other locations into opportunities for additional parkland.
• Rebalancing the City’s budget with an increased emphasis on park and trail planning, development and maintenance.
• Pursuing a significant effort to integrate and enhance trails into a stronger network across the community, both as recreational and transportation resources.
• Preserving key natural areas in the undeveloped area of the City, such as Hidden Valley.
• Ensuring future parkland pursues both leisure and environmental conservation objectives.
• Maintaining and growing the availability of parks at or beyond the current standards of delivery.
• Increasing the amount of volunteer involvement and civic responsibility for green spaces, linking green spaces to transit corridors, intensifying park development in the downtown area, along with integrating urban design features.
• Ensuring a balance between active and non-programmed uses in the park system, ensuring accessibility for all residents.
• Pursuing the development of multi-use facilities wherever possible.
• Increased efforts to acquire, sustain and improve the quality of the woodlots within the community.
• Pursuing park development that is timely, is four season focused and is re-adaptive in order to align with changing neighbourhood and community demographics, needs and priorities.

Most Important Priority Initiatives
• Keep what the City has and do not give up existing parkland.
• Increase the natural areas and green spaces available.
• Enhance trail development across all dimensions of trail availability, development and operations.
• Maximize multi-use fields / venues.
• Formally develop the Grand River corridor as a premier venue.

Medium Priority Initiatives
• Rebalance the City’s budget levels of investment in parks.
• Re-naturalizing open areas and enhance tree planting across the City.
• Increase volunteer and community engagement and collaboration / partnerships.

6.3 External Agencies and Service Providers

Meetings were held with representatives from the Grand River Conservation Authority, Ministry of Natural Resources, Public School Boards, Chicopee Ski Club, the Disabilities and Human Rights Group (Social Planning Council) and a Developer/Consultant group. The following points summarize their input:
Strengths
• The partnerships that exist between the City and a variety of external agencies and service providers are highly valued.
• All groups positively associate a vibrant parks system as critical to community development (beyond their specific mandate).
• A variety of formal agreements and informal arrangements exist between the City and partners related to use of land, programming of space and maintenance.
• Accessibility of parks, trails and nature area with school sites, conservation areas is valued.
• Shared use of school/park sites works for schools.

Concerns/Issues/Weaknesses
• School sites with natural area may not be sustainable, overuse, safety and liability concerns.
• Turf maintenance still an issue on schools not programmed for sport use – City and School Board have different standards.
• Grand River Corridor is an underutilized asset.
• Accessibility of trails, neighbourhood parks can be improved through enhanced design guidelines.

Future Perspectives
• Potential re-alignment of public ownership of park land holdings of external agencies – conservation authority and public school board.
• Regional natural heritage system planning required. Region has initiated broader valley land study for Grand River and tributaries.
• Year round maintenance of community trails for recreation and destination purposes should be an objective.
6.4 Strategic Themes

The following strategic themes emerged across all the consultation input and discussions.

- Continuing to build on the significant and diversified facility and land resources that exist within the City’s park system to-day in order to meet the needs of a growing and changing population.
- Enhancing the year round access, destinations/linkages, maintenance and ancillary supports for the community trail system.
- Improving the timeliness of park development, instituting more multi-use strategies, intensifying current sports field utilization and ensuring re-adaptive capacities of parks to changing demographic needs and trends.
- Responding to changing structural dimensions of the City in terms of growth management, urban intensification, urban design strategies, light rail, new economic development opportunities and related transitions.
- Improving the maintenance and preservation perspectives of the parks and related facilities.
- Increasing community engagement, volunteerism, collaboration/partnerships, education and communication strategies that enhance the acquisition, development, operations and security of the parks.
- Sustaining the vision and “jewel” qualities of the large park areas, involving Victoria, Kiwanis, McLennan, Huron Natural Area, Homer Watson and related areas.
- Balancing the overall parks system in terms of the active and non-programmed/passive areas to respond to the wider range of needs and interests of all residents.
- Developing the management and related capacities necessary to increase the tree cover within the community, to protect natural areas and to sustain these areas in the long term, including achieving a better balance
between development and conservation within the City land development processes.
• Assess the city’s land acquisition process, funding balance, bylaw enforcements and other key inputs to the ongoing planning, development and delivery of park spaces.
• Align parks with the interests of various aged-based market segments, giving consideration to the different needs of seniors and teens in order to facilitate their use of parks making them more accessible to all residents.
• Preserve the parkland that currently exists, and continue to add new sites on both passive and active dimensions, using direct acquisition, parkland dedication, community-based initiatives and other strategies, such as school closures, to brownfield properties in mature areas.

6.5 Benchmarking

A comparative survey was part of an initiative to create a Master Plan for the City of Kitchener that focuses upon parkland provision, development, capital and operating investment, policies and procedures. Three municipalities provided a response, being Barrie, St. Catharines and London. Results are summarized below (response table can be found in Appendix D).

6.5.1 Park Area Under Management

London reported the largest amount of parkland 2294ha (1353 ‘naturalized’, 59%), Kitchener the second-largest at 1322ha (885ha, 64% naturalized). Barrie followed with 1,143.4 ha (886.5 ha, 78% naturalized). The respondent reporting the smallest amount of parkland was St. Catherines, reporting 365 ha of parkland (73ha, 20% naturalized).
6.5.2 Park Planning

Types of facilities and programs for new parks are set either via a process to determine deficiencies and address during the creation of new parks or via a standardized profile based on park type. Secondary plans are repeatedly mentioned.

With the exception of Barrie, the respondents were similar to Kitchener in consulting the public in some way during park design.

Funding for new parks varied with amounts per hectare for Neighbourhood parks reported at between $23,500 to $100,000 per acre. Amounts for other types of parks were inconsistently provided. (Community Parks in Barrie receive $100,000 to $150,000 per acre. District Parks in London receive an allocation of $70,000 per acre.) St. Catharines and London are able to engage capital funding strategies involving naming rights to some extent.

New parks are funded through Development Charges in Barrie and London. Redevelopment of current parks is initiated in a variety of ways including visual evidence, reduction in bookings of sports fields, community request, or consultant’s reports. Storm water management in these parks are consistently seen as an engineering responsibility, park lighting is not standard, and topsoil/with sodding or seeding is generally required as part of subdivision agreements. The approach to requiring planting standards in new subdivision parks varies.

All respondents had standards for the identification of parkland parcels but individual standards varied. Relationships between school locations and parkland parcels were suggested. Maximum park grades varied from 3:1 in Barrie (depending on location) to tableland in St. Catharines. All agreed that the parkland should be developable; watercourses, ravines, wetlands, are not considered part of the 5% parkland (for residential) dedication though they are accepted as protected areas at no cost.
6.5.3 Park Programming and Standards

All municipalities except Kitchener stated that they have general park standards that they update when new park programming or activities are pursued. Two of the three respondents are using consultants to identify trends. Urban design guidelines don’t yet seem to have a strong relationship with park standards.

Responses to the question regarding whether there are clear budget allocation for developing and maintaining park to standards approved by council received a variety of responses. Barrie is currently reviewing this as part of their upcoming Parks and Recreation Master Plan. St. Catherines states there are clear budget allocations, and London states they do not, it is a flexible situation.

Park lighting was generally used only where evening programming (such as lit tennis courts) exist.

Turf playing fields are typical, with St. Catharines and London stating they have no synthetic fields yet. St. Catharines lights fields to 30 Foot Candles and London only lights fields if they are irrigated. Standards seem to vary for parking provisions, based on situational factors, with only stating they provide 30 spaces for fields.

Sizes and programming:

- Tot lots/parkettes are discouraged by Barrie and St. Catharines. London’s guide size is 50m X50m minimum.
- Neighbourhood Park sizes range from 1 to 4 ha
- Community Park sizes seem to be stated as 4 ha (+/- ) with some as large as 8 ha
- Regional park sizes – varies or n/a
- Woodlot sizes – no standards except in Barrie.
- Other – Wetlands, Eco-park and Linear parks
Parks and Recreation Strategic Master Plan, Official Plans, Secondary Plans, and Bicycle Master Plans were all given as methods of establishing the primary community trail network.

When asked about the use of technology to improve use or performance of parks, there was general agreement on the use of native species and the reduction of pesticides/herbicides.

### 6.5.4 Natural Areas

Rather than natural area design/management guidelines, Barrie uses the local Conservation Authority and an urban forester on staff to generate what is necessary. London has Conservation Master Plans/Woodland Management Plans an ecologist on staff, and consultants. St. Catharines has no guidelines. Each municipalities approach to acquisition of Natural areas differs. EPA lands are accepted at no charge to municipality or they are not acquired. London is reviewing its policy. Barrie obtains undevelopable EPA’s at no cost, however, land value of woodlots is through appraisals prior to land registration. The value is calculated back against any cash-in-lieu of parkland.

Trail location and dedication is determined or negotiated by municipalities primarily in early planning stages.

Categories of Natural areas reflect their physical nature. Categories include woodlot, wetland, ANSI, waterfront and environmentally protected area.

### 6.5.6 Operations

Budgets for maintenance of areas is varied. Maintenance and what tableland parks include also varies. Reporting by some included all arenas, community centers and pools. Barrie reported a cost per acre for maintenance of $5,300.00/acre while St
Catharines’ reported over $15,000.00 per acre but included building maintenance.

Barrie reports that a newly created Corporate Asset Management Department will be required to track lifecycle management and expectations of City owned equipment and infrastructure. Current replacements for playgrounds are based on an approx 15 to 20 year lifespan. Other park infrastructure replacements are based on Parks Operations staff observations and levels of repairs necessary to keep the amenity functional and safe. London’s Life Cycle Renewal Program includes capital request yearly of $2-3 M/ maintenance and upgrades for play areas/paths/parking/amenities of $400K/year.

All municipalities report that they maintain horticultural, signage, and other specialized landscape features including road buffers and features display beds.

All municipalities partnered with others, through Adopt-a-Park programs, teaming up with Rotarians and school and community groups to address park maintenance. Everyone is gearing up Adopt-a-Park programs.
7.0 TRENDS AND STRATEGIES

In developing the Park Master Plan for the City of Kitchener, a number of key trends and strategy options and considerations are relevant in setting directions and courses of action for the ongoing development, delivery and evaluation of parks spaces and community trails. The following material is contributory to developing the specific services strategies and recommendations to be incorporated within the Master Plan and the associated feasibility studies.

7.1 Demographic Trends

7.1.1 Aging and Youth Populations

One of the most significant and well documented trends within Canadian society is that of the aging population. By 2016 to 2020, over 30% of most urban centre residents in Ontario will be over the age of sixty. This will have a profound impact in both the types of leisure services / activities that will be undertaken and resident servicing expectations.

An aging population will have the following impacts related to park and related facility expectations and use:

- Greater emphasis on accessibility of park and trail locations;
- A rising interest in bird watching, genealogy, walking and related health / fitness / wellness oriented activities;
- Increasing interests in art, culture and heritage
- Rising interest in increased physical fitness and other related activity-based programming.

In conjunction with the aging trends and impacts, the birth rate has stabilized at a low level (1.5 children per family as indicated by the 2006 Census). The projections for
most urban environments in Ontario is that the 0-19 population will either remain stable in number or actually see some declines in the number of youth over the next 20 years. The importance of this trend in relation to parks planning is not that youth are going to disappear or that there will be less of them, rather, it is more the fact that there will not be significantly more of them which has been the traditional planning profile for parks and leisure services for the last forty to fifty years. Therefore, proportionately, they will represent a reduced segment of the total population which is a uniquely different planning framework.

As a result of these demographic shifts, there will be absolutely more mature adults in terms of numbers who are looking for different types of activities while there will not be a growing but rather a likely stable or declining youth population. This trend uniquely changes some of the perspectives as to the planning and delivery of parks and related leisure services from what has historically been the benchmark of the last decades.

For Kitchener, the aging phenomena for both seniors and children, is tracking general Canadian trends and those for Ontario. This has been outlined in depth in Section 2.0 of the Situation Analysis Report that identifies an aging population, with 30% of residents in the boomer generation and relative stability or limited growth for the younger age cohorts.

7.1.2 Changing Cultural Face

Due to birth rate declines, Canada needs approximately 300,000 to 350,000 plus net new immigrants per year to sustain its current population. This is felt to be a significant goal for the country in order to ensure a stable and growing economy. As a result, Canada has encouraged immigration from around the world in order to meet these particular policy objectives and strategic outcomes, probably more so than any other country. What has significantly changed related to immigration, has been the source of new immigrants and refugees. Traditionally they have come from northern Europe, the
Mediterranean area and related regions in large numbers through the later part of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century. In the last twenty years, they have increasingly been arriving from non-traditional sources, such as the Middle East, Asia, Africa and South America. Many of these individuals have also been refugees from war torn, impoverished countries, with no fundamental experiences or traditions in regards to parks and related leisure activities, education and health care. Others have come with a different array of leisure experiences, involving soccer, cricket and other leisure activities that have limited exposure historically in Canada. The Kitchener area has historically been a strong settlement area for New Canadians, with 26% of its population not born in Canada in the 2006 Census.

From a leisure services perspective, an ethnically diverse population creates communication requirements to inform and educate new Canadians about parks and related leisure services, ranging from everything from how to source information to encouraging participation in new experiences. This trend also can impact the types of services that people are interested in, ranging from increased soccer participation, to reduced interest in activities that they may have no history in, such as ice-based sports, baseball, fitness and related considerations.

Waterloo Region has nearly 26% of its population not born in Canada in the 2006 Census. This is estimated to grow to over 30% of the total population in the next ten years. For Kitchener, they are at the leading edge of the cultural changing face of Canada, and have had a more significant visible minority and immigrant population for many decades. Therefore, the impacts of cultural activities transitions and expectations will be a significant theme for Kitchener now and continuing strongly into the future. Soccer, cricket and other activities, along with culturally-based picnics and special events will likely emerge with greater strength.
7.2 Parkland, Facilities and Participation Trends

7.2.1 Sports Activities

There are some significant changes occurring within the minor and adult sports area which is one of the cornerstones to parks and leisure services planning and development.

In terms of field sports, a number of key trends are emerging. The first is the substantive growth in soccer. Soccer has grown in the early 2000’s to over 500,000 registered youth soccer players in Canada, both male and female. It now has the highest level of minor sports registration for any sporting activity in Canada.

A projection by Soccer Canada, 2004, forecasted that registration by 2010 will be over 1,000,000 participants which effectively doubles the participation rate in soccer if this outcome were to occur.

Soccer has four key attributes that are attracting participation:

- Low cost of participation;
- More structured / definable times during the summer months which are valued by busy families;
- Superior aerobic activity and benefit compared to baseball, golf and similar activities;
- Connections to immigrant population experiences and interests as it is the dominant global sport.

With the significant increases in youth soccer, growth in women's and men's adult soccer and the introduction of Master's soccer leagues have also emerged. These are following the same courses / patterns that adult baseball and hockey have followed over the last forty plus years. As a result of these trends, one can anticipate continuing
growth in demand for soccer facilities, both for recreational and competitive use. Soccer is also following similar patterns in terms of pursuing more highly developed sites to support competitive and tournament play, lighted fields, clubhouses and other higher level facilities than sometimes have historically been provided. This development is similar to the up-scaling of ice, baseball and other sport venues.

A counter trend to the soccer growth has been a decline in some communities in minor baseball registration. Also, there has been decline in some communities in the number of adult slo-pitch participants. Some minor baseball associations have experienced declines in registrations of 30% to 60% over the last number of years from the peak registrations after the Toronto Blue Jays won two World Series. Many of these individuals have transferred to soccer. Also, the impact of golf, year round aquatics and hockey / skating and other sports have impacted baseball. The Ontario Baseball Association has undertaken an active promotional campaign for the sport over the last five years and is reporting some renewal of participation levels. As an example, Burlington Minor Baseball reports a transition from over 2,800 registrants to 600 players and now back to 1,200 players.

For adult baseball leagues, trends are more variable from community to community. Some communities have experienced a decline in the number of adult participants in slo-pitch and adult fastball leagues have been variable. This could be because of changing lifestyles, where summer is more intensive in terms of business and other activities, the impact of ethnic populations who have no long-term history with baseball and other impacts. Kitchener has seen recent growth in adult slo-pitch and softball.

Other interesting trends involve tennis and golf. Tennis has had a highly cyclical history. In the 1970s, tennis participation grew significantly and many communities developed extensive community-based tennis facilities, such as Kitchener, London, Windsor and other centres. By the 1980s, tennis had declined in participation rates, with many communities moving from public facilities to private or publicly-oriented
club environments.

Today, tennis has a continuing interest at a recreation level, but is not one of the dominant high growth leisure sport activities. Tennis court servicing needs to be considered in order to ensure reasonable opportunities but is no longer a given component in individual park master plans and development strategies as occurred in previous decades.

Golf has increased its youth participation, due to interests in U.S. scholarships, the impact of professional golf figures and golf courses attempting to attract more youth players on daytime Monday to Friday use as both a revenue source and for developing future golfers. A significant growth period appears to have peaked, though there is a continuing interest in youth golf opportunities, which are primarily delivered through private sector and not-for-profit golf course operators. Some municipalities do operate public golf courses and a few expansions have occurred in recent years, though the number of new public municipally operated golf courses has not substantively increased over the last twenty to thirty years compared to the growth rate in non-municipal golf courses.

Other sports considerations involve a host of lesser known activities. One is cricket, which tends to have increasing interest among specific cultural connections in the population, particularly East and West Indians who come to Canada. Interest in this sport appears to be tied significant to settlement patterns in North Rexdale, Mississauga and the Waterloo region. However, as facilities are developed and immigration patterns unfold, there may be increasing interest over time but likely within narrower interest parameters. A proposal for a cricket facility in Burlington has been received.

Another sport that has some changing parameters is rugby. In recent years, women's rugby has unfolded as a participation sport in the secondary school system. It is also now part of the Ontario Summer Games. Consideration is being given to introducing
female rugby into the Canada Games. Such exposure will likely impact participation levels. However, like men's rugby, it tends to be specialized and operate within a narrower market segment but will potentially have increased participation.

Another area of consideration is the movement towards extreme sports. This is primarily an American phenomenon that is driven to a certain degree by television coverage. A number of communities, Lakeshore, London, Kitchener (Leisure Facilities Master Plan), Niagara Falls and other communities, in their recent Master Plans, had community groups approach them with respect to developing moto-cross courses, extreme bicycle venues and related activities. For over a decade, skateboarding activities within formal skateboard parks have been of increasing interest and many municipalities have introduced them. The City of Sarnia has constructed an in-ground bowl. The City of Kitchener Community Services Master Plan calls for the development of four permanent venues, one in each quadrant of the City. Many municipalities are moving towards making permanent investments in these outdoor facilities.

Some requests are being received by communities for indoor skateboarding facilities. This service however has tended to evolve within the private sector domain.

The growth in extreme sports is tentative due to the liability issues from injuries, the potential need for supervision and the level of attraction is variable on an activity by activity basis, often very narrow in scope. Therefore, the ability of a City to engage raises questions around accessibility, and trying to serve broad-based activity interests across the community.

The City of Kitchener is experiencing significant strength in soccer which is particularly culturally-based, and directly follows the trends across the country in sport participation. It is also been approached on cricket and other culturally-based sports activities. The Leisure Facilities Master Plan did identify some extreme sports, like the development of four skateboard parks, one in each quadrant of the City. Also, cycling and similar activities have been identified for McLennan Park. The City has been
adapting to key trends in sports activities due to the long term focus on master planning for both recreation and park services. This will be a continuing focus for the City as it develops new facilities and venues in the future, such as the South Kitchener District Park. Also, the transition of tennis courts to outdoor basketball and winter ice-pads, as well as stability in the inventory for ball fields, reflects these trends.

7.2.3 Facility Quality

One of the fundamental transitions of the last twenty years has been the qualitative leaps that parks and recreation facilities have experienced in municipal, YMCA and other related venues. The large multi-use complex, the tournament / competitive level quality of many park facilities and community centres has been widely evidenced. One community builds a state of the art facility and other communities start to look at that facility as the new standard.

One of the long-term planning considerations is the need to determine what level of quality new parks and facilities should attain and how does that impact existing parks and facilities and venues in terms of how they compete and not be cannibalized by current use moving to newer facilities. This also needs to be considered on a regional market basis where neighbouring municipalities may be building significant new park facilities that could be used by residents of Kitchener, such as Waterloo, RIM and Bechtel Parks in Waterloo.

With increased facility quality comes increased initial capital costs, as well as increased on-going maintenance and operational costs. Therefore, these investments become more significant in terms of their total cost implications. Sports fields with artificial turf have higher initial costs but have reduced maintenance and upkeep requirements resulting in savings over the long-term due to lower operating costs. These fields also provide extended capacity and additional revenue.

As marketing and user preferences becomes a more critical part of the choices people
make in terms of investing their leisure dollars, facility and venue quality becomes important and the rates and fees structure around these facilities tends to increase. Sometimes, as rates and fees for users increase, quality expectations also increase.

The City of Kitchener has been the leader in facility quality advancement. In the 1990’s, the development of the twin pad facility at the Auditorium Complex was state of the art. The ACTIVA Centre, opened in 2008, has a wood-floored walking track, partnered boxing facility, a twin pad ice rinks and other resources that are high quality. Facilities such as the Lyle Hallman Ball Yards, Breithaupt Centre and other dimensions of the City’s parks and facility delivery of services reflects the facility quality initiatives that Kitchener has been a leader in.

7.2.4 Tourism and Sport Tourism

One of the interesting trends within the community services sector has been the merging of tourism strategies within parks and recreation servicing. Increasingly, particularly as facility quality increases, the opportunity to attract day visitors and overnight tourists increases via tournaments, shows and special events. One dimension of this has been the development of market segments within tourism called sport tourism. Sport tourism involves tournaments, meets and other similar events that bring individuals and teams from out of town into the community for one or more days.

There has been a long history of local soccer and baseball tournaments; track and field meets; and related activities. What is increasingly occurring beyond this level, is municipalities interested in pursuing larger provincial, national and international events, such as the World Under 17 Soccer Tournament, the Ontario Games, the Ontario Senior Games and many other such events. Kitchener and other cities such as London, Brantford, Ottawa, Halifax, Brandon, Red Deer, Saskatoon and Kamloops are examples of communities that have become very aggressive in the sport tourism sector.
The drive to sport tourism, as an increasingly marketed and municipally supported enterprise, results from the potential economic and related employment impacts that this type of activity can bring to the community in terms of room, food, retail, gas and other sales. They also are, at the minor sports level, popular amongst non-profit organizations due to their potential fundraising capacity for the host organizations. Increasingly, major municipal park and recreation facility development is being rationalized based on sport tourism capacity in conjunction with the regular activity use supported by the facility or service.

In 2008, the City of Kitchener approved a Sport Tourism Strategy that directly connects to this growing trend of tourism and sport tourism being connected to recreation facilities and park venues. The City has a long tradition of being a leader in sport tourism, ranging from the Memorial Cup, to the Ontario Games, to bids on the World Junior Hockey Championships, to the hosting of numerous international baseball tournaments. The City is well positioned in a number of dimensions of sport tourism, and has worked actively in building a strategy, some of it connected to the City of Waterloo, in advancing this area of endeavour.

### 7.2.5 Environment

Over the last ten years, and in particular the last several years, the world’s concern in regard to the environment, particularly global warming, has substantially increased. Significant growth in political priority has been placed on environmental issues and needs. For municipalities generally, and parks planning specifically, this trend has considerable connectivity.

One of the considerations which has emerged over several decades is the City’s role in the preservation of identified environmental land areas. Recently, the City of London passed a by-law that all woodlots would now become parkland. The Town of Fort Erie has identified numerous parcels of land outside of their Official Plan that have potential environmental priority. Other communities are increasingly reconsidering
ravine lines, water courses, forested areas, wetlands, shorelines and related areas for public acquisition and conservation, either directly by the municipality or through partners, such as local Conservation Authorities or the Nature Conservancy of Canada.

Conservation Authorities typically now do not have the budgets to pursue the acquisition and management of all the parcels of land that municipalities are becoming engaged with. This engagement often is not derived from the City itself, but from community advocates who form various coalitions in order to create community awareness and political support for the preservation of specific sites.

It is anticipated, that municipalities over the next twenty plus years, will have an increasing stewardship role in the protection, conservation and day-to-day management of a variety of environmental areas. Some of these areas will be able to sustain little if any human activity, while others will become significant park venues. An interesting perspective on this, is the Town of Fort Erie has recommendations under consideration to develop a Land Conservancy Foundation as a way to facilitate this particular initiative. This would be similar to the concept of the Nature Conservancy of Canada which has just received significant federal funding support.

Another dimension of the environmental consideration relates to facility design. There are increased expectations that municipalities will use the latest environmental technology in facilities in order to both set an example, as well as to save operating costs. Many municipalities have been active in energy reduction programs that require significant up front capital investments. Other municipalities have taken leadership roles, to undertake pilot and development programs in their buildings to test environmentally friendly technology or to be demonstration sites. One initiative involves the Leadership in Energy and Environment Design (LEED).

Increasing consideration is also being given to public transit and community trails as ways to reduce carbon emissions and to enhance fitness. The development of trails is gaining increasing attention as not only a recreation resource, but also as an alternate form of transportation. Therefore, the development of trail master plans and
Investment in trails has been a growing priority for many municipalities which also links to health and other benefits. With walking being one of the most popular recreational activities, and its direct linkage to health, fitness and other benefits, trails take on a multi-benefit perspective that is closely linked to sustaining a healthy, living environments focusing both on ecological and personal well-being.

Beyond these specific considerations is the concept of the healthy and sustainable community living environment. These principles, concepts and strategic directions are increasingly important factors in community services decisions.

Therefore, the conservation of more natural areas, the expansion and increased promotion of trails and trail usage, increasing expectations on facilities being environmentally friendly and reducing environmental impacts from day-to-day parks and recreation operations is a significant growing trend and community expectation. This trend has definable capital and operating cost implications that are generally seen as important investments in enhancing the health, environment, liveability and sustainability of a community.

The City of Kitchener has been connected to this trend for many years. In recent time, the ACTIVA Centre was developed at a gold level LEED standard. From an open space perspective, the development of the Huron Park Natural Area, Cressman’s Woods, the partnership with the Grand River Conservation Authority on the Stanley Park Conservation Area, the protection of Steckle Woods and many other sites have historically been strong initiatives within Kitchener. Currently, the City is considering the Conservation of land in the Hidden Valley area and other sites along the Grand River that would significantly engage with the protection of environmental areas and the provision of large, buffered and sustainable natural resources.

Further, as noted in Section 4.0, the City approved the Local Environmental Action Fund (LEAF) in 2007. LEAF is a $5 million environmental fund with the goal to “reduce, or repair, Kitchener’s impact on the environment focusing on the reduction of
greenhouse gases, and to enhance the ability of the Kitchener community to live sustainably into the future.”

7.2.6 Community Trails

For over thirty years, communities have been developing trail systems throughout their community. These trails have utilized hydro rights-of-way, waterfront public lands, linear ravine systems, direct purchases of land and linkage and acquisition of land through the Planning Act in new development areas. Community trails have become one of the most popular and sought after development initiatives within communities. Initially, walking and jogging-type activities were the prominent use. In more recent years, cycling, rollerblading and other uses have emerged in force.

The design of trails has advanced significantly, in terms of hard surfaces to support wheelchairs and bicycle use, rest areas to support older aged users and the concept of connecting destinations so that a linked network evolves. These destinations often involve schools, large parks, attractions, commercial areas, waterfronts, special environmental features and a host of other community resources.

In the last ten years, Trail Master Plans have become common amongst municipalities and are often linked to bicycle master plans and other transportation systems plans. One of the most significant trends of the last five years, has been the linking of community trails to broader linear transportation network planning as a component in these networks. As a result, community trails are increasingly taking on a role as an alternate transportation resource in combination with the fitness, recreational and related activities that have traditionally been the value basis for these resources.

With the development of the broader network system, and also with the integration of trails between municipalities, particularly in regional government areas, has come the notion of a three tiered trail system:

- The spinal corridors that are the primary transportation routes;
• The local trails that connect neighbourhood and other destinations within communities;
• The specialty trails that are theme-based, such as the Winery Trail in Grimsby and Lincoln, the Beer Trail in Waterloo and Guelph, many waterfront trails and those associated key geographic features, such as the Bruce Trail along the Niagara Escarpment.

Community trail development is evolving, is generally a primary resource development initiative and needs to be considered in all new and renewal development occurring within communities as both a recreational experience that sustains leisure interests, fitness and related activities, as well as providing alternate transportation opportunities.

In addition, as trails become more multi-use, involving everything from cyclists training for marathons to seniors walking for health, comes the need to better manage trail utilization to reduce conflicts and to provide trails on a year-round basis. Trail conflicts have existed where bicyclists have collided with trail users, often seniors. As a result, using defining yellow lines to separate use or to have two track trail systems in heavy use areas have been developmental strategies that have evolved. Also evolving is the development of trail heads, the use of tea rooms and other services along the trails and the maintenance of trails in the wintertime to facilitate year-round utilization. Kitchener and other cities such as Waterloo, London, Fort Erie and others have all been approached by groups who have asked Councils to maintain the trails on a year-round basis so that users can sustain their fitness regimes and facilitate ongoing alternate transportation access.

As the role of trails evolves and utilization grows, trails will become an increasingly important resource that will need continuing investment, maintenance and management to sustain their value and effective use and benefits.

In the 1970s, the City of Kitchener initiated a significant community trails program.
Over the last thirty years, it has evolved significantly, expanding into new areas as the City has grown. Trails are an integral part of the recreational parks and parkland system, as they provide linkages for trail users to travel to and from parkland and other recreational amenities throughout the City of Kitchener.

7.2.7 Multi-Use Facilities

The multi-use concept for major parks and recreation facilities has been available and used for many years both as a concept and in practise. Multi-use facilities have more critical mass, potentially better operating and capital economies of scale, higher visibility and greater customer service potential by creating a single access venue. However, they also tend to result in larger facilities that move to a district and municipal-wide servicing perspective, potentially reducing neighbourhood / local area level presence and roles. There can be some significant trade-offs.

Multi-use strategies have been identified from the research as a strategy in developing major venues in Kitchener. It is a strategy that is the basis for a partnership-oriented development model. Therefore, multi-use, which means bringing together the most number of uses and users that have demonstrated need and the right compatibilities, should be a valued venue development strategy within this Master Plan.

7.2.8 Parks Integration

Recreation facilities do not exist in isolation. They are often a significant partner with ongoing parks and trails acquisition, development and operations within a community. The integration of parklands and facilities initiatives are an important strategy in determining the location, size, access, land form and related considerations for park acquisitions.

The importance of parks and the integration of recreation facilities are significant in the delivery of leisure services in the community. Parks provide a potential home for facilities, forming important linkages from both programming and operational
perspectives. Both dimensions need to work together in order to maximize the benefits for the community.

A number of key considerations in the Master Plan need to integrate with ongoing parks planning and development in Kitchener:

- Closure of schools could result in the loss of indoor facilities for leisure activities as well as important outdoor space often used as parkland after hours and on weekends and throughout the summer for field sports and related activities. More importantly, many school sites are used for outdoor, non-programmed-based leisure activities;
- It is a concern of many people that program-based activities tend and continue to dominate leisure facility operations when it is often more important at the neighbourhood level to have spontaneous, informal play areas for children, youth and families. A balance of programmed and non-programmed outdoor space is needed, especially at the neighbourhood level. Working to achieve some outdoor space for a residential area may need to be considered by the City in its redevelopment planning and zoning;
- Funding and acquisition of land for major indoor leisure facilities can be processed through the facilities component of the Development Charges By-law. Facility use of parklands is preferred, but facility lands should not absorb or reduce the availability of needed parkland resource;
- The use of campus setting for parks and facilities should be explored wherever possible, including the possible inclusion of other partners beyond schools, to enhance overall service levels, access and efficiencies.

Parks and facilities should not be planned and developed in isolation. Though they evolve from different sources of information and development processes, the department needs to ensure their full integration in order to maximize the use of resources, determine the best site locations and configurations and to achieve the best
operating benefit for both users and the community at large.

Kitchener has a long history of parks and facilities integration. The Breithaupt Centre in the late 1960s and early 1970s was integrated in Breithaupt Park, the indoor soccer facility as Budd Park, proposals for the new South Kitchener District Park and the Stanley Park facilities represent examples of integration that has been widely established in Kitchener as a service delivery approach.

7.2.9 Centres of Excellence

With the Olympics in Calgary, came the notion of Centres of Excellence for sport. The concept of Centres of Excellence has trickled down into local municipal recreation and sports delivery. Local not-for-profit sports organizations have adopted the Centres of Excellence label partly to attract participants, funding and to have more enhanced facilities developed. One example is the proposed development of Sherwood Forest Park to be positioned under the concept of a Soccer Centre of Excellence in Burlington.

As a result of the transitions over the last two decades, the definition of Centres of Excellence has widened and become multi-tiered and more competitive as a means for sports associations to differentiate themselves. In many cases, Centres of Excellence are not aligned with the municipal boundaries in which the centre operates. Centres of Excellence often attract participants from wider regional areas due to the advanced coaching, programming, visibility and opportunities that they offer.

The Centres of Excellence have potentially significant capital and operating costs. At the national and provincial sport areas, there is generally federal and provincial government funding. At the local levels, the programs tend to be independent with user fees and fundraising being the dominant operating supports, while municipalities are often engaged in all or part of the facility development perspectives required to sustain a Centre of Excellence program.
7.3 Service Delivery and Financial Trends

7.3.1 Parks and Recreation Services Development and Delivery Strategy

Input received from community members, municipal staff and Councils and the trends and analysis within the parks and recreation services sector at the municipal level, indicate potentially substantive change in terms of how leisure services will be developed and delivered in the future. The expectation that a City is the centre point for leisure services delivery, involving programs, parks, coordination and special events is changing. As the municipal operating environment changes relative to overall service responsibilities (e.g. aging infrastructure) fiscal constraints and other factors emerge relative to the use priorities of available resources. In concert with these changes, are market-based changes in terms of the types and numbers of leisure interests that people wish to pursue; the level of interest they wish to pursue them at; their preparedness to pay user fees of a higher order; and trends towards increased participation by the private, non-profit and other service providers. Rock climbing; sports and fitness centres; specialized programs delivery, such as soccer schools; private sector adult leagues; and represent examples.

The operating environment for these services at the municipal level is also changing with increased connectivity between sport, recreation, arts, culture, heritage, tourism and economic development; movement towards facilitated access and information resources for all services; and consumer demands for more one window / coordinated accessibility to services.

Of increasing concern to the community is the ability of community members to reasonably access these services related to costs, varying interests, locations and ability / skill levels. As the leisure services delivery system gets more complex and user fees become more prominent, access issues become more significant. Therefore, efforts to reduce costs by gaining cost economies through partnerships, mergers and conjoint / joint venture activity are more evident. As an example, YMCA Canada reports that local YMCAs now have over seventy municipal servicing partnership and /
or direct delivery agreements.

What these changes lead to is a vision of an integrated parks and recreation services delivery strategy that builds on the strengths of all service providers in a community and which uses all the community's resources to achieve positive outcomes in terms of each participant's personal development and the quality of life in the community. This is a holistic strategy that also needs to connect with education, health, social services, tourism, economic development, policing and other initiatives, as leisure services do not exist in isolation within a single community or within broader regional markets.

The trend towards a more integrated community-based services strategy, that can achieve trust between service providers; establish strong leadership; and uses cooperative and collective efforts that focus on consumer interests and needs, practical financial realities, reasonably universal accessibility and ongoing services evaluation, is the service delivery model that will support future success.

7.3.2 Volunteers and Services Delivery

Another emerging strategic theme and challenge for municipalities is the sustainability of volunteer service organizations as important service providers and partners. Volunteer organizations have a long and valued history in the delivery of an array of leisure services. However, increasing concerns are being raised about the sustainability of these organizations, particularly from a financial perspective, as operating and capital costs rise to significant levels, and their ongoing ability to recruit committed and / or skilled volunteers becomes increasingly challenging. A loss of capacity and service from this sector would greatly impact the availability of park and recreation services. Therefore, municipalities will need to examine various options, inputs and roles that it may be in a position to undertake in order to maximize the supports available to voluntary organizations in order to sustain, and if possible, enhance their present capacities. Governance and technical training, marketing and analytical supports, advocacy initiatives, volunteer recognition, grants acquisition, and
other activities and services could be considered based on individual group needs.

There are also a number of trends that are influencing the availability of and the level of participation of volunteers. First, is the assumption that with more retirees of an earlier age, the province educational requirements for forty hours of community service by secondary school students and the historical tradition of volunteerism, that there would be a significant supply of volunteers to support Boards of Directors positions of non-profit entities, programs and services delivery, administrative supports and related activities. However, there has been a trend in recent years for volunteers to become more project-focused rather than engage in longer-term involvement. However, reports from non-profit organizations who deliver continuous service speak to the challenges of attracting volunteer Board of Directors and operational support volunteers where the need is more for continuing, longer-term commitments. This trend speaks to the challenges that are evident where people are looking to volunteer on a targeted basis and know what their defined commitments are.

A second consideration is that many of the leisure services and community supports that exist in a community have evolved on the basis of few key volunteer players, some who have provided twenty to thirty or more years of leadership. However, succession is becoming an increasing challenge for some non-profit organizations and community groups, especially where it is not evident that there is the leadership commitment and support necessary to replace those individuals who are moving on. This generational transition in volunteer leadership and commitment is a challenge to sustain the range of community services that are offered in communities across Canada.

Third, is the increasing challenge around accountability and “red tape” involved with volunteering. Organizations, especially those involved with youth, now often require police checks, costing anywhere from $25.00 to $50.00 per check. Other volunteers are concerned about accountability of working with youth and the negative public
exposure that can occur. More and more not-for-profit community organizations need to undertake complex evaluation and reporting programs to government which creates more paperwork and less time associated with program and organizational development and delivery. The changing nature of the volunteer environment is becoming a potential constraint.

The fourth, and final, consideration is that many volunteers are highly educated, have been involved in supervisory or managerial leadership and have a host of experiences. Therefore, how they are treated, valued, recognized, trained and supported becomes important as the sophistication of volunteer increases. Many not-for-profit organizations and community groups do not have a tradition or a capacity to adapt to some of the changing profile considerations of volunteers.

Volunteers continue to be critical to the development and delivery of leisure services. However, their availability, development, use, recognition, recruitment, succession and related considerations, as well as changing preferences around their commitment and interests, needs to be effectively addressed and responded to in order to sustain a strong and vibrant volunteer pool in support of a broad array of accessible and affordable leisure services.

7.3.3 Capital and Operating Finances

For the last decade, considerable change has occurred within the context of capital and operating finances for major parks and recreation facilities. For the last ten years, targeted senior government recreation and culture grants for leisure facilities have not been as available though some opportunities have opened up in recent years via infrastructure, rural development, culture and other granting programs. For decades, these grants contributed up to one third of capital costs via Ontario and other programs. In more recent years, fundraising, direct financing, Development Charges, municipal grants, corporate sponsorships and other strategies have become significantly more important in funding major parks and recreation facilities and development.
Beyond the loss or limiting of capital grants, the capital funding environment has continued to change significantly. Amendments to the Development Charges Act in 1999 have reduced the application of this capital funding source for new resources. The definition of eligible facilities has been reduced, e.g.: no cultural facilities, a redefinition of the service level has lowered the thresholds for the funding of future facilities needed to support population growth in the community, and there is a 10% arbitrary capital cost reduction, along with a penalty for overcapacity. As a result, Development Charges, which have been a primary source for parks and recreation facilities capital funding, especially in faster growing communities, can have a reduced role under the current legislation.

Fundraising and corporate sponsorships have become an increasing source of capital funding for larger parks and recreation facilities. The opportunities to name facilities, to fund specific rooms or equipment, along with traditional cash donations have become increasingly important. However, the overall fundraising environment is increasingly competitive as not only the leisure services sector, but many sectors are competing for funds on a daily basis, such as health, education and others. Within the context of fundraising, corporate sponsorships have grown significantly which results in a changing relationship with corporate funders who take a stronger marketing and visibility-based approach to their contributions towards a particular project or program. Also, sometimes they wish to contribute value-in-kind as a displacement for direct funding. Fundraising may not always work as a strategy and securing and retaining volunteers to drive a fundraising campaign is a concern due to community volunteer fatigue. Fundraising can be a goal but does not come with a guarantee. It has enhanced application for joint venture initiatives where there may be significant shared outcomes.

There is now a wider mix of capital funding sources applied to parks and recreation facility initiatives than in the past. Where major facility initiatives were once funded from two or three sources, it is likely in the future, that they will require four, five and
six sources. This direction will create stronger partnership needs and a greater risk orientation related to creative financing approaches.

From an operating perspective, increases in user fees have become a growing strategy over the last decade for all municipalities. Most municipalities have increasing expectations that user fees will continue to move between 60% and 75% coverage of a department's total budget and even higher over time. However, the park's component, other than for sports fields, generally has limited user fee generation capacity and is often positioned as a public good versus a revenue stream.

Increasing onus is being put on users to fund facility operations. As these funding formulas become more sophisticated, they begin to include not only direct costs, but also allocated corporate and indirect administrative costs, capital maintenance reserves and capital upgrading charges.

Another dimension of the financial strategies and trends is the emphasis on sustainability. Sustainability is seen as the ability to continue to operate a facility or deliver a program within the financial resources of the organization and meet the investment goals or benefits defined for the service. Often times, if a City provides initial financial support, the question emerges as to how the services is reduced or completed. It is a question often confronted by the Ontario Trillium Foundation to the funders. This emphasis is intended to ensure sponsoring groups take a longer term view and do not become overly reliant or dependent on funders. It is also intended to focus service providers on the business perspectives of the operation and to intensify self-financing and revenue generation strategies.

7.3.4 Evaluation

Municipalities are moving into the area of services evaluation that are more comprehensive, data and input-based and which will become a key component in establishing servicing priorities and resource allocations. Some municipalities have
instituted a regular three year resident survey on twenty-five or more service themes, which gauges the value residents place on services through a gap analysis approach involving the level of satisfaction versus level of importance. This process identifies outcomes related to utilization levels, value held for the service and overall importance to residents.

The notion of evaluation has become increasingly apparent in all public and other service sectors as expectations grow for outcomes and restraint exists on the availability of public resources. Best practises and evaluation programs are supportive to continuous improvement approaches in ensuring that resource decisions and operations are consistent with the real, demonstrated needs and interests of residents.

Evaluation of leisure services has become increasingly apparent now and for the years ahead. Both existing and new parks and recreation facilities and services will be influenced more and more by these evaluation strategies and their outcomes. As a result, leisure services will increasingly need to be targeted on specific needs that are demonstrated by community members, support specific outcomes that benefit those that have the needs and will need to be flexible and adaptable to the changing uses and applications that will occur within the population.

7.3.5 Market Segmentation / Services Differentiation

One of the business components that is emerging into the parks and recreation services operating environment is the recognition that the population is not generic or homogeneous as to what activities they wish to undertake and at what participation / quality levels. Increased target audiences or market segmentation strategies are emerging.

As an example, participation can often now be tracked on the following levels of interest:
• Experimental and general interest;
• Hobby / specialized interest;
• Competitive / elite interest and skills development.

Each of these levels has various degrees of intensity, cost and user preparedness to pay user fees and participation. They also have different levels of park and facility quality and capacity requirements. These range from the amount of seating for competitive and tournament oriented activities to the fact that unorganized recreational baseball can occur on school board or other less developed and maintained baseball fields.

The tendency in many municipalities has been to deliver services on a more generic basis. However, changing facility quality expectations results in a question as to whether all facilities need to be developed at a high end or whether different levels of park and facility development should occur in terms of quality and capacity supported by different levels of user fees. This is a changing consideration, in that historically municipalities have charged a common level of user fees for playing fields.

An increasing trend is to consider charging different fees and rates based on the quality of the facility, with potential premiums being charged for the time slots that are most in demand. This is a more of a business model and also focuses on different levels of intensity, interest and ability to pay.

The repositioning of the market to a more targeted approach may also result in changes to two of the other trends identified in this report related to user rates and fees as well as park and facility quality.

7.3.6 Use of Schools and Their Availability

Currently, some community-based leisure programs and activities occur within schools
owned and operated by the local school boards in the Region of Waterloo. Bill 160 reshaped school management and operations, including the cost of maintaining schools, how surplus schools are disposed of and other key considerations. In June 2004, the new provincial government of the day announced $20 million provincially to facilitate increased affordability access to school-based facilities. This program was renewed in late 2006 and continues. It is primarily focused on indoor activities but can involve outdoor uses.

The community use of schools user fees were recast between 1995 and 2004 to reflect a true cost accounting approach compared to the previous more free / low cost access model. This resulted in reduced use of schools and pressure for more municipal facilities due to affordability issues by community service providers. If school use were to be eliminated, it creates a need to develop new community centres and related facilities often with gymnasiums.

Another community use of schools relationship issue is the development of campuses or the attachment of community facilities to schools. Future campus strategies will need to be assessed for balance, vulnerability and risk before being entered into due to increasing school closures and anticipated schools or undeveloped school sites that are not needed are being sold off. School boards also benefit from joint school and park development and have relied on adjacent parkland to fulfil school green space, play space and sport and physical education curriculum.

Due to school closure policies and directions of school boards, the building of additions to schools for community facilities is potentially a less supportable strategy then it was fifteen to twenty years ago. A preferred strategy in this regard may be to develop multi-use facilities with other partners if longer-term sustainability is evident. If access to schools can be reasonably achieved and sustained, it represents an affordable and preferable strategy for providing selected indoor and outdoor activity spaces.

In March of 2009 the Declining Enrolment Working Group published a study entitled
‘Planning and Possibilities’. The study included a discussion and recommendations regarding the shared use of school facilities. Recommendations 5 through 9, in particular, address shared use between school boards and between a school board and other community agencies. These recommendations may be adopted as provincial policies in the future.

With respect to non-specialized facilities, school resources continue to represent one approach as they are the most widely distributed resources for the provision of leisure programs in the community. They are flexible, service many neighbourhoods and represent a potentially more cost efficient approach.

In terms of a strategic direction, access to school sites should be a preferred delivery strategy under the following conditions:

- Local area / neighbourhood servicing strategies for both programmed and non-programmed activities;
- By improving relationships between the users and the onsite school staff to enhance access and participant experiences;
- Pursuing the development of specialized facilities with schools with caution, particularly existing schools in areas with declining student enrolment;
- Examining opportunities for campus relationships between the school boards and park and recreation facility providers, ensuring that there is a reasonable contingency plan, if school development does not proceed or if a school closure occurs.

7.3.7 User Fees and Charges

A number of municipalities are increasingly looking to user fees and charges for leisure services to fund a higher proportion of the costs of services delivery. On the cost side, municipalities are also looking more at the total cost of services delivery, involving department and corporate overheads, long-term repair and rehabilitation costs. On
the revenue side, some rates and fees policies identify a specific coverage revenue target for children's / youth services, with usually a higher one for adult services. However, many municipalities still do not have a defined cost structure as a baseline to develop their user fees.

Today, more sophisticated discussions are occurring on what is the role of the users in funding higher proportions of facility access costs, especially specialized facilities with high costs and more limited participation profiles, e.g.: municipal golf courses, and tournament-quality sports fields. This is a key strategic question that has profound political considerations, influences the grants and subsidies provided by a City to various user groups and represents a significant challenge in terms of key principles around affordability, accessibility, enhanced resident health, a balanced set of participation opportunities and investing community tax dollars wisely and fairly.

Some other communities have made efforts to develop a sound cost understanding of services delivery and are recognizing the challenges of structurally changing this dimension of leisure services delivery, as many of the fees charged have no real foundation, have evolved on an ad hoc basis and are not connected to each other by a set of principles or an unifying strategy or policy framework.

7.3.8 Collaboration, Partnerships and Joint Ventures

The use of partnerships and joint ventures has come to dominate many of the discussions around future leisure services delivery. They are seen as a service delivery strategy that uses all the resources in the community, allows organizations and individuals with expertise and capacity to more effectively deliver service, expands service opportunities within the community and potentially achieves greater cost efficiencies through economies of scale and more coordinated / integrated delivery efforts.

In terms of strategies, the use of partnerships and joint ventures, and the expansion of their role and application in delivering major leisure facilities, is a strategy that will
need to be examined in all services initiatives. This should be a check list question for each project as to potential partner’s identification, feasibility and desirability. However, the challenges with partnerships, in terms of risk, sustainability, mutual benefit and value for investment, needs to be continually assessed.

Partnerships are also evolving in different contexts. As one example, YMCAs now have over seventy municipal partnerships and joint ventures in the delivery of leisure services in Canada. The Town of Goderich in 2005 / 2006 entered into a partnership with the Sarnia / Lambton YMCA to build and operate the new South Coast Recreation Complex involving an indoor pool, arena, walking track, gymnasium and fitness centre, along with operating all the Town sports fields, a second arena and leisure programming. YMCAs are also moving into significant partnerships with the City of London on Northeast Recreation and Aquatics Centre and have undertaken similar initiatives in the City of Sarnia, along with discussions on a new complex in the City of Waterloo that could include sports fields. In the City of Niagara Falls, a new recreation complex was built by the City and the YMCA in partnership, which houses a YMCA, Branch Library, City’s Parks and Recreation Offices and a major outdoor skate board park.

Many different types of partnership models are evolving, both in terms of leisure programs and venues. There are ongoing efforts to consider different ways of delivering services than traditional municipal only approaches. Financial constraints and the increasing spectrum of leisure services interests results in collaboration, partnerships and joint ventures representing important strategies in responding to an ever changing operating environment.

7.3.9 Role of the Parks and Recreation / Community Services Departments

Municipalities have traditionally held significant responsibility for the development and delivery of parks and recreation services within their communities. This has been generally undertaken through a department of Parks and Recreation/Community
Services that is funded in whole or in part by the local municipality.

The municipal role over many years has been as direct financier, developer and operator of park facilities and programs. In more recent years, there has been some contraction of the role in leisure services delivery for some municipalities. Some municipalities have opted to allow non-profit, community-based, private enterprises and others to undertake more of a role in leisure programs delivery in order to expand services, reduce competition and to use all the resources available within the community, such as in Niagara Falls. Other municipalities, due to the growth in leisure services and changes in the market and fiscal realities associated with those services, have tended to focus their role on community development, venue development and operations and coordination / facilitation activity related to marketing, information provision / referrals and related supports to the overall leisure services network in the community.

### 7.3.10 Capital Facility Maintenance

One of the often forgotten dimensions of parks and recreation facility ownership is the ongoing capital maintenance of parks and facilities with respect to the replacement of major components, such as park playground equipment, sportsfield infrastructure and other elements. Over a twenty year period, considerable capital rehabilitation can be required. Portions of these costs are sometimes paid for from reserves contributed from annual budgets. However, other supports are usually required due to the magnitude of the project and limitation of reserves. Since these projects often do not involve expansion or renovations, but rather capital replacement and maintenance, they typically are not candidates for fundraising or partnership approaches.

One of the key recognized trends is that many public bodies have significant capital maintenance and reserves deficits that will put increasing pressure on operating budgets in order to sustain these facilities and venue resources. The utilization of pro-active reserve funding approaches for capital renewal, self-sustaining debt coverage
and other financing strategies should be incorporated.

The City of Kitchener has developed a Facilities Division which focuses on capital facility maintenance. They have taken some steps, similar to other municipalities, to give consideration to the need for reinvestments in aging facilities, new energy technologies and related perspectives.

7.3.11 Land Banking

One strategy municipalities often consider is to pre-identify land needed for major parks well ahead of the time of an area’s development. In this strategy, the municipality would generate the funding resources necessary to purchase land potentially eight to ten or more years ahead of its required use. In this way, the municipality could receive two significant benefits: first, it would be able to secure the land necessary from both a size and locational preference perspective more conveniently than trying to secure the land later in the land development process; secondly, there may be opportunities to acquire the land significantly ahead of its development timeframe at a lower cost than when development is imminent or ongoing.

7.4 Emerging Trends

7.4.1 Culture and Heritage

Over the last ten or more years, there has been a notable increase in interest in culture and heritage dimensions and services within communities. This involves the performing arts, crafts and guilds, historical and heritage resources and ethno-cultural activities and diversity celebrations.

For many decades, municipalities supported a range of museums, historical sites, performing art venues and related resources. Kitchener and other communities, such as London, Hamilton, Oakville, Guelph and Windsor, developed more regionally-based performing art facilities. Many of these centres and the groups that utilize them often
struggled financially and were seen on the margins of what was important to the community. However, a number of factors have started to reposition culture and heritage values within communities. One of the perspectives is an aging population which has shown increasing interest in arts and culture. Second, has been evolution of many community advocates in regards to preserving historical sites, the community’s heritage resources and related initiatives. As Canada becomes older, the notion of history and heritage grows in terms of venues, events and perspectives.

Another consideration has been the significant growth in the interest in genealogy. Public libraries report substantive growth in inquiries and individuals undertaking research on family relations and the development of family trees. Also, many cemetery operators of older sites indicate growth in the number of inquiries for burial records as part of genealogy searches.

A further catalyst for the growth in culture and heritage has been the Creative Cities movement that has evolved over the last ten year, focused significantly on a book by Richard Florida. The thesis of this book identifies that culture and heritage is a legitimate and vital part of what constitutes a healthy, vibrant and sustainable community. A community is not just about its economy, its housing and its parks and sports. It is also about its creative capacities that is generally expressed through cultural and heritage resources and services. Many cities have now embrace Creative Cities as one of their values within their Strategic Plans and as a principle by which they undertake decisions in regards to developing all the important capacities and perspectives of their community.

The provincial and federal government have created some new small scale funding programs to support travelling cultural shows and exhibits and for limited capital support for museums, theatres and related facilities. As a result, public investment in arts, culture and heritage appears to be increasing, with a growing segment of the population identifying a strong affinity and interest in this particular dimension of community life.
The growth in arts, culture and heritage is also a balancing perspective, in that not everyone in a community is interested in sports, physical activity or social recreation pursuits. Many individuals are interested in the arts, heritage, history and other creative pursuits. Still others are interested in genealogy, bird watching and hobbies. The rise in arts, culture and heritage provides these community members with opportunities to be more fully engaged with their community through the provision of a broader range of leisure opportunities and experiences.

The City of Kitchener was one of the first communities in Ontario to complete a Cultural Master Plan. It has now completed the second generation of the Plan. It has shown significant leadership in this area, dating to the development of the Centre in Square, a new Kitchener – Waterloo Arts Centre and other theatre and program opportunities across the community. The City has a strong position in alignment with this trend and continues to develop special events around cultural and heritage themes, including Octoberfest which has a long standing as Canada’s third largest special event attraction.

7.4.2 Urban Design and Intensification

Parks provisioning is, and will be more so in the future, influenced by key land use development trends occurring in urban centres in Ontario. The Ontario Government has approved a Growth Plan that will over time see at least 40% of new residential development occurring in developed areas by 2015 in the Greater Golden Horseshoe Area. This strategy will result in a growing amount of infilling and intensification of densities in currently developed areas. Some of these projects will be small infills while others will involve the demolition of existing land uses, sometimes involving industrial or commercial converting to residential.

Unlike the historical development of the last five decades which tended to be large tracts of greenfields where parks and trails could be integrated into the overall design process through secondary plans, and land could be acquired at a rate of 5% dedication, the new projects will have other implications for parks and trails.
The first implication will be higher densities, resulting in more people living in the same land space. As a result, park provisioning standards may not be adequate if they have been based on hectares / acres per thousand of residents. As the number of residents goes up in a defined area, the current park areas may not be adequate to meet a denser and larger population with less private green space.

Second, many of the developments that will be occurring are out of scale where it may be challenging to acquire adequate land for a park area or an effective trail connection. The tendency will be to accept cash in lieu of land, however, land costs may be escalating in these areas and the ability to purchase land for adequate park or trail connections may be restrictive.

The third consideration is sourcing adequate land as intensification occurs. Pressure will exist on municipalities to attempt to utilize lands at schools, especially if closures are involved; to buy plots of land that maybe have been abandoned or are unused such as former industrial sites; and to utilize hydro rights-of-ways, church properties or other semi-public domain lands that are utilized for park or trail connections.

The urban intensification strategy is in its early life. Over the next several decades, as intensification grows and potentially increased intensification is regulated, the ability to source adequate parks and trail connections will be increasingly challenging compared to how these resources evolved in the previous decades. Therefore, municipalities will need to be vigilant in looking at land acquisition opportunities related to school closures, possible sites that are turning over, and the use of non-traditional sites for parks and trail connections.

Also what may need to be considered are new forms of parks within the emerging developments. This could include rooftop parks, on-site playgrounds, garden areas and other developments within the site development plans. This would potentially place more of an onus on the developer to provide parks opportunities within the development, placing less pressure on municipalities to provide global or generic parks
and open space areas. However, these types of solutions will not likely resolve considerations related to sports fields whether for competitive or recreational use, large open greens for non-programmed use, trail connections and related resource requirements.

Another consideration within this trend is the evident move towards urban design and place-making design standards. Most municipalities are in the process of developing or have developed urban design standards and place-making criteria as a means to significantly upgrade the urban design fabric of their communities. Many of these initiatives involve development of public transit nodes surrounded by commercial and high density residential development; the bringing of residential homes to the street line; the use of back lanes; and numerous other strategies. These strategies involve land use, architecture, transportation and in many cases, parks and recreation resources. In some cases, the concept of the self-contained neighbourhood or community is emerging, where people work, play, shop and recreate within their local community.

In some communities, the “open green” concept has been embraced where, within a subdivision, a one or two acre park is developed with roads on four sides and then houses on the opposite sides of the road. These parks typically are neighbourhood parks with no sports fields. They can provide playgrounds, sun shelters, pathways, garden areas and open play spaces. Some concerns have been raised about the utility of these spaces, the need to cross streets on all four sides to access them and the potentially more limited use that they may be able to offer. However, the urban green concept has advocates and has been used in London and in GTA communities on an initial strategy basis.

Another consideration within this trend is the institution of urban design panels, who as objective third parties, review major development proposals for architectural, urban design and other characteristics and values. As a recent example, the City of London formed an Urban Design Panel and one of the first projects to go through the panel
will be the new Northeast Recreation Complex. The intent of this strategy is that if the City is going to require private sector developers to place their developments before the panel, the City needs to place its developments before the panel also.

The urban design standards will not only have significant potential impacts on the exterior design of the buildings, but will also shape parking, trail access, streetscape alignment and other design perspectives. One of the major targets within the urban design strategy is parking lots. The general intent is to bring buildings to the street line and have parking less visible and intrusive.

A number of Greater Toronto Area communities have instituted urban design panels, such as Toronto, and others will be following suit in the future. The Town of Oakville has developed similar strategies, particularly related to the development of a significant area known as North Oakville which is going to have a large Conservation Area incorporated into the total development as part of a mixed urban landscape with a hospital, active parks, residential, commercial and other developments.

Urban intensification and design trends will have important considerations related to parks and community trails, and also in terms of the design and positioning of major recreation facilities. Strategies to respond to the impacts of these trends will be important in ensuring adequate parkland, developing trail connections and design perspectives associated with recreation facilities.

In Kitchener, urban design consideration has been a long standing dimension of a strong parks and open space system that evolved from the late 1950’s and through the 1970s. The urban design context of Victoria Park, Hibner Green, City Hall Square and other resources have evolved. However, much of the future for this initiative in Kitchener will align with the development of broader urban design policies and directions that will emerge from the Planning Department. A need will exist for significant integration between Community Services and Planning to ensure an integrated urban design strategy and that the role of and the investments in parks,
open spaces and community trails can be significantly positioned to play a important role in this evolving trend.

7.4.3 Balancing Rehabilitation with New Development / Adaptive Reuse

Another strategy consideration is whether parks and recreation facility initiatives become focused on new venue development or the redevelopment of existing sites via additions, renovations, venue renewal and related changes. The strategies around this particular consideration will need to be evaluated on a case by case basis. It will also be dependent on what partnerships are available and what resource transitions are occurring at the time related to the types of uses, level of need and funding that is available. It may be that rehabilitation with expansion is a less capital intensive strategy than new construction if no land costs are incurred and if better economies can be achieved operationally.

As a strategy, new parks and recreation facility/venue initiatives should be evaluated as to what options are available to achieve the facility/venue in the context of rehabilitating and readapting an existing facility or venue. Balancing new facility and venue development with existing facility and venue rehabilitation should be part of an evaluation framework related to parks and recreation facilities development.

A fourth dimension of this strategy is both planned and non-planned adaptive reuse of venues. As venues and their facilities age and new trends and technology emerge, facilities need to be renewed, often significantly, in order to hold and grow their user base and revenues.

In terms of rehabilitation and re-adaptive use, this is an area the City of Kitchener will need to give consideration to in the future. The renewal of older parks and open space venues has evolved as a need identified within the Situational Analysis Report. Only limited investments are being made on an annual basis. Playgrounds have received considerable funding in this regard due to on-going changes by the Canadian
Standards Association for these facilities.

7.4.4 Integrative Public Art

There are a number of examples of integrative public art across Canada. One in particular, Village North Park in Whistler, B.C., is a useful example. Village North Park is a four phased linear park than connects the Village North development. The first phase of the Village Park included a water course, bridge structure along the main concourse, linear plaza, and waterfalls. The project team identified features within the design that would provide opportunities for integrative public art. ‘Tools of Observation’ and ‘Glacial Traces’ were two of the first public art integrative projects for the Municipality.

Design and fabrication of metal bridge and observation area railings, which feature beautifully crafted steel railings, and post top obelisks upon which are cast or etched elements through or upon which to observe (telescope). Prominently positioned along the main thoroughfare, the elements are a major attraction in the village. The project landscape architect worked closely with the artist to assist in coordination of the contract.

The opportunity to provide the entire pavement treatment as an artist project was exciting and challenging. The durability of the surfaces and translation of the artists’ vision into the materials was a collaborative exercise between the artist, project landscape architect and product manufacturer who ran a custom blend of colours. The artist engaged local children to create snowflake templates that became cast glass insets.
7.5 Trends Summary

The following material summarizes the trends and strategies perspectives.

• An aging population profile is evolving, but there will not necessarily be an absolute decline in youth numbers. Therefore, a need to have a more balanced services delivery focus that moves beyond a strong youth orientation focus since the 1960s;
• The ability to address, both through the principle of inclusiveness and participation, the needs and impacts of a changing ethno-cultural mix within the population. A mix that will have other types of interests based on their traditions and experiences, as well as will want, in some areas, to adapt to Canadian leisure activities. Education, communications, engagement and focused contact with these communities represent important strategy considerations;
• Key trends related to sports activities, which are one of the traditional bases of parks and recreation services delivery, as follows:
  o Increased participation of females in sports, particularly related to girl’s and women’s soccer, rugby and other sports;
  o Expected growth in soccer at both the youth and adult levels;
  o Increased interest in extreme sports and specialized sports, such as year-round outdoor ball hockey and more skateboarding facilities;
  o Some declines in baseball and related activities;
  o Potential interest in culturally-related activities such as cricket.
• Ever increasing expectations amongst users relative to facility quality, driven both by consumer and fee expectations, as well as what is being developed in other communities. This has significant capital and operating cost implications;
• The increasing merger of sport and cultural tourism with parks and recreation services facilities and operations as one of the key rationales and points of investment;
• An increasing interest in the environment and the conservation of key environmental features, such as water / wetlands, woodlots, ravines, which often brings additional lands and management responsibilities to a City;
• An increasing emphasis on energy efficient facility and venue designs, using LEED Standards as a baseline;
• The growing importance and value for arts, culture and heritage as part of a healthy and creative City and in support of changing resident values and population characteristics;
• The increasing integration of community, health, education, social and policy services relative to holistic servicing strategies, often led by health units and both public and community-based social service providers;
• The increasing sophistication, emphasis on and impact of user fees and rental rates development relative to how they are prepared, their fairness and equity, transparency; and the ability to develop them in a meaningful and consistent way;
• The growth in market segmentation and services differentiation between recreational use, higher skill interests and other types of uses that define different market niches and varying types of expectations and levels of needs amongst participants;
• The increasing role of not-for-profit, private sector and community organizations in the delivery of services and the potentially changing role of municipalities with a greater emphases on facilitation and community development;
• The growing use of partnerships, joint ventures and community engagement as a basis to facilitate services development and delivery;
• The increasing use of a wider array of capital and operating financial sources to support services delivery, including corporate sponsorships, community fundraising and senior government grants;
• The increasing emphasis on the evaluation of services delivery to ensure that the right services are being delivered within the appropriate frameworks and with the desired outcomes;
• The increasing emphasis on multi-use venues and the potential to use more of the community’s facilities in terms of institutions and schools, clubs / associations;
• A growing emphasis exists to balance the need for the rehabilitation of aging facilities in conjunction with the development of new facilities. Also ensuring adequate resourcing for ongoing capital facility maintenance, renewal and serviceability is important.
8.0 CONCLUSIONS AND STRATEGIC THEMES

Five central themes have emerged from the information gathered through the extensive research and consultation undertaken in the Situational Analysis phase of the Park Master Plan initiative and summarized in this report:

1. Natural Areas;
2. Trails;
3. Active Parkland;
4. Neighbourhood Parks;
5. Community Engagement.

8.1 Natural Areas

The community identified three key priorities related to natural areas through the consultation program:

- Acquiring additional land;
- Developing more linkages between parks and natural areas; and,
- Accessibility.

The background document and inventory review also identified areas to be addressed:

- Standardized approach to data collection, organization and management;
- Terminology and classification used with respect to parks and natural areas within the City of Kitchener;
- Raising awareness of existing natural areas;
- Allocation of resources to appropriate management of natural areas;
- Balancing natural areas protection with public access/trail opportunities;
- Stewardship.
8.2 Community Trails

Trails and trail linkages also emerged as a high community priority. In general, the feedback with respect to trails in the City of Kitchener was very positive. The Iron Horse Trail and Walter Bean Trail were frequently noted as a strong attribute. The need for better connectivity within the trails system was also identified, as well as the need to recognize trails not only as an important recreational resource but also as a key component of the City’s transportation infrastructure.

Through the inventory and background document review, the following trail system gaps were identified:

- Trail linkages to and within the downtown core;
- Linking proposed trail systems within newly planned communities with the existing trail fabric to ensure that residents of the new developments have access to key attractions and key destinations within the City;
- Naming, signage and wayfinding as necessary additions to the trail system;
- Development constraints in newly developed areas; and,
- Maintenance and monitoring is another critical aspect to ensuring the proper linkages and care for existing trail systems and amenities.

The City has indicated that it will be undertaking a transportation based trails study in the near future; however, the scope of the study has yet to be prepared.

8.3 Active Parkland

The following key issues and priorities were identified regarding active parkland:

- Growth in soccer for both the youth and adult age segments;
- Steady demand for baseball diamonds from the youth age segment;
- Growth in the demand for softball by the adult age segment;
- Under-serviced city-wide for other turf sports (i.e. field hockey, cricket, rugby, lacrosse) that complete for fields with soccer users; and,
- Review of the cost/benefit of artificial turf as opposed to traditional grass fields.

The need or demand for facilities and opportunities for emerging activities such as extreme sports was also identified.

### 8.4 Neighbourhood Parks

Three central issues/priorities were identified relating to neighbourhood parks in the City of Kitchener:

- Ensuring that newly developed areas have similar provision levels as established areas;
- Need for resources for the timely development of neighbourhood parks in new development areas and allocation of appropriate resources for increased maintenance and operations requirements; and
- More attention to updating/redeveloping existing neighbourhood parks in the older areas (capital maintenance and renewal).

### 8.5 Community Engagement

Through the consultation program, Kitchener residents clearly articulated the value and importance of parks, natural areas and trails to quality of life, individual and collective well-being, the social fabric of the community, and the health and sustainability of the environment in which they live, work and play. Not surprisingly, residents and stakeholders alike also expressed a strong collective willingness and desire to work together to do what it takes to turn the vision for the future of the parks system into reality. Participants in the consultation program also showed a strong understanding that achieving that vision for the future requires a long-term
commitment not only by the City, but the entire community. Some of the key issues, ideas and priorities identified related to community engagement include:

- community participation in park design/development and renewal;
- collaboration and cooperation among service providers;
- community access to school, hydro corridors and other park areas;
- partnerships, joint ventures and reciprocal agreements;
- Foster community volunteerism (e.g. adopt-a-park, community clean-ups).

In addition to the above-noted themes, the provision of public space along the Grand River corridor was a prominent theme identified through the consultation and the background documentation. It is evident that the provision of parkland along the Grand River has been an issue in the City dating back to the 1989 Leisure Facilities Strategy Master Plan through to today. The Grand River is a significant resource amenity that is currently underutilized. A key area of focus for the Park Master Plan will include:

- Strategic land acquisitions;
- Creating linkages between the Grand River and the City.
Appendix A
Document Review
A: DOCUMENT REVIEW

A.1 Regional Documents

Region of Waterloo Growth Management Strategy

Adopted by the Region of Waterloo in 2003, the Regional Growth Management Strategy (RGMS) guides the location, form and timing of future employment and residential growth, with the aim of focussing growth to promote a more compact, transit and pedestrian-oriented community through reurbanization and firm urban boundary limits, while enhancing the natural environment. Regionally, the RGMS directs growth to a primary re-urbanization area along a Central Transit Corridor (CTC) extending through the core of the three major urban centres – Kitchener, Waterloo and Cambridge. Future Greenfield Development Areas are also identified for urban residential and employment growth, with the largest area located east of the Grand River around the Waterloo Regional Airport in Woolwich/Cambridge and including smaller areas identified in south/west Kitchener.

Related to the provision of parkland, the RGMS identifies the completion of a Greenslands Strategy and the need for new Regional Official Plan (ROP) policies related to urban parks as action items.

Region of Waterloo Greenslands Strategy

Completed in 2004 to 2007, the Greenslands Strategy is made up of several component studies/documents, and is intended to establish a sustainable balance between the developed and the natural components of the Region’s landscapes, while forging partnerships to foster creative implementation.\(^1\) Within these documents, a Vision for the Regional Environment in 2040 is described as including a linked system of parks and trails connected by natural areas, with street trees and rooftop greenspaces, new and old woodlands providing passive recreational opportunities, many people using the extensive network of trails and bikeways for their daily activities, a landscape that has evolved from manicured lawns to naturalized environments, and children participating in environmental learning experiences throughout their education.\(^1\)

These themes are consistent with the input received from participants in the consultation program for the Park Master Plan when asked about their ideas and priorities for the future.

Two areas identified for improvement within the Greenslands Strategy include linkages between natural areas and publicly accessible

natural parkland. Acknowledging the limited resources of municipalities to purchase and maintain natural areas, the Strategy recommends creation of a region-wide land trust to open such areas for public enjoyment while also providing them with informed stewardship. To complement this approach, the study also suggests the development of programs which contribute to human health and quality of life by expanding opportunities for human recreation in suitable areas of the Greenlands Network.

The Greenlands Strategy also includes the Alder Creek Watershed Study and Upper Strasburg Creek Subwatershed Plan Update (2007). These watershed plans are intended to support the long-term preservation and protection of the existing natural features within the study area (including south-west Kitchener) through responsible development. The Strasburg Creek Subwatershed Study highlights the importance of management plans and trail plans, and recommends that trails should be located within the 30 metre buffer zone at the edge of natural areas where such buffers are implemented, and if they must be located inside that natural area, they should be carefully routed to avoid sensitive features, especially ephemeral ponds. Where natural heritage areas fall into public ownership, the study recommends that access and trail plans should be designed to reduce impacts from recreational trail use.

Another related component of the Greenlands Strategy is the Regional Forest Management Plan, 2007-2026. The plan covers sixteen woodlands (450 ha) owned by the Region of Waterloo, including three in Kitchener (39.4 ha): the McLennan Park Woodland (4.6 ha), Doon Regional Forest (29.1 ha), and Doon Heritage Crossroads (5.7 ha). The overall management goal and ecological, social/educational, legal and economic objectives for these woodlots are identified in the Plan. Social/educational objectives for certain Regional Forests include appropriate trail development, trail improvement and related facility provision (parking lots, signage, gates). Five-year operating plans are to form the basis for management activities with one-year plans to identify stand and site-specific details. This management approach should be considered further for City-owned woodlands.

The Greenlands Strategy also includes an Environmentally Sensitive Landscapes (ESLs) study which resulted in amendments to the Regional Official Policies Plan in 2006 to designate two areas in the Region as ESLs, including the Laurel Creek Headwaters Area and the Blair-Bechtel-Cruikston Area. While both areas are outside the limits of Kitchener’s municipal boundary, some of the goals and actions established by the Greenlands Strategy for these areas are relevant considerations for Kitchener’s natural areas as part of the Park Master Plan, such as public sector acquisition of targeted natural areas for recreational and aesthetic enjoyment, trail routing through dedication or purchase of lands or voluntary agreements with landowners, and enhancing natural features through management.

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Region of Waterloo Official Plan

The Region is currently in the process of preparing a new Regional Official Plan (ROP), the guiding document for directing growth and change for the next 20 years in the Waterloo Region. The draft ROP delineates a ‘Greenlands Network’, which includes policies on the protection, restoration and enhancement of environmental features and the linkages. The Greenlands Network is a layered approach to environmental protection comprised of Landscape Level Systems (including Environmentally Sensitive Landscapes and Significant Valleys), Core Environmental Features (provincially significant) and Supporting Environmental Features (non-regionally significant).

Based on the mapping appended to the draft ROP, there are no Environmentally Sensitive Landscapes in the City of Kitchener. Land adjacent to the Grand River is designated as ‘Significant Valley’ and the intent of this designation is to ‘maintain the character of Significant Valleys by identifying, conserving, interpreting and enhancing cultural heritage resources of recreational and scenic value within Significant Valleys’.

The draft ROP notes that ‘responsibility for the environment is shared among Federal and Provincial governments, the Region, Area Municipalities, the Grand River Conservation Authority and private landowners.’

The ROP provides policies related to the pedestrian and cycling environments in the Region including wayfinding, integrating trails, safe and accessible greenspaces and implementing dedications for trail corridors.

Further, Section 7 states that the Region ion will enhance linkages, where appropriate, by restoring natural habitat on lands owned by the Region. The Region encourages the naturalization of inactive sections of parks and open space areas under the jurisdiction of other agencies and in private ownership, wherever appropriate, to enhance linkages.

Section 7 also states that the establishment of trails may be permitted within the Core Environmental Features buffer areas provided that a minimum of 10 metres of appropriate self sustaining native vegetation is generally maintained between the edge of the trail and the feature.
Region of Waterloo Cycling Master Plan (2004)

In 1994, the Region of Waterloo completed a Cycling Master Plan (CMP) which outlined optimum approaches to cycling development and identified the framework and strategies needed to implement an integrated cycling network within the Region. The document set out goals for the Region of Waterloo which included the following:

- “Continual development of cycling and trail policies to introduce cycling infrastructure and encouragement programs to residents within the Region;
- Explore a variety of supporting initiatives through co-operative efforts of the Region and other potential stakeholders including the Regional Cycling Advisory Committee, school boards, the Ministry of Transportation, and other involved agencies;
- Highlighting the benefits of cycling and reducing the detriments to cycling;
- Develop supporting initiatives in areas that encourage education, awareness, end-of-trip facilities, and maintenance and monitoring requirements;
- Proper phasing of the cycling network, to connect many of the most significant destinations within the Region of Waterloo;
- Continuing the cycling network into newly developing areas, retired roadways and railway right-of-ways, focusing on land acquisition”.

The CMP also detailed the importance of the Region working cooperatively with local municipalities, private businesses, public service campaigns, and other stakeholders to create an integrated cycling and trail network across the Region of Waterloo to be implemented over the next 20 plus years.

A.2 City of Kitchener Documents

City of Kitchener Strategic Plan

The City of Kitchener released its Strategic Plan in 2009, which outlines the key corporate policies, strategies and goals for the organization over the next 20 years. The policies, strategies and goals will direct the work of City government by guiding and bringing clarity to city decisions and assisting is directing the development of the community.

Community priorities include:

- Quality of Life
• Leadership and Engagement
• Diversity
• Dynamic Downtown
• Development
• Environment

Parks play a key role in relation to each of these community priorities, enhancing quality of life, providing leadership and social engagement opportunities, venues for a diverse range of social, cultural and recreational activities and events, civic beautification and downtown revitalization, servicing new growth and development, natural areas protection, environmental awareness, education and providing outdoor experiences.

**City of Kitchener Strategic Plan for the Environment (2008)**

The environmental mission for the City of Kitchener as identified in the *Strategic Plan for the Environment* is: “to ensure an environment that is ecologically sound and supportive of the health, safety and well-being of its residents by identifying and implementing policies and practices which reflect community values and impact positively on the environment.”

The Strategic Plan for the Environment identifies 7 focal areas:

1) Natural heritage system and recreational amenity areas
2) Water resources
3) Air quality
4) Land resource and growth management
5) Energy systems
6) Resource consumption and waste management
7) Environmental education and public awareness

The overall program priorities for Natural heritage system and recreational amenity areas are:

1) “To develop and implement an effective natural area conservation program within the municipality.
2) To reintroduce, enhance and maintain the natural environment in the urban area.”
3) To promote a culture of stewardship throughout the community and with all of our partners”.

City of Kitchener Growth Management Plan

The City of Kitchener Growth Management Plan (KGM) provides a long-term framework for “planning where and how future residential and employment growth can be accommodated in Kitchener”. The Plan sets out a number of criteria to determine the staging of development. Further, the KGM coordinates the provision of infrastructure and services with new development.

The KGM provides the following goals:

Goal 1: Enhance our Valued Natural and Cultural Heritage Resources
Goal 2: Create Vibrant Urban Places building communities where people want to live, invest and be creative
Goal 3: Ensure Greater Transportation Choice
Goal 4: Strengthen Communities improving the social, cultural and recreational network
Goal 5: Foster a Strong Economy
Goal 6: Manage Change in an Effective and Coordinated Manner

The Plan identifies Growth Subareas and provides a summary of each area, including the natural heritage features, walkability as well as the active parkland provision. In particular, the Strategy identifies where new parks are either proposed or required to meet community needs.

Table 7-1: Subarea Profiles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subarea</th>
<th>Natural Heritage Conservation</th>
<th>Pedestrian Charter/Walkability</th>
<th>Active Park Provision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban Growth Centre</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Prime location</td>
<td>Existing. New urban required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Use Corridors</td>
<td>Primarily none. Portion of Lancaster MUC includes Grand River floodplain, significant valleyland</td>
<td>Potentially high</td>
<td>Existing. New potential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nodes</td>
<td>Several - floodplain, small woodland in Block Line/Strasburg, EIS required @ Fairway/Lackner (ESPA #25, PSW), mainly private</td>
<td>Incl destinations, impr. reqd</td>
<td>Primarily exist. Required TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subarea</td>
<td>Natural Heritage Conservation</td>
<td>Pedestrian Charter/Walkability</td>
<td>Active Park Provision</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood Mixed Use Centres</td>
<td>None</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridgeport North</td>
<td>Adjacent to Grand R., incl. Melitzer Creek (coldwater), GRCA Regulated wetlands, floodplain, valley slopes, wooded areas. Greenlands in public including Kiwanis Park and private ownership</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Kiwanis Park, Exist Neighbourhood Park unbuilt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand River North</td>
<td>Adjacent to Grand R., Kolb Creek (warmwater), GRCA Regulated wetland, wooded areas, floodplain, valley slopes, mainly in public ownership w/ some private</td>
<td>Low-medium</td>
<td>Neighbourhood park pending with playground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand River South</td>
<td>ESPAs (#24, 25), Grand R., Idlewood Cr., Chicopee Cr. wetlands, floodplain, valleylands, woodlands. Large portion in private ownership</td>
<td>East of Zeller to be 5 minute walk</td>
<td>Additional parks required including potential District Park with sportsfields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hidden Valley</td>
<td>Incl. ESPA (#27), proposed ESPA, PSWs, creeks, habitat, woodland, Grand R., private ownership, comprehensive EIS required</td>
<td>Currently low</td>
<td>One Neighbourhood Park existing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deer Ridge</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doon South Phase 1</td>
<td>Includes ESPAs (#30, 34, 35), PSWs, candidate ESCA, woodlands, creeks and Habitat. Some private, some public ownership</td>
<td>Limited destinations, recreation +, connectivity</td>
<td>(2) Neighbourhood parks pending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doon South Phase 2</td>
<td>Includes ESPAs (#33, 34, 37 39), Blair Creek, PSWs wooded areas, Habitat. Primarily in private ownership</td>
<td>recreation +, connectivity</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brigadoon</td>
<td>Includes ESPA (#30), Strasburg Cr., woodlands, PSW, EIS required, mostly public ownership, some private</td>
<td>Med. - includes destination, adj. to school, employment</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brigadoon South</td>
<td>Includes woodland, other TBD, indirect water management considerations, private ownership</td>
<td>Potentially low</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huron</td>
<td>Huron Natural Area, PSW complex, small woodlands, Strasburg Creek, mostly public ownership</td>
<td>Incl. or adj. to destinations</td>
<td>Existing (1) Neighbourhood park unbuilt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subarea</td>
<td>Natural Heritage Conservation</td>
<td>Pedestrian Charter/Walkability</td>
<td>Active Park Provision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huron South</td>
<td>Strasburg Creek, PSW complex, woodlands, unevaluated wetlands, private ownership</td>
<td>Potential medium</td>
<td>(3) Neighbourhood Parks pending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trussler Southeast</td>
<td>Contains and adjacent to Core Environmental Feature, EIS and buffer required, private</td>
<td>Based on 5-min. walk</td>
<td>Neighbourhood park(s) required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trussler Northeast</td>
<td>Includes Strasburg Cr. And floodplain, upstream of PSW complex, Core Env. Feature in south portion, EIS &amp; buffer required, Habitat, mostly private with some public (cemetery)</td>
<td>To be based on 5-min walk</td>
<td>Required - TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trussler Northwest</td>
<td>Additional study required. Includes small portion of Core Env. Feature</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laurentian West Phase 1-3a</td>
<td>Wetlands, woodlands, ESPA Laurentian W. Community Plan Environmental Review, some public ownership and some private</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Parks built, Neighbourhood unbuilt, Neighbourhood pending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laurentian West Phase 3B</td>
<td>Woodlands, unevaluated wetlands, EIS reqd., Laurentian W. Community Plan Environmental Review, private ownership</td>
<td>Low-long dist to destinations</td>
<td>Pot. Neighbourhood park(s) w. playground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highland West</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasgow West</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Kitchener Growth Management Plan, 2009

City of Kitchener Municipal Plan

The City of Kitchener Municipal Plan, approved May 25, 1995, is the governing document that regulates land use in the City. The Municipal Plan is subdivided into five (5) parts, with Part 2 setting out the general policies. Part 3 provides the policies specific to each land use identified on the Land Use Plan.

General Policies:
Part 2 identifies policies related to community and cultural services as well as urban design and urban woodlots. Section 3.0 in Part 2 of the Municipal Plan provides policies related to parks, leisure facilities, libraries as well as other cultural facilities. This section states that the greatest challenge in the provision of these services is ensuring that the needs of the various cultural groups in the City are met.
Subsection 3.1 identifies the policies related to parks and leisure facilities. Specifically, the policies direct that Council will strive to provide and maintain active and passive parks for all age groups and lifestyles through the implementation of the Leisure Facilities Strategy Master Plan (2005).

Objectives related to the provision of parkland include:

- “To provide for a continuous linear open space system in the City of Kitchener which includes the diverse natural areas of the municipality and the Grand River and its major tributaries;
- To provide for linkages between open space areas to be used for a community trail network throughout the City;
- To provide a balanced distribution of open space and leisure facilities for both active and passive recreational uses to satisfy the needs of all residents of Kitchener;
- To maximize the opportunities for both active and passive recreational pursuits in all areas of the municipality; and,
- To promote the use of open space as a buffer between incompatible land uses“.

Key policies of the Plan related to parks and leisure services include:

- “The City of Kitchener shall actively seek to broaden the base of leisure participants through the balanced development of a public parks and leisure services system that provides opportunities for physical recreation, socialization, cultural pursuits, community identification, nature appreciation and education;
- The City of Kitchener shall develop a system of linked open spaces, urban trails and bikeways throughout the City, relying heavily on the City's parklands, watercourses, utilities corridors, conservation areas and schools;
- The City of Kitchener is supportive of the Grand River Corridor Conservation Plan and will strive to maximize public access along the Grand River;
- The City of Kitchener shall require the development of on-site recreation facilities and usable greenspace areas in larger family-type multiple housing projects; and,
- The City of Kitchener encourages the joint development and use of open space and community facilities by public and separate school boards, libraries, churches, citizen groups and the City”.

Section 3.1.2 provides policies related to parkland acquisition. Specifically, the City of Kitchener may exercise its powers in order to acquire and/or protect Open Space Areas from urban development, including parkland dedication and cash-in-lieu of parkland. Hazard Lands will not normally be acceptable as part of a dedication for parkland under the Planning Act. However, the City may
require the dedication of up to 7.5 metres of land beyond the Regulatory Floodline on the banks of the Grand River, its tributaries, and all other water courses where necessary to provide continuous trail links.

Section 6, Urban Design, states that the City is to develop active and attractive park spaces and is to ensure that these spaces connect with pathways, bikeways and natural connections.

Section 7, Natural Resources Management, provides policies for the protection and enhancement of urban woodlots, including:

- “Preservation and protection of significant urban forested areas and woodlots;
- Development of a Woodland Strategy to preserve and protect significant tree stands, hedge rows, woodlots and forested areas from development;
- To implement a program for the reforestation and naturalization of parks, open space and stormwater management areas;
- To implement a tree planting program in the urban area“.

Section 6.0 of Part 3 to the Municipal Plan outlines policies for land designated as ‘Open Space’ in the City of Kitchener. The Open Space designation is primarily intended “to preserve the integrity of the natural environment, provide a buffer between land uses and increase opportunities for recreation, conservation and general enjoyment of an area.”

As stated in Section 6.1.1, uses permitted in the Open Space designation must fulfill at least one of the following objectives:

1) “The provision of outdoor recreation;
2) The preservation and enjoyment of distinctive natural features;
3) The enhancement of the urban environment by the introduction of open land or water as interruptions to urban development patterns and as a buffer between land uses;
4) The creation of a continuous linear open space system; and/or
5) The prohibition of development on hazard lands for public safety and reduction of damage to new development“.

Woodlots, wetlands, fish and wildlife habitat areas, flood plains, hazard lands, Environmentally Sensitive Policy Areas, Provincially Significant Wetlands (PSW) and the 120 metre adjacent lands and Locally Significant Wetlands and the 30 metre adjacent lands are designated as Open Space.
Open Space land can also include linkages between open space areas. Such linkages could include utility corridors, abandoned railway lines, wildlife passages, storm water management areas or any other landforms which provide for a continuous linear open space system.

City of Kitchener Municipal Code

Chapter 270 of the City of Kitchener Municipal Code, as amended February 2009, applies to all recreational and parkland controlled and managed by the City as well as the avenues, boulevards and drives and approaches. Subsection 6 provides a list of prohibited uses within municipal parks, including:

- “Operating any motorized vehicle;
- Walking or riding a horse or any other animal, upon a roadway, path or trail posted community trail or path for walking, cycling or hiking; and,
- Shooting an arrow, practice archery or operating power model aircraft”.

270.4.2 Use states that no person shall be in the park anytime during the hours not permitted, specifically between the hours of 11:00 p.m. of one day and 6:00 a.m. the following day unless authorized by the City.

Chapter 273 of the Municipal Code outlines policies related to parkland dedication in the City of Kitchener. This Chapter does not apply to the Downtown Kitchener Community Improvement Area as defined in the Downtown Kitchener Community Improvement Plan. The Chapter specifically states that:

273.1.1 Commercial - other development
As a condition of development or redevelopment of land anywhere in the City, land in an amount not exceeding, in the case of land proposed for development or redevelopment for commercial or industrial purposes, two percent and in all other cases five percent of the land shall be conveyed to the City for park or other public recreational purposes, free of encumbrance and without cost to the City.

273.1.2 Residential purposes - alternative
As an alternative to the requirement of Section 273.1.1 and, as a condition of the development or redevelopment of land anywhere in the City for residential purposes, land at a rate of one hectare for each 300 dwelling units proposed in any such development or
redevelopment shall be conveyed to the City for park or other public recreational purposes, free of encumbrance and without cost to the City.

273.1.3 Payment in lieu of land
The City may require the payment of money to the value of land otherwise required to be conveyed under Sections 273.1.1 and 273.1.2, in lieu of the conveyance.

273.1.4 Exception - Downtown Kitchener Community Area
Sections 273.1.1, 273.1.2 and 273.1.3 do not apply to the Downtown Kitchener Community Improvement Area as defined in the Downtown Kitchener Community Improvement Plan, approved under section 28 of the Planning Act, R.S.O.1990, c. P.13.

City of Kitchener Neighbourhood Design Guidelines

In April of 2007, the City of Kitchener approved the Neighbourhood Design Guidelines, which set out a number of guidelines for the development of new subdivisions and neighbourhood shopping centres. There are eight (8) primary objectives that frame the guidelines:

- Walkability
- Variety
- Conservation
- Connectivity
- Transit Supportive
- Safety
- Balance
- Liveability

Section 2.1 states that all neighbourhoods should have convenience, accessible and direct access to surrounding neighbourhoods, parks, shopping areas, schools, places of employment and worship, transit routes and neighbourhood focal points.

Section 2.3.8 of the Neighbourhood Design Guidelines provides specific guidelines related to the design of parks, including:

- “Encourage a variety of functions, facilities and features in each park space;
- Build park spaces during early phases of development;
- Ensure park spaces are at a similar grade to the public street;
- Provide enhanced perimeter street tree planting along street frontage;
- Ensure all park spaces include appropriate signage visible from surrounding streets;
• Locate playground structures with clear visibility to public streets;
• Provide a balance of hard and soft landscape materials at street corners;
• Incorporate seating areas into the play area with waste and recycling receptacles and trees for shade;
• Encourage architectural structures in active park spaces;
• Integrate neighbourhood mailboxes into park spaces;
• Locate bike racks along trails, play areas and park entrances; and,
• Provide on-street parking along public streets”.

Mixed-use Corridor Design Brief

In 2001, the City of Kitchener developed new commercial policies based on a nodes and corridors planning model. Seven Mixed Use Corridors were established, and include Belmont Avenue (Upper & Lower); King Street (East & West); Lancaster Street; Queen Street; and Victoria Street (North & South). The policies encourage intensification and a high standard of urban design in each of the corridors.

Table 7-2: Park Supply by Mixed-Use Corridor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Belmont</th>
<th>King East</th>
<th>King West</th>
<th>Lancaster</th>
<th>Queen</th>
<th>Victoria North</th>
<th>Victoria South</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public Spaces (Parks)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximate</td>
<td>2,273</td>
<td>8,198</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>449.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park Area (sq. m.)/%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: City of Kitchener, 2005

A Plan for a Healthy Kitchener (2007-2027)

A Plan for a Healthy Kitchener, completed in 2006, is a result of extensive community consultation (Environics Study and Who-are-you-Kitchener? Campaign). The plan highlights priorities identified in consultation with more than 3,000 citizens including: quality of life, leadership and community engagement, diversity, downtown, development and the environment and it organizes recommendations for action under each priority area.
Strategic Directions for Dynamic Downtown:
  • “That the City continues to implement the Downtown Strategic Plan with an emphasis on attracting more people into the core”.

Strategic Directions for Environment include:
  • “That the City show leadership in the development of an environmentally sustainable community; and
  • That Council supports the citizens' report on Air Quality in Kitchener”.

Strategic Directions for Diversity include:
  • “Conducting an annual review of change and improvement in access, equity and inclusion of citizens;
  • Develop a volunteer strategy, youth strategy, seniors strategy and leisure access strategy;
  • Continue to improve physical accessibility; and,
  • Remove barriers across City facilities”.

Strategic Directions for Development include:
  • “Managing growth with a view to the critical elements of a healthy community; and,
  • Maintaining a balanced approach to replacing and/or expanding existing infrastructure and building new infrastructure”.

Strategic Directions for Leadership Engagement include:
  • “That the City partner with other groups in all Healthy Community initiatives;
  • That the City develops a partnership with area school boards and other youth-service organizations to engage tomorrow’s leaders in civic life; and,
  • Developing a Volunteer Support Strategy”.

Strategic Directions for Quality of Life include:
  • “That the City put a permanent Healthy Community framework in place; and,
  • That the City works with its many partners to create a culture of safety, through social development and through increasing the capacity of communities to discuss”.
Pedestrian Charter

The purpose of the City of Kitchener Pedestrian Charter is to ensure walking is a safe, comfortable and convenient mode of urban travel. As such, the Charter respects the following principles:

- **Accessibility:** Walking is a free and direct means of accessing local goods, services, community amenities and public transit.
- **Environmental Sustainability:** Walking relies on human power and has negligible environmental impact.
- **Equity:** Walking is the only mode of travel that is universally affordable, and allows children and youth, and people with specific medical conditions to travel independently.
- **Personal and Community Safety:** An environment in which people feel safe and comfortable walking increases community safety for all.
- **Health and Well-Being:** Walking is a proven method of promoting personal health and well-being.
- **Community Cohesion and Vitality:** A pedestrian-friendly environment encourages and facilitates social interaction and local economic vitality”.

Kitchener Leisure Facilities Master Plan (2005)

In 2005, the City of Kitchener, in association with Fred Galloway Associates Inc., GSP Group, TSH and Insights, completed the Leisure Facilities Master Plan. While the Plan included the consideration of recreation, sportsfields and trails, an assessment and recommendations for neighbourhood parks were to be developed through a future process (i.e. this 2009 Kitchener Park Master Plan). The plan identified a number of recommendations, including items applicable to this study. The table below identifies a number of recommendations and provides a status update.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 7-3: Leisure Facilities Master Plan Recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recommendation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Natural Areas</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation and management of natural areas to ensure the continued existence at a level of quality which supports the leisure pursuits of the public into the future;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Recommendation | Status
--- | ---
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 | On-going

### Trails

That an annual marketing and promotional program be developed for the Community Trail system | Not yet started

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 of the Community Trail system into newly developing areas | Not yet started

That the City participate with the Grand River Conservation Authority (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 GRCA, the Region of Waterloo and various city plans in order to develop a comprehensive strategy for the conservation and utilization of the corridor | Not yet started

### Sportsfields

That if the Queensmount twin pad arena is located on the current site, and the ball fields are displaced, replacement ball fields be developed within an immediate time frame within the west Kitchener area | Not yet started

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 the site for:

- Four soccer fields (one potentially with field turf)
- Two baseball fields (one lit)
- A skateboard park
- A fount-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 – South Kitchener Recreation Centre

Develop two to four new soccer field in east Kitchener between Ottawa Street and King Street using existing park area or acquiring a new site | Not yet started

The redevelopment of softball fields in south Kitchener area (Southwest Optimist, Budd Park, Wilson, etc.) | Not yet started

The potential development of two additional soccer fields in west Kitchener | Not yet started
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Possible location of another softball / slo-pitch in and venue upgrading at Peter Hallman Ball Yard</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The lighting of one, and possibly both football fields at the Bridgeport venue within the next five to ten years</td>
<td>Not yet started</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Not yet started</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enact a policy that the City will acquire lands in area that are underserviced in terms of neighbourhood parkland on an active basis as they become available</td>
<td>Not yet started</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The City continue to use the park classification and provisioning levels identified within the Official Plan and the 1991 Parks and Recreation Master Plan</td>
<td>On-going</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The City assess its public tennis 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</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City staff undertake a review of existing park service level standards for new and existing parks and develop budget estimates on a per acre approach as a basis for future capital forecasts for park development initiatives</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Parks**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>That the Victoria Park Master Plan be implemented</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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 skateboard park</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That the City support the general direction of the Huron Natural Area Park Plan</td>
<td>On-going</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That the department undertake a Parks Service Provisioning Plan that focuses on:</td>
<td>Being undertaken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Identification of areas that are underserviced relative to neighbourhood and local park and open spaces;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Potential opportunities in the short or the long-term that may be available within the individual service areas; and,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Potential strategies to overcome the deficiencies focusing on sites, sizes, partners, funding approaches in terms of developing reserves</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: *Kitchener Leisure Facilities Master Plan, 2005*

**City of Kitchener Leisure Facilities Strategy Master Plan (1989)**

Cumming Cockburn Limited, in association with F.J. Galloway Associates Inc. prepared the 1989 City of Kitchener Leisure Facilities Strategy Master Plan. The plan identified a number of recommendations, including items applicable to this study. The table below
identifies a number of recommendations and provides a status update.

### Table 7-4: 1989 Leisure Facilities Strategy Master Plan Recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accessibility</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The City of Kitchener undertake a complete review of its user fee rates and procedures for leisure services and establish an approved policy and plan to determine how these will be developed and applied over a five to ten year period</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Trails</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That the Community Trails system, development and maintenance, be accorded a high priority each year in both capital and operational budgets and planning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trails be linked to all City wide and district parks, major City facilities, public institutions and commercial areas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop trails in established community areas utilizing public lands, easements, leases and related rights of way</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That trail identification be of high quality, visible and informative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand River Conservation Lands</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That the department work intensively with the GRCA to further the utilization of their lands for community leisure services purposes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That, where viable, lands be utilized for a wide range of servicing from neighbourhood playgrounds to regional parks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Park and Facility Classification System</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The recommended park classification system be incorporated into the Municipal Plan</td>
<td>Completed – Section 3 of Municipal Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand River Corridor Development</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That the City, on its own and/or in conjunction with the GRCA and others, attempt to maximize the opportunities for public access along the river through direct acquisition, easements, leases, zoning and land use controls and set back regulations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That recreational development support: non-motorized boats, canoeing, fishing, hiking and walking trails, bicycling, picnicking for families and groups, nature interpretation, scenic viewpoints, wildlife and habitat areas/zones, tobogganing and sleigh rides, horseback riding and hay rides, and day camping for children</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That parking lots be confined to designated lots at key access points</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Land Acquisition Policies
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The City review its parkland inventory to determine surplus lands that could be sold to supplement the park trust fund</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Kitchener Leisure Facilities Strategy Master Plan, 1989*

The Master Plan also identified the provision of park space within each planning community. At the time the report was written, the following communities had deficiencies in park space:

- Civic Centre;
- Laurentian West;
- Highland West;
- Grand River North;
- Idlewood;
- Hidden Valley;
- Country Hills West;
- Country Hills East; and,
- Bridgadown.

**Draft Kitchener Older Adult Strategy (Draft, 2009)**

The impetus for the Older Adult Strategy study is the rapidly growing older adult segment of the population (i.e. the baby boomers). The aging population trend is occurring in communities across Canada and the United States and Europe.

To date, a draft Background Report has been prepared which summarizes the current demographic statistics, relevant trends, existing facilities and programs as well as the input received through the public consultation program.

A few of the national and provincial statistics on the aging population provided in the report include:

- Between 1981 and 2005, the number of seniors in Canada increased from 2.4 to 4.2 million;
- The number of seniors in Canada is projected to increase from 4.2 million to 9.8 million between 2005 and 2036, and their share of the population is expected to almost double, increasing from 13.2% to 24.5%;
- Population aging will continue between 2036 and 2056, but at a slower pace; and,
- In Ontario, Women outnumber men, and this is most significant in the older age groups.
Based on the current research, the next generation of older adults (i.e. baby boomers) as a whole:

- “Are more racially and ethnically diverse;
- See work as playing a role in their retirement years;
- Have a great range in income, but in general are more well-off than previous generations;
- Are redefining retirement as a time to begin a new chapter in life, and undertake new experiences, including re-entering the workforce;
- Are more likely to be physically active;
- Are looking for the right mix of lifelong learning, leisure, personal and spiritual fulfillment;
- Are often part of the “sandwich” generation - caring for grandchildren as well as helping parents and grandparents;
- Dislike the language of aging, do not think of themselves as “elderly”;
- Generally have a higher level of education and are healthier than previous generations;
- Have a greater sense of global awareness and a stronger ecological ethic;
- Generally tend to be more guarded than previous generations of older adults in donating their time; and,
- Are “technology savvy”.

Kiwanis Park Strategic Plan (2003)

The Kiwanis Park Strategic Plan set out a number of recommendations, including:

- “The park is maintained for passive uses;
- There is little demand for organized sportfields;
- Between 2003 and 2007, a playground, picnic shelters, canoe rental facility and multi-purpose building’ (i.e. washrooms, open area) are to be constructed; and,
- A second casual-use baseball diamond could be located on the “Flying Field”.

McLennan Park Master Plan Study (2003)

The McLennan Park Master Plan Study, completed in 2003, identified three concepts for the development of the former landfill site on Ottawa Street. The recommended concept included the following features:
• Tobogganing;
• Multi-use court;
• Downhill BMX;
• Leash-free dog area;
• Skateboard area;
• Short-track speed skating;
• Play area;
• Great lawn;
• Trails; and,
• Lookout point.

The Grand River Corridor Conservation Plan (1995)

The Region of Waterloo commissioned the preparation of a Grand River Corridor Conservation Plan in 1995. The Plan is a comprehensive planning document which identifies and guides the short, medium and long term acquisition, development and redevelopment of land along the Grand River for the purposes of continuous, linear, open space. The land defined by the Grand River Corridor in the Region is 996 hectares in area, of which 580 hectares are within the City of Kitchener. At the time this plan was prepared, approximately 22% of the corridor was in public ownership.

Key recommendations included:

- “Environmentally sensitive and culturally significant resources be secured for conservation purposes through acquisition and/or land stewardship arrangements;
- Municipal open space systems plans be amended or developed as appropriate to incorporate Corridor open space lands and links;
- Restoration and enhancement of degraded Corridor lands be initiated through cooperation with land owners and those operations which contribute to degradation of Corridor lands and water quality be modified to prevent such degradation; and,
- Detailed plans for public open space within the Corridor, where they do not exist, be drawn by the responsible jurisdiction”.

Some of the implementation issues identified include:

- “Forging a network of stakeholders toward the realization of the Plan;
- Resolving the potentially detrimental “engineered” solutions to development with the flood plain and fill lines;
- Acceptance of the principles of the Corridor Conservation Plan by all member municipalities; and,
- Setting priorities for securing for the public those important lands and resources that are threatened”. 
APPENDIX A

City of Kitchener Park Master Plan
City of Kitchener Public Art Policy and Program Review (2008)

The Planning Partnership in association with Jane Perdue, Jane Buyers and Public Art Management Inc. completed the Kitchener Public Art Policy and Program Review in 2008. The purpose of the study was to review Kitchener’s existing policies and to “develop a multi-faceted and coordinated strategy that provides policy and programming direction for the future implementation of public art in Kitchener”.

Regional Bicycle Policy Master Plan (1994)

The Region of Waterloo, in association with IMC Consulting Group Inc. and Victor Ford and Associations Inc. prepared the Regional Bicycle Policy Master Plan in 1994. Part 1 of the Plan outlines the policies resulting from the study, including:

- “Phasing of on-road cycling facilities, with links serving major existing cycling traffic generators;
- The Region has the primary responsibility for the overall planning, construction and maintenance of the Regional Cycling System;
- Prevailing standards and MTO Bikeway Design Guidelines will be used;
- Cycling will be encouraged and promoted as a desirable mode of transportation;
- Area municipalities will coordinate secondary cycling systems; and,
- The Master Plan is to be updated every 5 years”.

City of Kitchener Bikeway Study (1998)

The City of Kitchener Bikeway Study is a strategic document that supports the City’s Municipal Plan policies and requirements to facilitate the development and implementation of a recommended bikeway and trail network within the City. Outlined within the study are recommendations that the City of Kitchener consider incorporating trail development into the capital works and maintenance programs of the Parks & Recreation Department. At that time, there were 100 kilometres of community trails, 3 kilometres of bike lanes, 67 kilometres of on-road signed routes and 49 kilometres of on-road bikeways in Kitchener.

The Study concluded that there is a need to develop a connected, comprehensive trail network and bikeways on quiet streets (for casual biking) and an on-road system of bicycle lanes for experienced cyclists. The findings of the Study lead to the development of a trail network throughout the City (Figure X).
Woodland Management Program (1995)

This report was prepared by the Forestry Section of the Parks Operations department in 1994 and revised in 1995. It includes a review of all 39 parks that contained forested areas at the time. The general characteristics and problems associated with each woodland were identified and a management plan was developed based on the findings of this assessment. The key objective of the management plan outlined in the report is to maintain and protect the woodlands in a natural state for present and future generations. Ten woodland management objectives were developed and are outlined in the report.

The report includes sections on 1) woodland classification, 2) managing Kitchener’s woodlands and 3) woodlands operations – standards. It also includes an appendix with brief summaries for all woodlands that were within the system in 1994.

This report recognized that many of the smaller woodlands were so degraded that it would not be practical to attempt to return them to a more natural state. As such it identified 11 of the City’s largest natural areas as priorities for a higher level of management (Level II). The smaller woodlands would be managed at a lower level with less intervention (Level I). It was also identified that an important part of the woodland management program is to engage and educate the public.
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Parkland Inventory by Planning Community
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Appendix C
Consultation Summary
C: Community Consultation

One of the primary components in the development of the Parks Master Plan for the City of Kitchener is the broad-based Community Consultation Program. It has involved three components; focus groups and interviews with community organizations, members of Council, developers and staff; two community workshops; and an on-line survey on the City of Kitchener’s website. The following material provides the key summary points that emerged from the various input sources.

C.1 Interviews and Focus Groups

Community Baseball Organizations

Seven representatives of five different youth and adult baseball organizations participated in this focus group.

Strengths

- Some good relationships noted between the organization and the City;
- Some excellent ball diamonds at Hallman, Budd Park, Conestogo College and Breithaupt;
- Jack Couch and Wilson Parks are good venues for rep teams and higher play;
- The proposed new facility in southwest Kitchener will add capacity;
- The number of tournaments and the opportunity to operate tournaments.

Concerns/Issues

- Overriding concern was with the maintenance of facilities in terms of grass cutting, sloping, holes in the outfield, backstops, etc.;
- The poor quality of the school ball diamonds which some organizations need to use. Also, school diamonds are too small for adults and create impacts with neighbours;
- Some the centre fields are too short and need to be a minimum of 325 feet;
- Inability to grow the leagues even though there is a waiting list because of capacity constraints;
- East Forest, Green Gables, Driftwood and a number of other sites have drainage and water problems.
Future Perspectives

- Need to consider the lighting of at least two more ball diamonds or one more ball diamond complex with three diamonds should be considered similar to Breithaupt Park;
- Sport tourism is a unique possibility that needs further development;
- Need to consider making better use of school facilities in Kitchener;
- Consider in the future providing and/or improving of existing washroom, concessions and related park amenities.

Soccer/Rugby

Eight participants from four different organizations involving soccer and rugby participated in this focus group.

Strengths

- Communications are reasonably good with City staff;
- A number of fields drain well and are in excellent shape;
- There are a number of excellent fields, potentially three, that serve rep soccer well;
- There is a variety of fields sizes, and the City is very accommodating in connecting size to playing levels;
- There is a fair number of fields with posts that support informal use;
- Signs are put up to keep people off the fields which helps communications;
- The lighted soccer fields are excellent, though they are too few.

Concerns/Issues

- A need for more fields that drain well;
- Programs are looking to get onto the fields earlier in the season;
- A sense that the City is too quick sometimes to cancel games due to rain;
- There are too many mediocre fields that should be upgraded;
- More lighted fields would support greater adult activity;
- At the start of the 2008 season, there was a considerable amount of tall grass and wrong lines/no lines on certain fields which created playability issues;
- Some of the house league fields have potholes and can be unsafe;
- For some fields, they are overbooked, resulting in too much play which hurts field recovery;
• The Laurier field at University Stadium is $750 an hour with lights which is way beyond the means of ordinary soccer organizations;
• There is a need for more capacity for soccer fields and more dedicated fields. May need to consider removing rugby, ultimate frisbee and other uses to more specified fields for those activities. Also, multi-lined fields are confusing;
• The bulk of the opportunity for soccer is May to October only. There is a need for at least one more indoor field to support year-round training and development;
• School-based soccer fields are of poor quality and there are too many injuries;
• At Woodside Park, teams can only get onto the field on June 1st which is too late;
• As population and participation rates increase, fields are being overbooked in trying to meet capacity, when the real question is building more fields and/or lighting some existing fields;
• Sometimes at Centennial Stadium there are challenges between the sharing arrangements with track and field and soccer;
• Consideration may need to be given to an enhanced computer scheduling program to ensure optimal use of existing field capacity.

Future Perspectives
• A future need for four new fields, two with lighting;
• Potential need to separate fields into those for practices and those for games;
• Consider development of an adult soccer sports centre;
• Development of a soccer-oriented stadium complex as is occurring in other municipalities;
• Undertake steps to enhance field maintenance before new fields are developed;
• A preference for four to six fields in one location to consolidate activity, with consideration given to possibly expanding the fields available at Budd Park;
• In a stadium complex, potentially develop a clubhouse facility with change rooms, seating, concessions and related amenities;
• Consider a joint soccer-hockey program that would focus on cross-training, cross-skills development, etc., due to the high incident rate of young players playing both sports and their potential for seasonal alignment;
• Undertake a field upgrading program over a number of years for both school and City fields, focusing on an enhanced Reciprocal Agreement with the School Boards;
• Ensure potential consequences for teams that book fields and don’t use them. A need for schedule sharing exists as occurs in other municipalities;
• The Kitchener Soccer Club currently has five thousand registrants and is anticipating ten thousand in the next five to ten years which will create significant capacity considerations.

Park Users

A focus group involving winter rink, summer playground, track and field, football and field hockey representatives was completed, involving ten individuals.

General

• Don’t ignore “fringe” activities (e.g. track and field, field hockey, football). Need to maintain a diversity of activities and opportunities in Kitchener to support diverse interests. Participant numbers in these activities would be higher if fields were available. Fields are booked primarily by soccer, constraining growth in other activities;
• Current/historic participation numbers are not an accurate reflection of growth potential of some sports/activities and current/future facility needs;
• Need a City-operated multi-use, multi-sport/activity venue. Should look into the Huron/Fischer-Hallman area;
• Field sizes need to be to standard and to ensure the City’s standards meet tournament requirements for the intended sport/activity;
• City is doing a good job trying to work with the field users to accommodate needs/maintenance requirements;
• A paradigm shift is needed to change the mindset of viewing natural areas as a liability. Need to focus on the benefits and value of these features. Natural areas enhance liveability and need to not only be protected but be left as green areas in urban developments. This will benefit the City’s health and economy; and,
• Need receptacles with dividers for recyclables at playground, park, trail and winter rink locations.

Winter Rinks

• City provides boards, shed (in some locations) and light standards. Local/neighbourhood volunteers do the flooding and ice maintenance for thirty-five rinks across the City;
• Some are located in open fields which requires a lot of water and more difficult to flood and maintain than those on paved surfaces (e.g. tennis/basketball courts);
• Volunteers need the right tools (e.g. snow blower) and assistance from the City (e.g. maintenance/snow clearing). Some feel they are under-appreciated when this is not provided;
By supplying the right tools and providing assistance, the City can leverage volunteerism;
In some cases, where snow-clearing assistance is provided, the machinery used is too large and heavy and destroys the ice;
There is no standard of service. Some have secure sheds for storage, others do not; some are on paved surfaces while others are in open fields. Need a standard for winter rinks and apply it across the City:
  o A level area marked out/delineated for the rink;
  o Access by a paved, maintained path with snow clearing;
  o General notification to the neighbourhood that the rink is going in (e.g. flyers);
  o Secure storage space for shovels, flooding equipment, etc.;
  o Water supply with heat source to keep lines/hoses from freezing;
  o Lights;
  o Benches for people to put their skates on.
In some locations, the City puts boards in but there are no volunteers to do the flooding or maintain the ice (would rather see City focus its resources in areas where the volunteers need assistance and the rinks are used);
Some areas average twenty to forty people per day using the rink (when it is usable);
Can Victoria Park Lake be re-opened for winter skating?
Need to do an evaluation of the winter rink sites to determine which ones the City should support which ones are viable locations, and what the standard is for size of the ice surface and ancillary facilities;
Average ice season is thirty to forty-five days per winter, typically mid-January to early March;
Could be part of the City’s Celebrations of Neighbourhoods initiative.

Track and Field

Kitchener - Waterloo Track and Field Association is the longest established, not-for-profit organization, with approximately 200 members (thousands of participants use Centennial Stadium annually). They operate from April to October;
No indoor tracks in Kitchener - Waterloo (London has one as do many GTA municipalities);
They use Centennial Stadium but the facility is in very poor physical condition and is structured unsafe for hosting events. Can’t hold WCSAA, CWOSSA, OFSAA;
Need a consistent and reliable contact at the City to deal with issues with facilities on short notice (e.g. can’t find anyone to get a maintenance issue resolved quickly). No dedicated maintenance/security staff and the maintenance of the facility has suffered;
Security issues for equipment purchased by the Association exists, involving vandalized/stolen/damaged equipment;
• Immediate need for a large multi-use facility with a track and dedicated staff, with a long-term need for indoor track facility;
• Recognize that an exclusive track-and-field facility may not be feasible, so combine it with other uses into a new multi-use facility that benefits a wide range of user groups;
• Stadium parking is used for Auditorium events which is a barrier to the use of the stadium any time there is an event going on at the Auditorium;
• Lost revenue potential occurs due to the singular function of Centennial Stadium and parking issues.

Field Hockey

• Require short grass (shorter than soccer preferences), otherwise safety issues exist. Field turf would help and is ideal for more elite levels. Now use school fields (Resurrection Secondary School);
• City should continue to encourage use of school fields but need to ensure maintenance levels are adequate for the user groups;
• Never invited to use Budd Park for tournaments.

Football

• Twin-City Football has seventeen teams;
• Use mainly school fields (Bridgeport), but will use any field available in Kitchener and Waterloo. Maintenance/conditions generally better in Waterloo;
• Booked through City but not clear who to contact regarding maintenance;
• Growth/registration numbers constrained by lack of field availability.

Natural Areas/Urban Forestry

Five representatives of various groups interested in natural areas and urban forestry participated in this focus group.

Strengths

• Good network of linked open spaces in Kitchener;
• Urban forest inventory is an important initiative to assess what we have. Ecosystems appear healthy;
Kitchener Park Master Plan

Appendix C: Consultation Summary

- Huron Natural Area is well done with connections to School Boards, educational aspects, well-established trails, supervised and a good size;
- Trail accessibility opened up by paving a travel lane which allows for wheelchair use (e.g. Iron Horse Trail);
- Good initiatives to control invasive species which needs to continue;
- Good job of balancing use and protection in larger natural areas.

Concerns/Issues

- Need more trails/should be spending more on trails.
- Downside of trail paving is salting requirements which impacts natural areas;
- Some trails don’t go anywhere. Need a destination and ensure they are linked;
- Barriers at trail access in Monarch Woods helped to address potential safety issues;
- Kitchener is years behind in environmental management and protection;
- Threats exist on Kitchener’s doorstep such as Emerald Ash Borer.
- There is no such thing as “no maintenance” areas;
- Naturalization of parks and open spaces requires appropriate management, especially in the first few years. Longer-term, maintenance requirements will be reduced compared to manicured areas;
- Need dedicated people and funding to support park naturalization;
- Need effective signage at trail accesses and on-line trail maps;
- Enforcement/presence to ensure rules are being complied (e.g. dogs on leashes);
- Need larger buffer areas.

Future Perspectives

- Need to take advantage of and foster Earth Day activities and similar community events for parks, trails, clean-ups, etc.;
- Would like to see water quality improvements in Victoria Park Lake (undergoing EA presently);
- Need to protect Hidden Valley. Do not allow encroachment by development as it is one of the last “pristine” areas remaining;
- Need to recognize that the value of protecting species is related to the large size of an environmental area’s land base;
- Need to recognize value of natural areas, e.g. Huron Natural Area which acts as a carbon sink, water purifier and has other benefits;
• Need to anticipate where future development will go and ensure that the large environmental areas are preserved and protected. Better to protect the big piece then small pieces;
• Forests are not the only feature to protect. Scrublands, grasslands, prairies and wetlands all provide benefits. Need to expand the perspective of natural areas to protect;
• If there are areas that can be re-forested those should be identified;
• Do we know what the future climate conditions will be, and is this being considered when vegetation is planted?
• Need to protect cultural aspects, e.g. hedgerows, fencerows, etc., and preserve the rural history;
• Need to re-consider appropriate landscape treatment of areas. An example is Lakeside. Why plant and cut grass between the trees? Could be savannah with reduced maintenance needs;
• There are too many trails in some natural areas, some need to be closed off;
• Need to identify and prioritize areas based on sensitivity (City of Toronto example – GIS-based inventory and identify required level of management, protection and appropriate level of recreational use);
• Green buildings should be a priority by applying LEED standards with the minimum being Gold certification;
• Environmentally friendly, green developments will become increasingly popular. Developers and the City need to work together to realize the benefits and value of natural areas.

Seniors’ Advisory

Four members of the Seniors Advisory Committee participated in this focus group.

Strengths
• Victoria Park, which is in the centre of the City, facilitates celebrations and festivals and is a real gathering place with a great tradition;
• Excellent downtown parkettes which are well used. The smaller neighbourhood parks which are good for community building;
• There are some very good community gardens;
• Where parks exist in the community, there is effective community building;
• The green spaces throughout the City are a major asset and highly valued;
• The Trail System is evolving very successfully though it still has gaps;
• The festivals and events within the community are growing and are excellent for the community;
• Cemeteries represent good walking areas and paths as recreational sites;
• Homer Watson Park and Huron Natural Area are outstanding natural assets and provide corridors for wildlife to be sustained;
• The City Arbourist is assessing strategies to sustain tree life.

Concerns/Issues
• Some parks are too crowded at times, and this is hard on the natural environments;
• The trail system has gaps, such as the connections to Beethel Park. Also, there needs to be in some areas, separate pedestrian and cyclist lanes, as well as enhanced surfaces that resist wash-outs. As well, some areas of the trails are poorly maintained;
• There is inadequate parking at some of the sites and cemeteries;
• The maintenance of trees on the trails is not effectively undertaken. There appears to be a lack of understanding of the need for trees for birds for perching;
• The parkettes need benches that face one another to facilitate more social interaction;
• The maintenance of the parks is too variabl, related to picking up garbage, the availability of garbage containers, etc.;
• Some safety issues, especially where trails meet roads or after-dusk use of trails. Should consider a Park Watch program;
• Number of examples where trails have been removed but not necessarily replaced. Need to consider plantings two trees for every tree that is removed.

Future Perspectives
• Need to give consideration to different levels of accessibility for different levels of seniors’ mobility. Don’t treat seniors as a homogeneous group in terms of site designs and development;
• Need more balanced green spaces, with more walkable areas;
• With densities going up through infilling, need to ensure there are adequate parks and structures that are developed within strong urban design guidelines, such as being able to move from a seniors’ home directly into a park complex;
• Continuing need to increase the engagement of residents in the safety of parks and to enhance security through volunteers and taking local ownership;
• Introduce an Adopt-A-Tree and park/trail link model, similar to the Adopt-A-Road program in outlying areas;
• Increase the lighting on trails using cut-off lighting and not scatter lighting, along with solar power;
• Consider the future development of vertical gardens and parks that can add to the streetscape, reduce noise and enhance air quality;
• Maximize green in non-traditional ways, such as using smaller spaces and through building technology;
• Increasingly invest in and facilitate a culture of change, innovation and green;
• With land becoming scarcer, need to maximize the land resources we have;
• Work with neighbourhood associations to take more ownership for the operation and maintenance of their local parks, supporting the police and other roles. Does the City need to do everything? Look for opportunities for more joint/partnered roles;
• Develop washrooms and public drinking fountains in parks, using new technologies. Seniors often need to use washrooms more frequently and this needs to be considered in park designs;
• When planning buildings, plan for at least three generations and not just current perspectives;
• Examine opportunities to integrate uses, such as natural areas with bird nesting poles, canoeing on the river, trails;
• Intensify the relationship with the School Boards through new Reciprocal Agreements, whereby the City maybe undertakes turf management. A need exists to use all the community’s resources;
• Develop an amphitheatre, which currently does not exist in Kitchener, for outdoor music and other uses. Ensure that there are good seniors’ designs with wide aisles for wheelchairs;
• In the future, consider communal bake ovens, possibly within community garden sites;
• Give greater consideration to moving back to basics, that is: from leisure and recreation to accessibility, assembly, informal activity and green.

Kitchener Youth Action Council

Twenty-two members of the Council participated in this focus group, involving individuals primarily between the ages of 15 and 18 years who were secondary school students in Kitchener. The following material provides the input received on the four questions that were posed to the group.

What do you use Kitchener parks for:
• Tobogganing
• Walking dogs
• Leisurely strolls
• Running/Walking
• Festivals
• Picnics
• Skating
• Forest Walks
What do you like about Kitchener parks?
- Location of Victoria Park;
- Festivals at Victoria Park;
- Kid Park at Victoria Park;
- Skating rinks;
- Trilliums at Steckle Woods;
- Maintenance of Victoria Park;
- Good trails for running;
- Voisin Park maintenance.

What could be improved with Kitchener Parks
- Water at Victoria Park;
- Safety - better lighting using solar energy;
- Stands for watching games;
- Small ball diamonds need better upkeep;
- Use more historical artifacts;
- More parking (e.g. Victoria Park);
- More picnic tables;
- The soccer field at Country Hills floods all the time;
- At Gzowski Park, kids get hurt trying to cross the railway tracks;
- Use more fruit trees and strawberry bushes;
- More BBQ facilities;
- Develop a fake beach (similar to the ‘Docks’ in Toronto);
- Develop a petting zoo;
- More parks in Forest Heights;
- There should be more parks in new subdivisions;
- Subdivision plans show parks and then they are never built;
- Parks should be built while new housing is being constructed;
- Should not have to pay to get into Kiwanis Park in the summer;
- MacLennan Park is overdone. Should leave some areas more natural;
• More green space (like Budd Park);
• East end developments (along Grand River) need more parks and trees;
• More hours for hockey games;
• More soccer fields;
• More Stadiums;
• Build more tennis courts;
• Maintain existing tennis courts.

What should be the top priorities for the City of Kitchener when looking at Improvements:

• Water in Victoria Parks;
• Snow/ice removal on pathways;
• Accessibility in parks to relax/walk;
• More tennis courts;
• Maintain parks for kids;
• More gazebos;
• More wildlife.

C.2 City Staff

C.2.1 Community Service Department Program and Management Staff

In total, twenty-one staff from program and management functions within the Department participated in this session, along with one written submission.

Strengths
• The trail connections;
• The strong maintenance of parks to City standards;
• Parks and open spaces exist for all people across a variety of interests;
• Green spaces are a part of all new developments and neighbourhoods;
• The Huron Natural Park, in terms of its history, partnership, layout, signage, etc.;
• The trails along the Grand River which are expanding;
• The parks and open space available in the Breithaupt area which are excellent;
• The use of hydro-corridors for off-road routes that are safer;
• Some excellent natural areas and wood lots throughout the City;
• McClennan Park which has gone from a landfill site to the state-of-the-are outdoor park facility, and where staff listened to neighbours on the future of that venue;
• The City has successfully, in many cases, taken a resource that is in a raw state and turned it into something much better, such as McClennan Park and hydro-rights-of-ways;
• There is an excellent variety of parks at community, neighbourhood and parkette levels;
• The parks are well used, and the parkettes are quiet places where people can sit with little noise;
• There are park staff available who are trained in natural environments and human impacts;
• The outdoor winter rink program in terms of the number of sites, volunteers and the continuing interest and consistency that has been shown that has not occurred in many other communities;
• Victoria Park is premiere heritage venue that has been maintained to a very high standard;
• Kiwanis Park is a key resource, along with Homer Watson Park;
• The City’s policies and practices on partnering in terms of programming and maintenance, use of volunteers has contributed to stronger communities;
• When building park facilities, they are linked to the park and its limitations;
• The City has refrained from developing right up to the Grand River which has allowed accessibility;
• The golf courses are being designed and maintained to attract more wildlife;
• The Urban Forestry Program has resulted in the planting of trees in subdivisions, development of large canopies, the presence of a lot of green and improved air quality. Also, the City is working with schools and others to plant more trees;
• The community gardens have been excellent supports for community development and have forged important partnerships;
• The Parks Department is very open and receptive to working with different groups, and rarely says no. A high level of cooperation and flexibility;
• The sports fields in the parks receive a high level of service, and there are some excellent sports fields at Peter Hallman Ball Yards, Breithaupt Park and other venues;
• Parks are available for all seasons;
• Recycling in the parks has started.
Concerns/Issues

- The quality of a house league level sports field is a gap;
- Recycling in parks has only started and has a long way to go;
- Inconsistency of the maintenance on trails, especially in the winter season in regards to accessibility;
- There is some inconsistency in maintenance across the parks;
- Gaps exist within the trail system, and trail information is very limited. A trail map is needed. The material used on the trails is inconsistent and effects the usability of the trails;
- There is a lack of land for future park development;
- The Department is not involved in subdivision development from the outset which can put park development behind other priorities;
- Need more washrooms in the parks, especially for seniors, along with transitioning some parks for older age users;
- The placement of garbage containers is not always accessible or consistent;
- Ninety percent to nine-five percent of sports field capacity is being utilized. Competition amongst field users for access is growing;
- There are increasing quality expectations, with an increasing focus on using only the better fields which results in over-use;
- Soccer is a high-growth sport, and the City may not be keeping up with capacity requirements;
- The increasing level of parental expectations for youth sports is a challenge in terms of managing expectations. Better and enhanced communications are required in managing these expectations;
- There is a lack of skateboard parks across the City as per the previous Master Plan;
- Can cul-de-sacs could be used to plant trees, for community gardens and to build neighbourhood capacity?;
- There is a need for more places where people can just simply gather, socialize and be with one another, such as is provided by parkettes;
- Many sites are insecure and are heavily vandalized;
- Archaeology at Huron Park needs to be a priority and receive funding;
- Developers are becoming more strident in terms of governmental requirements for more land and making investments in parks and open space;
- Land selections for parks are not always the right lands or in the right locations or are they flexible enough to support the range of uses, such as sloping land that then needs to be used for soccer and winter rinks;
- There is very little priority on capitalizing on the cultural landscapes and history available within the City, such as the old mills, the City’s industrial history and bringing to life the history of the community;
• Are we being effective enough in responding to the increasing cultural diversity within the community?
• Need to explore ways to build more partnerships with the schools, churches and others who have space available;
• There is marked increase in vandalism and graffiti in the parks;
• In the downtown area, there is no place for youth as to where they can be free to express themselves.

Future Perspectives
• The Growth Management Strategy will intensify residential development densities. This will have an impact on greenspace requirements;
• Neighbourhood and subdivision design guidelines should consider locations for public art in parks as key public spaces with balanced services;
• Institute a full recycling strategy within the parks;
• Consider park alternatives, such as vertical parks;
• Give greater consideration to how parks link with traffic in terms of pedestrians first;
• Need more connections and routes that connect the parks that are safe;
• Responding effectively over time to the aging population and a more diverse ethno-cultural population. This could lead from parks moving to being more child-focused to being focused for every one;
• With many New Canadians, develop more community gardens that assist them in adapting to the community and meeting people;
• Develop a parks profile that separates downtown parks from suburban parks in terms of focus, use and development;
• Undertake a new Reciprocal Agreement with both School Boards to enhance accessibility and better use of school lands as parks and open spaces;
• There will be a need for additional leash-free parks as this phenomena grows;
• Cemeteries should evolve to be more historical resources, with greenspaces, art work, trees, and potentially community gardens, as well as specialized programs, such as historical walks;
• Placing gazebos in the park can create a greater sense of gathering, with more flexibility and programming;
• Not every park has to be the same in the future. Match the parks to the local audiences;
• Move to a model of stewardship between the City and residents for parks and open spaces;
• Develop a LEED framework for parks, possibly giving consideration to Autobahn standards;
• Ensure that there is value expressed in the planning process for leaving areas in their natural state. Not everything needs to be developed;
• Design parks to be more natural, eliminating large concrete barriers and other intrusions by using more green-oriented tools;
• Increase the effectiveness of managing encroachment into the parks and open spaces;
• More localized/audience-targeted programming in the parks could reduce vandalism;
• Need to give greater consideration to opportunities for informal and spontaneous use of the parks;
• How can parks and open spaces be used to bring more children out of homes and schools and into the outdoors? Get them off their computers and electronic games;
• Build more family activities into the parks to bring families together and build community capacity;
• Undertake capital infrastructure and educational/interpretive programming development at the Huron Natural area.

C.2.2 Planning, Design and Development Staff

Twelve members of the Planning, Design & Development staff group participated in this session.

Strengths
• Extensive trail network;
• Good job of protecting/acquiring natural areas.

Concerns/Issues
• Need to increase awareness of trails through marketing and signage;
• Need to do a better job of linking new trails in subdivisions to the higher order trail system;
• Better engagement of community services staff in planning and engineering projects;
• There is a disconnect between community services and planning; not always agreeing on function and location of parks;
• City is behind in parks development and is seeing proposals for developer-build parks. How does a public consultation process fit into a developer-build scenario? Also need to link operational needs to new park development;
• Land acquired through development process not always ideal for parks and operations/maintenance requirements; eg: remnant lands;
• Need to “green” existing areas;
• Lack of year round activities. No plan for winter use of parks and trails;
• Park placement/access to parks in general. Need opportunities for casual, unstructured activity in local neighbourhood parks. Could do programming of local parks;
• Transportation impact of active parks not always considered, eg: sportsfield parks and need for off-street parking;
• Need to inventory natural areas and identify management requirements;
• Downtown exemption from cash-in-lieu but increasing population density through intensification;
• Need to identify priority areas and look further ahead to opportunities to increase open space and how to get more parkland for intensification areas;
• Lacking standards, putting things in parks but not always needed/ideal for that area;
• More intensive use of parks in redevelopment areas.

Future Perspectives
• Toronto is an example where the Transportation Division has taken over trails. Puts a different perspective on trails and their role in the transportation network. Opportunity to increase funding for trails and accelerate projects, also part of TDM;
• Develop a hierarchy of trails to guide how they are constructed and maintained, bring other trails up to this standard;
• Need to think about commuter trails, eg: Laurentian Trail with six schools along the route;
• Co-relate cycling network with parks, overlay and identify links;
• Design guidelines for parks and trails;
• Need to define “park” and formalize a hierarchy;
• Develop a neighbourhood design process to engage the community in parkland and trail design and build awareness of where the parks and trails are or will be;
• Need a process for the City departments to work together;
• Goal should be to limit the need to drive to access parks;
• Link Parks Planning, Design, Development and Management together;
• Get school board input to park planning process.

C.2.3 Senior Corporate & Department Staff

Three senior City managers from corporate and the Community Service Department participated in this session.

Strengths
• There are “jewels” in the park system, such as Victoria and Kiwanis;
• The Chicopee facility is working very well and is a major park in the community;
• Parks, open space and trails are valued by the community as a significant priority. The trails are excellent and fairly well integrated;
The Huron Natural Area is a strong recreation and educational resource;
One of the most significant assets of the community is the Grand River though it is significantly under utilized;
Victoria Park is a very special place for visitors, and is well placed in the central part of the City. It is an area where people can get out of their higher density housing and participate in social interactions. It could be emulated in other neighbourhoods;
There is good park and school integration in Kitchener;
There is significant knowledge and support for parks at all community levels.

Concerns/Issues
- Significant community interest in repositioning Victoria Park and bringing back a lot of the former elements related to the water, skating, etc.;
- The Grand River has not been embraced and needs a champion;
- Later park development in new areas is becoming and increasingly significant concern to residents, as parks are often developed several years after the first flight of new residents move into the area;
- A sense that the whole approach to parks planning is reactionary, such as preserving a woodlot whether or not it has value or can be sustained. Need a more integrated approach to natural open space planning that rationalizes each piece of land that is preserved;
- Residents and staff need to understand the City is an urban environment and it needs a strong framework of open space and connecting linkages that are seen in the context of a whole plan and not just their individual parts. This will be very important to illustrate to people the overall strategy and direction of the open space components;
- A question as to whether the current hierarchy of parks/classification system is appropriately positioned and focused, in light of a growing perspective around smaller areas, urban design features and integrating parks into smaller communities;
- Need more spaces for the new “urban kid” who has more interest in extreme sports and other more non-traditional activities;
- Considerations around the needs of older adults have not evolved to level necessary in terms of washrooms, shade, etc.;
- Servicing trails is a challenge, and the cost to open trails up on a longer seasonal basis may be prohibitive;
- Biking on the trails works but the connecting links on the roads are a significant problem;
- With intensification and neighbourhoods one would anticipate there will be some challenges with parks availability;
- There’s a changing perspective on sports fields in terms of soccer, cricket and other activities, with less emphasizes on baseball;
• Has the City examined new technologies adequately in regards to increasing capacity per sports field other than just building new fields.

**Future Perspectives**
• The overall park system needs to be completely integrated, no beginning/no end. A whole system or network and not optional pieces;
• Consider Adopt a Kilometre system to enhance trail maintenance;
• Pursue partnerships more extensively and with a more creative and innovative frameworks;
• In the future, hard surface trails and winter use may need to be considered;
• Extend the planting of trees to a more significant level and develop stronger canopies;
• Become more innovative on how parks are acquired, operated, developed through partnerships and maintained;
• Need to ensure that parks are full and used, and are not just there;
• Relook at the rules, bylaws and constraints that reduce park use. Open them up and create greater opportunities and be less fearful of liability and related considerations;
• Make the Grand River part of the City/embrace the resource. Likely the City will need to be the champion;
• Need to involve the community more in civic responsibilities around parks within a sustainable framework.

**C.2.4 Arts/Culture and Heritage Staff**

A small focus group was held with City staff representing arts and culture and heritage.

**Strengths**
• Amount of natural areas, variety of opportunities, opportunity for cultural heritage interpretation
• Victoria Park jewel, heritage district
• Publicly accessible spaces for interpretation – recreation and education
• Land base is a huge asset
• Natural areas provide connections to neighbourhood
• Natural areas is attraction for new residents
• Grand River tremendous asset, underused, undervalued
Concerns/Issues

- Funding collaborative projects between parks, culture, heritage
- Fix gaps in the trail system
- Access to Walter Bean Trail
- Access to the Grand River
- Opportunities to build park, trail linkages from one jurisdiction to the next
- Park design elements to appeal to all ages, are innovative, creative and aesthetically pleasing
- Utilitarian perspective in park planning
- No allocation of funds for Heritage Interpretive funding with funding for maintenance
- New public Art policy is a pooled fund. The scope covers parks but parks have not money for what they already have/need.
- Need another skateboard park
- Programming within parks (ie: orienteering program, maintain biking, canoeing)
- Changing demographics
- School partnerships
- Creative cities approach suggested
- Open space is a design element – cost and funding
- Integration of neighbourhood and parks planning within City administrative structure
- Sheltered/shaded areas in neighbourhood parks
- Public art as identifiers, place-making (North Vancouver cited), and inspiration for community activity
- Heritage acquisitions as amenities that require understanding of full cost implications
- Strategic direction – environmental – LEEDS NO

Future

- Collaboration to achieve vision (Doon Village Road project)
- ‘Vision’ to connect with broader community vision and the creative community
- Integral process for public art/heritage/park design
- Expand park educational programming
- Public art and Heritage features, accommodate into vision for park planning
- Interpretation within Heritage Conservation Districts and streetscapes
• Creative park design beyond the traditional template-consider function, use to inform design. Provide precedents from other communities.

C.6.5 Operating and Maintenance Staff

Ten staff from operations and maintenance staff within the Community Services Department participated and staff member from Development and Technical Services participated in this session.

Strengths
• A new call centre has been established to receive public requests
• Established ten year forecast of playground replacement – 4 per year @ $145,000
• Undertaking street tree inventory
• Neighbourhood park reviews with public meeting to determine community needs

Concerns/Issues
• Budget required for park rehabilitation
• No established priority for which parks
• Need turf report with metrics, standards
• City should not assume deficient features (ie: developer built entrance features
• Process needed for acceptance of developer built parks/trails

Future
• Consolidate athletic sportsfields
• School board agreement working reasonable well, they cut more frequently
• Capital resources for retrofit of existing parks

Grand River Conservation Authority (3 staff and written submission
• Region Valley Land Study underway
• Need to look at linkages to tributary valleys
• Natural heritage system planning required
• GRCA owned land – Chicopee, Stanley Park
C.3 Institutions & Operators

Chicopee Ski and Summer Resort

The Chicopee Ski and Summer Resort is a non-profit organization that will celebrate its 75th Anniversary in the fall of 2009. Over its seventy-five year history, it has been primarily a ski-club. In recent years, it has branched out extensively with a high ropes course, a contracted water tube slide, development of conference centre capabilities and other four season endeavours.

Currently, the organization is considering the undertaking of a new Strategic Business Plan that would emphasize the future development of the venue as a full four season operation that would maximize the potential of the site for various recreation and entertainment activities. The strategy is seen as essential in sustaining the long term financial viability of the organization and the membership fees for skiing and other activities.

The venue is owned by the Grand River Conservation Authority and is leased to Chicopee. The lease is up for renewal in the next two years. The new Strategic Business Plan will likely form part of the discussions with the Conservation Authority on the future of this venue in east Kitchener.

From a community perspective, the Chicopee Ski Hill has long been a valued winter recreational venue, is linked with trails, and has been a site that people have used as an outdoor experience in terms of a natural or rural area. It is the only significant ski hill in South Western Ontario, the other closest ones being Boler Mountain in London and Rattlesnake Point in Milton. Therefore, it traditionally has had a strong regional market perspective, with up to 25% of the users being from outside of the City of Kitchener.

In discussions with the management of Chicopee, a number of considerations have been identified that relate to the Kitchener Master Plan. These are:

- Significant interest in forming partnerships with the City of Kitchener on the development of additional recreational and leisure activities on the venue;
- Development of a relationship with the City so that the two parties are not developing similar facilities which will cause more limited use of each others facilities than the potential that exists;
• Continuing interest in being connected to and as a destination on the Community Trail System, possible with upgrades in mapping, marketing and related considerations;
• Possible joint venture initiatives where mutual benefit would exist between the two parties;
• Possibility of Chicopee becoming involved in other services in the community, thus not necessarily being totally bound to the existing venue.

Chicopee Ski and Summer Resort is starting a process that could move to an uniquely enhanced and broaden vision of the role of the organization, the recreational services it provides and the opportunities for recreation and leisure that will be provided to Kitchener and regional residents. The organization wishes to engage with the City at a significant level to determine what partnerships and joint ventures would be available, and to ensure that the two bodies are not working at cross purposes in their future development plans.

C.4 Written Submissions

Numerous submissions were received via email, letter or other means in regards to the consultation phase for the Kitchener Parks Master Plan. The following material summarizes the key points identified within the submissions:

• The need to protect the mature forest along Glasgow Street between Knell and Westwood Drives;
• The strong value of the residents in the west area of the city in regards to protecting woodlots;
• A need for stricter protection of mature forest that compromise not only large mature-trunk trees but smaller trees. A good tree stock management system is required;
• Identification of the importance of Centennial Stadium as a track and field resource within the city and the region. Loss of this facility would be a significant setback for the schools, track and field clubs and other users. Significant upgrades are required;
• Concerns in regards to public safety, especially after dark, as individuals use the park to come onto private property to break-in, cause damage, etc. Cameras may need to be installed in parks to reduce these issues;
• Belmont Park play equipment is old, rusted, and not appropriate. Many children lose the opportunity to play on equipment in this park. These facilities should be addressed and upgraded;
• Identification of the importance and value of the natural trails that wind through Homer Watson Park, and the need to continue to maintain them as they are continually used by joggers, skiers, walkers and others;
• Request to have trees planted on the circle on Mitchner Court which has been a bare area since 1988. This is felt to be important as many other courts have trees planted on them;
• Concerns expressed in regards to the possible sale of Kiwanis Park property which is seen not as a run of the mill, average park. Its connection with the Grand River, the natural areas and recreational activities make it an outstanding resource for the people of Kitchener and the region. Belief that the sale of the land of Kiwanis Park is a short term perspective that should be opposed;
• A perspective that something needs to be done to enhance the green space between the parking lots on King Street and King Street itself, with particular attention around the old Goudies building. If there are places for people to enjoy and rest in the warm summer evening, more people would be attracted to the downtown and it would become a more vibrant and active place;
• Need to consider more investments in parkettes and places for children to play as a way to keep them active, to reduce vandalism and to enhance neighbourhood life;
• Selling park land is not a strategy that responds to the needs of the community;
• The forested green space that borders Fisher-Hallman Road, Busch Clover Crescent, Cotton Grass Street and Cooper Leaf is a phenomenal area. The City does remove fallen and leaning trees but there is no effort to pick up the garbage and to keep the place in a clean and safe manner. Possibly some volunteers and a small budget could be used to pick up the garbage and to better sustain the overall natural area.

C.5 Members of Council

Six members of Council participated in interviews in regards to parks and open space resources in Kitchener. The following material represents the collective summary perspectives put forward.

Strengths
• Victoria Parks is the jewel of the City’s park system;
• The strong array of playgrounds;
• Good trail system that is popular for walking, cycling and receives a lot of repeat utilization;
• Some very special areas, such as Hidden Valley, Huron Natural Park and the Grand River corridor;
• Some of the major parks, such as McClennan, Kiwanis and Homer Watson are unique and special. They have lots of different uses;
• The availability of parks in most neighbourhoods, along with a good trail system that utilizes the hydro-rights-of-ways;
• Reasonable maintenance of the parks and trails;
• The Urban Forestry Program;
• A range of sizes, variety, uses and accessibility levels for parks and open spaces;
• The value and importance that residents place on parks, open spaces and trails;
• A couple of very effective community gardens which are seen as a good idea that arose from community groups;
• The festivals and events that occur, both within a larger City focus, as well as in smaller neighbourhood areas such as Knollwood Park.

Concerns/Issues
• For trails, there are some poor surfaces and maintenance challenges. Also, the trails are not necessarily knitted together well. There are significant gaps;
• Maintenance of parks tends to be a significant source of resident complaint in the springtime, as the City tries to keep up with the heavy grass growing season;
• Some of the other issues that emerged around parks in terms of complaints, though limited, involved noise, parking, garbage collection and security/vandalism;
• Protecting and managing wood lots needs more planning and enhancement;
• The timing of park development in new areas doesn’t align with the area’s residential development. Resident expectations are high for services when they move in;
• Security and vandalism in the parks continues to be an ongoing problem, with lots of places to hide and to do damage;
• A number of older facilities in the parks need renewal and rehabilitation;
• A number of the parkettes need benches and supports in terms of public art, socialization, etc. There needs to be a better design standard;
• Trees are becoming a more important green initiative, and enhanced management and investment is required;
• Leash-free parks need to be large enough to effectively operate and be well maintained;
• Victoria Park is a source of a lot of frustration and complaints, ranging from water quality, to geese, to noise, to parking, etc. Maybe it is a candidate for a citizen advisory group;
• Expectations for Victoria Park continue to hearken back to a previous era in terms of what the park used to be. How do you balance competing interests with some of the environmental challenges, such as sustaining the lake;
• The use of the boathouse at Victoria Park in terms of what is the best use, how to enhance public accessibility and preserving the over-all perspective and history of the site;
Some concerns that large events will be increasingly moved into Victoria Park which could overtax the venue. What is the role and purpose of Victoria Park? The neighbours and users are split in their perspectives on this park;

- Need improved trail linkages to the downtown area, and can cul-de-sac loops be used for community gardens, play structures, etc. to create greater value for these resources?
- Cherry Park may require better electrical connections to support the activities pursued in that space;
- How can the Grand River corridor be brought to a higher level of community value and engagement, as it is a powerfully unique natural resource. Currently, the River tends to be fairly invisible, has limited use and is out-of-sight/out-of-mind;
- A number of young parents are looking for enhanced play equipment in some park areas;
- People expect good maintenance of the parks because it impacts the value of their homes and their use of the park. They view their taxes as paying for that level of service;
- In some new areas of the City, the five percent land dedication has been used for trails and wood lots, resulting in limited or no lands for soccer fields and larger neighbourhood park resources. Demographics have been missed in terms of defining the land requirements;
- The focus of parks has been relatively centered on new areas and subdivisions, yet there are significant park resources in other parts of the community that need renewal and to be brought to more contemporary standards;
- Park development needs to occur earlier, and strategies developed to make this happen on a more consistent basis;
- Budget constraints have an impact on park maintenance and development;
- Some concerns that the City is not keeping up with the demand in regards to the growth in trail use, natural areas, soccer and other sports field activities, multi-cultural and population changes and changing expectations amongst residents;
- Trails are also increasingly part of the transportation network. Closing the gaps, improving surfaces, increasing maintenance and ensuring year-round access, along with trail maps, improved communications, more loops and other enhancements need to be considered to maximize the use and value of this resource;
- Some significant gaps exist in regards to the Walter Bean Trail in the southeast, Victoria Street to Freeport, as well as Pioneer Tower to Highway 401;
- Are the parks supporting the active and healthier living policies and strategies that are emerging?

A number of open spaces and parks are tired and need investment, which also includes some of the smaller neighbourhood parks in the downtown area.

Future Perspectives
- Trails across many dimensions represent a major focal point in terms of use and investment;
• Development of more passive areas in parks, and parks that are more targeted to the local population and demographics;
• An increasing shift towards environmental consideration or “greenness” in the parks, healthier and active lifestyles, environmental conservation, etc.;
• Sustaining the parks that are jewels of the system, and positioning them in order to be viable within the constraints of the natural resources;
• Developing the Grand River corridor to be more of a positive natural and human resource within the community;
• Investing in park renewal and enhanced maintenance services in terms of garbage collection, recycling, improved playground structures and other considerations;
• Use the Official Plan to secure trail rights-of-ways through Freeport, over the golf courses, along Highway 8, and in Hidden Valley, Grand River Woods North, Deer Ridge, Forwell’s gravel pit area and other sections to ensure a complete system;
• Develop a strategy for Hidden Valley in terms of the Carolinian forest, the wetlands, the small lake and other areas;
• Need to form partnerships and use other means to acquire, develop and maintain parklands. The City cannot do everything. We need to think differently;
• Healthier lifestyles and green initiatives will become more pronounced and a more dramatic part of parks and open space planning and development;
• Urban intensification under the Growth Management Strategy will potentially impact the need for additional green spaces in mature areas of the City;
• Younger generations have a different perspective on parks and open spaces, the need for assembly and other values that may not align with some of the Boomer Generation priorities for parks and open spaces;
• The proposed light-rail transit system will intensify urban development in the downtown area and create a need for open space and other related considerations;
• Responding to the growth in soccer, and potentially other sports that have smaller registrations but are growing, in order to have a balanced array of participation opportunities;
• Improved communications, marketing and other tools to support the use of trails, understanding the importance of open spaces, natural areas and related perspectives;
• Need to give consideration to the relocation of Centennial Stadium and Jack Couch Park, possibly as part of the future development of the South Huron District Park;
• The Stanley Park Conservation area needs to be considered for upgrades in terms of the potential of the site, its limited use and some other health challenges with mosquitoes, etc.;
• Need a champion for the trails to bring them to a higher level of perspective and investment;
• The City is running out of developable land. There will need to be other considerations made in terms of partnerships with the School Boards and other parties in accessing currently available and new outdoor spaces. Ensure that parkland is not sold or lost, but is successfully sustained.

C.6  Community Workshops

C.6.1  Community Workshop #1 – Tuesday March 23rd, 2009, Kitchener Memorial Auditorium Subscribers’ Lounge

The first community workshop attracted thirty-eight residents of Kitchener to the Subscribers’ Lounge at the Kitchener Memorial Auditorium on Tuesday, March 23rd, 2009. This represented the first of two community workshops hosted to gather public commentary on parks, open spaces and trails in Kitchener in support of the development of the Kitchener Parks Master Plan. The session had three primary components, involving:

• An overview of parks, open spaces and trails in Kitchener, key demographics, trends and related background information;
• The use of facilitated work tables that allowed participants to identify the strengths of the current park system; concerns/issues/gaps; and future vision prospectives;
• Priorization by the workshop participants of the key themes that emerged from the vision question.
• The following material provides the responses to the three questions by each of the four work tables, as well as the results of the prioritization process.

**WORK TABLE 1**

**Strengths**

• The mini parkettes which are strategically located;
• The green spaces between Freeport and Doon along the Grand River, which is a heritage river;
• McLennan Park which is taking a good direction in its development;
• The Huron Natural Area;
• The community trail system throughout the City;
• The leash-free dog areas/parks.
Concerns/Issues/Gaps

- The concept of surplus land in Kiwanis Park is not accurate;
- City Hall staff need to have more of a balance between environmental and building/developer perspectives;
- The City does not utilize its resources well, as it tends to sell assets low and buy assets at a high price;
- Need more enforcement of dog and other associated by-laws as they pertain to parks;
- There are significant gaps in the trail system;
- The quality of the trails for cyclists is inferior;
- More green spaces in high density areas are required. This represents a significant gap;
- Better maintenance of park lands is required;
- Efforts should be made to increase tree plantings that occur annually across the City;
- New developments should include more tree planting;
- A central phone number for City by-law and environmental concerns should be established;
- The parks budget is too small. It needs to be increased to address the many dimensions of parks, open spaces and trails.

Vision

- Rebalance the City’s budget towards parks;
- Connect the trail system, along with adding proper signage and better maintenance;
- Acquire Hidden Valley’s 200 acres as a natural heritage area;
- Maintain Kiwanis Park lands, and develop them for various recreational and other activities and events;
- Create a loop hiking trail along the Grand River between Freeport and Doon (fourteen kilometers);
- Future parks should be developed as both leisure and environmental resources;
- Maintain the current ratio of one park space per 100 population;
- Establish an environmental telephone number that can be easily accessed;
- Ensure parks are accessible for all people and groups, and can be accessed by bus, car, walking, etc.;
- Ensure green spaces in all high density areas.

WORK TABLE 2

Strengths

- Victoria Park, which is accessible, has many children’s activities, is multi-purpose in scope and year round in availability;
• Parks adjacent to schools which allows children to access them;
• All the parks in terms of special events and corporate participation;
• The trail system and its accessibility;
• The Huron Natural Area;
• The green spaces linked in south western Kitchener;
• The Grand River;
• The Walter Bean Trail;
• Kiwanis Park is a multi-use facility, which has unique features and a swimming pool;
• The good sports clubs which are well funded, organized and neighbourhood-based;
• The cultural events of City Hall, Victoria Park, the Market Building, etc.;
• The areas that are set aside and dedicated as natural spaces;
• The Huron Sport Park and its dedicated sports activities.

Concerns/Issues/Gaps
• There are significant gaps in the trail system that need to be undertaken in order to complete this system;
• The lack of parking at trail heads and at local parks, as well as Victoria Park during special events;
• The bus links to the parks do not provide good public transportation and access;
• The misuse of trails by dirt bikes which generate mud and impact hikers;
• Specific trails and naturalized areas which have disorganized use;
• Need a park patrol to monitor misuse of the parks and trails;
• Need more shade, trees and other amenities around the open areas in the parks;
• Could make use of the assets along the Grand River by having a park nearby and utilizing the resources;
• Need a new access to the Grand River at Kiwanis Park;
• Make Kiwanis Park more open which could result in more use;
• Erosion along the creek beds is a result of spring floods, resulting in a need for restoration projects and more public education;
• Concern for creeks that they be kept natural as opposed to lining them with concrete;
• The gravel pits near the Grand River impact the speed and quality of the water;
• Hidden Valley zoning designation is outdated and needs to be protected.
Vision

• No subdivision on green spaces. Natural areas and lands are preserved as future green spaces;
• Want clean air and water, that is places for children to walk without shoes;
• Preserve and plant more trees;
• Realign the budget in order to catch up on the requirements for natural areas, parks and trails;
• Need places to experience nature and that allows nature to co-exist with humans. Allow natural areas to be separate and preserved;
• More civic engagement, volunteer involvement and civic responsibility for the green spaces;
• A view needs to emerge that parks are not just for children but also for seniors and everyone;
• Transit linkages to the parks and open space areas as destinations;
• More use of parks;
• Look to alternative park spaces and open spaces. Be more creative;
• Intensify parks in the downtown area;
• Use alternative architecture with the green spaces in urban area;
• Develop a management plan to protect existing natural assets so they flourish in the next ten to twenty years;
• Balance informal use of park areas with formal uses.

WORK TABLE 3

Strengths

• Park access is free and easy;
• Good access to the Grand River;
• Well treed city;
• Rockway and Victoria Parks;
• A good distribution of parks across the City;
• Well maintained public spaces;
• A good balance between natural areas and planned activity parks;
• Good multi-use, social meeting areas;
• The Walter Bean Trail;
• The future land base for new parks that is available;
Concerns/Weaknesses/Gaps

- The bicycle/walking trails are not effectively connected, and there is an imbalance between the off and on road trail components in terms of quality, safety, etc.;
- Safety issues on the Iron Horse Trail;
- Create more parks in new and developing areas of the City;
- Planning decisions need to be improved to create larger buffer zones between development and natural spaces;
- Ensure connectivity of spaces for wildlife migration and movement;
- More washroom facilities in an increasing number of parks;
- Better policing and security initiatives.

Vision

- Accessibility to every park from every subdivision;
- Purchase Hidden Valley and Lackner Woods, along with Natchez Woods;
- Finish the Walter Bean and Iron Horse trails;
- Increase the funding in the LEAF fund;
- More development of sports fields concentrated in complexes versus being spread out;
- Don’t sell any parks for any reason, including Kiwanis;
- With inner-city school closures, acquire the lands;
- Tighter enforcement and penalties for misuse of parks, open spaces and trails.

WORK TABLE 4

Strengths

- The central downtown parks are focal points in this area;
- The diversity and variety of parks that are available to residents;
- The size of downtown parks and their qualities as venues for festivals and events;
- Strong sports field planning;
- Accessibility of parks is good;
- The community trails are away from traffic and have regional connections;
- Maintenance of the open spaces, particularly the Huron Natural Area.
Concerns/Issues/Gaps

- Need more dedication of park land from commercial and industrial land developers;
- More community oriented parks;
- Better connectivity between parks and to trail heads/destination/transit access;
- Parks within walking/cycling range of users;
- More passive parks with opportunities for preservation of environmental features;
- More extreme sports parks which are accessible and well located at community centres, and are safe and visable;
- Signage in the natural areas, along with educational opportunities;
- More community gardens are needed with special opportunities for cultural groups;
- Rationalize the park system in terms of sports fields, higher usage and their locations;
- Do not allow developers to use cash-in-lieu to avoid the allocation of lands for parks.

Vision

- Work together with community partners, such as school boards and the GRCA, to develop stronger and more comprehensive partnerships, transparency and community involvement;
- Enhance the safety of parks and open spaces with lights and better security;
- Establish more leash-free dog parks that will result in fewer dogs in natural areas;
- Do not sell any park land, and increase what the City already has;
- Plant more trees;
- Increase the connectivity between trails, and between trails and transit;
- Implement artificial turf as part of multi-faceted sports complexes;
- Protect Hidden Valley and other key natural areas;
- The City needs to give a higher priority to parks within the overall infrastructure assets of the City;
- More leveraging of volunteer resources;
- More casual/unorganized leisure opportunities in the parks;
- Ensure sustainable infrastructure is developed using solar lighting and other green initiatives;
- Develop brownfield sites as opportunities for parks;
- Pursue more multi-use and other synergistic opportunities in the development of parks, open spaces and trails.
Comment sheets
Three comment sheets were provided by workshop participants, along with a series of follow-up emails from workshop participants. The key points identified were:

- A good workshop, the process was appreciated;
- Need to protect natural areas as both passive parks and opportunities for ecological cleanup;
- Improving the trail system in many facets and dimensions;
- More and smaller parkettes for young children and families;
- Need to improve tree cover;
- Keep the parks we have and build on their strengths;
- Make sure that new subdivisions have more parks and parkettes;
- Keep the natural areas protected;
- Ensure greening options in all park development;
- Improve park linkages and trails with transit;
- Improve safety and by-law enforcement to enhance the comfort levels of users;
- A need exists for higher a priority within City budgets and policies for parks.

Vision Priorities
Based on the results of the vision question, twelve themes were identified. Each participant was provided with a red, yellow and green dot whereby they could prioritize their first, second and third priorities amongst the twelve themes. They have been rated based on three tiers - higher priority, medium level priority and lower priority.

Higher Priority Themes
- Keep what we’ve got – do not give up existing parkland;
- Protect/sustain natural areas from development;
- Trails/connectivity and access – use loops and ensure connections to identifiable destinations;
- Develop a formal park an open space resource connected to the Grand River corridor.

Medium Priority Themes
- Rebalance budget/investment and priority of parks and natural areas within the City;
- Re-naturalize open areas and plant more trees, along with co-existing with nature strategies;
• Seize opportunities to acquire green spaces;
• Increased volunteerism, community engagement and collaboration/partnerships.

Lower Priority Themes
• Use new strategies and technologies to increase sports field capacities;
• Use parks to shape urban form/the community;
• Accessibility for all – culture, age, mobility, etc.;
• Improve maintenance.

C.6.2 Community Workshop #2 – Saturday, March 28, 2009 at the Lions’ Arena Hall

A second community workshop, following the same format as the initial community workshop, was held on Saturday, March 28th, 2009 at the Lions’ Arena Hall. In total, fifteen individuals participated in this session. Two work tables were formed, and the following information outlines the commentary provided by the participants.

WORK TABLE 1

Strengths
• The Iron Horse Trail;
• The playgrounds, soccer fields and Lyall Hallman Ballyards;
• The schools can use ice time as part of the reciprocal agreement in exchange for the community use of sports fields on school property;
• The walking and biking trails and their maintenance;
• The Grand River, which is a significant plus and the future opportunity for a large park, biking/walking, trails, etc.;
• The Huron Natural Area;
• Variety of activities for youth in the extreme sports areas. There is a good start in terms of what currently exists for them.

Concerns/Issues/Gaps
• Maintenance of the highly used trails and the skateboard park where there are safety issues and which are often a mess with broken glass, etc.;
• The need for surveillance and increased enforcement of park by-laws;
• There is a lack of turf fields to increase use capacity for outdoor sports;
• Need to focus on the development of multi-use facilities, involving open space, sports fields, play-grounds, indoor and outdoor tracks, trail connections, etc.;
• Ensure dedicated bike lanes on roads that connect to trails outside of park and green space areas;
• Continue to grow the amount of parks, open space an community trail lands to sustain an effective ratio between a growing population and the acreage that is available so that existing sites do not become overused and can be accessed from all parts of the community;
• Increase the emphasis on creative play via splash pads, playgrounds, etc.;
• Incorporate the waterways in the community into recreational activities opportunities;
• There are a number of gaps in the community trail system. Will need to work on connectivity, both in terms of having real destinations, but also loops. Too many trails start and go nowhere. Also sometimes the deer get trapped;
• A number of trails need increased maintenance and more supporting amenities in terms of parking, signage, litter containers and trail head supports;
• The condition of Centennial Stadium which has become seriously deficient, and for which there is a lack of alternatives for the activities hosted there;
• A need for more garbage cans in parks. Work on litter control programs;
• The need for more funding to support enhanced open spaces and trails;
• Need to give increasing consideration to older parks and venues in terms of renewal and revitalization. Many of them are tired and worn out and need to be modernized;
• Efforts should be made for increased partnerships, such as with schools and others to develop more outdoor rinks and other types of outdoor opportunities;
• Need to focus on keeping in good shape what we have related to building and outdoor assets;
• Need to plant more trees and to preserve tree cover, woodlots and related spaces.

Vision

• Focus on securing high value open spaced lands now before they are lost to developers, such as Hidden Valley;
• Priorize keeping the most valuable and important parks and open space resources. If park land needs to be sold, the funds should be reinvested into parks, open space and trails;
• Protect the watershed in every way possible, and ensure clean water in the creeks, ponds and waterways, whether it is Schneider's Creek or Victoria Park;
• Build on the environmental values of keeping things green, healthy and safe;
• Continually work with other stakeholders, involving the school boards, the conservation authority, seniors and youth groups, neighbourhood associations, service clubs and the corporate world in order to maximize the opportunities for parks, open spaces and trails;
• Ensure that linkages for the trail system extends into the new areas, and continues building the trail network with destinations and connections across the community and the region;
• Integrate the Grand River into the main fabric of the community/embrace the Grand River with more open spaces, parks, and trails opportunities;
• Sustain and grow the focus on multi-use facilities in the parks, including a need to develop an integrated track and field facility;
• Consider capacity building strategies for sports fields in terms of lighting, artificial turf, etc. Such technology to both elevate the quality of play and reduce the need to continually build more and more sports fields.

WORK TABLE 2

Strengths
• The amount and availability of green space;
• The walking and biking trails;
• The opportunities for community input and participation;
• The trails linkages with natural areas;
• The introduction of splash pads;
• The accessibility of the parks across the community;
• The use of simulated natural landscaping in some parks;
• Some of the enforcement of parks rules/by-laws;
• The City having a track and field complex though there are challenges;
• The availability and introduction of leash-free parks;
• The availability of community gardens.

Concerns/Issues/Gaps
• Not enough trails are connected together. There are some significant gaps and lack of destination linkages;
• The access to the trail system are often not evident or well promoted;
• Weak enforcement in some parks in terms of dogs running loose, ATV’s, damage, litter, etc.;
• The public transit system should be linked to the trail system, and highly used trails widened to accommodate increased use;
• The Grand River is underutilized and under appreciated, yet is a phenomenal resource;
• The City has many brownfield sites, and these could be utilized for park and open space areas;
• There is a lack of community gardens;
• There is increasing pressure on existing green spaces and parks, and there needs to be a mindset to preserve and conserve to support the value of these resources in the community;
• A need exists for a multi-use track and field facility in the community to replace Centennial Stadium. It could be integrated with a number of indoor and outdoor recreational facilities and partners, including an indoor walking/running facility;
• Larger and more splash pads need to be considered;
• Some trails need to be wheelchair accessible in support of people who have mobility challenges so they can participate;
• Trails should be kept natural, using stone dust as a base and not all asphalted;

Vision
• Greater effort needs to be placed on preserving woodlots, planting more trees and protecting natural areas;
• Need to consider other surfaces for sports fields to increase their capacity so that it is not a question of building more fields but using the fields we have more effectively;
• The water quality in Victoria Park and Schneider Creek is very poor and needs to be addressed;
• Need more large green/open space areas in the City that are not booked or scheduled, and are available to everybody for passive and spontaneous activities.
• Identify and preserve well in advance key green/environmental spaces, and make sure they are distributed throughout the City, resulting in more natural areas;
• Look for opportunities to expand the community gardens, leash-free parks and other emerging areas of interest, including parkettes and urban green spaces.

Priorities Identification
Nine priority themes emerged from the visioning work of the two work tables. Participants had the opportunity to identify their first, second, and third priorities amongst the nine themes. A three tiered set of priorities emerged.

Higher Priority Themes
• Multi-use fields/venues/track;
• More natural areas/green spaces throughout the community;
• Increased and improved trail development with linkages, signage, trail head development, enhanced maintenance, better marketing, etc.

Medium Priority Themes
• Maintain what we have as to its quality, and increase the security and preservation perspectives;
• Embrace and develop opportunities along the Grand River corridor;
• Develop the trail system to support more bicycling as a means to shop, go to work and school.
• Maintain facilities that we already have to an effective standard.

Lower Priority Themes
• More creative play opportunities;
• Increased availability of community gardens;
• Continuing and growing community engagement and involvement, volunteers, etc.;
• Ensuring access/accessibility for all residents.

C.7 External Service Providers and Agencies

C.7.1 Ministry of Natural Resources - Guelph

• Provincial funding of acquisition of land for specific initiatives – Julie Simard
• Crown land at Freeport
• Potential opportunity for one Open Space System

Strengths
• Amount and accessibility of parks and open space
• Grand River corridor
• Natural areas

Concerns/Issues
• No overall plan, no maintenance or control of natural areas, inappropriate activity
• Significant resource deficiency
• Growing public expectation
• Parks and Recreation department not equipped to care for natural areas
• Linkages

Future
• Linked, integrated regional system to river corridor accessible
• Political recognition of value – allocate resources

C.7.2 Disabilities and Human Rights Group (Social Planning Council of K-W)

Strengths
• Victoria Park’s accessibility, trails, washroom facilities
• Plenty of green, open space, serenity
• Safety
• Iron Horse Trail

Concerns/Issues
• Iron Horse Trail crossings difficult transitions to sidewalks of Victoria Park, Mill Street bridge to sidewalk slope, need street signs
• Kiwanis Park surplus land sale
• Accessibility by transit
• Parent accessibility to playgrounds from trails
• Visibility of parks – accessibility and maintenance
• Aligning programming with parks
• Neighbourhood access to parks
• Accessibility advisory group

Future
• Will not have accessibility issues, integrated with design guidelines
• Safety, environmental focus for parks
C.7.3 Developers/Consultants Focus Group

A focus group for developers and consultants was held to gain their input into park planning, design and development matters.

Strengths
- Community trail network well developed to a high standard for recreational use.
- People enjoy City parks (the ones they are familiar with).
- Developer-build parks an opportunity to catch-up (City seems reluctant to embrace).
- Diversity/variety in the public parks system.
- Opportunities in shared-use of school sites.

Concerns/Issues
- Trail use as a transportation mode – winter use and maintenance, wayfinding/signage.
- Cycling Master Plan update – co-ordinate with Region/City of Waterloo, component of Transportation Demand Management (TDM).
- Walking is top leisure activity – need to reflect this in trails investment.
- Need better co-ordination between City departments regarding planning, design and maintenance of parks and trails.
- More public consultation prior to park and facility investments, how are needs to new parks and trails.
- More public consultation prior to park and facility investments, how are needs to new parks/components established?
- Developer-build parks design should not be driven by low expectation of maintenance resources.
- Existing parks rehabilitation; improve visibility, accessibility, more trees, year round activity areas.
- Classification of parks limited, broader, newer definition to reflect different types of parks and activities.

Future Perspectives
- Trails as transportation infrastructure with dedicated rights-of-way (Cambridge example).
- Park naturalization with corresponding investment in training and management (Guelph examples).
- Multi-funding opportunities – approach to Region/Conservation Authority regarding regional scale parks and natural areas.
- Replacement of sportsfields with synthetic turf.
- Develop a management plan for natural areas.
C.8 Online Community Survey Results

During the winter of 2009, an Online Community Survey was undertaken via the City of Kitchener’s web-site. In total, 178 responses were received based on promotion through City communication tools and at various public & other meetings. The following material provides the results of the survey.

Table C-1 examines the respondents’ use of parks based on a five levels of frequency. For the 178 respondents, almost one half were regular users of parks, being a minimum of once per week, 47.2%. Another one in four respondents used the parks almost daily. Approximately 14% of respondents were occasional users, that is two to three times per month or infrequent users, that is several times a year. Only 1% of the respondents were nonusers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How would you rate yourself individually as to your frequency of use of City of Kitchener parks? (Please check only one choice)</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Almost Daily</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>23.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular User (minimum once per week)</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasional User (minimum 2 to 3 times per month)</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>47.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrequent Users (several times a year)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-User</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>178</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The respondent user profile of parks indicates significant park utilization, with 70.4% of respondents being almost daily or regular users.

Table C-2 examines respondents’ family use of parks. Again, regular use was the dominant category, 47.2%, with almost daily use at 20.4%. In total, 67.6%, or just over two out of three respondents indicated that their family frequency use of parks was similar to their own.
TABLE C-2  
Respondent Family Use of Parks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How would you rate your family members' use of City of Kitchener parks? (Please check only one choice)</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Almost Daily</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>20.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular User (minimum once per week)</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>47.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasional User (minimum 2 to 3 times per month)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrequent Users (several times a year)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>13.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-User</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table C-3 examines respondents’ importance ratings for park features on a five point scale, ranging between most important to least important. In terms of the most important items, the following was identified:

- 46% of respondents identified sports fields and pathways/trails;
- 38% of respondents indicated nature areas and features, with 33% indicating playgrounds;
- The lowest top priority was 14% for outdoor natural ice rinks, 18% for picnic areas, along with 16% for water features.

Almost one half of the respondents identified sports fields and pathway/trails as the most important features in the parks.

In terms of second most important features, areas to play informal games were cited by 26% and natural areas and water-play features by 23% of respondents.

In regards to the third most important rated features in the parks, outdoor ice rinks were identified by 28% of respondents, followed by youth facilities, 25%, reflective/quiet areas 25% and water-play features by 24%.

The least important ratings were leash-free dog areas, 34%, playgrounds 26% and horticultural displays 25%.

All the features listed in the question had significant levels of support across the five levels of evaluation. However, sports fields and trails tended to dominate at the most significant levels of importance, with splash pads, areas for formal gathering, walking and natural areas and features forming a second tier of importance.
We would like to know what activities or features of the parks and trails you use are most important to you and your family.

### Table C-3

**Respondent Importance Ratings of Park Features**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Most Important ------------------</th>
<th>Least Important</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playground</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sportsfields</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective/quiet areas</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Areas to play informal games, walking</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor natural ice rinks</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horticultural displays</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor courts</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pathways and trails</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural areas and features</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picnic areas</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water play features</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth facilities</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leash free dog areas</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table C-4 examines respondents’ rating of different park perspectives as outlined in the question. The ratings were on a five level scale, with one being excellent and five poor. An average scoring was used. The following key perspectives are identified:
TABLE C-4
Respondent Rating on Selected Park Perspectives

Based on your use and experience, your views on the following perspectives for the City’s parks and trails using the following five point scale where 1 is excellent and 5 is poor (Average Score):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perspective</th>
<th>Neighbourhood Park</th>
<th>Natural Area</th>
<th>City/Community Park</th>
<th>Community Trails</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility/ Availability</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visibility and Awareness</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>2.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance and Upkeep of Landscaped Areas</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance and Upkeep of Sportsfields</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance and Upkeep of Buildings, Hard Surfaces and Equipment</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>2.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation of Environmental and Natural Features / Areas</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>2.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Mix of User Opportunities and Experiences Available to You</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>2.64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- All the averages are in a narrow range, being between a low of 2.28 for accessibility/availability of city/community parks to a high of 2.73 for conservation of environmental and natural features/areas. All the ratings hovered around the 2.5 midpoint.
- The city/community park choice tended to have lower averages likely because there are fewer of these facilities. Natural areas tended to have higher averages, but these are marginal differences;
- The respondent averages for natural areas and community trails were similar.

The respondents overall indicated a slightly above average assessment, with no one perspective receiving an outstandingly low or high evaluation.
Table C-5 assesses respondents’ rating of the City’s park consultation programs. Almost 45% of respondents evaluated them as good and another 6.6% as excellent, indicating 51.5% were in the excellent to good range. Just over one third of respondents indicated fair and 13.8% poor, indicating 48.5% had a less favourable view. The result was generally a split perspective.

**TABLE C-5**

**Respondent Rating of City’s Park Consultation Program**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How would you rate the City of Kitchener on their consultation programs and efforts with residents on the design of new or the renewal of existing parks?</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>44.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>34.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table C-6 profiles respondents’ use of specific parks and outdoor sport venues.

- Centennial Stadium and Breithaupt Park were visited by between 34% and 39% of respondents over the last year;
- Budd and Woodside Parks had visitation levels in the 19% to 25% range respectively over the last year.

In terms of local parks, 72% of respondents had visited their local neighbourhood park in the last year, another 5% had visited one in the last three years, indicating three out four respondents had visited their local neighbourhood park over the last three years.

In regards to city and regional parks, the following is identified:

- Almost 60% of respondents had visited Victoria Park in the last year, and another 16% over the course of the last three years;
- 37% of respondents had visited Kiwanis Park in the last year, and another 17% or a total of 54% over the last three years.
- McLennan Park had the lowest level of visitation in this category at 16% over the last year and 33% over the last three years.
### TABLE C-6  
**Respondent Use of Park Venues**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In the last year, and for over the last 3 years, have you or your family visited or used any of the following venues?</th>
<th>Over the last Year</th>
<th>Over the last 3 Years</th>
<th>Total Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outdoor Sports Venues</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breithaupt Park</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budd Park</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centennial Stadium</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodside Park (Highland Road)</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local Parks</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your Local Neighbourhood Park(s)</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>City and Regional Parks</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiwanis Park</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McLennan Park</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria Park</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Natural Areas and Trails</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breithaupt Woods Natural Area</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homer Watson Natural Area (Cressman’s Woods)</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huron Natural Area</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanley Park Conservation Area</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steckle Woods</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Trails</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of natural areas and trails, the following is identified:

- Some 58% of respondents identified they had visited Steckle Woods in the last year, with another 10% visiting over the last three years which indicates two out of three respondents had visited this venue in the last three years;
- The Homer Watson Natural Area was visited by 31% of respondents in the last year and another 11% over the last three years;
• Breithaupt Woods Natural Area, Huron Natural Area, the Stanley Park Conservation Area and the community trails had visitation in the last year in the 21% to 25% range, with similar visitation over the last three years.

All the sites identified have had significant visitation from the respondents, with Steckle Woods having a significantly higher rate of visitation.

Table C-7 rates respondents’ evaluation on the contribution of parks and trails to the quality of life experience in Kitchener based on a scale of very important, important, somewhat important and not important.

**TABLE C-7**
Respondent Rating of Parks & Trails Contributions to Quality of Life Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How would you rate the contribution of parks and trails to the quality of life for residents in the City of Kitchener?</th>
<th>Very Important #</th>
<th>Very Important %</th>
<th>Important #</th>
<th>Important %</th>
<th>Somewhat Important #</th>
<th>Somewhat Important %</th>
<th>Not Important #</th>
<th>Not Important %</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood Parks</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>76.8</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community / Larger Parks</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>75.1</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Areas</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>77.4</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Trails</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>76.9</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Very important was the dominant result for all four categories of parks, natural area and trails, ranging from 76.3% for neighbourhood parks to 77.4% for natural areas. The important rating ranged from 22.5% for community/larger parks to 16.2% for natural areas. The somewhat important rating ranged from 1.7% for community/larger parks to 6.4% for natural areas, while the not important category only had a single response for community/larger parks.

Overall, 96.0% of respondents had very important/important rating for neighbourhood parks, 97.6% had a similar rating for community/larger parks, 93.6% had a favourable rating for natural areas 96.0% for community trails.

These elements within the parks system were identified as significantly important as to their contribution to the quality of life of residents in Kitchener.
Table C-8 assesses respondents’ ratings of the importance of school yards being part of the parks system in Kitchener. Some 58% of respondents indicated it was very important to include school yards, while 24% said it was important. Therefore, 82% of respondents had a favourable view of this, with another 16% indicating somewhat important and only 3% not important. From a respondent perspective, school yards are an important part of the overall available park spaces in Kitchener.

**TABLE C.8**  
Respondent Rating of Importance of School Yards as Part of the Parks System in Kitchener

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School yards can be an important part of the available park space in a neighbourhood. How important do you see school yards as part of the parks system in Kitchener?</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Important</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Important</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Important</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>173</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The respondent profile data indicated that there was reasonable age, geographic, residential and family status representation in the respondent pool as follows.

- A fairly balanced response between the 12 to 60 year old age groupings, a more limited response from those age categories 61 years and over:
- There was over thirty respondents in every age category between 12 and 60 years;
- There were twenty-two postal codes represented in the survey. Twelve areas had three or less respondents, five areas had six to twelve respondents, two had thirteen to sixteen respondents, three had twenty-two to twenty-four respondents resulting in a diversity of geographic perspectives;
- 154 of the 178 respondents lived in single family homes/duplexes, six lived in low rise apartments, thirteen lived in a townhouse and five in high-rise apartments;
- 107 of the 178 respondents were involved in a family with children in the home, thirty-nine were adults with no children in the home, fifteen were respondents who retired and seventeen were single working persons.
Appendix D
Benchmarking Survey
## Respondent Identification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Kitchener</th>
<th>Barrie</th>
<th>St. Catharines</th>
<th>London</th>
<th>COMMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. a.</td>
<td>Municipality</td>
<td>The City of Kitchener</td>
<td>The City of Barrie</td>
<td>City of St. Catharines</td>
<td>City of London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Dan Ritz</td>
<td>Walter Fischer</td>
<td>Stuart Green</td>
<td>Andrew Macpherson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Supervisor of Design &amp; Development</td>
<td>Supervisor, Parks Planning and Development</td>
<td>Landscape Architect</td>
<td>Manager, Parks Planning and Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>Contact information</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dan.ritz@kitchener.ca">dan.ritz@kitchener.ca</a></td>
<td>705-739-4220, ext 5101</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sgreen@stcatharines.ca">sgreen@stcatharines.ca</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:amacpherson@london.ca">amacpherson@london.ca</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.</td>
<td>Main responsibilities</td>
<td>Park Design &amp; Development</td>
<td>Responsible for the supervision, operation and administration of the Parks Planning and Development Section of Infrastructure Planning Branch in the Engineering Department including overseeing the design and construction of parks and park amenities, trails and other outdoor activity areas related to development applications, the urban forest and the landscape architecture portfolio.</td>
<td>Park Design, Park Policy</td>
<td>Park and Environmental Planning, Design and Construction, Trees</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>How much parkland does your municipality currently have under management? How much of this total is ‘natural’.</td>
<td>1322ha, 855 ha naturalized</td>
<td>Total Parkland: 256.89 hectares Total Environment Protected (Valleyland/floodplain): 886.2 hectares Total Combined: 1,143.4 hectares</td>
<td>365 ha (estimate of 73 ha natural) 20% naturalized</td>
<td>2294 ha, 1353 ha natural area (2007 figures) 59% naturalized</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>How does your municipality determine the types of facilities and programs for new parks?</td>
<td>Based on a variety of factors: past experience, public input, operational standards, etc.</td>
<td>Within Secondary Plans, park facilities and programs are verified against the overall City wide inventory and programming needs to determine if a deficiency in field type and size exist. Park facility fit designs are presented to verify park size, location, amenity composition and preliminary acceptable layout. At a neighbourhood level, a further review of the surrounding parks and their facilities ratifies any additional needs for the immediate residential area.</td>
<td>Depending on type of park and Secondary Plan a general facility profile has been established for each type of park, i.e. Neighbourhood Park, District Park and City-wide park.</td>
<td>Parks and Recreation Master Plan, Operations Plan, specific amenity ‘strategies’ i.e. Skateparks, aquatics. Either via a process to determine deficiencies and address during the creation of new parks or via a standardized profile based on park type.</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Does your municipality consult with local residents during the park design process?</td>
<td>Yes, for most community parks, occasionally for neighbourhood parks.</td>
<td>Within new subdivisions - no. For neighbourhood parks – unless there is a major change to the program or facility within the park – no. Residential consultation is not typically part of a local improvement unless the land use changes. For neighbourhood playgrounds, replacements are determined to meet or exceed what the current play structure contains</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes. By-law requires certain levels of consultation depending on type of project.</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>What does the Parks Department budget for creation of new parks</td>
<td>$75,000 per ha for new park development. Nil for natural areas (acquired and left as is).</td>
<td>No budgets for natural areas. For the municipal portion of a DC park and current</td>
<td>$30,000 - $40,000 per ac for Neighbourhood Parks. District Parks</td>
<td>Development rate for parks: Neighbourhood = $58,000 per Ha</td>
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<td>Neighbourhood Parks = $60,000</td>
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<td>Appendix D: Identification of Emerging Trends/Comparative Analysis</td>
<td>City of Kitchener Park Master Plan</td>
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<td>and natural areas on a per acre or hectare basis?</td>
<td>Tot Lot - small play structure elements, bench. Neighbourhood Park - play structure, swings, trail, park sign, benches, scrub diamond or soccer pitch. Community Park - all of the above and bookable fields (baseball &amp; soccer), parking, possibly a spray pad, tennis court, skateboard park, picnic shelter. Development requirements, the average cost for a neighbourhood park is $75,000 to $100,000/acre while Community Parks range from $100,000 to $150,000/acre. Developers are responsible for the costs associated with the installation of park grading and servicing, topsoil provisions and new fencing. would require additional funding depending on the level of use i.e. lighted soccer, baseball with washrooms and change rooms District Parks = $77,000 per Ha Natural areas by master plan. * not a statistically sound average, sample size is small</td>
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<td>7. Do you use capital funding strategies involving naming rights, corporate sponsorship, fundraising or bequests to fund new park development or major park renewals?</td>
<td>No. Not at this time. We have set up a process that would allow this to occur but have not used it for parks yet. This process has been used to name facilities i.e. Seymour-Hannah Arena. The amount of money is negotiated by Senior Staff and Councilors. Yes. Minor projects usually. New ‘commemorative’ program. Varies, some experience exists.</td>
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<td>8. Do you alter the programming of existing parks and how does this come about?</td>
<td>Seldom does this occur. A review is completed if a current park is deemed to be underutilized through visual observation or reduction in bookings by local sports groups. User groups and neighbourhood representatives may also petition for changes to local parks. Also refer to answer 11b). Yes, through our consultants report we have reduced the number of baseball diamonds and converted them to soccer because of user demand. As needed for life cycle upgrades or by sports trend need. Varied approaches.</td>
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<td>9. New parks as a result of other land development:</td>
<td>Developer Build park conditions started in 2008, standards are the same as what the city would typically develop (question 5 above), funded thru approved capital budgets as DC credits are not presently available or adequate. Subdivision parks are certified by the developer after rough grading and servicing is complete. Finish grading, amenities and planting are tendered by the City. New parks are funded through DC’s whereas an existing park that is being redeveloped is funded through taxes or partnerships with User Groups, Service Clubs, business organizations and/or Public or Catholic School Boards. We do not generally have ‘developer build parks’. We budget through impost funds, capital funds. Yes, development charge dollars.</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Do you have ‘developer build park’ conditions and what level of service/development/standards are required? How are they funded - by developer, DC credits, or capital budget?</td>
<td>Development Guidelines established through the design of the subdivision and implemented in accordance with Barrie standard details known as “BSD” for sportfields, walkways, bridges, playgrounds and play courts.</td>
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<td>b. When a park or naturalized area is created as a result of a Development Charge, what standards does the Parks Department impose upon the parks built from these funds? If possible, please answer specifically for the following areas: Storm water management</td>
<td>Not park planning, Engineering</td>
<td>MOE Guidelines and local Conservation</td>
<td>Engineering responsibility</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Varied approaches.</td>
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<td>Requirement</td>
<td>Authority policies. Barrie drainage policies and standards are currently being updated.</td>
<td>City of Kitchener Park Master Plan</td>
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<td>ii. Requiring grading information (is this provided prior to draft plan stage?)</td>
<td>Prior to Draft Plan – only if a function of overall stormwater servicing requirements. Grading information is provided through the design development stages of a park. For Environmental Protected areas (EP), existing grading information is provided at the time of development for the surrounding limits of the EP zone unless a proposed feature, such as boardwalk is planned. In this case, detailed grades are provided. Any trees impacted are assessed and identified in a Tree Inventory and Assessment Report.</td>
<td>Yes at agreement stage. Generally yes.</td>
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<td>iii. Grading (grubbing or fine grading, +/- 1500mm?)</td>
<td>Rough grading as part of subdivision conditions.</td>
<td>Grade to accommodate storm water. Yes, have specs.</td>
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<td>iv. Water supply requirements (size of line, water chamber and backflow preventers, termination in park or at property line?)</td>
<td>Not required, installed as needed.</td>
<td>At property line No, can’t leave a ‘dead’ stub. Generally at property line.</td>
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<td>v. Electrical supply</td>
<td>Not required.</td>
<td>Park walkway lighting is not installed as a standard solution for trails. Only solar powered morality lighting is installed around the playgrounds if there is a perceived safety and/or vandalism concern are expressed by the public, City Councillors.</td>
<td>No Not usually. Not usually.</td>
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<td>vi. Topsoil provisioning</td>
<td>Topsoil required as part of subdivision agreement. 200mm of topsoil, stripped from the site, screened and stockpiled for future use. Developer to import as required for 200mm depth coverage over park site.</td>
<td>Yes, specs. Yes.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>vii. Sodding or seeding</td>
<td>Seeding required as part of subdivision agreement. Sodding is used except where native seed mix is required within watercourse buffers. Selective seeding has been applied in certain sportsfield situations.</td>
<td>Sodding Yes, specs. Generally sodding.</td>
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<td>viii. Planting</td>
<td>Not required. Existing Barrie standard details outline planting specifications and standards that are to be met by developers and contractors. Planting requirements are also outlined in our Naturalization Policy.</td>
<td>No Yes, specs. Varies.</td>
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<td>10 New parkland parcels</td>
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Appendix D: Identification of Emerging Trends/Comparative Analysis
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City of Kitchener Park Master Plan</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>a.</strong> Does your municipality have specific criteria for parkland parcels identified at draft plan stage (i.e. are there criteria regarding % table land, relationship to school lands, minimum frontages, required connections to other open space lands, required form (not simply linear strips, etc.), surface cover type, maximum gradients, relationship to municipal storm water functions including SWM ponds, overflow channels and other storage areas, access roads, swales, structures, etc.)?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>b.</strong> What definitions or strategies do you use to secure parklands (accepting or not accepting watercourses, ravines, slopes, wetlands and irregularly shaped parcels) via the 5% dedication requirements?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>c.</strong> Is the Parks Department involved in Subdivision agreement review?</td>
</tr>
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</table>

### Park Programming and Standards

**11. General park standards:**

| a. Does your municipality have standards for its parks? Are these standards broken down further by park classification or uses? | Standards are provided by the Landscape Architects, they are not in approved written form. Parks are not broken down into further classifications | Yes. Community, Neighbourhood, parkettes, gores (Road island green spaces). | Yes | Yes. | Yes. |
| b. Are there definitive trends that you are addressing in park programming? How did you become aware of those trends? | Trends are typically brought to our attention from user groups or neighbourhood groups. Trends include: Youth -skateboard, bike park, Natural Areas -increase in use of passive activities, trails, etc. | Barrie is currently updating our 1991 Parks and Recreation Strategic Master Plan through an outside consultant. Future park development, programming needs, demographics (trend towards younger community), trends and any current deficiencies will be identified through this MP for implementation. New emerging trends. | Yes, through the Parks Policy Plan prepared by consultants survey | New Parks and Recreation Master Plan. | Two of three respondents are using consultants to identify trends. |
### Appendix D: Identification of Emerging Trends/Comparative Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>c. Do you develop/update your standards when new park programming/activities are pursued?</th>
<th>Not currently.</th>
<th>Yes, as required.</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>d. Is there a relationship between park standards and urban design guidelines in your municipality?</td>
<td>There is a disconnect between these as Urban Design Guidelines were developed by the Planning Department and park standards are provided by the Landscape Architect in the Operations Department.</td>
<td>At this time, urban design guidelines are typically only used with site plan and rezoning applications. Based on City Council Strategic Priorities, our waterfront parks are exhibited to a higher standard than most parks including level of design, type of facilities and public access to activities.</td>
<td>Not currently but this relationship is being developed between Parks and Planning.</td>
<td>Urban Design Guidelines are being completed in 2009.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Are there clear budget allocations for proposed standards/park classifications for developing and maintaining the parks to standards approved by Council?</td>
<td>Budgets are submitted annually and levels have remained the same for many years. Both park development and maintenance budgets are underfunded.</td>
<td>This process is being reviewed as part of the Parks and Recreation Strategic Master Plan update.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No – flexible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. What are your standards for -</td>
<td>Community Parks are lit for class 'A' sportsfields and Major Park areas. Neighbourhood parks and trails are not lit.</td>
<td>Lit walkways are only provided in community parks where other lit amenities will be/are located such as tennis courts. Solar powered LED morality lights are placed near playgrounds to ward off unwanted activities. For all other areas, the Park Lighting Policy applies.</td>
<td>5 Foot Candles</td>
<td>Only in parks where we have after-dark activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Lit walkways/lit parks</td>
<td>Synthetic vs. turf playing fields, lighting fields</td>
<td>We have no synthetic fields. Class A sportsfields are lit</td>
<td>Turf playing fields are typical standard.</td>
<td>No synthetic turf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>No synthetic turf</td>
<td>No synthetic yet. Lit fields if irrigated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii.</td>
<td>Irrigation – automatic and quick coupler (manual) systems</td>
<td>Automatic sprinklers are used for class 'A' sportsfields.</td>
<td>Implemented in high use sports fields for both new and existing fields. For new sites – irrigation is built into the construction contract; for existing sites – implementation occurs through public quotation or tender pending size. Based on complexity, City Park Operations staff may perform the retrofit.</td>
<td>Automatic systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv.</td>
<td>Parking per hectare, per facility (soccer, baseball, skate parks, spray pads)</td>
<td>Determined by type of facility on an individual basis, ie 30-40 spaces for a soccer or baseball diamond.</td>
<td>Calculations are subject to availability of on street parking, proximity to neighbouring schools, recreation centres and other public facilities.</td>
<td>No standard right now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>What are the typical sizes and programming (if not included in Question 5) of your municipality’s:</td>
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<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>Tot lots</td>
<td>Under 0.5 ha</td>
<td>Parkettes have been discouraged.</td>
<td>Not built</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>Neighborhood parks</td>
<td>0.5ha to 2.5ha</td>
<td>Approximately 2.5 to 10 acres (1 to 4 ha).</td>
<td>Max 3 ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>Community parks</td>
<td>2.5ha and larger</td>
<td>Approximately 10 acres plus (4 ha)</td>
<td>4 ha to 8 ha</td>
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<td>d.</td>
<td>Regional parks</td>
<td>Varies - recognized by uniqueness rather than size</td>
<td>Strictly speaking Barrie is a “city” and not within a “region” however, Barrie does have large 50 acres plus park sites that could be classified as “County wide” facilities. Several examples include Barrie Sports Complex, Sunnidale Park, Ardagh Bluffs (ANSI) and Little Lake (EP area).</td>
<td>varies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.</td>
<td>Woodlots (do you have maximum and minimum sizes?)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>City owned woodlots are defined under our By-law 2005-120 and range in size from a minimum of 0.2 hectares to over 240 hectares. Amenities include natural and passive recreational trails and activities only. Motorized vehicles are not a permitted use.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Wetlands and Eco parks are being reviewed as a new classification type.</td>
<td>Linear Parks (Trails) min width of 15 m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>How is your primary community trail network established in the planning process – municipal plan, community plan or secondary plans, draft plans of subdivision or on detailed subdivision grading plans, or as a condition within the subdivision agreement?</td>
<td>A mix of all of the above.</td>
<td>Trail network is developed through a City wide approved Parks and Recreation Strategic Master Plan, City Active Transportation policies and are implemented through Secondary Plans and detailed in Draft Plans of Subdivision.</td>
<td>Official Plan and Secondary Plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Are all of your new playgrounds accessible? If so, what surfaces do you use?</td>
<td>Management Plans are created for major natural areas, however budget for this work is non-existent.</td>
<td>Majority of surfaces are sand. Only 5 accessible structures have been built in Barrie. Currently, the intent is to implement only in larger community parks.</td>
<td>All have a degree of accessibility. Ramps and transfer points with a limited amount of rubber surface.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>What strategies do you employ to conserve and manage natural areas (e.g. invasive species, rare species, recreational impacts, encroachments, etc.)?</td>
<td>Management Plans are created for major natural areas, however budget for this work is non-existent.</td>
<td>Protection of significant woodlots and Federal protected tree species such as Butternut. Setbacks are established with Conservation Authorities, Planning and Engineering Divisions for limits of top-of-bank, stable slope setbacks, and floodplain mapping.</td>
<td>All above based on Conservation Master Plans/Woodland Management Plans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>How do you use technology to improve the uses or performance of your parks (e.g. illumination/lighting to increase number of hours of use, etc.)? What are your environmental guidelines (for example, water conservation, purchase of local materials, use of native species, reduction of impervious surface, reduction in pesticide/herbicide use)?</td>
<td>Neighbourhood parks are not lit, park bylaw prohibits use between 11:00pm and 6:00am. Structural soil used in urban streetscapes. Central controller being implemented for sportsfield irrigation. GIS tablets being used for Tree Inventory. GIS inventories park assets, trails, playstructures, etc. AutoCAD used for park designs and tender documents. What are your environmental guidelines (for example, water conservation, purchase of local materials, use of native species, reduction of impervious surface, reduction in pesticide/herbicide use)?</td>
<td>Most trails are bare earth or are designed as granular surfaces except in high traffic areas along the waterfront; Native species are planted within all our parks and open spaces; planting programs exist with the local Conservation Authorities; naturalization policies establish and limit the use of pesticides and herbicides in parks with “no mow” zones being established on an annual basis for size, impact and effectiveness. Granular parking lots exist in most neighbourhood parks.</td>
<td>Yes we use lights to increase hours of play. We use native species. We have a pesticide/herbicide ban</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appendix D: Identification of Emerging Trends/Comparative Analysis</td>
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<td><strong>Natural Areas</strong></td>
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<td>17. Do you have any natural area design or management guidelines? Do you use expert input, if so who?</td>
<td>Land parcels are reviewed/acquired via the Planning Department’s Environmental Planner and handed over to Park Operations for management of these areas. There is a disconnect between Planning’s guidelines to preserve and leave as is, versus the Park Operations guidelines to formalize trails, manage encroachments and maintain the natural area.</td>
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<td>Local Conservation Authority; Urban Forester on staff; and City staff work with other area specialty groups such as the Brereton Field Naturalists.</td>
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<td>18. What provisions in your Official Plan are used to secure natural areas / environmental lands and has your municipality established a price per acre for such acquisitions? How do you ensure acquisition of appropriate natural areas during the planning process for each development? How do ensure a trail network is constructed these lands?</td>
<td>Generally, natural lands or non-developable lands are acquired through the subdivision process at no cost. Developable natural lands are acquired through negotiation and usually are valued at current market value. Recently a Natural Area Acquisition fund was created for purchase of developable natural lands, this fund has not currently been utilized.</td>
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<td>Typical costs for woodlot areas are determined through Real Estate Appraisals calculated prior to registration of the plan of subdivision. This helps staff to determining what the current costs for cash-in-lieu of parkland will be. Trail implementation is typically undertaken by the City unless a specific requirement through development such as a compensation requirement due to road or lot impacts. EP areas on undevelopable lands are dedicated to the City at no cost.</td>
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<td>Open Space, Green Belt and Environmentally Protected Areas. Parks are generally zoned Neighbourhood Residential Environmentally Significant Areas. Significant Woodland Open Space</td>
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<td><strong>Operations</strong></td>
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<td>20. What is your budget for park maintenance (by hectare or acre)? For natural areas maintenance (by hectare or acre)?</td>
<td>Natural Areas: $497.55/ha [Based on 855 ha] Open Space: $9,607.19/ha [Based on467 ha]</td>
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<td>Cost per acre of active tableland parks is approx $5,300/acre whereas natural areas are approx $50.00/acre.</td>
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<td>Total Parks budget per year $14,000,000 / 365 ha = $38,000 per ha. Note that this includes all the arenas, community centres and pools that are located within the parks.</td>
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<td>21. What mechanism is used to include new park maintenance in the operating budget? What are your standard levels for park maintenance? (grass cutting, sports fields, horticulture, trail</td>
<td>There is no particular mechanism, when a new park is added to the inventory a budget is established and is left to the new years budget. If budget cuts are directed, then the maintenance levels are impacted. Grass cutting levels have a council approved</td>
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<td>This is being reviewed as part of the update to the Parks and Recreation Strategic master Plan however, currently, park Operations staff are notified on park designs during design stages and are notified after acceptance of the works by Parks Planning Budgets are not increasing they are decreasing. New park maintenance is stolen from other areas that receive less attention (not ideal but reality)</td>
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<td>Currently use the development charge process and annual growth asks from Council during the budget process.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maintenance and Development:</th>
<th>City of Kitchener Park Master Plan</th>
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<td>service level standard, sportsfield maintenance is established through the user groups. Garbage collection is through a third party contract and is completed once a week.</td>
<td>Life Cycle Renewal Program – capital request yearly - $2-3 M/maintenance upgrades for play areas/parks/parking/amenities - $400K/year.</td>
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</table>

22. Do you have a strategy for the rehabilitation of older/existing parks? What funding is allocated to this?

- There is no specific strategy. Pieces are replaced based on wear and tear. (i.e. Playgrounds) Funding is through our General Parks Capital Budget.
- Barrie’s newly created Corporate Asset Management Department will be required to track lifecycle management and expectations of City owned equipment and infrastructure. Current replacements for playgrounds are based on an approx 15 to 20 year lifespan. Other park infrastructure replacements are based on Parks Operations staff observations and levels of repairs necessary to keep the amenity functional and safe.

23. What have you done to reduce maintenance requirements/costs? What do you think could be done?

- Naturalization has been completed in a number of parks where it makes sense. Based on citizen complaints, we are not meeting their expected level of service presently with the budgets that we are provided.
- Annual repairs made and undertaken by Operations staff with approved budget funding. Higher levels of vandalism have increased the demand on policing, staff patrols and natural surveillance opportunities within parks.
- Cut less grass, more ‘natural areas’, contracting garbage pickup, contracting some grass cutting, removing some horticultural displays
- Increase the length of time for cutting cycles on roadsides. Increase naturalization projects. Create community partnerships. Work with developers and planning to plant the right products.

24. Are parks operations staff required to maintain horticultural, signage or other specialized landscape features within the road rights-of-way (e.g. roundabout islands, community entrance features, road median gardens, boulevard gardens, cul-de-sac gardens)? Are specific design criteria established to guide the planning of these specialized features?

- Parks operations staff do maintain all of the above noted items. Specific criteria has not been developed and planning is based site specific review. That is if we have been notified of the specific projects. Many times we inherit a finished item that is problematic from an operations perspective.
- Yes – Park Operations and Horticultural staff maintain all major entry feature signs and display garden areas, numerous road buffer planting areas (reverse lot frontages), Gore parkette areas (large turf and planted traffic islands) and feature display beds for community activities such as Communities in Bloom. Where these elements are designed through subdivision and site plan applications, the plant material types and varieties are commented on by City Landscape Architectural Technologists and Urban Forester.
- Yes.
- Yes, we work hand in hand with parks planning and the urban development team.
- Yes.

25. Have you partnered with any local groups to address maintenance of your parks (horticultural groups and societies, school clean-up days)?

- We have partnered many times. Kitchener Horticultural Society maintain Rockway Garden. School groups assist with Earth Day events as well as regular garbage/litter clean ups.
- Adopt-a-Park programs have been implemented to work with area Rotary and other Service Clubs and businesses. Community clean-up events are scheduled annually.
- Yes.
- - some school and community clean-ups.
- - Community gardens; dog walkers association; horticultural groups.
- Yes.

26. Have you used or have you considered an adopt-a-park program? If you have used an adopt-a-park program please provide an assessment of its success.

- We have not maintained an adopt-a-park program. I don’t know if a program was carried out years ago, but not recently.
- Yes, the program does exist. Information can be obtained from our City web site www.barrie.ca located under: recreation information/parks/adopt-a-park/trail program.
- Yes but not implemented
- We are just developing the criteria for an adopt-a-park program.
- Everyone is moving in this direction.